



# **ANNUAL WRAP-UP 2022**

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# A word from our CEO



Vytautas Kaziukonis  
CEO

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Every year brings us new challenges and opportunities. Needless to say, this year was no exception. Internet disruptions and cybersecurity risks continued to evolve with an accelerating pace. But so did our drive and commitment to **continue building humanized and fully-fledged tools for online security.**

This year, in particular, showed how profoundly significant our aspirations are – online freedom, and everyone having better control of their digital lives. **To achieve these goals, we've taken a step forward with new innovative solutions and cooperated with non-profit organizations to educate people about online security.**

2022 has also brought us new solid partnerships, meaningful in-house research projects, and opportunities to grow – not only in numbers but also in spreading the word about cybersecurity and data privacy.

**After such an eventful year, I want to share Surfshark's technical, legal, educational, social, and other significant highlights with you.**

# The year's highlights

01

## January

Started selling Incogni subscriptions.

02

## February

Signed the merger agreement with Nord Security.

03

## March

Removed Russian servers.

06

## June

Shut down servers in India in response to a new data law.

05

## May

Released a Linux GUI.

04

## April

Gained the Unicorn status – we're now a startup company valued at over \$1 billion.

07

## July

Published an Internet Shutdown Tracker study in collaboration with NetBlocks.

08

## August

Released manual WireGuard connection.

09

## September

Published the 2022 Digital Quality of Life study.

12

## December

Confirmed our no-logs policy with the assurance report by Deloitte.

11

## November

Won the "VPN Solution of the Year" award.

10

## October

Reached 100 server country locations.



# TECHNICAL OVERVIEW



Donatas  
Budvytis  
CTO

## A word from our CTO

During 2022, the System Engineering and Infrastructure teams worked on improving the innovative Surfshark Nexus VPN platform. It adds new capabilities and builds an even stronger foundation for the future of Surfshark. We were also on track to keep our promises: provide the best user experience and create products without compromising customers' digital privacy and online security.

# Introducing new product changes

## Nexus

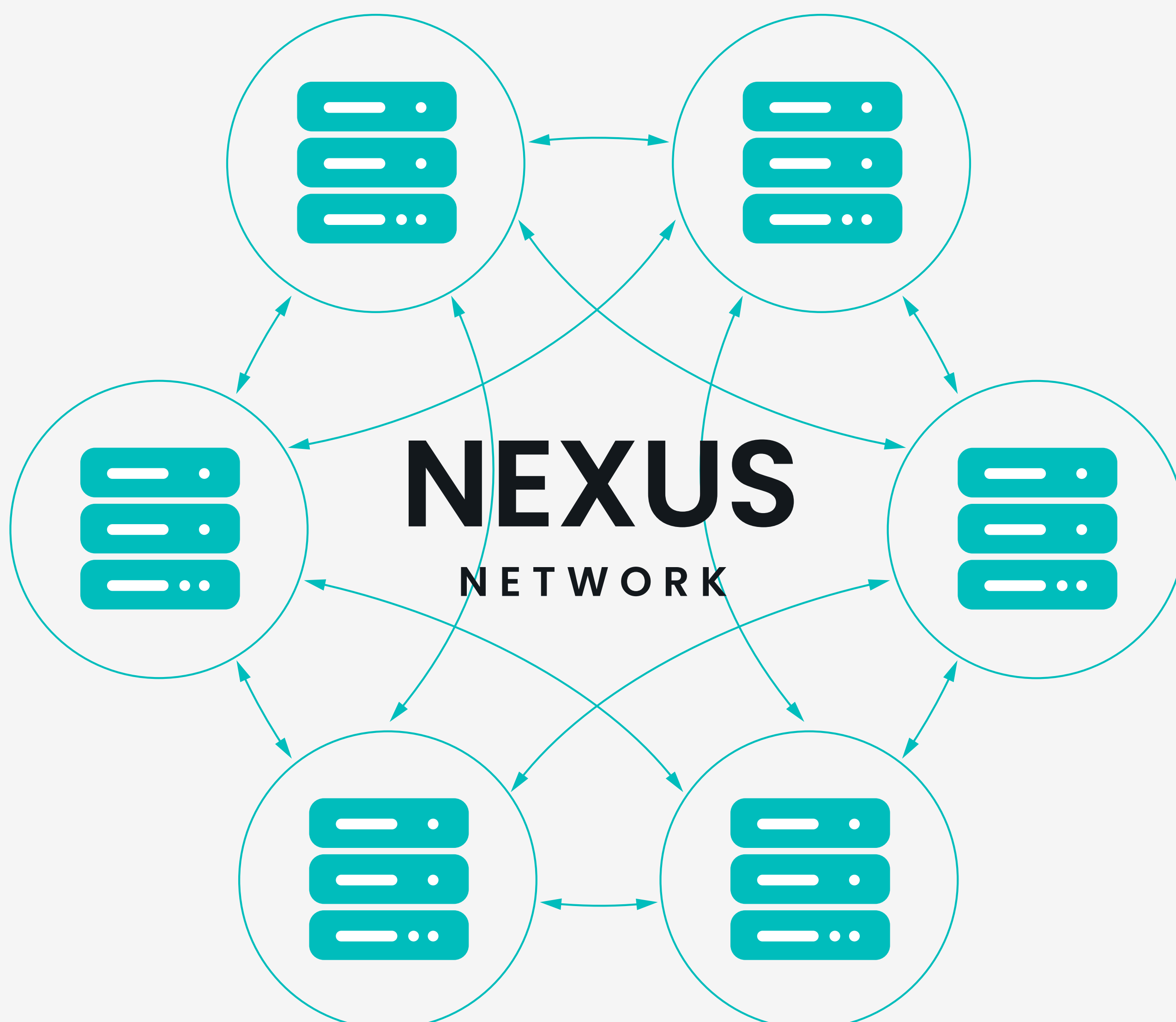
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Our new technology [Nexus](#) connects all of the existing VPN servers together in one network. Thanks to this feature, we can guarantee our users the fastest performance, increased security, and the ability to switch between IP addresses without losing connection to their apps.

