

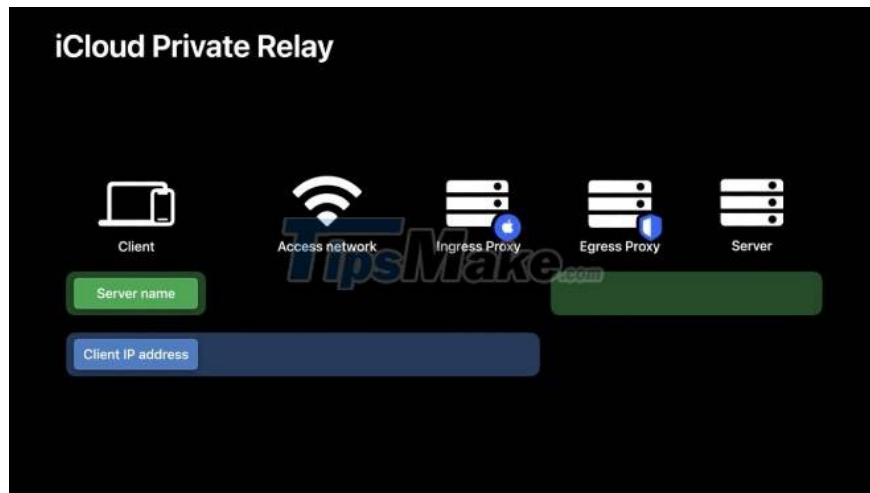
What is Private Relay on iOS 15? Is it better than a VPN?

Private Relay is a new VPN-like service that will be available on iOS 15, iPadOS 15, and macOS Monterey this fall. At WWDC 2021, Apple introduced Private Relay along with a few other privacy protection services.

In this article, TipsMake will learn with you what is Private Relay? What does Private Relay do and is it better than a VPN?

What is Private Relay and what is its mission?

Private Relay helps you hide browsing data like IP address, websites you visit. In short, Private Relay is a service that helps ensure that your browsing data is kept secret, confidential, secure.



Private Relay works thanks to the support of 2 servers, one from Apple and the other from a trusted content provider. When you visit a website using Safari, Private Relay encrypts the IP and website address (URL) and then sends it out. At Apple's servers the IP will be decrypted and then assigned with a random IP in the area.

Next, at the provider's server the URL you visit will be decoded and then you will be taken to the website you want. By using two servers in this way, Apple ensures that no one can know your identity and the website you visit, including Apple.

Is Private Relay a VPN or not?

Apple claims Private Relay is not a VPN. Private Relay and VPN have some things in common but also have important differences. Firstly, Private Relay uses two servers, not a single server like a VPN. This helps Private Relay overcome the critical weakness of VPNs that is user data can be stored by the VPN provider.

In short, when you connect to a website, your internet service provider (ISP) stores data about that connection. When you use a VPN, the ISP can't see the website you visit, but the VPN can. This is one of the reasons why you should use VPN services that promise not to save user data.

By using two servers, Apple solved the VPN problem. Suppose. Apple knows what the first server is doing, but they can't know what the second server is doing because everything is encrypted. It's a rather subtle solution and reminiscent of Tor.

However, Private Relay has a weakness that it will automatically assign you an IP address in your area. This means you won't be able to assign yourself an IP address from another region or select a specific region like a VPN.

Is Private Relay the same as Tor?

Private Relay's multi-point routing system is very similar to how Tor protects users' identities. Typically, Tor will pass users' traffic through nodes, usually small servers run by volunteers. These nodes can be just a personal computer.

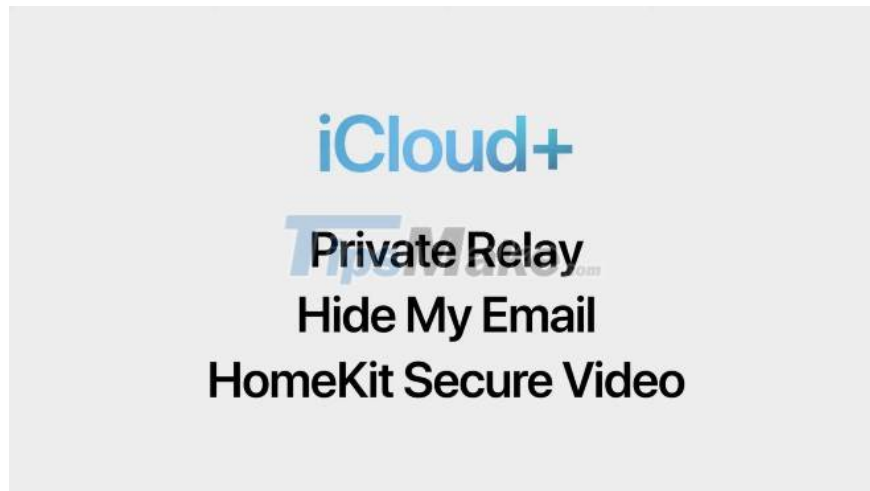
The difference is that Private Relay has only two data transfer points (2 servers) while Tor can provide up to dozens of nodes for some connections. By reducing data rotation to 2 and using proprietary servers, Apple has solved Tor's biggest weakness: speed.

How will Private Relay be implemented?

Currently, Apple has not announced the release date of the Private Relay feature. On the first iOS 15 beta version, TipsMake has not yet seen the appearance of this feature.

At launch, Private Relay will be part of an iCloud+ plan with some additional privacy features. iCloud+ is available for free to customers who are paying for existing iCloud storage.

It is possible that when implemented, Private Relay will not be available in some countries because of legal issues. For example, China and Belarus are currently two countries that ban VPNs, while Saudi Arabia and Turkmenistan also discourage people from using VPNs.



Can Private Relay replace VPN?

Overall, iCloud+ is a set of additional privacy and security features to an already reasonably priced iCloud plan. However, Private Relay is hardly a complete replacement for VPN and Tor.

Although secure and private, Private Relay is not giving users much choice. Currently Private Relay only supports Safari browser and does not allow to select the region. If Private Relay can work well on both browsers and other applications as well as allowing users to customize IPs, then VPN will definitely reduce users.

For now, VPN is still a more flexible and powerful tool than Private Relay. However, for those who do not use VPN, Private Relay is a much more accessible and simple solution.

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