ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

SoftEther VPN

The Insider's Guide

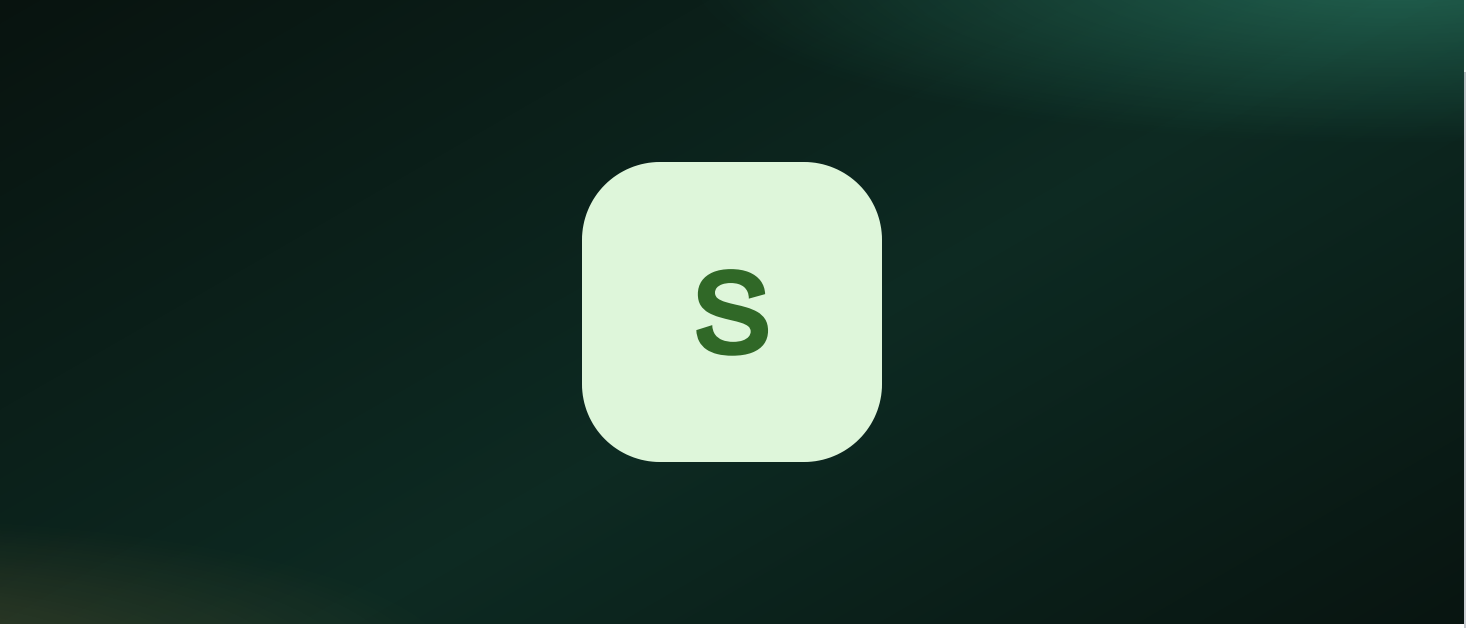
Free multi-protocol VPN server and client from a Japanese university



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

Made by SoftEther VPN Project (University of Tsukuba) · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.8
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 SoftEther VPN's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on SoftEther 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

2.8

GPA, above 36 of the 50 other VPNs we grade

SoftEther VPN is free, open-source VPN software that began as an academic research project at the University of Tsukuba in Japan. One server can accept SSL-VPN over HTTPS plus OpenVPN, IPsec, L2TP, MS-SSTP, L2TPv3 and EtherIP connections, and it can bridge networks at the Ethernet layer. It is licensed under Apache License 2.0.

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

> **You install and configure a server and manage it with admin tools, which is self-hosting.**
>
> From our grade for ease of use

1 **Best for a self-hosted VPN that speaks many protocols**

SoftEther is free, open-source VPN software that came out of a university project, and one server can take SSL-VPN, OpenVPN, IPsec, L2TP and more.

2 **It is free**

SoftEther VPN has no paid plan at all. Freeware and open source under Apache License 2.0; no paid plans.

