Another important aspect of managing software on the network is figuring out the most expedient way to install the software on multiple computers. The last thing you want to do is manually run the software's Setup program individually on each computer in your network. Instead, you'll want to use the network itself to aid in the deployment of the software.

Finally, you'll want to ensure that all the software programs installed throughout your network are kept up to date with the latest patches and updates from the software vendors.

This chapter elaborates on these aspects of network software management.

Understanding Software Licenses

Contrary to popular belief, you don't really buy software. Instead, you buy the right to *use* the software. When you purchase a computer program at a store, all you really own after you complete the purchase is the box the software comes in, the discs the software is recorded on, and a license that grants you the right to use the software according to the terms offered by the software vendor. The software itself is still owned by the vendor.

That means that you're obligated to follow the terms of the license agreement that accompanies the software. Very few people actually read the complete text of a software agreement before they purchase and use software. If you do, you'll find that a typical agreement contains restrictions, such as the following:

>> **You're allowed to install the software on one, and only one, computer.** Some license agreements have specific exceptions to this rule, allowing you to install the software on a single computer at work and a single computer at home, or on a single desktop computer and a single laptop computer, provided that both computers are used by the same person. However, most software licenses stick to the one-computer rule.

>> **The license agreement probably allows you to make a backup copy of the discs.** The number of backup copies you can make, though, is probably limited to one or two.

>> **You aren't allowed to reverse-engineer the software.** In other words, you can't use programming tools to dissect the software in an effort to learn the secrets of how it works.

>> **Some software restricts the kinds of applications it can be used for.** For example, you might purchase a student or home version of a program