* Ashley’s redesign plan will likely benefit from an RFP because an RFP will specify what kind of equipment, software, and services are desired and in what time frame to vendors willing to do business. Although some network components Ashley wants can be purchased individually at stores, it is probably not a good idea to do that because it will become too expensive to accomplish all of her redesign wants. To start, the RFP would provide background information about Ashley’s business which would include an overview of its current networks and new network. Then, the RFP will include network requirement needed for her business such as PC workstations, application software subscriptions, data center, internet access, web server, and fiber-optic connectivity throughout her office. The RFP will also include service requirements for the vendors to ensure reliability and performance of products bought by her business. And finally the RFP will include information for the buying of products/services from vendors so time schedule and ground rules. Therefore, the RFP will ensure that Ashley’s business is able to purchase products/services from vendors for their best prices.
* Additional information which I feel should be apart of Ashley’s Needs Analysis is the cost of her current network, information about her current server (storage, web, etc.), what type of cable connectivity is used currently, any constraints her business has (space, cost, etc.) and her budget for the redesign. With anything in a business setting, there are always costs so it is important for her to provide an estimate of the cost of her current network. In her Needs Analysis, Ashley put she want a long-term storage for important data so it would be beneficial if she also put the current storage situation, how/where information is stored in the network, and any constraints with storage. Ashley puts she wants gigabit fiber optic connectivity throughout the office so to start it would help if she put what cable connectivity her office uses. Additionally, she would need to put the capacity of the switches and router that are in her office because if she upgrades the cable and not the switch and router then it would be of no significance.
* Ashley’s redesign will benefit from using cloud-based computing, VoIP, fiber-optic communication medium and switches/routers capable of handling the businesses information flow. Since Ashley mentions she wants long term storage and backup for art designs and protection of sensitive data, she could use applications that specialize in data storage. Some Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms that Ashley’s business could use are Google’s Gmail or Dropbox. Additionally, Ashley also mentions she wants VoIP capability in her office, this relatively new standard replaces the old system of analog telephones and so as a result reduced wiring is needed, there is improved sound quality, and since VoIP phones are digital, you can download and install small software applications on the phones. Fiber-optic connectivity makes simultaneous transmission of voice, data, and image signals possible at her business. Only if the supporting hardware (switches and routers) are able to handle the huge amounts of information the fiber-optic cables carry.