The way a specific policy is put into play is through a *Group Policy Object* (GPO). A GPO is a collection of one or more policies that are applied to either computers or users. For example, a single GPO might set the default Internet Explorer home page and also set Internet Explorer security options. When that GPO is applied to a computer or user, all the policies included in the GPO are applied.

A GPO that applies to a computer will be enforced for any user of the computer, and a GPO that applies to a user will be enforced for that user no matter what computer he or she logs on to. As a network administrator, you'll be concerned mostly with policies that apply to users. But computer policies are useful from time to time as well.

To use Group Policy, you have to know how to do two things: (1) create individual GPOs that specify which policies you want to apply, and then (2) apply — or *link* — those GPOs to user and computers. Both tasks can be a little tricky.

The trick to creating GPOs is finding the particular policy or policies you want to employ. Trying to find a specific policy among the thousands of available policies can be frustrating. Suppose that you want to force all network users to change their passwords every 30 days. Your users will hate you, but you decide to do it anyway. The good news is that you know there's a policy to do that. The bad news is that you have no idea where to find it. You'll find help with this aspect of working with Group Policy in the section titled "Creating Group Policy Objects," later in this chapter.

After you've created a GPO, you're faced with the task of linking it to the users or computers you want it to apply to. Creating a GPO that applies to all users or computers is simple enough. But things get more complicated if you want to be more selective — for example, if you want the GPO to apply only to users in a particular organizational unit (OU) or to users that belong to a particular group. You'll find help for this aspect of working with Group Policy in the section "Filtering Group Policy Objects," later in this chapter.

Enabling Group Policy Management on Windows Server 2019

Before you can work with Group Policy on Windows Server 2019, you must enable Group Policy on the server. The procedure is simple enough and needs to be done only once for each server. Here are the steps: