

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Mullvad vs Proton](#)

Omniscient - June 1, 2026, 9:59 am

Let's get this debate started.

Are you a Proton or Mullvad VPN user?

Or if you use something else, what is it?

Mullvad vs Proton VPN - Which VPN Deserves Your Trust?

VPNs have become almost mandatory for privacy-conscious users, but not all VPN providers operate with the same philosophy.

Two names that constantly come up in the privacy community are Mullvad and Proton VPN. Both have strong reputations, but they take very different approaches.

? Mullvad VPN

Mullvad has built its entire identity around one simple idea:

"Know as little about the customer as possible."

Pros:No email required to register
Random account number system instead of usernames
Cash payments accepted by mail
Flat pricing with no marketing gimmicks
Strong no-logs reputation
Open-source apps
Independent security audits
WireGuard support
Anonymous payment options including crypto

Cons:No long-term discounts
Smaller server network
No free plan
Streaming support is not a major focus
Fewer extra features compared to competitors

Mullvad feels designed for people who care about privacy first and convenience second.

? Proton VPN

Proton VPN comes from the creators of Proton Mail and takes more of a complete privacy ecosystem approach.

Pros:Based in Switzerland

- Strong no-logs policy
- Free tier available
- Open-source apps
- Independent security audits
- Larger server network
- Secure Core multi-hop servers
- Good streaming support
- Includes extras like NetShield ad/tracker blocking
- Integrates with Proton Mail, Drive, Pass, and Calendar

Cons: Requires an account/email
More traditional subscription model
More user information involved compared to Mullvad
Full ecosystem features require higher priced plans

Proton feels designed for people who want privacy tools that replace mainstream services.

? Direct Comparison

Privacy:
Mullvad wins. The account-number model is difficult to beat.

Features:
Proton wins. More servers, more options, better ecosystem.

Ease of Use:
Proton wins slightly. More beginner-friendly.

Anonymity:
Mullvad wins. Paying cash without an email is rare.

Streaming:
Proton wins.

Price Transparency:
Mullvad wins. One simple price.

Company Ecosystem:
Proton wins. VPN is only one part of their privacy suite.

? Final Thoughts

Both are excellent choices, but they appeal to different users.

Choose Mullvad if: You want maximum anonymity
You dislike accounts and subscriptions
You care mainly about hiding your identity

Choose Proton VPN if: You want a full privacy ecosystem
You want more features
You care about convenience and performance

Personally, I see Mullvad as the VPN for privacy purists and Proton as the VPN for people trying to escape Big Tech.

Which one do you trust more, HF?

Artisan - June 1, 2026, 10:00 am

For me, its a tie between Proton and N-o-r-d. I use both from time to time.

Omniscient - June 1, 2026, 10:10 am

I've used PIA because they take crypto and you get 3 years for \$52.?
Personally, I think it's strange they aren't mentioned more in VPN debates.

They have a full no-logs policy and I've never heard a bad word about them.

<https://www.privateinternetaccess.com/vpn-features/no-logs-vpn>

HerrWinston - June 1, 2026, 10:22 am

(Jun 1, 2026 10:10 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I've used PIA because they take crypto and you get 3 years for \$52.

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I havent heard about them either before this, does look interesting and the price seems alright aswell.

Tbh the whole reason mullvads no log policy is so trusted is because of certain events like the raid on their server where to police actually left with nothing.

Which is why I would also choose them if the need of privacy is so big.

Personally I use both tho, mullvad when I have the money to spend and Proton when I have no money, but I do dislike proton much more because they feel somewhat slow for me.

Omniscient - June 1, 2026, 10:28 am

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I've never used Proton's VPN or Mullvad. TOR can be slow and also often exit-nodes are blocked. So sometimes, you just need a reliable VPN.

PIA has been around a very long time.

Actually got a nice response about PIA from AI.

AI Quote: Yes, but interestingly most of the law-enforcement related press around Private Internet Access (PIA) has actually been positive for their privacy reputation, not negative.