3 **It runs on 5 platforms**

Windows, macOS, Linux, iOS and Android.

4 **VPN over HTTPS**

SSL-VPN tunneling on HTTPS passes through NATs and firewalls.

5 **Many protocols on one server**

The server also supports OpenVPN, IPsec, L2TP, MS-SSTP, L2TPv3 and EtherIP, so built-in clients on phones and computers can connect.

6 **OpenVPN clone function**

A clone of the OpenVPN server lets existing OpenVPN clients connect, which the project pitches as a way to migrate.

7 **A 2.8 GPA, above 36 of 50**

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

8 **Keep it**

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

SoftEther VPN at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON macOS, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android
MADE BY SoftEther VPN Project (University of Tsukuba)	CATEGORY VPNs
OUR GRADE 2.8 GPA, good	

The report card

Best for a self-hosted VPN that speaks many protocols

SoftEther is free, open-source VPN software that came out of a university project, and one server can take SSL-VPN, OpenVPN, IPsec, L2TP and more. You host it yourself, and the news items on its page are from 2019.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD

SoftEther VPN

Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	C	Free under Apache 2.0, but you run the server yourself. Software that is only free if you host it yourself is a C.
Free plan and trial	A	Free outright, with no paid plans or caps.
Features	B	Many protocols on one server, an OpenVPN clone function, Layer-2 Ethernet bridging and an admin tool and API. It covers the whole job of a self-hosted VPN.
Ease of use	D	No rating on record. You install and configure a server and manage it with admin tools, which is self-hosting.
Platforms and integrations	A	Clients for Windows, Linux, Mac, Android, iPhone and iPad, plus an admin API and Amazon EC2 and Azure support.

Grade point average — Good, out of 4.0 **2.8**

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 SoftEther VPN is for

- ✓ Fits if you want one server that accepts several VPN protocols
- ✓ Works for people who need to bridge networks at the Ethernet layer

Who it is not for

- ✕ Skip it if you want a hosted VPN with provider servers
- ✕ Not for you if you want a vendor to call: support is a forum and the community
- ✕ Watch out: the news items on the project page are dated 2019
- ✕ Watch out: the page lists a 2019 security advisory for the Windows local bridge driver
- ✕ Watch out: the project's own client list also includes Windows Mobile, an old platform

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Administrators who want one self-hosted server to accept many VPN protocols
- ✓ People bridging networks across offices or cloud VMs at the Ethernet level
- ✓ Replacing a paid remote-access VPN with free software

Worth knowing

- ⓘ It is software to host yourself, not a VPN service with provider servers.
- ⓘ Clients are listed for Windows, Linux, Mac, Android, iPhone and iPad; the project's own native client list also includes Windows Mobile.
- ⓘ The project page's news items shown are dated 2019, and the page lists a 2019 security advisory for the Windows local bridge driver.
- ⓘ Support runs through a project forum and community, not a vendor with paid support.

What it costs

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

Free

No paid plan at all

SoftEther VPN is free to use.

> **Software that is only free if you host it yourself is a C.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

SOFTETHER VPN

$0

Free to download and run yourself; the server runs on Windows, Linux, FreeBSD, Solaris and Mac OS X.

The free plan

Freeware and open source under Apache License 2.0; no paid plans.

Read from softether.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

Free multi-protocol VPN server and client from a Japanese university. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, self-hostable, public API, vPN.

> **It covers the whole job of a self-hosted VPN.**
>
> From our grade for features

VPN over HTTPS

SSL-VPN tunneling on HTTPS passes through NATs and firewalls.

Many protocols on one server

The server also supports OpenVPN, IPsec, L2TP, MS-SSTP, L2TPv3 and EtherIP, so built-in clients on phones and computers can connect.

OpenVPN clone function

A clone of the OpenVPN server lets existing OpenVPN clients connect, which the project pitches as a way to migrate.

Layer-2 Ethernet bridging

Supports LAN-to-LAN and cloud-to-LAN bridge VPNs built on an Ethernet-based design.