## IP Rotator

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Because of Nexus, we were able to introduce the [IP Rotator](#) feature. Thanks to this groundbreaking innovation, the IP Rotator automatically changes the user's exit IP address on the chosen location every five to ten minutes without disconnecting the user from the VPN.



# Introducing new product changes

## Manual WireGuard connection

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User satisfaction is one of our primary concerns. As such, we're among the first VPN providers to offer one of the most requested features – a [manual WireGuard connection](#). If you want to secure all your devices and enjoy the fastest performance – manually connecting via WireGuard is the right choice for you!

## Antivirus real-time monitoring

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We've enabled the antivirus autopilot on Windows and macOS with real-time antivirus protection. Now, you get 24/7 protection against advanced malware, zero-day threats, and minimal use of computer resources.

## External authentication (login with Google)

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You ask – we listen. That's why we've implemented the login with [external authentication](#) this year. From now on, you can log in with just a few clicks using our external authentication method – your Google, Apple, or Microsoft accounts.

## Linux GUI

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In ancient times, Linux users had to use the terminal to control Surfshark's application. Now, we have an actual [graphical user interface](#) that has the capabilities you've come to expect in other operating systems' software.

## PauseVPN

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We understand the importance of having complete control of your VPN connection. That's why we've developed the [PauseVPN](#) feature. It puts your VPN connection on hold for 5 minutes, 30 minutes, or 2 hours. The VPN connection automatically resumes once the selected time period ends.

# Improving the product for the better

## Kill Switch

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Since all our users have different expectations and needs, we improved Kill Switch's functionality on Windows apps. Now, we offer two options: **Soft Kill Switch** (cuts off the internet when a server or VPN connection fails) or **Strict Kill Switch** (cuts off internet access in case of failures even if the VPN connection is manually disabled).

## Dynamic MultiHop

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This feature is as dynamic as it sounds, allowing you to choose both server locations you want to connect to; thus, you have even more customization options. Previously, you could only select the pre-made MultiHop locations from our list.

