**FIRST LOOKS**

Lotus' WordPro: Ami re-born as groupware

By John Lomberg

Lotus Development Corp.'s Ami Pro, a modest but likable product, fought a losing battle against the titans of word processing: Novell Inc.'s WordPerfect and Microsoft Corp.'s Word. In spite of its strong capabilities, it could never attain much market momentum. Now reconfigured as WordPro, the product emerges as a key element in Lotus' strategy. Less integrated in the aggregation of multiple features upon multiple platforms, WordPro offers a niche in the emerging workplace integration marketplace. It could become a strong component of the Lotus suite. Powerful word-processing tools and an effective user interface should counterbalance some complexities found in WordPerfect's word-processing groupware.

WordPerfect and Word for Windows are feature-rich. While WordPro has all the basics of Windows-based word-processing tools, it lacks some advanced features, such as a spell-checker, thesaurus, automatic spacing, and automatic page formatting. It does include a spelling checker, but it's not as sophisticated as those found in more advanced word-processing programs.

**Options:**

- Lotus WordPro
- Lotus Development Corp., Word Processing Division, Atlanta, Georgia 30345-5116, (404) 391-3307
- Price: $195 (license)
- Features: Draw, spreadsheet, database, and presentation tools
- Details: A word-processing program with a spell-checker, thesaurus, and automatic page formatting.

**Opinions:**

WordPro is a strong addition to Lotus' suite of products, offering a robust set of features that will appeal to users looking for a powerful yet user-friendly word-processing tool. While it may not be as advanced as some of its competitors, it offers enough features to meet the needs of most users.

**Macintosh start-up management utility**

**Conflict Catcher:** Extension management comes of age

By Fred D'Agostino

The case of trouble-shooting with utility software is among the most frequent problems faced by users. Conflict Catcher, a utility program designed to help with this process, is a valuable tool for any user who experiences computer problems. Conflict Catcher is easy to install and use, and most important, it is designed to prevent additional problems. Its appearance is reminiscent of Apple's Installer, but Conflict Catcher is a much more powerful and comprehensive tool.

**Opinions:**

- Conflict Catcher
- Gary & Steve Inc., Millbrae, Calif. (415) 344-9044, (415) 344-9042, fax: (415) 344-9043, e-mail: conflictcatcher@milbrae.com
- Price: $19.95
- Details: An easy-to-install utility for Macintosh computers that helps prevent software conflicts.

**Opinions:**

Conflict Catcher is a valuable tool for anyone who uses a Macintosh computer. It is easy to install and use, and it is designed to help prevent additional problems. It is a must-have for any user who experiences computer problems.

**Windows illustration software**

32-bit FreeHand passes CorelDraw

By Mike Nicosia

Professional designers committed to the Windows environment have two viable choices at the moment: Corel Corp.'s CorelDraw and Micropeer Inc.'s FreeHand. Both are designed for Windows 95, are priced in the same price range, and are capable of providing high-quality illustrations for Windows applications.

**Opinions:**

- FreeHand
- Micropeer Inc., 100 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, Calif. (415) 252-4700, fax: (415) 252-4701, e-mail: info@micropeer.com
- Price: $395
- Details: A 32-bit illustration program that is compatible with Windows 95.

**Opinions:**

FreeHand is a powerful illustration program that is capable of producing high-quality illustrations for Windows applications. It is easy to use and offers a wide range of features that make it an excellent choice for professional designers.