

# Network Interface Card (NIC)

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A Network Interface Card (NIC) is a hardware component without which a computer cannot be connected over a network. It is a circuit board installed in a computer that provides a dedicated network connection to the computer. It is also called network interface controller, network adapter or LAN adapter.

The purpose of the NIC:

- Allows both wired and wireless communications.
- Allows communications between computers connected via [Local Area Network \(LAN\)](#) as well as communications over large-scale [Wide Area Network \(WAN\)](#) networks through [Internet Protocol \(IP\)](#).
- Supports both a physical layer and a data link layer device, i.e. it provides the necessary hardware circuitry so that the physical layer processes and some data link layer processes can run on it.

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