Network Architect

A network architect designs plans for a network of linked computers and other equipment, such as telephones. The network might connect computers and communication equipment within a building or across different buildings. Job titles can vary and may include network engineer or network analyst.

The Work

You could work on different types of network including: local area networks (LANs) which link offices in a building or local area; metropolitan area networks (MANs) which link a large area or joins LANs across a campus or city; wide area networks (WANs) which are national or international; and global area networks (GANs) which combines all of these with satellite technology.

You could be:

- liaising with managers and technical staff to analyse the information technology infrastructure needs of the organisation
- looking at data such as network traffic to determine the capacity and speed required
- designing the network structure and presenting this to management
- identifying the hardware required, such as routers and switches
- identifying the software required, such as network drivers and firewalls
- working out a data migration plan, if designing a new network to replace an existing one
- working with the technical team carrying out the installation
- developing technical documentation
- keeping up to date with new hardware and software technology.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries can be around £25,000 to £27,000 a year. Experienced network architects can earn up to around £55,000 a year. Very experienced and senior level network architects may earn up to £85,000 a year or more.

If you do contract work, the daily rate varies.

Conditions

- You will be based in an office, which could be at a desk or in a server room.
- You will spend most of the time working at a computer.
- You might have to travel to visit companies.
- Your hours will usually be regular, Monday to Friday, but in some jobs you may need to work outside of

office hours if assisting with installations or updates.

Getting In

- Most entrants have a degree (SCQF Levels 9-11) in a relevant subject such as computer systems, computer networking or network management and design.
- Some entrants have a specialised postgraduate (SCQF Level 11) degree in advanced networking or network security.
- For entry to a degree course you need 4-5 Highers, sometimes including Maths.
- You may enter with an HND (SCQF Level 8) in Computing: Networking and complete further training with an employer.
- For entry to an HND course you normally need 1-2 Highers plus some subjects at National 5.
- Studying for a relevant Foundation Apprenticeship while in fifth and sixth year at school could count towards entry of a course. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually require some subjects at National 5 including English and Maths.
- You would need a driving licence if you have to travel between sites.

There are jobs in a wide range of companies and organisations including banks, building societies, insurance companies, central and local government, water, utility companies, universities, colleges and the National Health Service (NHS). There are also jobs with companies that supply, install and service networks.

What Does It Take

You need to be able to:

- keep up to date with IT developments
- understand the business needs of your company or client
- communicate with a wide range of people, some without a technical background
- organise work programmes and prioritise tasks
- work as part of a team and motivate others
- understand and convey complex technical information.

You need to have:

- excellent problem solving skills
- a logical, systematic and analytical approach
- excellent IT skills and knowledge of hardware and software
- good project and budget management skills.

Training

- Many network architects study part time for further qualifications.
- You could do CISCO Certification courses through the CISCO Networking Academy, which are available at Entry, Associate, Professional and Expert levels.
- You could study with the BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, towards professional qualifications including network management.

- You can also do manufacturer accredited courses such as VMWare and UNIX.
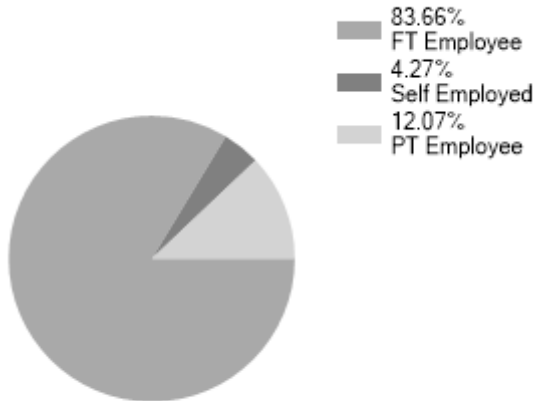
Getting On

- With experience, you can apply for promotion to a job as a project leader.
- You could specialise in cyber security.
- You might become self-employed and contract out your services as a consultant.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

83.66%
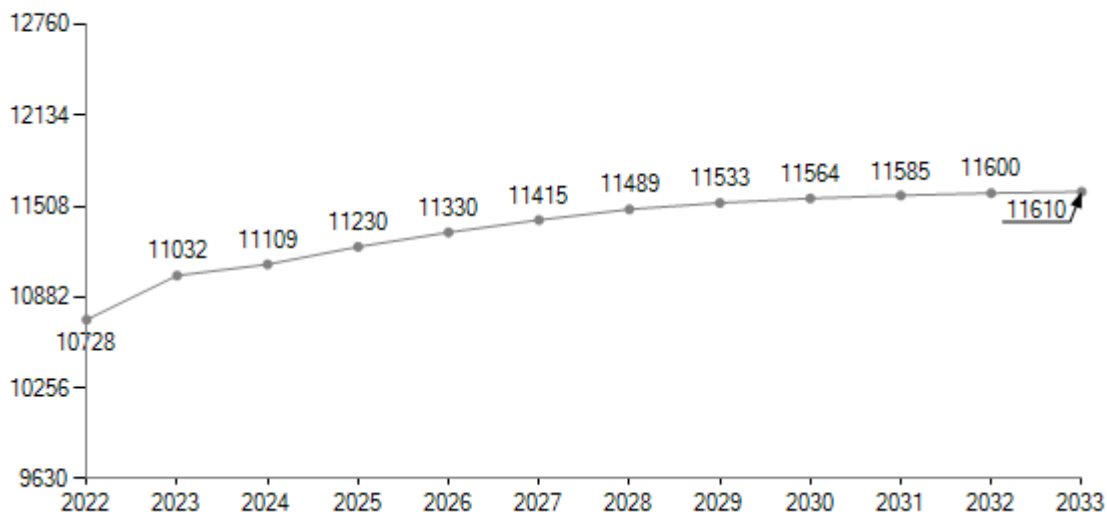FT Employee

4.27%
Self Employed

12.07%
PT Employee

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by LMI for All

Predicted Employment in Scotland

LMI data powered by Lightcast