To access a file that resides on a network volume that's mapped to a drive letter, all you have to do is use the drop-down list at the top of the dialog box to select the network drive.

You can map a network drive directly from the Open dialog box by navigating to the folder you want to map, right-clicking the folder, and choosing Map Network Drive.

TIP

If you try to open a file that another network user has opened already, Office tells you that the file is already in use and offers to let you open a read-only version of the file. You can read and edit the read-only version, but Office doesn't let you overwrite the existing version of the file. Instead, you have to use the Save As command to save your changes to a new file.

Using workgroup templates

Although an occasional sacrifice to the Office gods may make your computing life a bit easier, a template isn't a place of worship. Rather, a *template* is a special type of document file that holds formatting information, boilerplate text, and other customized settings that you can use as the basis for new documents.

Three Office programs — Word, Excel, and PowerPoint — enable you to specify a template whenever you create a new document. When you create a new document in Word, Excel, or PowerPoint by choosing File⇨New, you see a dialog box that lets you choose a template for the new document.

Office comes with a set of templates for the most common types of documents. These templates are grouped under the various tabs that appear across the top of the New dialog box.

In addition to the templates that come with Office, you can create your own templates in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Creating your own templates is especially useful if you want to establish a consistent look for documents prepared by your network users. For example, you can create a Letter template that includes your company's letterhead or a Proposal template that includes a company logo.

Office enables you to store templates in two locations. Where you put them depends on what you want to do with them:

>> **The User Templates folder on each user's local disk drive:** If a particular user needs a specialized template, put it here.