

Parameter	LAN	WAN
Abbreviation for	Local Area Network	Wide Area Network
Philosophy	LAN (Local Area Network) is a network covering a small geographic area and connecting various end devices like computers and printers. LAN may be limited to a home, office, schools or building.	WAN (Wide Area Network) is a network that covers a broad area and used to connect end devices like computers and printers which are distributed across long distance.
Speed	LAN Speed is high , upto 1/10 Gbps	WAN speed is much lower, generally 100 mbps. In few cases upto hundreds of Mbps
Components	The LAN is build using the layer 1/2 devices like hubs, switches, bridges and layer3 devices like Core/Layer 3 switch. These devices connect to computers, servers and Printers etc.	The WAN is build using the layers 3 devices Routers and Multi-layer Switches.
Ownership & management	LAN is owned, operated, managed and monitored by a customer	WAN is owned, operated, managed and monitored by multiple Service providers hence exist under distributed ownership.
Example	Network inside an office space	Internet is the best example of WAN Network
Security	More secured	Less secured
Technologies	Ethernet and Token Rings are 2 primary technologies used in LAN environment.	MPLS, ATM, Frame relay and ISDN are examples of WAN technologies.
Cost (CAPEX and OPEX)	Less expensive to setup and operate	More expensive
Coverage	Coverage across a small geographical area like limited to office area or customer building.	WAN is has extremely large geographical area. It is not limited to one country
Physical layer connectivity (Fiber)	Generally Copper and Fiber medium is used in LAN Setup. Multimode Fiber is preferred Fiber type in LAN environment	Generally Fiber medium is used in WAN terminations. Single mode Fiber is preferred Fiber type in LAN environment.
Congestion	Less congested	More congested