## CleanWeb integration to the browser extension

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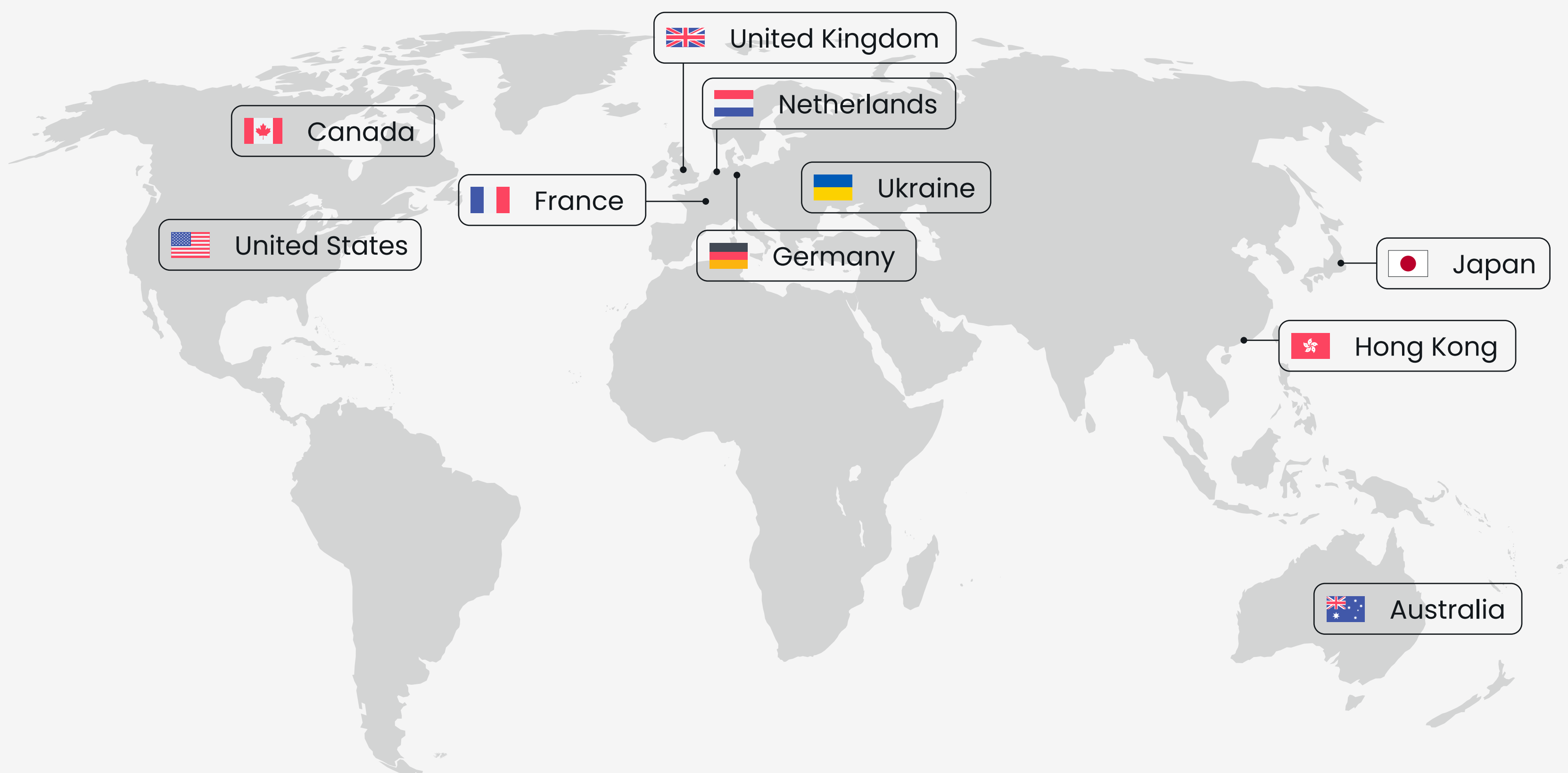
We always listen to our customers' suggestions on how to improve our products. This time, we brought you a better-than-ever CleanWeb 2.0. It features an enhanced ad blocker, cookie pop-up blocker, malware, and phishing warnings. The new CleanWeb works only on our extensions (Chrome, Firefox, Edge).

## Surfshark's no-logs policy verified

One of the Big Four auditing firms, Deloitte, successfully conducted an assurance procedure confirming that Surfshark [doesn't record user data](#). According to Deloitte, "the configuration of IT systems and management of the supporting IT operations is properly prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with Surfshark's description of its no-logs policy."

# Server data in the spotlight

Top 10 Surfshark VPN locations that  
users were connecting to:





# Product awards

Last year brought a lot of significant victories home for us, and we could not be more proud to share them with you.



VPN Solution of the Year at CyberSecurity Breakthrough Awards 2022



CNET's Editor's Choice for Best Value VPN 2022



CanalTech Most Popular VPN Service 2022 (Brasil)



PCWorld Verified Product 2022 (Poland)



Surfshark Antivirus Virus Bulletin certification



SourceForge Fall Category Leader 2022



Surfshark Antivirus AV-TEST Certification 2022

# INCOGNI



Darius  
Belejevas  
Head of Incogni

## A word from the Head of Incogni

The significant interest from privacy-conscious users led us to launching Incogni as a subscription service this year. We processed millions of data removal requests in our first year and are pursuing to expand our service's scope moving forward.

## Freeing you from data brokers

At Surfshark, we're constantly developing new tools and services to secure your digital world, which is why we are proud to add Incogni to our toolkit. It assists you in escaping the grasp of online marketing by contacting data brokers on your behalf and requesting to remove any information they may have on you.

## Growing rapidly

The increasing demand for and interest in Incogni led to rapid team growth quarter over quarter. As a result of this growth, we managed to process millions of data removal requests in our first year and almost doubled the number of data brokers we are sending data removal requests to.

## Opening the doors for new opportunities

We began by removing data from data brokers' databases for our US-based customers. We also joined a group of privacy and compliance organizations and created the Data Rights Protocol (DRP) – a new standardized protocol for sending and receiving data removal requests. Moving forward, we will continue seizing the occasion for new opportunities to grow, collaborate, and keep your data away from those who might exploit it.



# AN UPDATE FROM OUR LEGAL DEPARTMENT



**Gabrielė  
Kaveckytė**  
Privacy Counsel

## A word from our Privacy Counsel

The security and privacy of our clients are our top priority. With that in mind, we follow the worldwide development of legal and data protection rules very closely and embed those in our products. As our business grows, we have opened new offices in Germany and Poland. Further legal challenges came up following this, and we tackled them with utmost care.

## Setting clear priorities

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This year we focused on improving the processes related to customer support, as we believe our customers deserve the best assistance possible. Improvements include automation of certain elements, as well as some structural changes. Next year we plan to enhance our transparency by revamping our privacy policy.

