

► Word processing

Lotus' WordPro: Ami reborn as groupware

By John Lombardi 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 amass much market momentum. Now reconfigured as WordPro, the product emerges as a key element in Lotus' strategy. Less interested in the aggregation of multiple features upon multiple features, Lotus WordPro seeks a niche in the emerging workplace integration movement, where it's likely to become a strong component of the Lotus suite. Powerful workgroup tools and an effective user interface should counterbalance some complexities I found in WordPro's workgroup setup.

I looked at two beta versions of WordPro: one for Windows 3.x and one for Windows 95, which also runs under Windows NT. WordPro, which is scheduled to ship this summer, still has a ways to go. In its current state, Beta 2 for Windows 3.x is not very stable.

Nonetheless, it offers some hints about new directions. First, the product will have a reasonably rich collection of word-processing features. But if the beta is any indication, WordPro will lag behind

WordPerfect and Word for Windows in feature power.

Though WordPro has all the basic functions of a high-end word-processing program, it lacks a variety of specialized features, such as uneven newspaper columns, cross-references in text, footnotes and endnotes, automatic case change, and cut and paste by rectangular block.

What WordPro does have is an extensive suite of group-editing and version-management features and a

host of new user-friendly dialog boxes for managing standard functions. You can handle multiple versions of the same document with great ease, and you can take a number of versions of the same document and consolidate them into one document with the differences clearly marked. You can also use WordPro to manage the work of multiple editors of a single document. Each editor gets a name and a color, and you can review the combined changes and suggestions and notes of each editor in a common document.

WordPro has a slew of ease-of-use features. It divides documents using normal section divisions, but it adapts the common spreadsheet convention of creating tabs for each section, so you can quickly flip to the section you want.

Its dialog boxes for formatting text and handling frames and graphics operate live. When you change anything in the dialog box, such as font size or attributes, the affected text changes immediately. This makes trial-and-error adjustments easy, even if you don't know quite what you're doing.

Similarly, find and replace and the spelling checker have bar modules. This means that when you begin a spelling check a multiline bar with commands and options appears at the top of the screen. You can then move from the text to the bar and back without entering and

BETA

Opinion: ☺

Lotus WordPro
Lotus Development Corp.,
Word Processing division, Atlanta
(800) 343-5414, (404) 391-0011

Price: \$105 (street)
Pros: Excellent workgroup tools; much improved user interface; strong editing tools.
Cons: Complex workgroup setup; slightly less powerful than competitors; many features not yet implemented.

► Macintosh start-up management utility

Conflict Catcher: Extension management comes of age

By Fred DeLiso

THE TASK of troubleshooting conflicts among Macintosh extensions has always been time-consuming and tedious. Casady & Greene Inc.'s Conflict Catcher streamlines this process and virtually eliminates any guesswork, making it possible for anyone to isolate and fix various compatibility problems. From the novice home computer user to the IS manager, anyone who uses a Macintosh stands to benefit from this gem.

I found Conflict Catcher 3 to be easy to install, use, and — most important — it introduced no additional problems. Outwardly, its appearance is reminiscent of Apple Computer Inc.'s Extensions Manager, and it fulfills that function quite elegantly.

But this is no mere manager of links; Conflict Catcher can diagnose and troubleshoot various system conflicts and problems — including disk-related errors.

One of my favorite features is the capability to link two or more extensions; this comes in handy

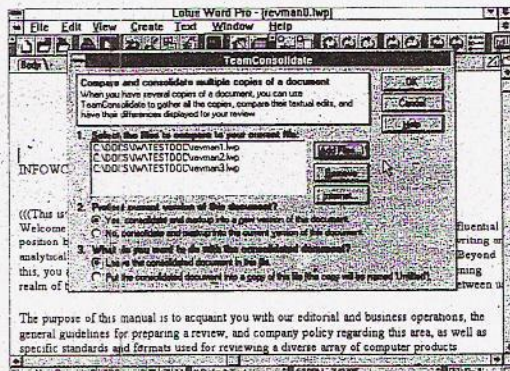
Opinion: ☺

Conflict Catcher
Version 3
Casady & Greene Inc., Sallinas, Calif.
(800) 359-4920, (408) 484-9228;
fax: (408) 484-9218; E-mail: CBG@casady.com

