

Each chapter is divided into self-contained chunks, all related to the major theme of the chapter. For example, the chapter on hooking up the network cable contains nuggets like these:

- »» What is Ethernet?
- »» All about cables
- »» To shield or not to shield
- »» Wall jacks and patch panels
- »» Switches

You don't have to memorize anything in this book. It's a need-to-know book: You pick it up when you need to know something. Need to know what 100BaseT is? Pick up the book. Need to know how to create good passwords? Pick up the book. Otherwise, put it down and get on with your life.

Feel free to skip the sidebars that appear throughout the book; these shaded gray boxes contain interesting info that isn't essential to your understanding of the subject at hand. The same goes for any text I mark with the Technical Stuff icon.

If you need to type something, you see the text you need to type like this: **Type this stuff**. In this example, you type **Type this stuff** at the keyboard and then press Enter. An explanation usually follows, just in case you're scratching your head and grunting, "Huh?"

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

I'm making only two assumptions about who you are: You're someone who works with a computer, and you either have a network or you're thinking about getting one. I hope that you know (and are on speaking terms with) someone who knows more about computers than you do. My goal is to decrease your reliance on that person, but don't throw away his phone number yet.