Admin tools and API

Server, client and bridge manuals, a command-line utility, and a JSON-RPC API with an HTML5 admin console.

Where it runs

macOS · Windows · Linux · iOS · Android

What it works with

Amazon EC2 · Windows Azure · OpenVPN · Microsoft SSTP

SoftEther VPN is made by SoftEther VPN Project (University of Tsukuba).

Where it stands

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

36/50

Other VPNs it is graded above

SoftEther VPN's GPA of 2.8 is higher than 36 of the 50 other VPNs we grade, and level with 7.

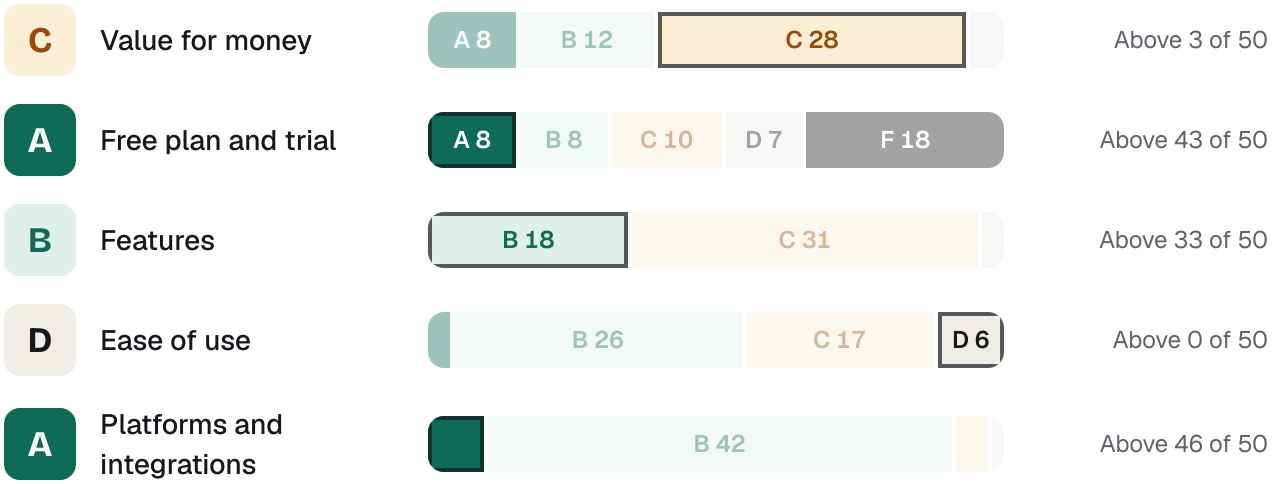
It stands best on platforms and integrations (A, above 46 of 50) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

SoftEther VPN has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.7 out of 4, and no tool on the category's chart scores higher without costing more.

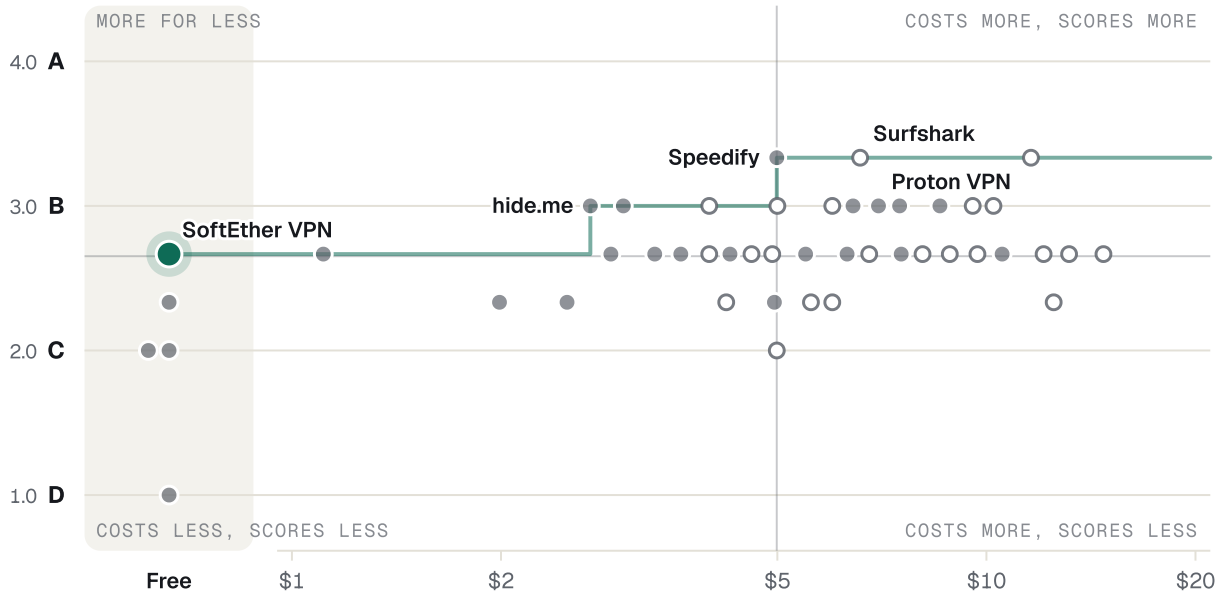
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 51 VPNs we grade, cut by the letter each got. SoftEther 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. SoftEther 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