## Working under data protection laws

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The Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-in) introduced new laws this year. According to them, VPN providers must collect certain information about their users and online activities. We always choose our users' privacy over doing business in jurisdictions that prevent us from protecting it. For this reason, Surfshark closed its operations in India. It is worth noting that the said directions' validity has been challenged in the Delhi High Court.

# RESEARCH PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES



**Gabrielė  
Račaitytė-Krasauskė**  
Head of PR

## A word from our Head of PR

In a world where massive cybercrimes are circulating daily, one can forget the importance of being safe online. That's why we track these crimes' development and strive to make digital privacy and security understandable to the masses through our research projects. Ultimately, we're helping people decode their digital worlds, which have become an inseparable part of our reality. Widely picked up by journalists worldwide, our studies provide context to topics that will shape our digital future and its democracy.



COVERING THE CYBERSECURITY GROUND  
WITH OUR RESEARCH PROJECTS

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# Internet Shutdown Tracker



Undemocratic governments increasingly use social media censorship and internet outages to uphold their authority. The reason behind most of the restrictions is to curtail the residents' freedom of speech and the right to assemble. Due to these methods of information suppression that are happening worldwide, **our [Internet Shutdown Tracker](#), in collaboration with human rights watchdog and internet monitoring organization NetBlocks, allows us to document social media and internet shutdown cases.**

MENTIONED IN









COVERING THE CYBERSECURITY GROUND  
WITH OUR RESEARCH PROJECTS

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# Data Breach Map

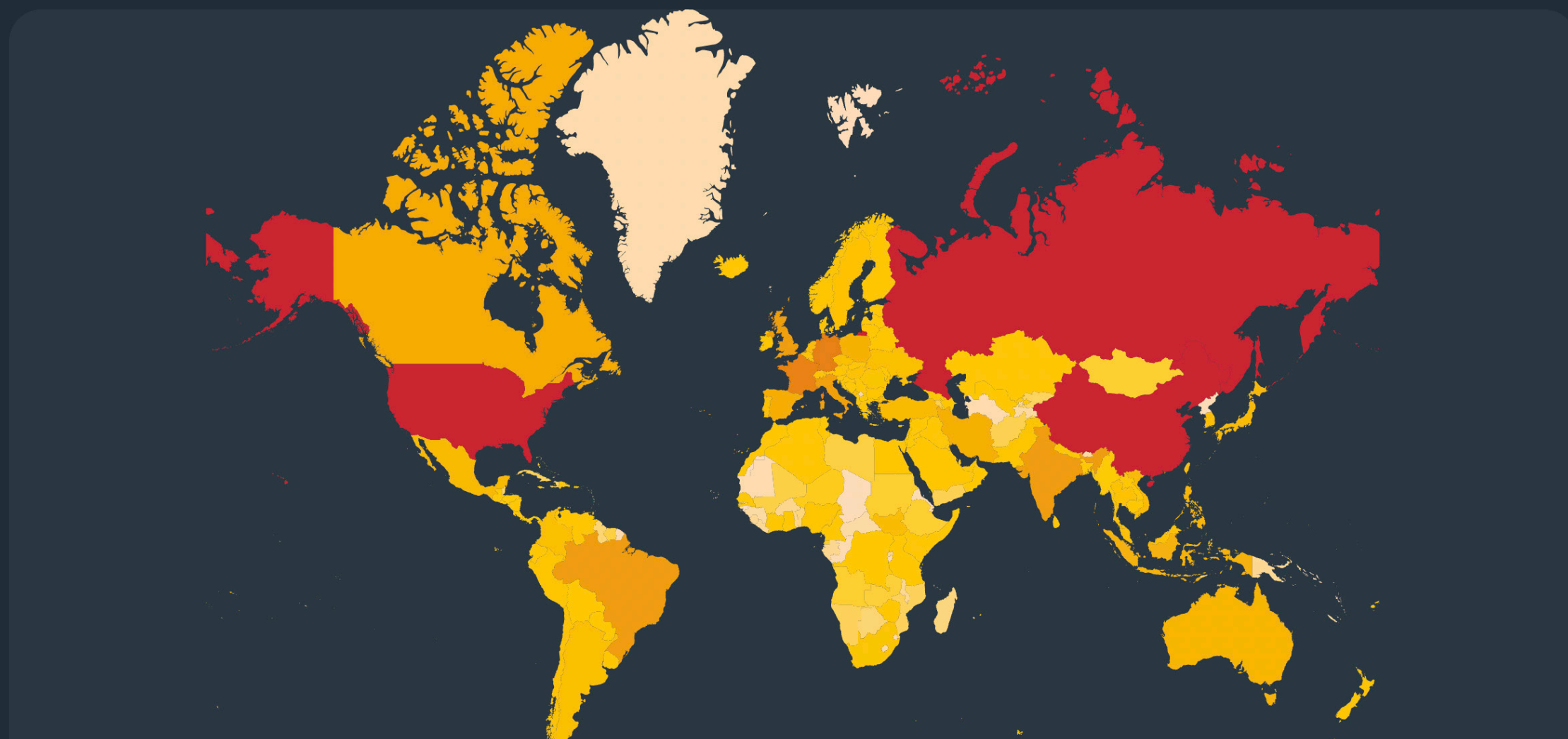
## Global data breach stats

This page contains publicly available information about personal data that's been copied, transmitted, viewed, and stolen from data holders, or otherwise illegally used since 2004.