The main controversies are different:

? Law enforcement / subpoenas: PIA actually passed tests

There are at least two famous cases where authorities wanted user information:

2016 FBI subpoena

The FBI requested information connected to a PIA VPN IP.

PIA responded, but they reportedly had no useful logs to provide because they did not store activity logs. ([TorrentFreak][1])

2018 court case

A PIA representative testified about their logging practices.

Again, the point highlighted was that PIA did not retain customer activity logs that could identify usage. ([TorrentFreak][2])

So unlike some VPN providers, there is no known major case where PIA advertised "no logs" and then handed over identifying VPN usage logs.

A contrast often brought up is providers like PureVPN and IPVanish, which received criticism after cases where logs were reportedly available despite privacy marketing. ([VPN Testing: The VPN Test Site][3])

? The biggest PIA controversy: Kape Technologies acquisition

This is the main reason privacy purists left PIA.

In 2019, PIA was purchased by Kape Technologies. ([TechRadar][4])

Why people cared:

Kape was formerly known as Crossrider.

Crossrider had a bad reputation because its software platform had been associated with adware/malware concerns. Privacy communities questioned whether a VPN should be owned by a company with that history. ([Reddit][5])

PIA supporters counter:

The company changed direction. PIA's apps became open source.

Its no-log claims continued. No public evidence has shown PIA started logging users after the acquisition.

? Jurisdiction concerns

Another criticism:

PIA is based in the United States. The US is part of the Five Eyes.

Some privacy users prefer services like:

Mullvad VPN (Sweden, anonymous account numbers)

* Proton VPN (Switzerland)

because they dislike US jurisdiction.

For an HF-style VPN trust ranking, I'd probably frame it like:

Privacy Extremist: Mullvad
Privacy + Ecosystem: Proton
Court-Tested Veteran: PIA

PIA's biggest stain is ownership optics, not a known betrayal of users. Their actual subpoena history is one of the stronger ones in the VPN industry. ([TorrentFreak][1])

- [1]: https://torrentfreak.com/vpn-providers-no-logging-claims-tested-in-fbi-case-160312/?utm_source=chatgpt.com "VPN Provider's No-Logging Claims Tested in FBI Case"
- [2]: https://torrentfreak.com/private-internet-access-no-logging-claims-proven-true-again-in-court-180606/?utm_source=chatgpt.com "Private Internet Access' "No-Logging" Claims Proven True ..."
- [3]: https://vpntesting.com/no-logs/?utm_source=chatgpt.com "VPN \"No-Logs\" Policies Tested in Court: Who Can You Trust?"
- [4]: [https://www.techradar.com/news/\[censored\]-owner-buys-pia-for-dollar955m-to-create-vpn-giant?utm_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.techradar.com/news/[censored]-owner-buys-pia-for-dollar955m-to-create-vpn-giant?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
"[censored] owner buys PIA for \$95.5m to create VPN giant"
- [5]: https://www.reddit.com/r/PrivateInternetAccess/comments/dz2w53/our_merger_with_kape_technologies_addressing_your/?utm_source=chatgpt.com "Our Merger with Kape Technologies - Addressing Your ..."

MadScientist - June 1, 2026, 10:33 am

(Jun 1, 2026 10:10 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I've used PIA because they take crypto and you get 3 years for \$52.? loading encrypted image...
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I was always with PIA until BitPay went KYC and they dont have other crypto options, just wish you could pick a static port for forawrding/services rather than randomly given one each reconnect/restart

Charlie Sheen - June 1, 2026, 11:22 am

I use Proton. I would've gone Mullvad but Proton had faster speeds when I researched it. Both are solid VPNs.

Omniscient - June 1, 2026, 11:29 am

(Jun 1, 2026 11:22 AM)Charlie Sheen Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I use Proton. I would've gone Mullvad but Proton had faster speeds when I researched it. Both are solid VPNs.

I do like the bundling that Proton has done. They absolutely make it easier to leave Google services. That one aspect is attractive to me.

Omniscient - June 1, 2026, 11:56 am

(Jun 1, 2026 10:33 AM)MadScientist Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I was always with PIA until BitPay went KYC and they dont have other crypto options, just wish you could pick a static port for forawrding/services rather than randomly given one each reconnect/restart

Yes, whenever I see Bitpay checkout I get a bit upset.

