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## Chapter 5

# Planning a Network

Okay, so you're convinced that you need to network your computers. What now? Do you stop by Computers-R-Us on the way to work, install the network before drinking your morning coffee, and expect the network to be fully operational by noon?

I don't think so.

Networking your computers is just like any other worthwhile endeavor: Doing it right requires a bit of planning. This chapter helps you to think through your network before you start spending money. It shows you how to come up with a networking plan that's every bit as good as the plan that a network consultant would charge thousands of dollars for. See? This book is already saving you money!

## Making a Network Plan

Before you begin any networking project, whether a new network installation or an upgrade of an existing network, start with a detailed plan. If you make technical decisions too quickly before studying all the issues that affect the project, you'll regret it. You'll discover too late that a key application won't run over the network, the network has unacceptably slow performance, or key components of the network don't work together.