**15,505,779,224**

Total number of breached accounts

Most accounts breached  Fewest accounts breached



Our global [Data Breach Map](#) aims to collect statistics about personal data that have been copied, shared, viewed, and stolen from data holders or used illegally. Visualizing the scope and scale of data breaches worldwide is giving food for thought to everyone concerned about the private data they share online. It's an ongoing investigation, and the statistics of data breaches are updated regularly.

## MENTIONED IN

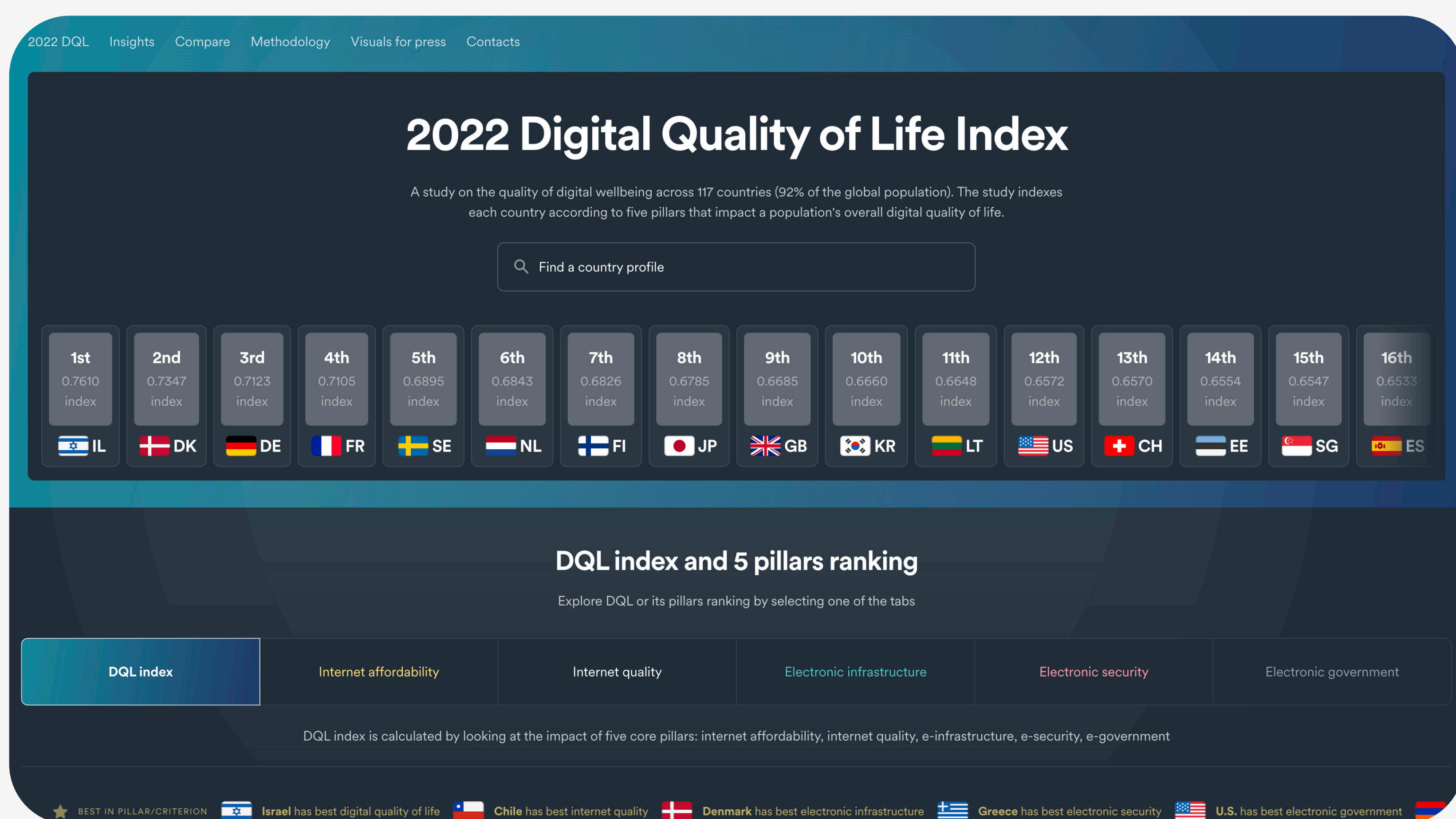
 The Washington Post

 Forbes

 REUTERS

COVERING THE CYBERSECURITY GROUND  
WITH OUR RESEARCH PROJECTS

# Digital Quality of Life 2022



Our [Digital Quality of Life 2022](#) study analyzed the digital wellbeing of 117 countries (92% of the global population). The research was focused on five pillars: internet affordability, internet quality, e-infrastructure, e-security, and e-government. The study brings a lot of valuable insights, such as the fact that broadband internet is slowly becoming less affordable worldwide.

