# WAN (Wide Area Networking)

Wide area networking combines multiple LANs that are geographically separate. This is accomplished by connecting the different LANs using services such as dedicated leased phone lines, dial-up phone lines (both synchronous and asynchronous), satellite links, and data packet carrier services. Wide Area Networks (WANs) span large geographical distances, even over oceans or across continents. WANs overcome the distance limitations imposed by LANs.
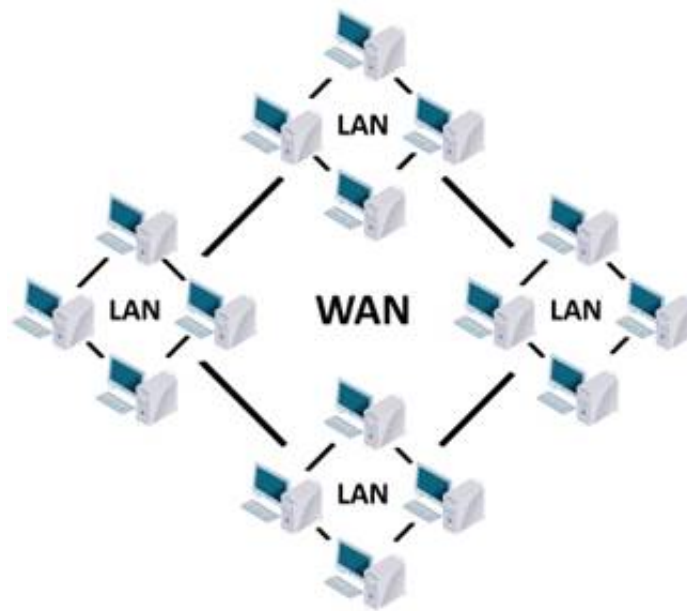
A WAN is complicated. It uses multiplexers, bridges, and routers to connect local and metropolitan networks to global communications networks like the Internet. To users, however, a WAN will not appear to be much different than a LAN. Computers connected to a Wide Area Network are often connected through the telephone system. They can also be connected through leased lines or satellites. Because Wide Area Networks (WANs) are often geographically spread over large areas and links between computers are over long distances, they often use quite exotic connections technologies: optical fibre (glass) cables, satellite radio links, microwave radio links, etc.

The largest example of a Wide Area Network is the internet itself, which connects all users to the information and data that is available on the internet. The speed available on a WAN varies depending on the cost of the connections (which increases with distance) and may be low.