ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Outline VPN

The Insider's Guide

Open-source software for running your own VPN server



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among VPNs, read from Outline VPN's own pages.

Made by Outline Foundation · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.0
GPA



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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from Outline VPN's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Outline VPN's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.0

GPA, above 9 of the 50 other VPNs we grade

Outline is free, open-source software for setting up a VPN server you control, then sharing access keys with other people. Outline Manager, a desktop app, creates the server at a cloud provider or on your own Linux machine, and Outline Client connects devices to it. It is owned by the Outline Foundation, a non-profit, and was launched in 2018 by Jigsaw, a Google incubator.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about Outline VPN**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> **No store rating on record, and you create a server through the Manager on a desktop and manage it yourself.**
>
> From our grade for ease of use

1 **Best for running your own VPN server for a few people**

Outline is free open-source software for running your own VPN server and sharing access keys with people you trust.

2 **It is free**

Outline VPN has no paid plan at all. The software is free and open source. You pay your own server host; the Get Started page says many providers offer plans for $5 a month or less.

3 **It runs on 5 platforms**

Windows, macOS, Linux, iOS and Android.

4 **Your own server**

Outline Manager walks you through creating a server at a cloud provider such as DigitalOcean, AWS or Google Cloud, or on your own Linux machine, and lets you pick its location.

5 **Access keys**

Each person you share the server with gets a unique access key from the Manager, and a key can be managed or deleted from the server.

6 **Per-key data limits**

The Manager can set a data limit for each key so one user cannot use all of the server's bandwidth.

7 **A 2.0 GPA, above 9 of 50**

That is against the other VPNs we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

Outline VPN is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

Outline VPN at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON macOS, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android
MADE BY Outline Foundation, since 2018	CATEGORY VPNs
OUR GRADE 2.0 GPA, fair	

The report card

Best for running your own VPN server for a few people

Outline is free open-source software for running your own VPN server and sharing access keys with people you trust. You pay a host, often $5 a month

or less, your traffic exits from the one place you picked, and setting it up needs a desktop.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	Outline VPN	Graded Nov 13, 2026
SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	C	The software is free, but only if you host it yourself, which needs a server; the site cites $5 a month or less at many providers.
Free plan and trial	C	The apps and server software cost nothing, but you also need a server of your own, so it is not free to use.
Features	C	Your own server, access keys, per-key data limits and an SDK. There is one exit location, with no pool to switch between.
Ease of use	D	No store rating on record, and you create a server through the Manager on a desktop and manage it yourself.
Platforms and integrations	B	Manager on Windows, Mac and Linux, and clients for iOS and Android.
Grade point average		Fair, out of 4.0 **2.0**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who Outline VPN is for

- ✓ Fits if you want to run your own VPN rather than trust a provider
- ✓ Works for sharing one server with friends or family

Who it is not for

- ✕ Not for you if you don't want a hosting bill, as you pay your own server host
- ✕ Skip it if you want to switch between countries, since traffic exits from one location
- ✕ Tight if you only have a phone, because creating a server needs a desktop computer
- ✕ Watch out: getoutline.me and a Telegram channel are not affiliated with the Outline team

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ People who want to run their own VPN instead of trusting a provider
- ✓ A person or group sharing one server with trusted friends or family
- ✓ Users on networks that block commercial VPNs

Worth knowing

- ⓘ You need your own server, so there is a hosting bill, and the site cites $5 a month or less at many providers.
- ⓘ Your traffic leaves from the one server location you picked, with no pool of locations to switch between.
- ⓘ The site says getoutline.me and a Telegram channel are not affiliated with the Outline team and cannot help with access keys from those services.
- ⓘ Outline Manager runs on Windows, macOS and Linux desktops, so creating a server needs a desktop computer.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

Outline VPN is free to use.

> **The apps and server software cost nothing, but you also need a server of your own, so it is not free to use.**
>
> From our grade for free plan and trial

OUTLINE

$0

Free Manager and Client apps and server software. You host the server yourself at a cloud provider you choose or on your own Linux infrastructure.

The free plan

The software is free and open source. You pay your own server host; the Get Started page says many providers offer plans for $5 a month or less.

Read from getoutline.org on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

5

Places it runs: macOS, Windows, Linux, iOS and Android

Open-source software for running your own VPN server. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, self-hostable, vPN.

> **Your own server, access keys, per-key data limits and an SDK.**

From our grade for features

Your own server

Outline Manager walks you through creating a server at a cloud provider such as DigitalOcean, AWS or Google Cloud, or on your own Linux machine, and lets you pick its location.

Access keys

Each person you share the server with gets a unique access key from the Manager, and a key can be managed or deleted from the server.

