A computer network is a [digital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_signal) [telecommunications network](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telecommunications_network) for sharing resources between [nodes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Node_(networking)), which are [computing devices](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computing_device) that use a common telecommunications technology. [Data transmission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_transmission) between nodes is supported over [data links](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_link) consisting of physical [cable media](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Networking_cables), such as [twisted pair](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twisted_pair) or [fiber-optic cables](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiber-optic_cable), or by [wireless methods](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wireless_network), such as [Wi-Fi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wi-Fi), [microwave transmission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microwave_transmission), or [free-space optical communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free-space_optical_communication).

Network nodes are network computer devices that originate, [route](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Routing) and terminate data communication. They are generally identified by [network addresses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network_address), and can include [hosts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Host_(network)) such as [personal computers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_computer), [phones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phone), and [servers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Server_(computing)), as well as [networking hardware](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Networking_hardware) such as routers and switches. Two such devices can be said to be networked when one device is able to exchange information with the other device, whether or not they have a direct connection to each other. In most cases, application-specific communications [protocols](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication_protocol) are [layered](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communications_protocol#Layering) (i.e. carried as [payload](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Payload_(computing))) over other more general communications protocols.