What is a Network?

* A network is any interconnected group of people or things capable of sharing meaningful information with one another.
* Network is usually short for "computer network" or "data network" and implies that computers are the things sharing the meaningful information.
* Data networks are important to all organizations because they provide faster, easier access to any message or data that can be represented and stored in digital format.
* Computer networks also enable resource sharing. Rather than buying one printer for every employee an organization with a network can buy a single printer, connect it to the network, and configure it in such a way that every computer user in the organization can print to it. Thus reducing overall costs.

Components of a Network:

* Switches:
  + Switches are the foundation of networks.
  + It acts as a controller, connecting computers, printers, servers and other peripherals together.
  + Two types of Switches:
    - Unmanaged:
      * Works right out of the box
      * Typical home switch
      * Cannot be configured
    - Managed:
      * Can be configured
      * Gives you greater control over network traffic and access
* Routers:
  + Connect multiple network together
  + Allows computers to connect to the internet
  + Enables all networked computers to share a single internet connection
  + Acts as a dispatcher. It analyzes data being sent across the network and chooses the best route for the data to travel.
* Access Points:
  + Allows devices to connect to the network wirelessly