They should all be replaced by BTCpay servers. It drives me crazy.

Prawnster - June 1, 2026, 12:09 pm

(Jun 1, 2026 10:10 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I've used PIA because they take crypto and you get 3 years for \$52.? loading encrypted image...

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+1 for PIA, I use them over Mullvad.

They are cheaper, have good no-logs policy/enforcement and have been around for a long time so I feel comfortable buying a few years at a time because they will likely stick around.

7 - June 2, 2026, 9:50 am

Mullvad over proton but building your own is very very easy and dedicated IP.

Omniscient - June 2, 2026, 1:19 pm

(Jun 2, 2026 09:50 AM)7 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Mullvad over proton but building your own is very very easy and dedicated IP.

Private tunnels are indeed imho the way to go if you're going to be a blackhat. Even better you Home ISP->TOR->Tunnel->Internet.

You can get VPS's with crypto and no KYC then build a very easy tunnel.

Lots of ways to be anonymous. Usually though the people caught by Law Enforcement for Cybercrime are because of money trails.

Charlie Sheen - June 2, 2026, 1:48 pm

(Jun 1, 2026 11:29 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I do like the bundling that Proton has done. They absolutely make it easier to leave Google services. That one aspect is attractive to me.

Besides potentially their VPN and their email services have you used any of their other services? I've only used their email and VPN but I'm open to making a complete switch to them.

Biggy Asian - June 2, 2026, 1:59 pm

(Jun 1, 2026 09:59 AM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Which one do you trust more, HF?

ANY organism that has self preservation including preserving ones own privacy should or would 100% pick mullvad over latters. A good reason is because mullvad has as little information on you as possible, also because of their blog informing the public they was subject to a SW (Search warrant) :

<https://mullvad.net/en/blog/mullvad-vpn-was-subject-to-a-search-warrant-customer-data-not-compromised>

I would only ever pay mullvad for their services when it comes to internet privacy via external networks like vpns. They even let you pay by shipping an envelope to them with your account ID, accept xmr and other coins including discounts and are very flexible with their payments. Support is also good as shit.

They are a very dedicated company and truly are the privacy vpn.

7 - June 2, 2026, 4:27 pm

(Jun 2, 2026 01:19 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Private tunnels are indeed imho the way to go if you're going to be a blackhat. Even better you Home ISP->TOR->Tunnel->Internet.

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<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=6272921>

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=6303716>

Take mins. But yeah your right follow the finance

Pr0m3th3us - June 2, 2026, 4:46 pm

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This is what i am going to do, thanks. I was thinking of using <https://njal.la/> for the VPS, but the trust pilot is horrible.....a cheaper UE alternative that has good trustpilot would be buyvm.net.

I do already have N-o-r-d until 2028 so ill keep that around for my torrents, but prob cancel the auto renew.

7 - June 2, 2026, 6:20 pm

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Zomro is cheap and accepts crypto.

VDSina if slightly more risky stuff

Depends on what you need.

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I do already have N-o-r-d until 2028 so ill keep that around for my torrents, but prob cancel the auto renew.

I actually do have NORD as a backup but only on mobile when travelling as I get it for free with my bank

Mercury - June 2, 2026, 7:47 pm

I had no idea that you can effectively pay for mullvad via cash. That's incredible. I've been using Proton for a long time now but the Mullvad fan club appears to be overwhelming anymore. Might be time to make the switch..

Pr0m3th3us - June 2, 2026, 9:22 pm

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Mullvad did something a couple years ago or so where they refused to give out user info, i cant remember specifics but yea they stuck to their guns, maybe im thinking of their 3rd party audits....idk someone will remember.

Mastercarder - June 2, 2026, 9:40 pm

Good comparison. I've used both over the years, but if I had to choose one it'd be Proton.

Mullvad definitely deserves the reputation it has earned in the privacy community, especially with the account-number system and minimal data collection. That said, Proton feels like the more complete package to me. The VPN itself is solid, but having encrypted email, cloud storage and the rest of the ecosystem under one roof makes it much more practical for day-to-day use.

