

A **computer network** is a group of computers that use a set of common communication protocols over digital interconnections for the purpose of sharing resources located on or provided by the network nodes. The interconnections between nodes are formed from a broad spectrum of telecommunication network technologies, based on physically wired, optical, and wireless radio-frequency methods that may be arranged in a variety of network topologies.

The nodes of a computer network may include personal computers, servers, networking hardware, or other specialised or general-purpose hosts. They are identified by hostnames and network addresses. Hostnames serve as memorable labels for the nodes, rarely changed after initial assignment. Network addresses serve for locating and identifying the nodes by communication protocols such as the Internet Protocol.

Computer networks may be classified by many criteria, including the transmission medium used to carry signals, bandwidth, communications protocols to organize network traffic, the network size, the topology, traffic control mechanism, and organizational intent.