

Best VPN for Designers 2019

Protect your client's data and check how your designs work around the world with these essential VPN services.

Imagine this: *Digital Arts* is secretly rebranding. New page name, new design, new everything – and we're giving you the keys on the basis that you respect our non-disclosure agreement.

Problem is, our rivals in all things 'nice' and 'creative' would love to get their hands on that juicy information. Then there's the fact we have readers all around the world, so how does a UX designer test how our website looks and works in different territories?

One stone can kill both of these problems, and that's making use of a virtual private network (VPN) service. Using a VPN to mask your IP address guarantees extra privacy for you and your client's data, and a way to see how a website is viewed in any country around the world on any device and operating system.

The ideal VPN service in 2019 will allow you browser extensions and app versions for tablet and phone. It'll also allow you to access your favourite streaming services when you go abroad, connect smoothly without dropping out, and have a kill switch in the event of that happening. (This is vital as otherwise your true IP address will be given away the moment your VPN drops out, thus negating the entire point of having one).

All of our recommended VPN services below feature the above essentials, and each has a good spread of servers in a good range of countries (remember, a VPN service can have as many servers as it wants, but if they're all based in the same handful of countries then it's next to useless).

We've also given any cash-strapped creatives the option of a

reliable free VPN service to use until more commissions from major (and thus secretive) clients come their way. It's always best to pay for good VPN service, though, so check our list for best budget and premium options alongside the most essential VPN brand out there in 2019.

Best VPN Service: NordVPN

NordVPN is so ridiculously good, you see it topping VPN charts in every conceivable area: best VPN browser extension, best gaming VPN, best for streaming, for social media, Windows, iOS, Android; the list goes on.

The software is also the best for VPN newbies, being easy to get around with a nifty SmartPlay feature that helps you connect to the server best suited to your needs.

And what a choice of servers, too, with over 5680 servers across 60 countries whilst based in Panama with an audited no-logs policy, meaning excellent service and absolute privacy for your client's data.

It also works with Netflix, BBC iPlayer and All 4 (formerly 4oD) meaning you can watch *Fleabag* and *Bake Off* after a hard day of art-making. Note there's an app for Amazon Fire TV, too.

You also get ad-blocker and malware protection features included, as well as mobile apps and browser extensions for Chrome and Firefox. Finally, there are six simultaneous connections included in your subscription, which is good news for any small design studios out there looking to share a subscription.

The three year option works out at £2.29/ \$2.99 per month

(£98.88/ \$107.55 upfront) with a money-back guarantee in case you don't believe the hype (or your clients ain't paying up and money's tight).

All four price plans are available to choose from at NordVPN.com.

Best Premium VPN: ExpressVPN

At first glance, ExpressVPN may seem less prestige than Nord, with over 2000 less servers and less simultaneous connections. But the rule of thumb on VPN quality isn't dependent so much on servers as it is on server location, and ExpressVPN has its 3000 strong 'army' spread out across 94 countries. That's also good news for any UX designers who need to see how their site works across as many territories as possible.

Express VPN is also easy to use and easy to stream with, and comes with efficient live chat support available when you need it.

Note there's a discount if you sign up for a year on ExpressVPN's website, giving you 15 months for the price of 12.

Widest Ranging VPN: PureVPN

Express and Nord, take note: PureVPN's servers are based in over 140 countries, claiming our titles of widest ranging VPN service.

That doesn't necessarily make it the best service on our list,

but if looking for an all-round VPN without too much fuss about consistent service on whatever device and OS you're using, then PureVPN remains a speedy and reasonably priced option for designers on a budget.

We found Pure easy to install, with plenty of features and modes. There are also often great deals to be had if you keep an eye out. Right now there are one year, three month and one month plans available, all of which you'll find on PureVPN's website.

Best Budget VPN: Surfshark

If PureVPN is still too pricey for you, then SurfShark is the next best thing.

Speeds are slow with this service, but with a simple interface and a good range of features, this newbie to the VPN market is well worth checking out.

As with all our choices above, there's a kill switch, mobile apps & browser extensions and – rather uniquely – unlimited simultaneous connections with your subscription.

You'll find an ad-blocker available too, and on Windows and Android the Whitelister feature lets you choose apps that you'd like to bypass the VPN. This handy for when you're testing a page's development version across different territories but not wanting to confuse your mobile banking app at the same time.

The current cheapest SurfShark option works out at just £1.59/\$1.99 per month. You can see all of the price plans on its website [here](#).

Best Free VPN: TunnelBear

There are plenty of free VPN services out there, but it's the big brown bear which wins our heart and minds.

Don't expect too big of a service, though: 500Mb is your limit at 12MB/s, and that's with access to 20 worldwide servers. Service is smooth despite these limitations, and you can get a bonus 1GB extra free via the TunnelBear Twitter.

If you decide to part cash, we'd advise you go with any of the other options above. But if you find yourself too addicted to TunnelBear's cute ursine-worshipping interface, then you can get unlimited data for a monthly plan of £7.35/\$9.99 and a yearly plan of £3.67/\$4.99 per month.

There's also a two year plan at £3.33/\$4.17 per month, which you can find with all the other options mentioned via TunnelBear's website.

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