

What is Peering

This section of the Toolbox describes the Internet ecosystem and how network operators interconnect with each other to create what we know as the Internet.

What is a Network Operator

A network operator is an entity which is running a TCP/IP based network infrastructure, providing access to end users.

A network operator will have their **own** Internet resources, namely their **own** IP address space (IPv4 or IPv6 or both) and their **own** Autonomous System number (the globally unique identifier for their network as used by the Border Gateway Protocol (BGP), the routing protocol of the Internet).

Entities without their own Internet resources are not considered network operators for the purposes of this toolbox as they cannot participate in the activities being described here without those independent resources.

Network Operator Goals

The primary goal of a network operator is to provide Internet access to their end users.

The vast majority of content consumed by end users today is made up of social media and videos. This content is distributed by the multi-national content providers and content distribution networks.

To provide the highest bandwidth and highest quality access to this content, a network operator positions their network as close as possible to the content providers. There are two ways of doing this:

1. Peering
2. Transit

References

This content is sourced from many contributors, including:

- [Value of Peering Presentation](#) - Philip Smith
- Network Startup Resource Center
- Input from Mark Tinka, Kurt Erik Lindqvist, etc

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<https://bgp4all.com/pfs/> - **Philip Smith's Internet Development Site**

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