

Uses of Computer Networks

Computer networks have become invaluable to organizations as well as individuals. Some of its main uses are as follows:

1. **Information and Resource Sharing:** Computer networks allow organizations having units which are placed apart from each other, to share information in a very effective manner. Programs and software in any computer can be accessed by other computers linked to the network. It also allows sharing of hardware equipment, like printers and scanners among varied users.
2. **Retrieving Remote Information:** Through computer networks, users can retrieve remote information on a variety of topics. The information is stored in remote databases to which the user gains access through information systems like the World Wide Web.
3. **Speedy Interpersonal Communication:** Computer networks have increased the speed and volume of communication like never before. Electronic Mail (email) is extensively used for sending texts, documents, images, and videos across the globe. Online communications have increased by manifold times through social networking services.
4. **E-Commerce:** Computer networks have paved way for a variety of business and commercial transactions online, popularly called e-commerce. Users and organizations can pool funds, buy or sell items, pay bills, manage bank accounts, pay taxes, transfer funds and handle investments electronically.
5. **Highly Reliable Systems:** Computer networks allow systems to be distributed in nature, by the virtue of which data is stored in multiple sources. This makes the system highly reliable. If a failure occurs in one source, then the system will still continue to function and data will still be available from the other sources.
6. **Cost-Effective Systems:** Computer networks have reduced the cost of establishment of computer systems in organizations. Previously, it was imperative for organizations to set up expensive mainframes for computation and storage. With the advent of networks, it is sufficient to set up interconnected personal computers (PCs) for the same purpose.
7. **VoIP:** VoIP or Voice over Internet protocol has revolutionized telecommunication systems. Through this, telephone calls are made digitally using Internet Protocols instead of the regular analog phone lines.

Applications of Communication & Computer Network

Computer systems and peripherals are connected to form a network. They provide numerous advantages:

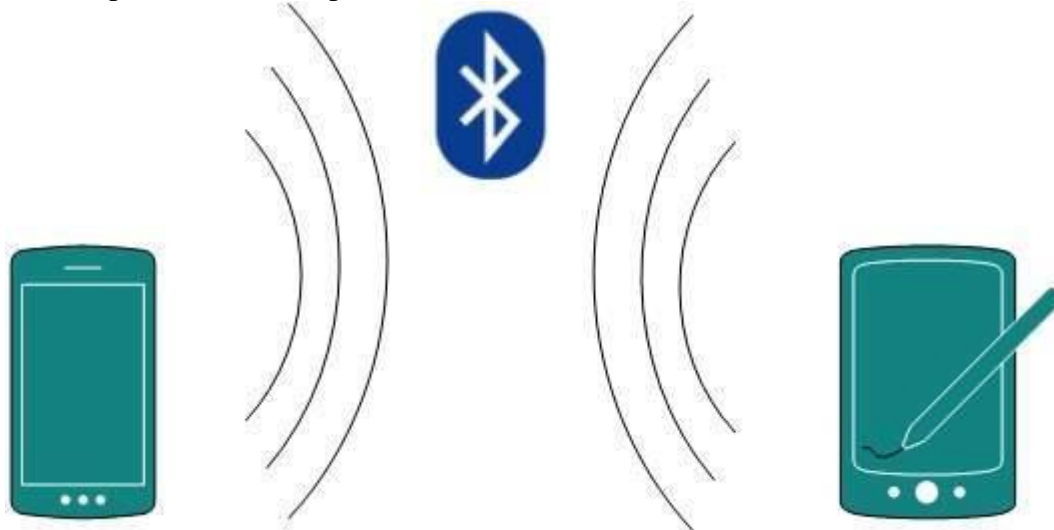
- Resource sharing such as printers and storage devices
- Exchange of information by means of e-Mails and FTP
- Information sharing by using Web or Internet
- Interaction with other users using dynamic web pages
- IP phones
- Video conferences
- Parallel computing
- Instant messaging

Computer Network Types

Generally, networks are distinguished based on their geographical span. A network can be as small as distance between your mobile phone and its Bluetooth headphone and as large as the internet itself, covering the whole geographical world,

Personal Area Network

A Personal Area Network (PAN) is smallest network which is very personal to a user. This may include Bluetooth enabled devices or infra-red enabled devices. PAN has connectivity range up to 10 meters. PAN may include wireless computer keyboard and mouse, Bluetooth enabled headphones, wireless printers and TV remotes.