I think Mullvad wins on pure privacy philosophy, but Proton strikes a better balance between privacy, usability and features. For most people trying to improve their privacy without completely changing how they use the internet, Proton is probably the easier recommendation.

Weekend Offender - June 5, 2026, 9:57 pm

Only got Mullvad as sometimes my ISP does not like a forum i frequent and it really does not like its loader for their software. I have just kept it going sometimes by accident (as I can disconnect once loader appears etc) And was quite impressed by the performance while using it to game. Their payment system is great and in the couple of years i have used them ..not had 1 problem.

5chn4pp - June 6, 2026, 2:46 am

I would use Mullvad over Proton.

Another VPN that often lets overlooked is Riseup VPN.

I have used them in the past, so I am not fully up to date on how they are doing.

Omniscient - June 6, 2026, 8:54 am

(Jun 6, 2026 02:46 AM)5chn4pp Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I would use Mullvad over Proton.

Another VPN that often lets overlooked is Riseup VPN.

I have used them in the past, so I am not fully up to date on how they are doing.
I've heard of Riseup a few times.

For those who want a link.

<https://riseup.net/en/vpn>

notagh0st - June 6, 2026, 1:32 pm

Has anyone seen this article that came out about a month ago about Mullvad exit IP's being fingerprinted?

<https://tmctmt.com/posts/mullvad-exit-ips-as-a-fingerprinting-vector/>

They responded and fixed it: <https://mullvad.net/en/blog/exit-ip-fingerprinting-between-vpn-servers>

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Lots of ways to be anonymous. Usually though the people caught by Law Enforcement for Cybercrime are because of money trails.

I thought one of the secure things about VPN providers is that your traffic is anonymized along with the other thousands of users exiting through the same IP, making fingerprinting a single user's traffic amongst thousands of others very hard, as opposed to a private VPN that belongs to just you, and all traffic originating from that one server. I'm probably missing something, but could you expound on that a bit more?

Omniscient - June 6, 2026, 2:03 pm

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While a tunnel is a single entry point, if you do it correctly still should be a reliable OpSec option as part of your overall protection scheme.

If you're worried the tunnel is single entry then ISP->TUNNEL->VPN/TOR->INTERNET

Pr0m3th3us - June 6, 2026, 6:45 pm

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This one is tricky (Home ISP->TOR->Tunnel->Internet), since TOR uses TCP and my wireguard is using UDP...they dont like each other.

However i was just going to wrap certain programs with TOR and see if that works.

notagh0st - June 6, 2026, 9:45 pm

(Jun 6, 2026 02:03 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) While a tunnel is a single entry point, if you do it correctly still should be a reliable OpSec option as part of your overall protection scheme.

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I'm not disagreeing, I'm genuinely just curious. What does adding a tunnel between VPN or TOR give you from a anonymity standpoint? It just moves who knows your home IP from the VPN provider to the VPS provider, everything else stays the same. It doesn't seem like it makes your more anonymous, just moves who you put your trust in from VPN provider to VPS provider. Is that the point? Or is there something I'm missing?

Pr0m3th3us - June 6, 2026, 11:06 pm

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from VPN provider to VPS provider. Is that the point? Or is there something I'm missing?

A tunnel can still be useful for compartmentalization, hiding Tor usage from your ISP, or preventing the first hop from seeing your real IP. Its all about the hops man. Make those feds work for it.

Look at the guys who did the "BayRob" scheme. They hopped so many times it took years to track them down. And even longer to build a case. I think it was 10 years....the main thing they did though that threw the feds off was steal wifi, that was technically the first "hop".

Omniscient - June 7, 2026, 9:54 am

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Basically yes, the more hops through services you are the harder is to trace origin.

Assume TOR isn't fully private. Assume your ISP isn't fully private. IMHO it makes sense to have a private tunnel between them. And advantage of a tunnel is that it's extremely clean. It's your own server setup, you 100% know it has no logs. You can easily destroy the tunnel yourself at any point.

Mullvad still requires an "account" like any service.