MENTIONED IN



COVERING THE CYBERSECURITY GROUND  
WITH OUR RESEARCH PROJECTS

# Data Vulnerability Thermometer

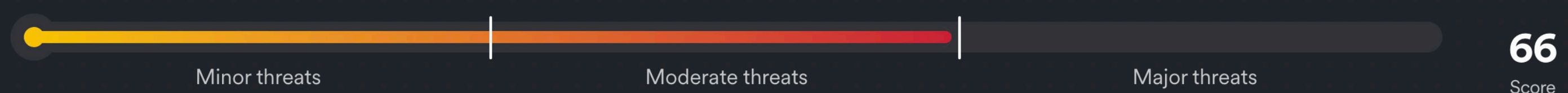
## Data Vulnerability Thermometer

Check how data breaches could expose you to online threats. This tool takes your selected data points and calculates how much this leaked data could put you in danger. If you want to know how the score is calculated, you can click on it to find out.

1. Select up to 4 data points

2. Some points will grey out because they don't add risk

3. Click "Show risks" to calculate results



Select a maximum of 4 data points that were leaked.

### Key data points

Email address

Physical address

Phone number

Social media profile

IP address

Credit card number

SSN/national ID

Full name

Passport number

The risk of a data breach might be hard to fathom, but it's there. From discrimination to extortion, losing your data can have severe consequences. Our [Data Vulnerability Thermometer](#) calculates how your leaked data could put you in **danger**. Select the leaked data points and learn about possible data breach risks.

MENTIONED IN



THE CONVERSATION

DIGITAL  
JOURNAL

## BEING ONE STEP AHEAD – AGILE STUDIES

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### Period tracker apps

It's a well-known fact that many apps collect user data. They often try to leave this fact behind closed doors (or the lengthy and complicated terms and conditions). To ease women's choice of the right period-tracking app, we've conducted a study on [how private popular period-tracker apps are](#). We analyzed 20 popular period-tracking apps in the US and found out which apps collect the most data, what data is collected, and for what reasons.

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### Cybersecurity in Ukraine and other former Soviet countries

Russian cyberattacks are now more widely anticipated due to the invasion of Ukraine. This event led us to study [cybersecurity in Ukraine and other former Soviet countries](#). The cybersecurity rankings of those nations helped us determine how well-prepared we are for cyberthreats from the East. We gained valuable insights, such as the Baltic States and Ukraine having the best cybersecurity out of all former Soviet countries.

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### Internet divide

Our Digital Quality of Life (DQL) study led to the discovery of the [ongoing internet divide](#). The study reveals the significant quality and cost differences in internet connection depending on where people live, resulting in substantial differences between lower and higher-income countries. The internet divide project presents the key insights and findings from the DQL study.





# NGO PARTNERSHIPS, DONATIONS, AND CSR



**Gabrielė  
Dačkaitytė**  
External  
Communication  
Officer

## A word from our External Communication Officer

Surfshark is rapidly growing and securing its place among the top players in the cybersecurity sector. Thus, it comes naturally that we – a company that cares about the future and the accessibility of the internet – aim to support non-governmental organizations and non-profits that align with our goals and values.

## STANDING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNET



NetBlocks is a digital rights watchdog and an internet monitoring organization. Both organizations joined forces in August 2022 with a natural alignment of their visions and common goals – **bringing awareness and gaining more routes to spread the news of worldwide internet disruptions.**



The VPN Trust Initiative (VTI) is an industry-led, member-driven consortium of VPN business leaders **focused on improving digital safety for consumers. To do that, they build understanding, strengthen trust, and mitigate risk for VPN users.** Surfshark is one of the founding members of the VPN Trust Initiative, which was established in 2020. All members must follow the VTI principles, ensuring that member companies are secure, trusted, and transparent to their users.



EDRi is the biggest European network defending digital rights and freedoms. Surfshark joined EDRi as its corporate member in 2022. Since then, we have **supported the network's efforts to push for robust and enforced laws, inform and mobilize people, and promote a healthy and accountable technology market.** Together with EDRi, Surfshark talked about [possible EU laws that might threaten the core of encryption.](#)



Founded in 2020, The Global Encryption Coalition (GEC) promotes and defends encryption in key countries and multilateral fora where it is under threat. Surfshark joined the coalition in 2022, **aiming to pursue policies that enhance, strengthen and promote strong encryption to protect people everywhere.** This year, Surfshark has spread the word about the importance of encryption during Global Encryption Day on October 21st – the GEC's flagship day.

