

Preface

Most homes today have at least one PC for accessing the Internet, playing games, or keeping the family finances. Many homes have more than one PC, or the families are considering purchasing another computer for use by a spouse, teenager, and even younger children. If you have two or more PCs in your home, you can network them together to double and even triple the advantages you get from computing.

Home networking can be easy and fun. You can learn about the technologies while setting up your network, and after that, if you like, you can continue to explore the possibilities. Add to your network to make it more useful to you and your family. You can even extend the network to automate one room or your entire home. And it doesn't have to be expensive, either.

Why You Need This Book

If you are considering setting up your own home network, you can use *Home Networking Bible, 2nd Edition*, to guide you through the process. This book helps you plan and prepare for your network, purchase the appropriate equipment and software, install the networking equipment, and make it work with Windows, Macintosh, and even Linux.

From start to finish, you learn everything you need to complete the job without depending on multiple references, vendors, magazine articles, or other sources. Everything you need to know is contained in *Home Networking Bible*.

In addition to terminology and information, you will find helpful advice about choosing the appropriate hardware for your situation, tips on saving money, and more. Included in the text are the names of many manufacturers of home networking products and suggested retail prices for the equipment.

Whether you want to set up a simple network between two computers or you want to run e-mail over your network and attach your network to the Internet, you'll find suggestions on how best to complete the task in *Home Networking Bible*.

If you run your own home-based business, or even a small business office, *Home Networking Bible* helps by giving small business tips to make your venture more useful, efficient, and prosperous.

Who Should Read This Book?

Anyone who owns two or more PCs can use this book to learn how to connect them and get the most from the resulting network. If you want to work on your laptop while your young children run educational software on another computer, this book is for you. If you and your spouse have computer work and are always competing for the printer, this book is for you. If you're a teenager trying to bring your parents into the twenty-first century, *Home Networking Bible* is for you.

You might want to learn how to create Web pages so that you can start your own home business. *Home Networking Bible* shows you how to set up your own home Internet (called an intranet) that you can use for experimentation and learning.

If you own a small business and you want to make it easier for your employees to print and share files, *Home Networking Bible* offers advice on how best to accomplish this goal and more.

You might have both a PC running Windows and a Macintosh and wonder if you can network them. *Home Networking Bible* explains how to do it.

Maybe you want to learn more about the Internet, but your spouse is always online. You can learn how to share an Internet connection, use chat programs over the Internet, and more, by reading *Home Networking Bible*.

If you are a home user or a small business owner looking for information about setting up a small network, *Home Networking Bible* is for you.

What Is the Audience Level for This Book?

Home Networking Bible is written for beginning to intermediate users. You should understand how to use Windows, the Mac, and/or your Linux distribution, as well as basic applications, such as word processing programs, games (if you might use them on your network), or perhaps Internet Explorer. You don't have to be an expert in Windows, however. *Home Networking Bible* explains the steps you follow to install and operate any networking software. It also shows you how to connect the other computers and printers on the network—and then how to use them after you connect them.

In addition, you don't need to be familiar with networking hardware or software. *Home Networking Bible* explains networking terms, technologies, hardware, and software. It also gives you advice on how to purchase, install, and use networking hardware and software.

Beginning users should start at the beginning of the book to get the most out of it. The book builds on previous knowledge, so if you skip the earlier chapters, you might need to go back to read about terms, processes, or procedures.

Intermediate users can use the book as a reference. If you're familiar with networking basics but want to set up e-mail or your own intranet, for example, you can go directly to the relevant chapters to find out how.

What's in This Book?

Home Networking Bible is organized such that simple topics are presented first, with the subjects becoming increasingly complex as you progress through the book. The first parts of the book explain various network types and methods of preparing for setting up your network. The latter parts cover more specific and complex networking topics. Following is a brief description of each part.

- ♦ **Part I, "Making Basic Network Choices,"** helps you decide what type of network you need. It deals with questions such as what programs you want to use, how much money you want to spend, and others to help you plan your network. Part I also includes descriptions of the two network types and discusses their advantages and disadvantages, basic requirements, and other information about them.

- ◆ **Part II, “Planning and Setting Up Networking—Hardware and Software,”** first discusses topics you need to consider before setting up your network. Next, you learn about various methods of connecting (wiring) your computers together. Part II describes each method and its advantages and disadvantages, gives suggestions for purchasing and installing the wiring, and more. You are introduced to networking terminology and learn about specific products that make setting up the wiring easier. Also included in Part II is information about purchasing and installing other networking hardware necessary for setting up your network. You learn about installing the necessary software and configuring the programs, too. Finally, Part II describes methods of adding non-Windows computers to your network, such as Macintoshes, Linux boxes, and portable computers.
- ◆ **Part III, “Working with Networked Computers,”** explains how to use Windows, Macs, and Linux boxes over the network. It explains features that enable you to share your files, use printers on networked computers, log on to the network, find other computers on the network, and more. You also learn about managing printing over the network and protecting your files.
- ◆ **Part IV, “Adding the Internet, E-Mail, and an Intranet,”** explains how to expand your network. It shows how to use one Internet connection for multiple computers and explains the available Internet services. Part IV shows you how to set up e-mail for the Internet and discusses common and popular e-mail applications for the various operating systems. Also included in Part IV is information about setting up your own private Internet, called an intranet, and a discussion of how to approach the technologies that go into making up a Web page.
- ◆ **Part V, “Working with Files, Folders, and Applications,”** explains how to install and use network applications as well as how to work with files over the network. You learn about various networked applications, such as games and communications programs. Part V also covers backing up files and securing your files from accidents or malicious sabotage.
- ◆ **Part VI, “Managing the Network,”** covers Windows management tools you can use to make the network more efficient and effective. Windows includes network tools that can help you locate network problems and optimize the network. You can also use third-party applications to help manage your network.
- ◆ **Part VII, “Adding to Your Home Network,”** describes multimedia devices and intelligent homes. This part explains various multimedia devices, applications, and more. It gives you advice on buying sound and video cards, digital cameras and scanners, Web TV systems, and so on. You also learn about managing the multimedia in Windows. In addition, Part VII offers information about wiring your entire home with computers and devices to make your life easier and more fun.

The book concludes with a troubleshooting appendix to help you with network and connection problems, an appendix about using the TCP/IP protocol, an appendix about telecommuting and remote access, and a glossary of technical terms.

What Conventions Are Used in this Book?

Step-by-step instructions include a pathway to folders and programs, as in the following example: