

LANs & WANs

What is a LAN & WAN and what is the difference between them?

A LAN is a Local Area Network. A LAN is a computer network that is typically restricted to one building and connects computers, printers and other resources together. A LAN may connect the devices by two different means: wired or wireless. In a wired scenario, a cable connects each device to a central hub or switch. Wireless connections are made by means of a Radio Frequency (RF) signal that does away with many of the cables.

A WAN is a Wide Area Network which covers a large geographic area and connects LANs to each other. The Internet is the ultimate WAN. WAN connections are typically provided by telephone companies although many WAN connections are now implemented by encrypting data and sending it to its destination using the Internet. Such an arrangement is called a Virtual Private Network (VPN).