

Preface

The *Active Directory Bible* is your comprehensive resource for planning, installing, configuring, and managing the Microsoft Active Directory. The Active Directory, which is the core networking technology in Windows 2000, provides advanced directory service features that makes your network — regardless of its size — easier to manage and use.

Welcome to the World of Active Directory

You have heard plenty of things about the Active Directory. Some say the Active Directory is the best product Microsoft has ever produced — some say the Active Directory is still a baby that has a lot of maturing to do. No matter your position, we can all agree that the Active Directory is Microsoft's flagship product at the moment and that the Active Directory is here to stay.

The Active Directory is the foundational networking component in Windows 2000. The Active Directory completely revamps Microsoft networking from the days of NT and brings Windows networking to a hierarchical, directory service model. This model modernizes NT and paves the way for the future. With the Active Directory, you have more manageability, more support for network resources, standardized naming, and excellent query capabilities. In short, the Active Directory opens an entire new world for Windows.

Before I get too carried away with the details (which you can jump into in Chapter 1) and before I sound like I'm singing Microsoft's praises, let me just answer two questions I am asked quite frequently. The first is simply, "Do you like the Active Directory?" The answer is — yes, I do. Quite a bit, actually. The second question is, "Is the Active Directory perfect?" I usually smile and shake my head because you already know the answer. No — the Active Directory is not perfect, and there are some serious design issues Microsoft will need to address in the future. But in Microsoft's defense, I will say that the first release of the Active Directory is awfully good — and when you see the potential a live directory service can bring to a network, I think you will agree.

If you are reading this book, you are likely one of two people. First, you're a newcomer to Windows 2000. Perhaps you have joined the ranks of the technical professionals in search of a better career, and you know that Windows 2000 is a wise move. If that is you — you have come to right place. This book is all you need to learn all about the Active Directory and the technologies that make it tick.