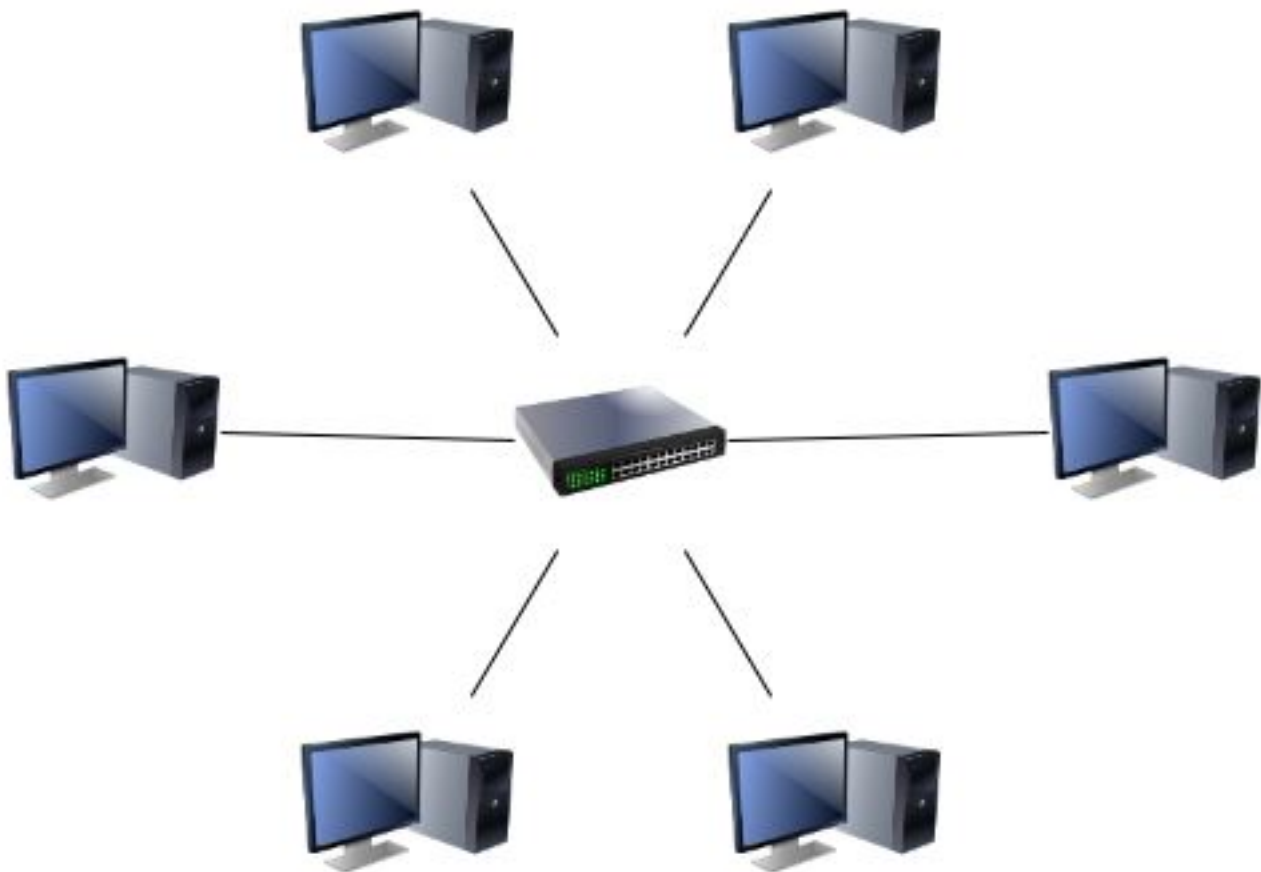


Network Switches and VoIP Switches

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At user-level, network switches are simple devices that form the core of a network. The picture below shows that you can make a LAN by configuring the computers and connecting them to a switch.



Switches can be used to do very clever things like VLANs and subnets, but that is for another article.

So what are PoE switches? PoE stands for *Power over Ethernet*, this

means network devices requiring low power can have reduced cabling by taking their power from the same cable that carries the data (an Ethernet or network cable). A PoE switch has power available on its data connections. VoIP phones are a classic example of this. In fact, VoIP phones usually act as a small switch as well, by being able to carry the data connection onto a computer if required.

What's a VoIP switch? There isn't really any such a thing as a VoIP switch - VoIP phones just need an Ethernet connection and power. However, a switch that has PoE on all its ports is the most useful type of switch for a phone network because none of the phones would need external power supplies; this might then be referred to as a VoIP switch.

See also [A Simple Overview of How Networks Work](#).

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