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

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces. It is one of the better ones too: its GPA of 2.8 is higher than 36 of the 50 other VPNs we grade.

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.
- ✕ It plugs into other products, Amazon EC2, Windows Azure and OpenVPN among them, and has an API.

- ✕ What a company asks for before it lets staff use something: roles and permissions.
- ✕ The depth: we grade its features B, which means it covers the whole job.

What this rests on. SoftEther 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



OpenVPN, WireGuard, Firezone, Outline VPN and Tunnelblick

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

OpenVPN

2.8 GPA

Free plan · from $7/mo

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

SoftEther VPN and OpenVPN compared in full

WireGuard

2.4 GPA

Free

Free, open-source VPN protocol and tunnel software.

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

SoftEther VPN and WireGuard compared in full

Firezone

2.6 GPA

Free plan · from $50/yr

WireGuard-based zero-trust remote access for teams.

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

SoftEther VPN and Firezone compared in full



2.0
GPA

Outline VPN

Free

Open-source software for running your own VPN server.

SoftEther VPN and Outline VPN compared in full



2.2
GPA

Tunnelblick

Free

Free open-source OpenVPN client for macOS.

- Only SoftEther VPN lists Windows, Linux, iOS and Android apps.
- SoftEther VPN is self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Tunnelblick also covers menu bar app.

SoftEther VPN and Tunnelblick compared in full

Quick answers

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

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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 SoftEther VPN free?

Yes. SoftEther VPN is free to use.

How much does SoftEther VPN cost?

SoftEther VPN lists one plan. SoftEther VPN: $0.

What platforms does SoftEther VPN work on?

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

Is SoftEther VPN open source?

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

Does SoftEther VPN have an API?

Yes. SoftEther VPN offers a public API, according to its own site.

What does SoftEther VPN integrate with?

SoftEther VPN's listing names Amazon EC2, Windows Azure, OpenVPN and Microsoft SSTP.

Who makes SoftEther VPN?

SoftEther VPN is made by SoftEther VPN Project (University of Tsukuba).

What are the alternatives to SoftEther VPN?

The closest alternatives to SoftEther VPN in our directory are OpenVPN, WireGuard, Firezone, Outline VPN and Tunnelblick.

How does SoftEther VPN compare with other VPNs?

SoftEther VPN's GPA of 2.8 is higher than 36 of the 50 other VPNs we grade, and level with 7.

Is SoftEther VPN good value for money?

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

Could I make my own version of SoftEther VPN?

SoftEther 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 SoftEther 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 SoftEther VPN'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 SoftEther VPN Project (University of Tsukuba). Prices change, so check softether.org before you buy.

softether.org/
softether.org/5-download
softether.org/1-features

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	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

SoftEther VPN, kept up to date

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

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

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

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded VPNs after SoftEther 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 SoftEther 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. SoftEther VPN is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by SoftEther VPN Project (University of Tsukuba). Prices and plans change: check softether.org before you buy.