## STANDING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNET

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The Internet Society is a global non-profit organization that **empowers people to keep the internet a force for good: open, globally-connected, secure, and trustworthy.** The internet is and must remain a place of **possibility and opportunity.** During this year, Surfshark collaborated with the Internet Society by spreading awareness about [Splinternet](#).



Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is **a leading non-profit defending digital privacy, free speech, and innovation.** Founded in 1990, it **accomplishes its aims through impact litigation, policy analysis, grassroots activism, and technology development.** EFF and Surfshark spread awareness about different surveillance technologies on the [Surfshark Wave podcast](#).



**Access Now defends and extends the digital rights of at-risk users around the world.** By combining direct technical support, comprehensive policy engagement, global advocacy, grassroots grantmaking, legal interventions, and convenings such as RightsCon, they fight for human rights in the digital age.



Founded in 2011, Fight for the Future is a small group of activists, engineers, technologists, and artists who run hard-hitting campaigns that fight for a future where **technology is a force for the community, openness, and collective power, and not oppression.**





"As a global internet monitor and watchdog organization working at the intersection of digital rights, cybersecurity, and internet governance, our partnership with Surfshark is helping us reach new audiences and communities in the fight for a more connected and inclusive digital future."

– Alp Toker, Founder & Director of NetBlocks

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## Taking a closer look at our partnership

**Surfshark and NetBlocks understand the importance of open and free internet for all.** Together, we can bring greater awareness and understanding of the threats to our online freedom via our common work. At the same time, we can also discuss the tools to counter it in greater depth. For example, a VPN can overcome most disruptions that countries impose, be they IP (Internet Protocol), DNS (Domain Name System), or Deep Packet Inspection-based.

During the partnership, we both share our expertise and best practices, and support one another on internet freedom and mapping internet shutdowns.

**By partnering with NetBlocks, we at Surfshark once again prove our commitment to covering the subject of internet disruptions.** Together, we are elevating accurate and detailed reporting on online freedom restrictions in even better detail.

# Corporate social responsibility

## Cyberocean

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Avoiding online threats, bullying, and personal information theft is hard, especially for kids. A child could give out family names, surnames, addresses, and even credit card numbers online. To prevent such instances and teach kids the cybersecurity dos and don'ts, we've created Cyberocean. A place where the little ones can learn how to stay away from cyberbullying, what to watch out for while gaming, and more.

## Lending a helping hand to vulnerable communities

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Every year we help others be safe online. This year was no different. We've provided over 300 Surfshark One accounts for people in vulnerable communities living under internet censorship or in countries experiencing political turbulence. In addition, our employees donated money from their team-building budgets to initiatives that provide support, housing, and more, to people affected by Russia's war in Ukraine.

## Making our website accessible to all

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Our employees are motivated to launch various initiatives to make Surfshark better. This year, they gathered together and decided to carry out multiple changes to our website, so it can also be accessible for people with disabilities. They've started implementing the following:

- Improvements for keyboard navigation for Website Main Navigation bar, Languages select, and Footer menus;
- Keyboard navigation for various pages, such as About us, Media center, and others;
- Improvements in Screen reader accessibility.

## Women Go Tech

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Women Go Tech is a campaign for diversity in tech-related careers. Through mentoring, it produces a generation of strong female role models to motivate future Women Go Tech mentees. Some Surfshark employees contribute to this initiative and help other women improve their tech-related career opportunities.



# THE PEOPLE BEHIND SURFSHARK



Goda  
Pakalnė  
Head of HR

## A word from our Head of HR

HR's primary focus is providing people with the proper tools, smooth processes, and development opportunities to let them become the best versions of themselves.





# Physical & mental wellbeing

## Training

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At Surfshark, we understand how physical activity affects people's moods and overall wellbeing. That's why our employees can join group training sessions to get some exercise in their day. These sessions focus on cardio, core strength, and flexibility. For those who prefer working out at home, we also offer online workouts.

## Hybrid working model

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Surfshark trusts its people and knows they can deliver quality work wherever they may be, not just at their desks in the office. That's why we encourage a hybrid working model and offer the possibility to work from another country. People at Surfshark say working from anywhere increases motivation, productivity, and life-work integration, and improves job satisfaction.

## Mental health support

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As well as physical wellbeing, Surfshark offers ways to improve employees' emotional wellbeing too. These ways include health insurance to cover external counseling sessions as well as various mental health apps for us.

## Self-development

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We put a lot of focus on our employees' self-development at Surfshark. Everyone is encouraged to dedicate some time per month to deepen their knowledge or learn new skills. To do so, we order books and offer online courses – internal and external. And since the internet is full of learning resources, we also suggest podcasts, online lectures, e-books, or YouTube channels for our employees to check out.



