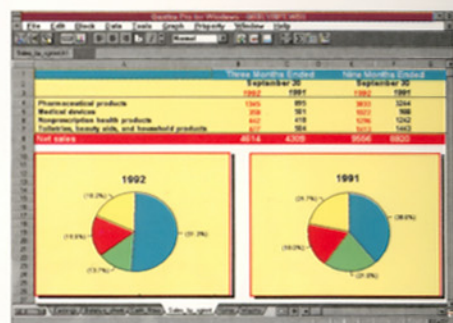




Unlock Your SQL Data: Nine Tools For Query, Analysis, And Development

Image-Editing Software: Is This The End of the Darkroom?



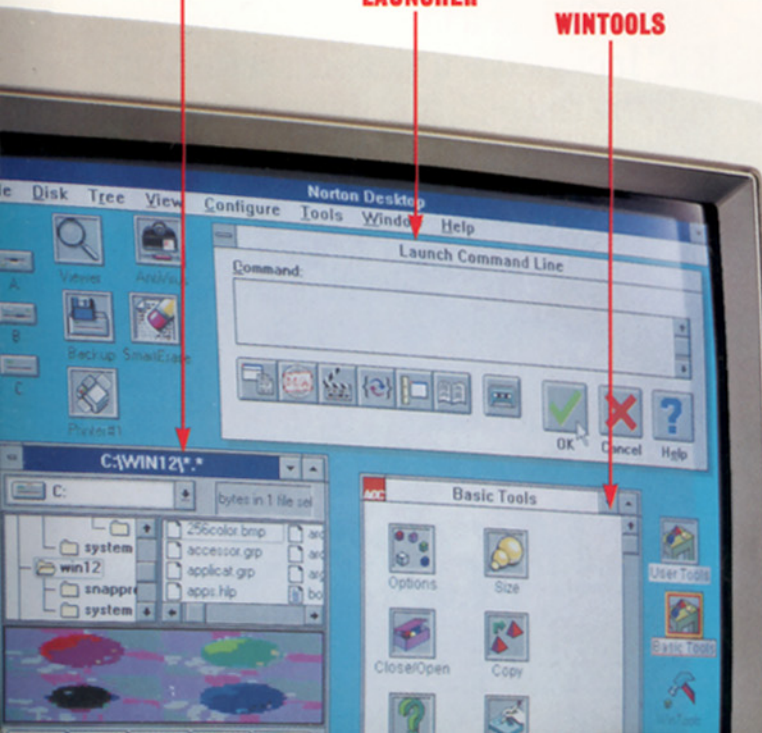
Preview: Quattro Pro for Windows Is Worth the Wait

20 Windows Desktops

THE NORTON DESKTOP FOR WINDOWS

hDC POWER LAUNCHER

WINTOOLS



Programs That Help You Organize, Automate, and Manage WINDOWS

PLUS

Eight Ways to Expand Your Desktop



WINDOWS DESKTOP MANAGERS

Everybody's got their own idea about how Windows should look and work. Those who use it "out of the box" find plenty of ways—personalized program groups, hotkeys to move between favorite applications, and the like—to adapt Windows' desktop environment to their own de-

20 Ways to Remodel Your Desktop

Run Windows the way you want to with one of these customizable file, task, and/or program managers.

by Rock Miller

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PHOTOGRAPH BY RALPH MASULLO

THE NORTON DESKTOP FOR WINDOWS

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Windows Desktop Managers

tions access to a virtually unlimited list of recently used files.

Picasso, Synergy's icon manager extraordinaire, uses the Multiple Document Interface (MDI) to allow access to multiple icons and icon libraries (even under Windows 3.0). You can move icons among libraries simply by dragging and dropping. Picasso also provides icon editing tools that surpass anything else on the market. They perform tasks such as moving icons and making raised or lowered borders around icons. Another Synergy feature, SynAppShot, lets you capture any part of the screen (a task button from a program button bar, perhaps), adjust its shape and size to that of a standard icon, and drag it to Picasso for editing.

