**What do you know about computer networks?**

**Computer network** is a collection of computers that are interconnected to share information and processing resources. Networks enable data to be transferred rapidly from one computer to another. Network users can share information or even work together on the same document.

Networks come in several types. *Local area networks* (LAN's) connect computers in a single location such as an office. LAN's frequently employ *client-server* computing. A central computer called the *server* holds common documents and performs difficult tasks. Computers connected to the server are called clients. Users at client computers can retrieve documents from the server or move documents from computer to computer through the LAN. Besides sharing information, LAN users share resources, such as printers. Cables typically connect the computers and other devices to the LAN. Modern wireless networks often use a technology called *Wi-Fi* (wireless fidelity). Wi-Fi and similar technologies enable communication between computing devices by means of radio waves sent through the air.

*Wide area networks* (WAN's) can spread across states, countries, or even around the world. The computers and devices attached to the WAN communicate via telephone lines or high-speed private communications lines. Many LAN's are connected to WAN's and are able to use their resources. Secure links known as *firewalls* prevent users of a WAN from gaining unauthorized access to resources on a LAN.

Routers

The world's largest network is the Internet. The Internet connects computers and computer networks around the world.

In addition to enabling computers to communicate, networks enable users to work together. For example, on some networks people in widely separated offices can all work on a document at the same time. As one user makes changes to the document, others connected to the network can see the changes. Such network operations require special *software* (computer instructions).

Ferrell, Keith. "Computer network." 2008. [Place of access.]  1 Oct. 2008   
<http://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar722707>.

**Do you know at least three fourths of these vocabulary words?**

LAN

WAN

router

firewall

network

client

Wi-Fi