

## **What Is a MAC Address?**

MAC (Media Access Control) addresses are globally unique addresses that are written into hardware at the time of manufacture. The MAC address is a unique value associated with a network adapter. MAC addresses are also known as hardware addresses or physical addresses. They uniquely identify an adapter on a LAN. MAC addresses are 12-digit hexadecimal numbers (48 bits in length).

## **MAC vs. IP Addressing**

Whereas MAC addressing works at the data link layer, IP addressing functions at the network layer (layer 3). It's a slight oversimplification, but one can think of IP addressing as supporting the software implementation and MAC addresses as supporting the hardware implementation of the network stack. The MAC address generally remains fixed and follows the network device, but the IP address changes as the network device moves from one network to another.