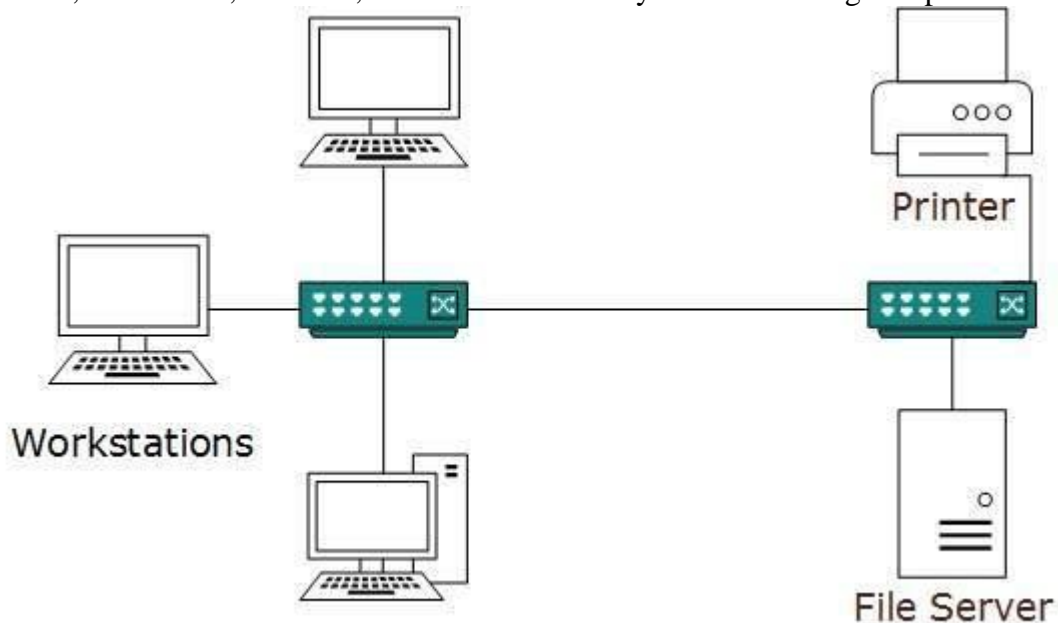


For example, Piconet is Bluetooth-enabled Personal Area Network which may contain up to 8 devices connected together in a master-slave fashion.

Local Area Network

A computer network spanned inside a building and operated under single administrative system is generally termed as Local Area Network (LAN). Usually, LAN covers an organization's offices, schools, colleges or universities. Number of systems connected in LAN may vary from as least as two to as much as 16 million.

LAN provides a useful way of sharing the resources between end users. The resources such as printers, file servers, scanners, and internet are easily sharable among computers.



LANs are composed of inexpensive networking and routing equipment. It may contain local servers serving file storage and other locally shared applications. It mostly operates on private IP addresses and does not involve heavy routing. LAN works under its own local domain and controlled centrally.

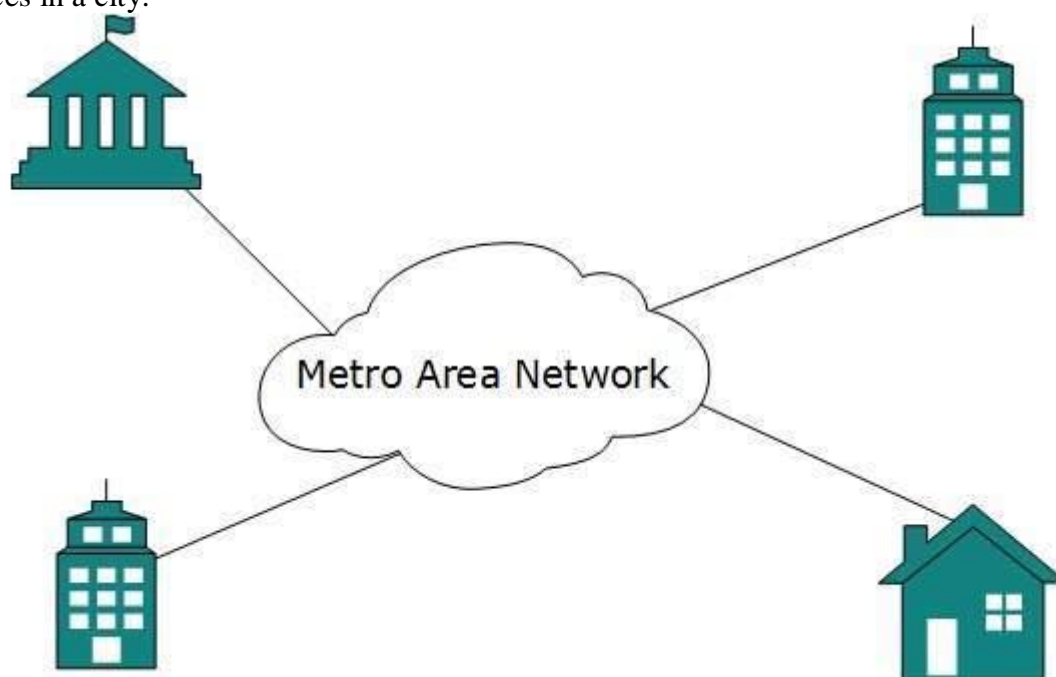
LAN uses either Ethernet or Token-ring technology. Ethernet is most widely employed LAN technology and uses Star topology, while Token-ring is rarely seen.