Price: \$79.95.
Pros: Easy to install and to use; amazingly feature rich in a league of its own.
Cons: Could not contact publisher.

when you have groups of extensions that must all be loaded to enable some system function or other. For example, Apple CD-ROM, Audio CD Access, and Foreign File Access must all be loaded to take full advantage of an Apple CD-ROM drive. In this case, you would link these three files so that whenever you select one of them, the others are automatically selected, saving quite a bit of time and confusion. You can also utilize this feature to make two incompatible extensions mutually exclusive — that is, whenever one is selected, the other is deselected automatically.

Fred DeLiso is a multimedia developer. His Internet address is fdeliso@eshop.com.



WITH WORDPRO's strong tools and effective interface, you can easily view editors' remarks and consolidate their work in a single document.

exiting a spelling module.

The program has a number of features for import and export, for linking files, and for managing graphics. If these perform as anticipated in the final version, they will strengthen this product. In the cur-

rent betas, however, many of these features simply crash the program.

In short, just when the word processing wars seemed to lose intensity, WordPro signals the opening of another front: workgroup editing and integration of documents.

► Windows illustration software

32-bit FreeHand passes CorelDraw

By Mike Heck

PROFESSIONAL designers committed to the Windows environment have two viable choices at the moment: Corel Corp.'s CorelDraw and Macromedia Inc.'s FreeHand. CorelDraw 6.0, designed for Windows 95, should be ready in a few months. But FreeHand 5.0 is here now — with a very admirable collection of illustration tools. (If you're wondering about Adobe Illustrator for Windows, the next version is not imminent.)

FreeHand 5.0 matches the capabilities of its Macintosh counterpart and betters the current CorelDraw 5. For example, FreeHand's open architecture lets you drop in special effects or additional functionality. I enjoyed working with Macromedia add-ins such as 3-D rotation, smudge, and multicolor gradation tools. It was especially easy to drag colors to the Gradient dialog and create sophisticated shading effects with as many as 64 colors.

Moreover, effects that you'll find with other products — starbursts and spirals, for example — are easier to accomplish with FreeHand because you manipulate the effect right inside your

drawing. For editing, I used the updated Dragging Knife tool to interactively slice through objects, thereby creating several new shapes in one step.

Another time-saver is drag-and-drop colors and styles. I created style sheets for both text and graphics and then easily applied global changes without having to manually select each object.

Version 5.0 lets you open multiple views, which I found helpful when working with an illustration at different magnifications; you can zoom to 25,600 percent to see the smallest detail.

Opinion: ☺

FreeHand
Version 5.0
Macromedia Inc., San Francisco
(800) 288-4797, (415) 252-2000;
fax: (415) 626-0554; Web: http://www.macromedia.com

Price: \$595; \$149 to upgrade
Pros: Open architecture for special-effects drop-ins; comprehensive text handling; drag-and-drop colors and styles; high precision.
Cons: A few commands could be more logically placed.

Opinions:

- ☺ Buy it!
- ☺ Worth a look
- ☹ Nope

► Innov

3D

By Andre

T'S AL an int develop Fax, fr gies Ir Because almost thinking closer loc uct. 3D F fer one o machine standard files via and let r 3D Pa transform bit-mapp Image. T white b densely Then, u: fax/mod Image to fax/mod machine Informa; machine fax/mod gram), 3 the fax d One r need the

► Wind

Mic to r

By Jeff Sy

F MOV your g intere of sele soft C number some wri value and entertain My fav collection can sche routine i save you t headache nance. If any system is install jobs — a tion; Dis different to easily e these jobs them, wh