Per-key data limits

The Manager can set a data limit for each key so one user cannot use all of the server's bandwidth.

Shadowsocks-based

The server runs a Shadowsocks service with a REST API for key management, which the project says benefits from ongoing work on resisting detection and blocking.

Outline SDK

A cross-platform library and tools for building the same blocking-resistant networking strategies into other apps and VPN tools.

Where it runs

macOS · Windows · Linux · iOS · Android

What it works with

DigitalOcean · AWS · Google Cloud

Outline VPN is made by Outline Foundation, and has been around since 2018.

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

9/50

Other VPNs it is graded above

Outline VPN's GPA of 2.0 is higher than 9 of the 50 other VPNs we grade, and level with 5.

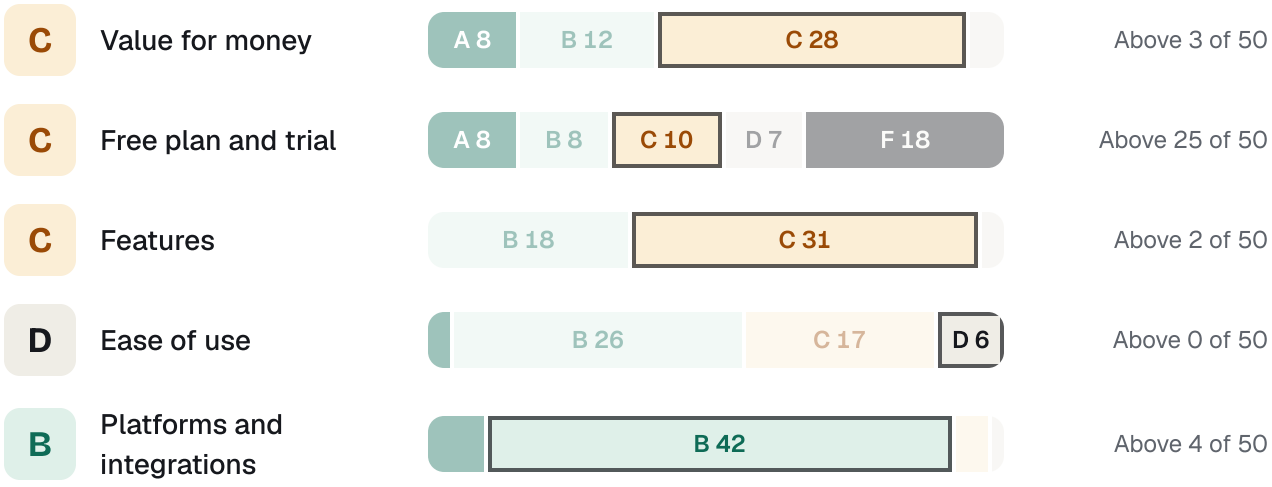
It stands best on platforms and integrations (B, above 4 of 50) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

Outline VPN has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.0 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

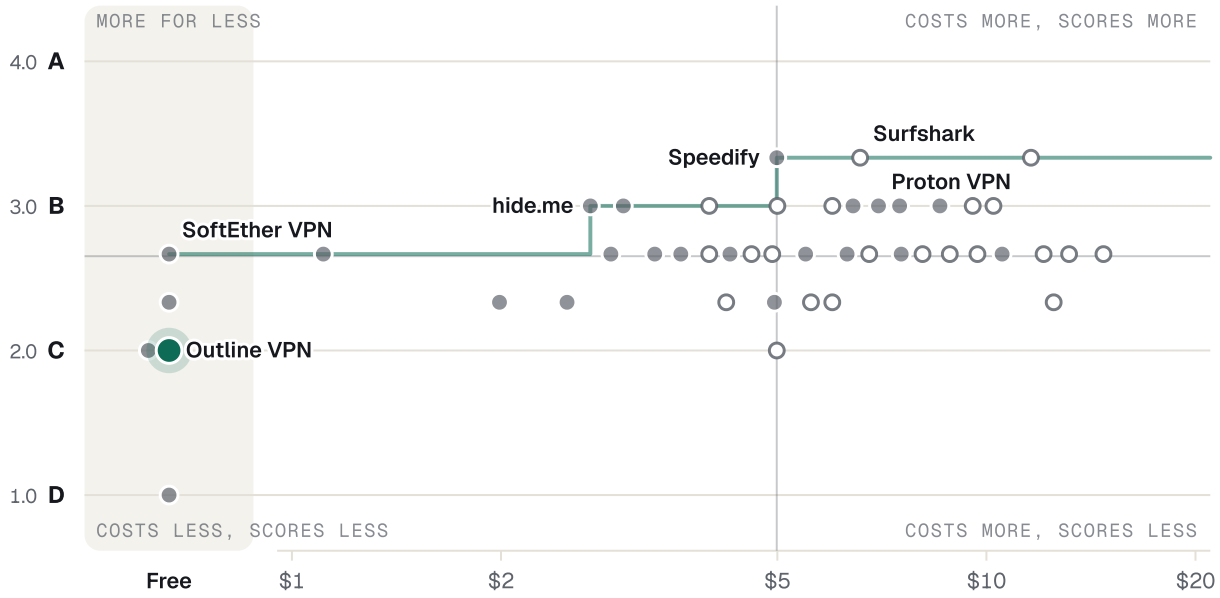
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 51 VPNs we grade, cut by the letter each got. Outline VPN's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 46 VPNs. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. Outline VPN is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double)