LAN can be wired, wireless, or in both forms at once.

Metropolitan Area Network

The Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) generally expands throughout a city such as cable TV network. It can be in the form of Ethernet, Token-ring, ATM, or Fiber Distributed Data Interface (FDDI).

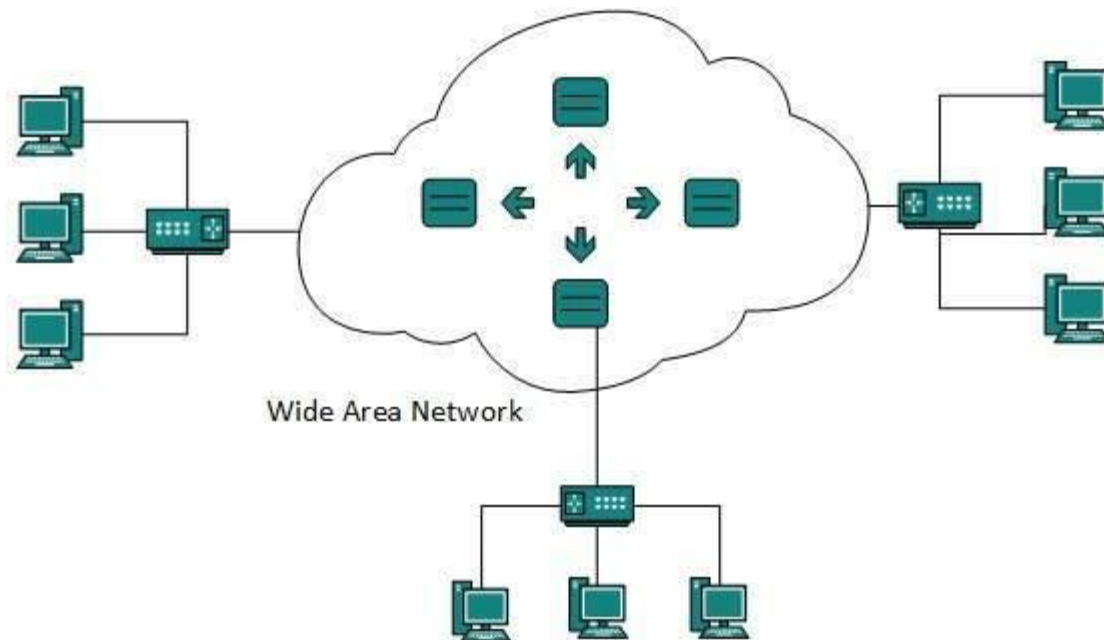
Metro Ethernet is a service which is provided by ISPs. This service enables its users to expand their Local Area Networks. For example, MAN can help an organization to connect all of its offices in a city.



Backbone of MAN is high-capacity and high-speed fiber optics. MAN works in between Local Area Network and Wide Area Network. MAN provides uplink for LANs to WANs or internet.

Wide Area Network

As the name suggests, the Wide Area Network (WAN) covers a wide area which may span across provinces and even a whole country. Generally, telecommunication networks are Wide Area Network. These networks provide connectivity to MANs and LANs. Since they are equipped with very high speed backbone, WANs use very expensive network equipment.



WAN may use advanced technologies such as Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM), Frame Relay, and Synchronous Optical Network (SONET). WAN may be managed by multiple administration.

Internetwork

A network of networks is called an internetwork, or simply the internet. It is the largest network in existence on this planet. The internet hugely connects all WANs and it can have connection to LANs and Home networks. Internet uses TCP/IP protocol suite and uses IP as its addressing protocol. Present day, Internet is widely implemented using IPv4. Because of shortage of address spaces, it is gradually migrating from IPv4 to IPv6.

