Some smaller networks take an alternative approach by enabling any computer on the network to function as both a client and a server. Thus, any computer can share its printers and hard drives with other computers on the network. And while a computer is working as a server, you can still use that same computer for other functions, such as word processing. This type of network is a *peer-to-peer network* because all the computers are thought of as *peers*, or equals.

Here are some points to ponder concerning the differences between dedicated server networks and peer-to-peer networks while you're walking the dog tomorrow morning:

>> Peer-to-peer networking features are built into Windows. Thus, if your computer runs Windows, you don't have to buy any additional software to turn your computer into a server. All you have to do is enable the Windows server features.

>> The network server features that are built into desktop versions of Windows (such as Windows 10) aren't particularly efficient because these versions of Windows weren't designed primarily to be network servers.

REMEMBER

If you dedicate a computer to the task of being a full-time server, use a special server operating system rather than the standard Windows desktop operating system. A server operating system is specially designed to handle networking functions efficiently.

● The most commonly used server operating systems are the server versions of Windows.

As of this writing, the current server version of Windows is Windows Server 2019. However, many companies still use the previous version (Windows Server 2016), and a few even use its predecessors, Windows Server 2012 and Windows Server 2008.

● Another popular server operating system is *Linux*. Linux is popular because it is free. However, it requires more expertise to set up than Windows Server.

>> Many networks are both peer-to-peer *and* dedicated-server networks at the same time. These networks have

● At least one server computer that runs a server operating system such as Windows Server 2019

● *Client* computers that use the server features of Windows to share their resources with the network

TIP

>> Besides being dedicated, your servers should also be sincere.