ALMOST SYNERGISTIC

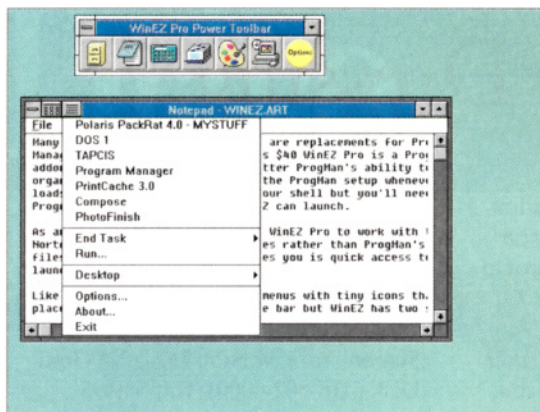
Less exciting Synergy modules include the lackluster File Find, a multimedia audio player, a scheduler, and a program that adds miscellaneous visual and audio special effects.

As a first-version product, Synergy is very impressive. Eclipse and SSL are both powerful tools; combined with the superb "extras," Picasso and Psychic, they are a hard act to beat. SynApps is not resting on its laurels, however: An upgrade is expected this fall which addresses some of the batch language problems and adds file manipulation operations and some clipboard-oriented utilities.

New Generation Software Corp.

WinEZ Pro**BY BARRY SIMON**

Many of the programs reviewed here are replacements for Windows' Program Manager. New Generation Software Corp.'s \$39.95 WinEZ Pro, Version 1.0, however, is a Program Manager enhancement, adding value in the form of quick access to a launch menu and a task list. The package makes no attempt to improve on Program Manager's ability to organize groups; it simply reads the Program Manager setup whenever it loads. Consequently, you cannot use WinEZ Pro as your shell, and you'll need Program Manager (or another shell program like The Norton Desktop for Windows) for managing the applications that WinEZ Pro can launch.



WinEZ Pro provides an iconic toolbar and two small icons that appear on the title bar of the active window and give you access to drop down menus, including a task list.

LITTLE MORE THAN EASY

As with Squeezegee, you access WinEZ Pro's menus with icons that are placed on the active window's title bar. WinEZ Pro, however, has two such icons to Squeezegee's one. Clicking the right-hand icon summons up a task list (a roster of currently running applications) plus an End-Task command, a run box, and a Save Desktop submenu in which WinEZ Pro lets you save up to eight desktop configurations.

Clicking the left icon on the title bar

SUITABILITY TO TASK	
WinEZ Pro	
	POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT
Customizing desktop	● ● ● ○
Managing files	N/A
Automating work flow	N/A
Controlling environment	● ● ○ ○

FACT FILE**WinEZ Pro, Version 1.0**

New Generation Software Corp., P.O. Box 9700, Dept. 271, Austin, TX 78766; 800-964-7638, 713-283-6760; fax, 512-388-4053

List Price: \$39.95.

Requires: Windows 3.0 or later.

In Short: WinEZ Pro is a quick-access launcher that reads Program Manager or The Norton Desktop for Windows groups each time it loads at your option. Two buttons on the title bar give you instant access to these launch groups and to a task list.

474 ON READER SERVICE CARD

with the left mouse button brings up a launch menu containing your Program Manager (or NDW) program groups. The groups will be listed in alphabetical order, with the exception that you can specify one of your groups to appear first.

Clicking the left-hand icon with the right mouse button launches the WinEZ Pro Power Toolbar, a button bar of the programs in the group that appears first in the menu. The Power Toolbar can be minimized and accessed directly, if you want.

With no file management capabilities, no scripts, and no way to add items not in your Program Manager/NDW groups, WinEZ Pro is little more than a minimalist task-switching/task-launching utility. Yet, those looking for super quick access to launch and task lists will find New Generation Software's WinEZ Pro an attractive tool.

Tool Technology Publishing Inc.

WinTools**BY EDWARD MENDELSON**

Tool Technology Publishing's \$149 WinTools, Version 1.0a, is an alternative Windows environment—or perhaps it's a state of mind.

As an environment, it is an extravagantly customizable replacement for Program Manager and File Manager. With it, you can create program groups that automatically run everything inside them and can contain other groups. WinTools also lets you schedule groups to launch their contents at specified times, select different fonts and colors for every item on-screen, replace some or all of WinTools' icons with text-only labels, or display only icons without text.

