

You can also browse the network from any Windows application program. For example, you may be working with Microsoft Word and want to open a document file that's stored in a shared folder on your network. All you have to do is use the Open command to bring up the dialog box, and then choose Network in the Navigation pane to view the available network devices.

Mapping Network Drives



TIP

If you often access a particular shared folder, you may want to use the special trick known as mapping to access the shared folder more efficiently. *Mapping* assigns a drive letter to a shared folder. Then you can use the drive letter to access the shared folder as though it were a local drive. In this way, you can access the shared folder from any Windows program without having to browse the network.

For example, you can map a shared folder named Data on the server named Win1601 Files to drive K: on your computer. Then, to access files stored in the shared Data folder, you look on drive K:.

To map a shared folder to a drive letter, follow these steps:

1. Open File Explorer.

- *Windows 7:* Choose Start ⇄ Computer.
- *Windows 8, 8.1, and 10:* Open the desktop and click the File Explorer icon on the taskbar, and then click Computer in the Location list on the left side of the screen.

2. Open the Map Network Drive dialog box.

- *Windows 7:* Access this dialog by clicking the Map Network Drive button located on the toolbar.
- *Windows 8 and 8.1:* Click Map Network Drive on the Ribbon.
- *Windows 10:* Click the Computer tab, and then click Map Network Drive.

Figure 3-4 shows the Map Network Drive dialog box for Windows 10. The dialog box for earlier versions of Windows is similar.

3. (Optional) Change the drive letter in the Drive drop-down list.

You probably don't have to change the drive letter that Windows selects (in Figure 3-4, drive Z:). If you're picky, though, you can select the drive letter from the Drive drop-down list.