

Medical Office Systems, LLC

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Safe Surfing with a Private VPN

I have avoided this topic for a long time, because it is complicated, or at least it was complicated. It is not so anymore, as we will soon discover. However, let's set the table with some details and descriptions first...

When you surf the web or get email at home, your internet connection is (mostly) safe. It is unlikely that anyone has tapped your internet connection, and so long as your home Wireless connection is password-protected, no one will be snooping on that either. Should you change locations to a coffee shop, restaurant, airport, or other public wireless connection, **that changes everything**. Anyone connected to a public WiFi hotspot can snoop on anyone else logged on the same hotspot. That is, well, how should I say... **a serious problem**. Yes, there is https, which promises to secure your traffic when logging into your bank or other secure website. But that's not a 100% guarantee either. And further, why reveal any browsing details to anyone?

How then can you safely surf on a public WiFi? The answer is a VPN, or **V**irtual **P**rivate **N**etwork. Those of you who work for large companies that have VPNs are familiar with the concept – your connection to your company network is secured by the company's VPN. You also are probably annoyed with the company VPN, because VPNs are complicated, require a lot of maintenance, and sometimes are just plain cantankerous to use. Tech Support at your company probably hates VPNs too, as the number of support calls to troubleshoot VPN problems is high. I am familiar with both sides as a user, and as Tech Support on the other end, which is why I normally avoid talk of VPNs like the plague... Or cleaning house... Or washing windows.

Now that I have painted a very dark picture with dark clouds, let us paint a new picture: a bright sunny day with birds singing in the meadows, the water babbling in the creek and cute puppies everywhere. I have found what may be the simplest, easiest personal VPN, ever.

I will not go into a long discussion of the VPN's I sampled, or feature sets, or comparisons of bells and whistles. Most people don't care about the intricate workings of a VPN: I certainly don't care. I just want it to work. So here you go: **SurfEasy VPN is my choice for a safe, personal VPN** when using a public WiFi hotspot. It comes in two flavors: **Free** (but limited to 500mb per month) and the **Paid \$48 per year** for unlimited usage on up to 5 devices. SurfEasy VPN is based in Canada but has servers worldwide so you will have good coverage.

I advise starting with the free version, then purchase the annual subscription when your free bandwidth runs out. Both versions let you install it on up to 5 devices, which is more than enough for most families. SurfEasy VPN is compatible with any computer, smartphone or tablet running Apple, Android, or Windows. **Bonus**: the paid version of SurfEasy VPN also is an effective Ad Pop-Up blocker and tracking cookie killer. **Nice**. Turn it on when you're on a public WiFi, and turn it off when you get home. **Easy**.

SurfEasyVPN: <https://www.surfeasy.com/en/>

Sorry Linux users: SurfEasy VPN is not compatible with Linux yet, but you can use Express VPN instead.

ExpressVPN: <https://www.expressvpn.com/>

-John Becker

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