

Update on Streaming TV Services outside the US

What's the problem?

- Most streaming subscription services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Acorn, etc. require that you have an account in the country where you use the service
- Use of a VPN service through a server based in your home country means that the access to these services is from home even though the final destination for the streamed data is your location elsewhere

Equipment Used

- I used an ASUS Dual-Band AC750 wireless router – \$50 on Amazon (requires an Ethernet cable connection)
- The GL-AR750 Travel AC Router will also work – also \$50 on Amazon (can use a wifi or Ethernet connection) but see https://docs.gl-inet.com/en/3/troubleshooting/captive_portal/ if you use this device
- My personal devices: Roku, Fire TV stick, laptop, phones, tablets
- VPN service – these routers support many commercial services but I used my own running OpenVPN on a Raspberry Pi 3 built using instructions from Ira Finch's Kindle book Build a Smart Raspberry Pi VPN Server ... \$3 from Amazon

Results

- Plugged an Ethernet cable from the router in the cottage we rented to the Internet input port on the Asus router which I had already configured to connect to my VPN at home
- Connected all my devices to the wifi access point created by my router and everything worked fine
- Speed was acceptable for streaming video and using my devices
- Maximum possible speed is a bit less than the maximum upload speed for my Internet service at home since all Internet traffic is sent from my VPN server

Addendum

- A VPN provides two important functions:
 - (1) end-to-end encryption of your data and
 - (2) your Internet access appears to be from another location
- You can build your own with a Raspberry Pi for a total of about \$50 (use a Pi 3 or 4)
- If your home router supports it, you can use it as a server
- You can carry a router with you and use it to access your own VPN server or a commercial VPN service

For streaming TV you most likely will need a router with you

- Using a VPN will let it appear that you are in your home country but most streaming devices (Roku, Fire TV stick, Apple TV) cannot directly access a VPN
- You need to connect your travel router to the Internet and your VPN service and then have your streaming device access your router's wifi access point

Commerical VPN providers

- ExpressVPN – has a 30 day money-back trial
- NordVPN – widely used, good reputation but not the least expensive
- ProtonVPN – has a free version with some limitations and several other paid plans; Switzerland-based; ultra-security-oriented
- There are many others with various price plans – look at reviews