Introduction

In this report I will be explaining to you the advantages and the disadvantages of having the computers in your office networked together. My report will explain in as much detail you need for you to understand the compensation of having a network, and what you need to know about how a network system can be brought to you the easiest way possible.

A network throughout your office will most definitely be a need to improve your business and bring your work colleagues closer together to create a much improved work environment which in turn will boost the motivation of your employees.

The Facts

The idea of linking all of your computers in your office may sound very intimidating and complicated and you are probably thinking how can your business benefit from spending money on something that seems to be not that much. Below I have compiled a list of what a network would include and the advantages of what each component can bring to your business.

- **(1) File sharing –** Within a networking you will need a server which is the main computer upon which files and documents can be stored on. The files that have been saved onto the server can then be accessed by each and every individual computer. Also, when a user 'logs in' to their computer which means each employee you have will personal account on the network they will be able to save into space on the server that is privet to them. This is all due to the network link.

  The advantages of this means that everybody in the office can access a piece of work or document quickly and more efficiently then passing it around the office on a disk which could involve corruption of data and definitely lack of speed. As well as an improvement of time but can make information so much more secure with passwords and encryption for parts that you may wish you don't want other people to see.

- **(2) Shared Hardware –** When a network has been installed because all the computers are linked together this also means that the hardware that a computer uses such as *printers* and *scanners* can be apart of the network. This is a **Major save on money** and space within the office. Without sharing hardware such as a printer you would have to have one for each individual workstation OR have a computer which employees have to go to especially to print something off which would people you would have to wait around until the computer is free to print something off.

  With shared hardware you will only need one printer and one scanner for all the computers on the network which means less space is used up filling the office with only one of each pieces of equipment, time is saved as you can send something to print from any computer and it will all go to the one printer and it will come through because of the network but if there is a heavy period of sending something to print then there could be jam, to resolve this it would be recommended to have a second printer. Another advantage of having a second printer is that if the first printer brake's then there is still an active printer whilst the first is being repaired. Only having one or two printers saves a lot of money on maintenance costs as there is only one or two to fix rather then a whole office full of individual printers

- **(3) Security –** as mentioned in bullet point **(1) File sharing** the security of information can be improved all the time. Without a network and without a computer you can have data on paper or in files lying around the office so that anybody can easily flick through it and find out information that is not relevant to them or even worse the data could be lost or damaged due to fire or something as simple as spilling a drink. If this data or information was then stored onto a computer it would be much safer from being damaged but not totally secure, other people could still access it, corrupt it or delete it.

  By setting up your computer as a network your data can be stored onto a safe and secure file server where extreme measures can be taken to keep your data protected from any risks. As the server is part of the network all the computers connected to it can access the files within the server depending on if they provide the correct passwords and usernames to access their own space on the server. Having a server and often a backup server in-case the first server crashes allows you to add all of these advanced security options to only one computer. It would prove to be far to expensive to have 100% security on every single computer in the office, not to mention there would not be enough room to lock away every computer in a secure case.

- **Shared Internet Connection (4) –** This means that the server can be connected to a fast internet connection with all the surrounding computers connected to the server can share the connection. This also means you have full control over what the users on your network are viewing on the network, for example if they are going onto a website that you do not wish them to be viewing, from the server you can have the control to stop all Internet processes to that certain user or computer. This is known as cyber slacking which means your employees are using the Internet for purposes unrelated to their work thus costing your business money.