

Computer networking has its own strange vocabulary. Although you don't have to know every esoteric networking term, it helps to be acquainted with a few of the basic buzzwords:



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- » **LAN:** Networks are often called LANs, short for *local area network*. In Figure 1-1, the LAN consists of the home router and the computers and iPad that are connected to it directly via cable or wirelessly.

LAN is the first *TLA* — or *three-letter acronym* — of this book. You don't really need to remember it or any of the many TLAs that follow. In fact, the only three-letter acronym you need to remember is TLA. You might guess that the acronym for *four-letter acronym* is *FLA*. Wrong! A four-letter acronym is an *ETLA*, which stands for *extended three-letter acronym*. After all, it just wouldn't be right if the acronym for *four-letter acronym* had only three letters.

- » **WAN:** The second TLA in this book is WAN. The WAN is part of the network that connects to the Internet. WAN stands for *wide area network*.

Okay, fine. Technically, WAN is the *third* TLA. The first TLA was LAN, and the second TLA was TLA. So that makes WAN the third TLA.

- » **On the network:** Every computer connected to the network is said to be “on the network.” The technical term (which you can forget) for a computer that's on the network is a *node*. Another term that's commonly used to mean the same thing is *endpoint*.

- » **Online, offline:** When a computer is turned on and can access the network, the computer is *online*. When a computer can't access the network, it's *offline*. A computer can be offline for several reasons. The computer can be turned off, the user may have disabled the network connection, the computer may be broken, the cable that connects it to the network can be unplugged, or a wad of gum can be jammed into the disk drive.

- » **Up, down:** When a computer is turned on and working properly, it's *up*. When a computer is turned off, broken, or being serviced, it's *down*. Turning off a computer is sometimes called *taking it down*. Turning it back on is sometimes called *bringing it up*.

- » **Local, remote:** A resource such as a disk drive is *local* if it resides in your computer. It's *remote* if it resides in another computer somewhere else on your network.

- » **Internet:** The *Internet* is a huge amalgamation of computer networks strewn about the entire planet. Networking the computers in your home or office so that they can share information with one another and connecting your computer to the worldwide Internet are two separate but related tasks.