AI Quote:

I think people underestimate how much tunneling is a part of proper OpSec, but they also overestimate what a tunnel actually protects.

A tunnel is just one layer. VPN, SSH tunnel, proxy chain, Tor, whatever method you use — all you're really doing is separating your real network identity from the endpoint you're communicating with. That's useful, but it doesn't magically make you anonymous.

Your OpSec fails when other layers leak:

- Browser fingerprinting
- Cookies/session reuse
- Logging into personal accounts
- DNS/WebRTC leaks
- Reusing usernames/emails
- Payment trails
- Device identifiers
- Timezone/language patterns
- * Behavioral fingerprints

A lot of people will run through 3 VPNs and Tor but then sign into their normal Google account or reuse the same alias they've used for 10 years. The tunnel didn't fail, the procedure failed.

Good OpSec is compartmentalization. Different identities, different environments, different habits. The tunnel is just the road you're traveling on — it doesn't matter if you take a hidden road if you arrive wearing a shirt with your name on it.

The biggest danger with tunnels is trust. You're not removing trust, you're moving it. Instead of trusting your ISP, you're trusting the VPN provider, proxy operator, exit node, VPS host, etc.

Use tunnels, but understand the threat model first. Protecting yourself on public WiFi, avoiding tracking, researching anonymously, or hiding traffic from an ISP are all different goals requiring

different setups.

Tools don't create OpSec. Discipline does.

cl0udzz - June 8, 2026, 12:38 am

NymVPN, it's a decentralized vpn so it's way way harder for them to log even if they wanted to, it also puts your traffic through a mixnet if you want to, if for some reason it's not available or I wanna use another VPN I'll use Cryptostorm or Mullvad.

Hamilton - June 25, 2026, 1:07 pm

Proton vpn has better app settings

Godhead - June 25, 2026, 1:09 pm

I'd say proton (If I could vote) for the sole reason that it's free. If I had enough money I'd just leave a small server in one of my acquaintances houses and pay them for having it.

xinusnotunix - June 26, 2026, 12:12 pm

I literally only use Proton cuz it's free and has fast free servers. I've been thinking about checking Mullvad tho

He B TeMy - June 27, 2026, 2:19 pm

Since this is a hacking forum, the question is.... why don't we all rent a VPS a configure a VPN service there (for each our own, not to sell here)? Like wireguard or something close to that?

Pretty easy to do, i've done it many times.

And the good thing is... you can always do other stuff on the VPS if you need to, instead of having a VPN only client, because the truth for me is.... they all can say whatever they want, when the gov or NSA wants, the data will get delivered either way.

You can say the same about any VPS, but the thing is.... they gotta look for it first, and it's not "advertised" as such, although i do know there's constant bots crawling everything, including all VPS's IP's etc from big datacenters, mainly from USA because we all know they control the world.

I can say at least 1 IP that does crawl the interweb;

AS14987 — Re't'hem Hos'ti'ng L'L'C
104.152.52.0/24

And the likes, question on to why is above my paygrade, don't ask me how i know.

Just be careful & safe my guys.

GLWS

AcTiviTy - August 6, 2026, 2:48 am

having problems using proton services in Africa, I'd suggest hotspot shield for African users

Omniscient - August 6, 2026, 12:09 pm

(Aug 6, 2026 02:48 AM)AcTiviTy Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) having problems using proton services in Africa, I'd suggest hotspot shield for African users

Africa sucks and most websites block it or restrict IP access. It's practically completely useless traffic.

StuffSneak - August 6, 2026, 1:41 pm

I use Proton personally. I prefer it over Mullvad only because Mullvad's streaming support is bad & I use VPN over my pfsense so streaming is essential.

AcTiviTy - August 25, 2026, 11:27 am

(Aug 6, 2026 12:09 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Africa sucks and most websites block it or restrict IP access. It's practically completely useless traffic.

not only africa bro, Asia and some Latin America too. However, there's basically many ways about ip restrictions just like we African gats to be on Hackforums despite ip restrictions. Except when dealing with major sites like aOL and f4ceb00k, or android apps, then it becomes a problem.