As a state of mind, WinTools is a heroic attempt to present Windows in terms of programming "objects," instead of files and documents. WinTools is organized in fundamentally different ways from Windows or DOS—although you do your real work in the same applications you've always used—and you have to be willing to retrain yourself if you want to make WinTools worth using.

*Windows Desktop Managers***THE TOOL'S THE THING**

In WinTools you use tools and tool containers called desks instead of files and groups; tools even replace most menus or keystrokes. You get help, for example, by dropping a tool on the Help tool, not by pressing F1. You don't modify a tool by opening an Options menu, but by dragging it to the Options tool. You even use a tool to close and open other tools, al-

though the program mercifully lets you open tools by double-clicking.

If you use WinTools as your replacement shell—it makes no sense to use any other way—the product provides an object-oriented substitute for Windows' Task Manager. Instead of a list of running programs, it displays a map of up to 16 virtual desktops, with open applications displayed graphically. (See the sidebar

"Navigating the Windows Workspace with Virtual Desktops.")

A WinTools tool looks like an icon with a frame around it. Desks that contain tools are themselves tools, and you can group desks into supertools called desk sets.

You start with a set of desks that match your Program Manager groups, and a set of "basic" tools with names like Copy,

■ The Cabbage Patch

by Barry Simon

It seems like a new Windows desktop replacement is born every day. While we were testing the 20 shipping products for this review 6 more were still in beta testing. One, Vivace, shipped just too late to make our testing deadline; the others are expected to be released by the time this article is printed or shortly thereafter. We will take a brief look at all six products.

PC-Kwik Corp. (503-644-5644; formerly Multisoft), known for its disk cache program of the same name, will release a \$129.95 utilities package called WinMaster. A central part of the program is a toolbox for launching applications; subtoolboxes can also be created. (Toolboxes, button bars, and icon bars are definitely in this year!) In addition, the package contains a system-reporting utility, called KwikInfo, and a program that compresses and archives files, called KwikVault. WinMaster's Power Scope is a file-allocation-table analyzer with more depth than any other program to date—Microsoft Windows or DOS. Also included is a Windows version of the company's disk defragmenter called Power Disk, which includes a defragmentation scheduler.

Hewlett-Packard Co. (408-720-3000) is working on a product called Dashboard for Windows. This \$99 program places a dashboard-like horizontal bar on your Windows screen. Along the top of the dashboard are small folders that open windows that look and act like the correspond-

ing Program Manager groups. The main part of the dashboard contains quick-launch buttons, a clock, control of a virtual desktop, visual gauges for free resources and memory, and quick access to printer setup.

Paper Software (914-255-0056) should release Version 2.0 of SideBar by the time you read this. The \$49.99 product (\$39.99 if ordered directly from the company) places a somewhat real-estate-hogging vertical or horizontal bar on your screen. The bar can show one or two windows, which can display either an array of task and drive icons or a file list. A menu provides access to your Program Manager groups. File operations are executed via drag-and-drop or menus.

Workspace, from ARK Interface (206-654-4189), uses lovely bitmaps to create a screen that looks like a real office with a desktop. With this \$149 product, you work in projects and assign programs to realistic-looking tools on the desktop. The version we saw looked quite attractive, but the program's functionality was far from fully implemented.

The \$145 Vivace, Version 1.0, from Digital Equipment Corp. (508-493-5111), feels like a stripped-down NewWave. It places an object-oriented shell around the DOS file system. The basic objects that appear on your desktop are files based on templates. Programs are either "editors" that have associated files or "tools" such as a calculator. Windows' File menu is replaced by an Action menu. It does not have all the richness or power of

NewWave, but it is much easier to grasp.

XTree Co. (805-541-0604) will be releasing their eagerly awaited XTree for Windows, a \$99 File Manager replacement. The beta version we saw was quite mature and included a button bar as well as numerous file viewers. XTree handles the creation and viewing of zipped files particularly well. You "mount" them onto your list of drives, after which a simple drag-and-drop will add a program to the zipped file. The viewers even work inside zipped files, a feat previously accomplished only by Lotus Development Corp.'s Magellan.