Internet enables its users to share and access enormous amount of information worldwide. It uses WWW, FTP, email services, audio and video streaming etc. At huge level, internet works on Client-Server model.

Internet uses very high speed backbone of fiber optics. To inter-connect various continents, fibers are laid under sea known to us as submarine communication cable.

Internet is widely deployed on World Wide Web services using HTML linked pages and is accessible by client software known as Web Browsers. When a user requests a page using some web browser located on some Web Server anywhere in the world, the Web Server responds with the proper HTML page. The communication delay is very low.

Internet is serving many purposes and is involved in many aspects of life. Some of them are:

- Web sites
- E-mail
- Instant Messaging
- Blogging
- Social Media
- Marketing
- Networking
- Resource Sharing
- Audio and Video Streaming

Network Operating System (NOS)

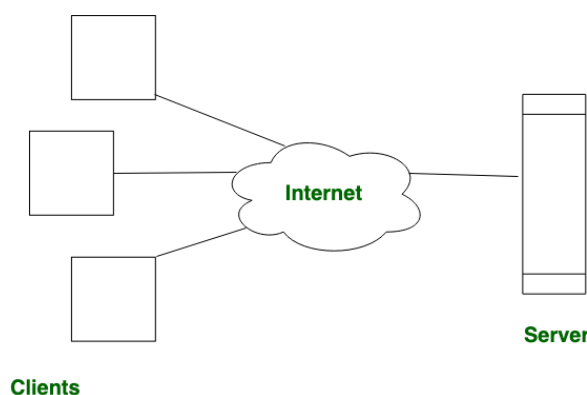
A network operating system (NOS) is a computer operating system (OS) that is designed primarily to support workstations, personal computers and, in some instances, older terminals that are connected on a local area network (LAN). The software behind a NOS allows multiple devices within a network to communicate and share resources with each other. The composition of hardware that typically uses a NOS includes a number of personal computers, a printer, a server and file server with a local network that connects them together. The role of the NOS is to then provide basic network services and features that support multiple input requests simultaneously in a multiuser environment. Due to earlier versions of basic operating systems not being designed for network use, network operating systems emerged as a solution for single-user computers.

Types of network operating systems

There are two basic types of network operating systems, the peer-to-peer NOS and the client/server NOS:

Client-Server Network:

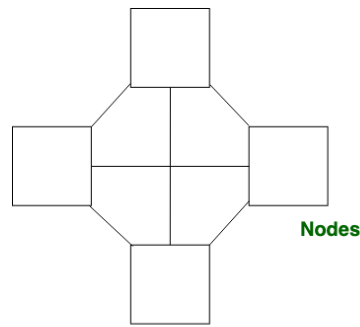
This model are broadly used network model. In Client-Server Network, Clients and server are differentiated, Specific server and clients are present. In Client-Server Network, Centralized server is used to store the data because its management is centralized. In Client-Server Network, Server respond the services which is request by Client.



Client-Server Network Model

Peer-to-Peer Network:

This model does not differentiate the clients and the servers, In this each and every node is itself client and server. In Peer-to-Peer Network, Each and every node can do both request and respond for the services.



Peer-to-Peer Network Model

Difference between Client-Server and Peer-to-Peer Network:

S.NO	CLIENT-SERVER NETWORK	PEER-TO-PEER NETWORK
1.	In Client-Server Network, Clients and server are differentiated, Specific server and clients are present.	In Peer-to-Peer Network, Clients and server are not differentiated.
2.	Client-Server Network focuses on information sharing.	While Peer-to-Peer Network focuses on connectivity.
3.	In Client-Server Network, Centralized server is used to store the data.	While in Peer-to-Peer Network, Each peer has its own data.
4.	In Client-Server Network, Server respond the services which is request by Client.	While in Peer-to-Peer Network, Each and every node can do both request and respond for the services.
5.	Client-Server Network are costlier than Peer-to-Peer Network.	While Peer-to-Peer Network are less costlier than Client-Server Network.
6.	Client-Server Network are more stable than Peer-to-Peer Network.	While Peer-to-Peer Network are less stable if number of peer is increase.

Common features of network operating systems

Features of network operating systems are typically associated with user administration, system maintenance and resource management functionality. This includes:

- Basic support for operating systems like protocol and processor support, hardware detection and multiprocessing.
- Printer and application sharing.
- Common file system and database sharing.
- Network security capabilities such as user authentication and access control.
- Directory
- Backup and web services.
- Internetworking.