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

Outline VPN is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces. That makes this kind of software worth paying for, not this one in particular: 36 of the 50 other VPNs grade higher.

What you could not

- ✕ Servers in dozens of countries, kept fast and private.
- ✕ Apps for macOS, Windows, Linux, iOS and Android that stay in step with each other.
- ✕ Sharing with other people, which means accounts and invitations.

What this rests on. Outline VPN's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



WireGuard, OpenVPN, Mullvad VPN, Psiphon and Lantern

The 5 tools Outline VPN is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

2.4 GPA

WireGuard

Free

Free, open-source VPN protocol and tunnel software.

- Outline VPN is self-hostable, according to its own site.

Outline VPN and WireGuard compared in full

2.8 GPA

OpenVPN

Free plan · from $7/mo

Open-source VPN protocol plus business VPN products built on it.

Outline VPN and OpenVPN compared in full



1.8
GPA

Mullvad VPN

From €5/mo

Flat-rate Swedish VPN with anonymous numbered accounts.

- Outline VPN has a free plan. Mullvad VPN does not.
- Outline VPN is self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Mullvad VPN also covers ad and tracker blocking.

Outline VPN and Mullvad VPN compared in full



2.8
GPA

Psiphon

Free plan · from $2.88/mo

Free, open-source circumvention VPN with an ad-free paid tier.

- Only Outline VPN lists macOS and Linux apps.
- Outline VPN is self-hostable, according to its own site.

Outline VPN and Psiphon compared in full



2.6
GPA

Lantern

Free plan · from $3.63/mo

Nonprofit, open-source VPN built to get past censorship.

- Lantern also covers ad and tracker blocking.

Outline VPN and Lantern compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

10

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is Outline VPN free?

Yes. Outline VPN is free to use.

How much does Outline VPN cost?

Outline VPN lists one plan. Outline: $0.

What platforms does Outline VPN work on?

Outline VPN is available on Windows, macOS, Linux, iOS and Android.

Is Outline VPN open source?

Yes. Outline VPN is open source, according to its own site.

What does Outline VPN integrate with?

Outline VPN's listing names DigitalOcean, AWS and Google Cloud. A listing names up to eight integrations, so it may connect to more.

Who makes Outline VPN?

Outline VPN is made by Outline Foundation. It dates from 2018.

What are the alternatives to Outline VPN?

The closest alternatives to Outline VPN in our directory are WireGuard, OpenVPN, Mullvad VPN, Psiphon and Lantern.

How does Outline VPN compare with other VPNs?

Outline VPN's GPA of 2.0 is higher than 9 of the 50 other VPNs we grade, and level with 5.

Is Outline VPN good value for money?

ToolGPA grades Outline VPN C for value for money. Outline VPN has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of Outline VPN?

Outline VPN is free, so making your own would save you nothing. And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Outline VPN's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from Outline's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Outline Foundation. Prices change, so check getoutline.org before you buy.

getoutline.org
getoutline.org/faq
getoutline.org/get-started
github.com/Jigsaw-Code/outline-server

PART 07 · ABOUT

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721
tools graded

95
categories

739
price changes on record

579
apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

Outline VPN, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/outline-vpn

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "Outline VPN: The Insider's Guide",
checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/outline-vpn
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Know someone choosing between VPNs?

Send them this guide:
toolgpa.com/tools/outline-vpn/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded VPNs after Outline VPN, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

VPNs Insider's Guide

Every one of the 51 VPNs we grade, compared

Cloudflare WARP Insider's Guide

Free Cloudflare app that encrypts traffic, with an optional paid tier

3.2 GPA

Ultrasurf Insider's Guide

Free censorship-circumvention VPN from UltraReach

3.2 GPA

hide.me Insider's Guide

Malaysia-based VPN with a no-signup free plan and flat renewal prices

3.0 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what Outline VPN's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Outline VPN is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Outline Foundation. Prices and plans change: check getoutline.org before you buy.