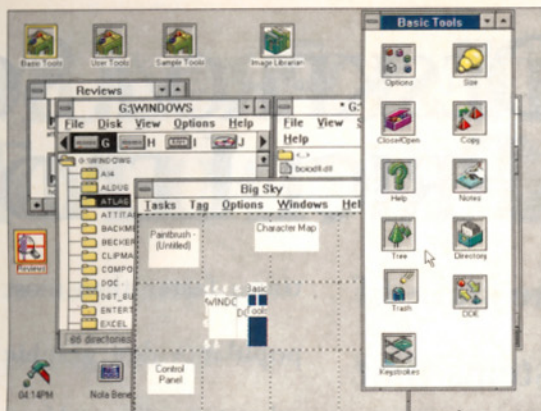
BRIEFLY NOTED

Three more packages came to our attention in the late stages of preparing this article:

Golden Retriever, Version 2.0: a modified, licensed version of Ready, Aim, FILE! for Windows, due to ship well before you read this; \$99 from Above Software Inc.; 800-344-0116; fax, 714-851-2285.

Powerstrip, Version 1.0: a Mac-like "universal" menu bar featuring program launching and drag-and-drop file compression; \$79 from Abbott Systems Inc.; 800-552-9157, 914-747-4171; fax, 914-747-9115.

proFOUND Desktop Manager, Version 1.1: an object-oriented replacement shell with both program launching and file management capabilities; \$99 from Computer Knacks Inc.; 908-530-0262; fax, 908-741-0972. □



WinTools' task list, shown at the center of the screen, is a map of its virtual screens. Other tools, shown at the top of the screen, are provided by the program. The Reviews icon contains files that can all be launched at once.

Size, Tree, Keystrokes, and Trash. You create new tools by dragging files to the desktop or dragging them into desk tools or desk sets.

Tools can have convenience features you won't normally find in Windows. If you drag a tool to the Notes tool, you can open a text file and annotate the tool. You can thus create help files for any tool, and they will be displayed when a user drags the tool to the Help tool.

SUITABILITY TO TASK

WinTools

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Customizing desktop	●	●	●	●
Managing files	●	●	●	○
Automating work flow	●	●	●	○
Controlling environment	●	●	●	●

FACT FILE

WinTools, Version 1.0a

Tool Technology Publishing Inc., 1125 A St., #107, San Rafael, CA 94901; 800-793-3701, 415-459-3700; fax, 415-459-1079

List Price: \$149.

Requires: Windows 3.0 or later.

In Short: WinTools is an elaborate object-oriented shell for Windows with unmatched customization options, but it has a fundamentally different style from that of Windows itself. If you are willing to put in the effort needed to tame it, WinTools can organize and automate your work to an almost unmatched degree.

475 ON READER SERVICE CARD

SPECIAL TOOLS FOR SPECIAL JOBS

Two special types of tools let you automate keystrokes and send DDE messages to applications. Unfortunately, you can't record the keystrokes you want to play back in a keystroke tool; you have to type in names like Ctrl-F10. In order to create a DDE tool, you need to understand the basics of DDE programming, but the result can be worth the effort if you need to automate complex functions. The sample DDE tools that are provided with the package work erratically, though, and the toolbars in which they are located can't float above the applications with which they work.

You can use WinTools to help control access to Windows in the office. Settings in an .INI file let you limit a user's rights to alter a tool or open tools other than the ones that you have specified. Because you can display tools with images or text only, you can arrange tools in the form of icon bars or menus—a method that uses WinTools object-orientation to convert Windows into a traditional menu-driven system.

An Image Librarian utility stores icons that you can use to represent any tool. It automatically imports icons from your Program Manager groups and can add images captured from the screen. It can also extract icons from other files, although it failed to find the icons in many recent Windows utilities. Tool Technology Publishing had no explanation for this problem.

WinTools' proliferation of tools and icons can ultimately save you labor—though at first they may only confuse you. You will probably spend a lot of time tracking down stray icons and deleting empty tools, and you will have to set aside many hours for careful customizing before it begins to pay dividends. You will also have to live with bugs that constantly force you to realign icons that WinTools leaves scattered about. Above all, you must embrace WinTools' object-oriented methods, which struggle constantly—and with mixed success—against the DOS files and applications that underlie Windows itself. □

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & -3 & 0 \\ 3 & 5 & \sin(3.0) \\ 4 & 7 & \ln(4.5) \end{bmatrix}$$

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