

CCTS Tech Tuesday NETWORKS THAT WORK

It's easier to understand how networks function if you have a working knowledge of related vocabulary. Here are a few key terms to get you started down the right path...

Client: On a client-server network, clients are workstation computers that have access to information and applications on the server.

Extranet: A secure, password protected website (or portion of a website) that provides a venue for information and resource sharing with external audiences.

Firewall: A system or group of systems that filters information going in and out of a network, either blocking it or allowing it to continue to its destination.

Hub: Hardware that performs network traffic control.

Intranet: A secure, private network that shares an organization's information or operations with its employees

IP (Internet Protocol) Address: A unique number that devices use to identify and communicate with each other on a network.

LAN (Local Area Network): A network that is typically confined to a particular area such as an office suite or office building.

Peer-to-peer network: A network with no server and no stipulated hierarchy between computers. Best for small networks of 10 - 15 resources.

Router: A device that acts as a junction between two networks to transfer data packets (information) among them.

Server: A computer that stores files for sharing, controls access to the printer, and generally acts as the dictator of the network

Switch: Switches connect network segments to form a LAN.

VPN (Virtual Private Network): A VPN is a technology that allows people to access their office's computer network over the Internet while at home or traveling.

WAN (Wide Area Network): A network that covers a larger geographic space than a Local Area Network. A WAN can be made up of multiple LANs.

Protocol: Set of rules used to ensure that all computers on the network are speaking the same language.

* Some definitions adapted from Wikipedia.org and TechSoup.org.