**NETWORK EQUIPMENTS**

[**Network Switch**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/switches/id-30)

A network switch is a device that connects other networking-capable devices together, typically via Ethernet. A switch uses packet switching to receive, process then forward data to the correct receiving device, creating a LAN (Local Area Network). Switches range from inexpensive desktop devices with 4-12 ports to large chassis-based managed switches with hundreds of ports. Switches use the MAC address of each device to identify them. High end managed switches can also perform basic layer 3 routing functions too. Some switches even have built-in wireless controllers.

[**Network Hub**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/hubs/id-26)

Similar to a switch, a network hub creates a network between multiple devices. But hubs are older and archaic compared to modern network switches. If you still have a hub deployed in your network, consider replacing it with a network switch.

**Network Router**

In addition to creating a LAN, a router is able to connect multiple networks to a wide area network (WAN). A WAN is a network that covers a large area and is sometimes used synonymously with the internet, though the internet is only one example of a WAN. Network routers can be either [wired](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/wired-routers/id-28) or [wireless](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/wireless-routers/id-145), with wireless routers sometimes referred to as Wi-Fi® routers.

**Network Access Point /**[**Wireless Access Point**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/wireless-ap/id-335)**(WAP)**

An access point is a device that adds wireless connectivity to a wired network. Some APs are standalone devices that connect to a router while others are components of the router itself. APs come in two varieties, stand-alone APs are for small installations with 1-5 APs while controller-managed APs are typical of larger implementations to permit central management of all the devices.

[**Network Firewall**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/c/network-attached-storage-nas/id-241)

A network firewall is a security device that controls traffic entering and leaving a LAN based on a set of rules. While it functions similar to a software firewall, but it protects the whole LAN instead of a single PC. Especially at the small business level, a firewall is combined with a router and often a WAP into a single package. Newer firewalls are often referred to as Unified Threat Management devices as they can inspect and control traffic at the application level.

[**Network Attached Storage (NAS) Drive**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/c/network-attached-storage-nas/id-241)

A network attached storage drive is a dedicated drive on a network that has its own IP address and functions similarly to an external hard drive. Some NAS drives feature built-in software that allow them to not only store files, but also stream media and provide remote access. Advanced NAS drives may utilize multiple hard disks arranged in a redundant array of independent disks (RAID) setup for increased performance.

**Network Adapters (NIC)**

Network adapters are devices that add networking capabilities, and can sometimes be referred to as network interface controllers or network interface cards. There three types of network adapters, wired, wireless, and dual wired/wireless. When purchasing a wireless network adapter, be sure that it is compatible with your organization’s wireless network standard.

[**Modem**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/modems/id-18)

A modem connects a router or computer to a telephone line to provide access to the internet, though some modems may have built-in router functionality. When purchasing a modem, you will want to be sure that it is compatible with your internet service provider’s (ISP) network.

**Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)**

VoIP is a method of voice communication that uses a computer network instead of the telephone system. You may already be familiar with VoIP services such as Skype™ or Google Voice™, which allow for communication over the internet. For your staff, there are [VoIP solutions](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/voip/id-519)that can connect them with each other through your computer network as well as your telephone lines.

**Power over Ethernet (PoE)**

Ethernet uses only two of the four pairs of wires in a copper Ethernet cable, leaving the other two available for power delivery. This allows low power devices like VoIP phones IP cameras and WAPs to run solely off the Ethernet cable. Many switches offer models with PoE (15.4W/port) or PoE+ (25.5W/port) on some or all switch ports.

[**Power Line Networking / Power Line Communication (PLC)**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/powerline-networking/id-294)

Did you know that power lines can be used to create a network in addition to powering electronic devices? Creating a computer network through your power lines will not require modification of the lines nor will it increase electricity usage. To set up an Ethernet power line network, you just need to plug at least two power line network adapters into wall outlets and run Ethernet cables from them to whatever devices you want on the network.

[**Network Print Server**](http://www.neweggbusiness.com/s/network-print-servers/id-387)

A network print server is a device that allows you to connect one or more printers to a network and provide print queue information to users. A print server can be used with any printer as long as the printer and print server feature compatible connections. Some network print servers have the ability to redirect print jobs to if one printer has too many requests.