**Advantages and disadvantages of networks**

**Advantages**

* Sharing devices such as printers saves money.
* Site (software) licences are likely to be cheaper than buying several standalone licences.
* Files can easily be shared between users.
* Network users can communicate by email and instant messenger.
* Security is good - users cannot see other users' files unlike on stand-alone machines.
* Data is easy to backup as all the data is stored on the file server.

**Disadvantages**

* Purchasing the network cabling and file servers can be expensive.
* Managing a large network is complicated, requires training and a network manager usually needs to be employed.
* If the file server breaks down the files on the file server become inaccessible. Email might still work if it is on a separate server. The computers can still be used but are isolated.
* Viruses can spread to other computers throughout a computer network.
* There is a danger of hacking, particularly with wide area networks. Security procedures are needed to prevent such abuse, e.g. a firewall.