

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Examining the basics of cloud computing
- » Looking at three kinds of cloud computing services
- » Understanding the pros and cons of cloud computing
- » Perusing a few major cloud computing service providers

Chapter 25

Life in Cloud City

The world's two most popular science-fiction franchises — *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* — both feature cities that are suspended in the clouds. In *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, Han takes the *Millennium Falcon* to Cloud City, hoping that his friend Lando Calrissian can help repair their damaged hyperdrive. And in the original *Star Trek* series episode “The Cloud Minders,” the crew of the *Enterprise* visits a city named Stratos, which is suspended in the clouds.

Coincidence? Perhaps. Or maybe Gene Roddenberry and George Lucas both knew that the future would be in the clouds. At any rate, the future of computer networking is rapidly heading for the clouds. Cloud computing, to be specific. This chapter is a brief introduction to cloud computing. You discover what it is, the pros and cons of adopting it, and what services are provided by the major cloud computer providers.