

# When is zero trust really zero trust?

Your checklist for sorting the hype from reality

There's no shortage of vendors claiming to offer zero trust. But how can you tell whether a solution truly delivers?

Here are 5 questions to ask before you commit.



**01 Does it replace VPNs or eliminate network access entirely?**

**With true zero trust:**

- Users connect directly to applications, not the network
- Applications are never exposed to the internet
- There are no inbound connections, ports or IPs to defend

**Why it matters**

VPNs and VPN-like ZTNA merely extend your network outward. True zero trust removes it altogether, dramatically shrinking your attack surface.

**55%** reduced breach risk when VPNs are fully replaced, not layered over  
Source: Forrester, "The Total Economic Impact™ Of Zscaler Private Access (ZPA)"

**02 Can users move laterally if something goes wrong?**

**With true zero trust:**

- Access is user-to-app, not subnet-to-subnet
- Policies enforce least-privilege access by default
- Compromised users can't see or discover other apps

**Why it matters**

Lateral movement is one of the most common breach accelerators. Zero trust only works if movement is architecturally impossible.

**60%** lower likelihood of data breaches among Zscaler customers by eliminating lateral movement paths  
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, Analyzing the Economic Benefits of the Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange

**03 Is zero trust applied everywhere, or just to remote users?**

**With true zero trust:**

- The same policies apply to users, workloads, partners and devices
- Branches, cloud apps and private apps are all covered
- There are no separate tools or consoles for 'exceptions'

**Why it matters**

Fragmented zero trust creates blind spots, which attackers quickly find and exploit.

**62%** of security professionals worry about tool sprawl  
Source: Zscaler State of Cyberthreats and Protection

**04 Does the solution reduce complexity, or add more layers?**

**With true zero trust:**

- Security tools are consolidated, not stacked
- Policies are managed through a single control plane
- Teams spend less time maintaining infrastructure

**Why it matters**

Complicated infrastructure pulls security teams away from strategic initiatives that actually safeguard your organisation.

**79%** reduction in security and networking tasks with Zscaler Internet Access  
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, Analyzing the Economic Benefits of the Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange

**05 Does it improve user experience, as well as security?**

**With true zero trust:**

- Users avoid backhauling and latency
- Access is fast, consistent and location-agnostic
- Productivity improves as security strengthens

**Why it matters**

Cumbersome security controls encourage unsafe workarounds among colleagues.

**\$1,000** productivity gain per user per year recovered by Zscaler customers through reduced wait times and outages  
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, Analyzing the Economic Benefits of the Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange

## Meet zero trust that walks the walk

True zero trust should work everywhere. Start embracing it in your organisation with Zscaler. Secure internet and SaaS access with Zscaler Internet Access, and protect your internal applications with Zscaler Private Access, both part of the Zscaler Zero Exchange Platform. Reduce risk, cut complexity and improve productivity with zero trust solutions that actually deliver.

To find out how your peers are tackling today's cyberthreats with zero trust, read the Zscaler report: **State of Cyberthreats and Protection 2025**

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**About Zscaler:**

Zscaler (NASDAQ: ZS) accelerates digital transformation so that customers can be more agile, efficient, resilient, and secure. The Zscaler Zero Trust Exchange™ protects thousands of customers from cyberattacks and data loss by securely connecting users, devices, and applications in any location. Distributed across more than 150 data centres globally, the SSE-based Zero Trust Exchange™ is the world's largest in-line cloud security platform. Learn more at [zscaler.com](https://zscaler.com) or follow us on X (Twitter) @zscaler.

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