# Recruitment

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## We're recruiting worldwide

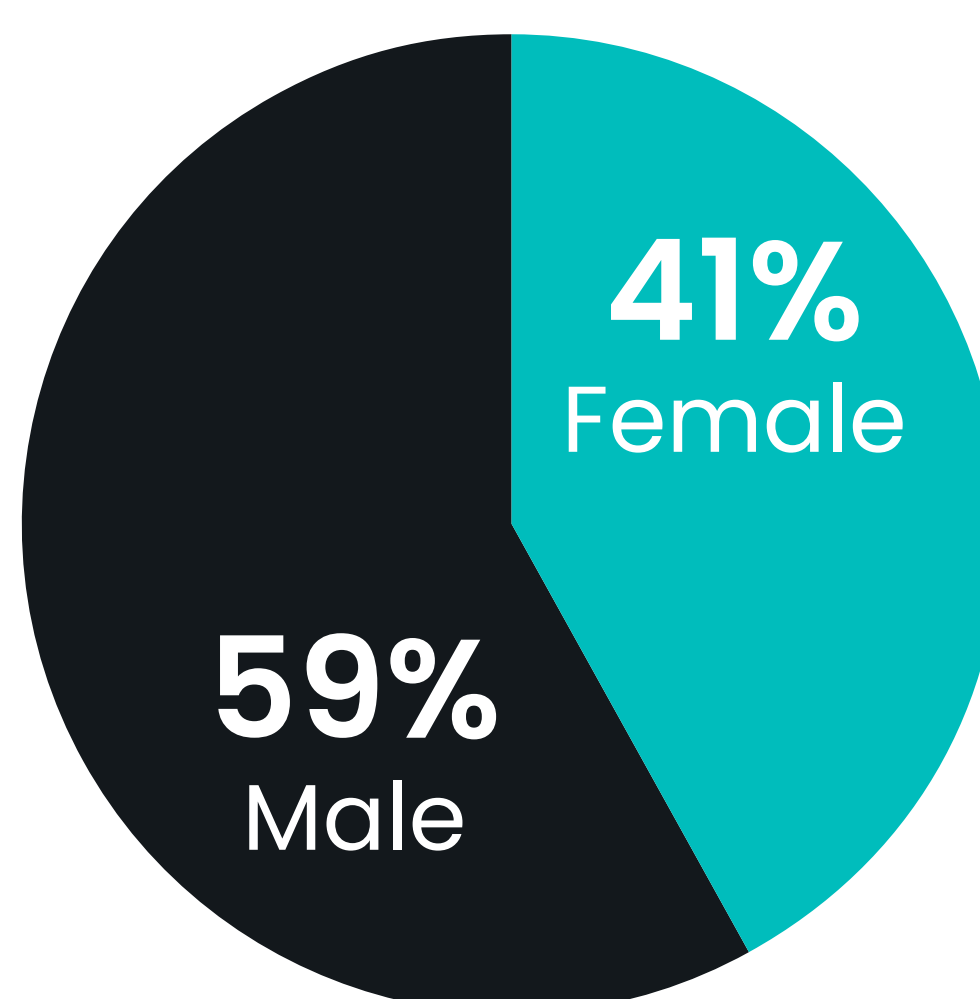
As a product, Surfshark has gone global. To catch up with its success, our workforce is also going international. While recruiting people from all around the world, we're also actively opening new offices – we now have one in Berlin and in Warsaw. The latter office is the latest addition to the family.

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## Surfshark employee statistics

**187** newbies  
during 2022

### Gender balance



**21%**

Managers

**79%**

Specialists

### Internal promotions within the company

**66** cases during  
2022



# What's next for 2023?

## Incogni

Next year, we expect even more rapid growth than we experienced in 2022. We will continue to hire new people, work toward increasing the number of data brokers we contact on users' behalf, and bring new initiatives to ensure that brokers respect our customers' interest in having their data removed. We will also improve the Incogni service by bringing new features so that our users can use it for years to come.

## Legal

We feel that we have to protect our clients' privacy and security. This responsibility will never change, and we will continue to monitor the emergence of new laws and protection regulations. In light of this, we plan to revamp our privacy policy and continue incorporating these privacy changes in Surfshark's solutions.

## NGOs and CSR

As one of the leading VPNs in the cybersecurity market, we consider the online future and the accessibility of the internet worldwide. This year, we worked with many non-governmental organizations. Next year, we will continue collaborating with organizations that share our values and get more involved in volunteering initiatives.

## Research

Even more people should hear about how they can protect themselves online. In 2023, we plan to revamp our Research Hub, release more educational content, and collaborate with even more global outlets in spreading the word about online safety.

## Technical

2022 was full of new challenges, releases, features, and updates. In 2023, we will put a strong focus on our products' quality and your suggested improvements. We look forward to empowering each other toward a safer digital world.

## Human Resources

2022 brought many new people that joined our company and increased the diversity of our employees. In 2023, we plan to move into our new working space – CyberCity, expand our Warsaw office, and continue building our international community.



# AND THAT'S A WRAP!



**Brought to you by**

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Written by Agnė Matusevičiūtė  
Edits by Ugnė Bendikaitė

Designed by Daumantas Pipiras  
Illustrations by Adelina Glebova