This is 1118 word article/review on using VPNs for privacy and to bypass college and university firewalls. It provides the unbiased, top five VPN services as researched by the author.

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What are the Best VPN Service Providers for Colleges and Universities?

Introduction

Colleges and universities all implement some type of firewall on their intranets. There are times when you may need to circumvent this security. Using a VPN is the safest method of accessing content that is blocked. This is an unbiased research article that covers basic information about using VPNs at school. It includes objective reviews of the five best VPNs to use at colleges and universities and gives the author's opinion of the top VPN pick currently available.

Why do schools implement firewalls?

Schools have good reasons for setting up security features. It is a practical and necessary safety precaution. Hundreds, sometimes thousands, of students are accessing the Internet from a school or university intranet. Logistically speaking, if there was no firewall in place, the entire system would be brought down by the sheer mass of malicious and spam content that would enter the intranet. The problem with generic firewalls is that they block content in a broad way. This can be frustrating when you need access to legitimate information that is blocked because it falls into some broad category set by the school's IT department..

Why use a VPN at school?

If you've had the experience of writing a research paper on campus only to be blocked from legitimate sites for no apparent reason, then you need a VPN. Using a VPN is the best method to bypass school firewalls because it is secure, safe, legal, and will allow you access to the data you need. While you may want the VPN to access websites that are blocked by your school's firewall, there is also the big issue of privacy. With a VPN, your browsing history is anonymous and private. All of your searches and data will appear to be from the VPN's server. As long as your VPN company isn't tracking you, your history will remain private and secure. It is important to check your college's policies around using VPNs to avoid serious trouble. If there is a strict

"no VPN use" rule in place that could get you expelled, you should stick with using your VPN on public Wifi or your own, paid ISP..

How to choose a VPN for school

According to [Wired Magazine](#), if you're going to use a VPN for privacy reasons, and want to avoid your history being logged, then you want to make sure that the VPN company itself doesn't track and record your data. Additionally, while free VPNs abound, we all know that free usually means the company is making money elsewhere. That being said, "free" VPNs often have lengthy use terms because they track and sell your browsing data to various interested parties, such as marketing companies.The practice of VPNs secretly tracking customers is more prevalent than most people realize according to [The Next Web Magazine](#), "*All told, 26 of them collect three or more important log files that could contain personal and identifying information — things like your IP address, location, bandwidth data, and connection timestamps*," the article states.

General opinion and common sense dictates that you have more say when you're paying for your VPN. Paid services don't need to use your data to make money. Unfortunately, even some paid services have been caught lying to customers. Multiple services that told customers they do not track data were actually found to be saving long-term logs and selling that information. This is a major point to consider when investing in a good VPN service.

There are three primary elements you should consider when choosing the best VPN for schools:

1. **Safety and security**: Is the VPN secure? Does it log your browsing data? What are their policies around use, data sharing, and privacy? Are they honest about their practices?
2. **Ease of use and speed**: Is it overly complicated to set-up and use, if so, you won't use it. A VPN should be straightforward to log into and use. Does it slow your surfing down to a crawl? That's a problem for most people. Few people can deal with frustratingly slow surfing speeds in exchange for content access on campus and privacy.
3. **Price**: Cost is a factor, particularly when there are multiple, high-quality VPNs available at a good price point.

VPN Reviews

Below are reviews of the top three products to help you make an informed decision when selecting a VPN to use at school, home or when using a public wifi.

Express VPN
- Fast service
- They do not log customers
- Offers discounts for long-term monthly plans

- Can only use two devices at a time
- Accepts bitcoin payments
- Very popular
- Offers four payment plans
- Offers a money back guarantee
- Located in the British Virgin Islands

Private Internet Access
- Does not keep log files
- Very reasonable pricing
- Accepts bitcoin payments
- Is a USA based company
- Fast and reliable

Nord VPN
- Full-featured
- Easy-to-use
- No logs are kept and data isn't tracked
- You are anonymous when browsing
- Can use up to six devices at a time
- Accepts bitcoin
- Offers frequent specials including $99 for three years
- Located in Panama

CyberGhost
- Does not keep log files and does not track customers
- Accepts bitcoin payments
- Can only use one device at a time
- Very fast connection
- Only offers two plans
- Located in Romania

PIPVanish
- Stated in their use agreement that they don't keep log files, but were found to be keeping and sharing customer data
- Accepts bitcoin payments
- Offers 12, 3 and 1 month plans
- Located in the USA
- Has many features

And the winner is……

It was a tough choice as all of these top contenders had great features. PIPVanish was eliminated first because they mislead their customers about tracking, which is a big trust issue. The rest came down to price point, number of devices, speed, and reliability. The top two winners in all of these categories where ExpressVPN and NordVPN. Both of these companies have full features, both have a 30 day money back guarantee, neither of them track customers, both are highly rated by customers, both are reliable, and they both take bitcoin payments, but in the end the clear winner was NordVPN.

Why? Because although ExpressVPN has great qualities, Nord allows six devices to be connected at the same time, while Express only allows two. Feature for feature, the two are on point, but Nord offers a little better security and anonymity and is much more cost effective than ExpressVPN. A one year ExpressVPN plan is about $8.00 per month, while NordVPN's year plan is $5.75 per month. That's a big difference and the prices for NordVPN get better as the plan gets longer. A three year plan is only $2.75 a month.