

Shells, Interface Enhancements, file launchers

Product	Company	Phone	Price	In short
Dashboard 2.0* (*EDITORS' CHOICE)	Borland International Inc. Scotts Valley, CA	800-533-0004	\$49.95	Dashboard, the slickest of the light shells, is a horizontal utility bar that sports pop-up launch lists, quick-launch buttons, and virtual desktops. It's even strong enough to be a Program Manager replacement.
Do-Over! 1.0a	Kansmen Corp. Milpitas, CA	800-200-9881	\$59.00	Do-Over! lets you dramatically revamp the appearance of all aspects of Windows, making any element bigger, bolder, and more garish. Novices will find that its launch bar, which resembles the Taskbar planned for Windows 95, makes application switching a mere breeze.
FrontRunner 1.03	Phar Lap Software Inc. Cambridge, MA	800-292-9622	\$139.00	FrontRunner provides a powerful command line interface for Windows users who still prefer the speed and efficiency of the DOS prompt. It also offers easy launching for Windows apps.
Hotwin 3.5	TMA Software Del Mar, CA	800-497-3617	\$49.95	Hotwin's cornucopia of add-ins includes a quick-access button on the current application's bar and the ability to tear off any menu as a floating toolbar. Nine virtual desktops let you spread your work out. The only downside is an unaesthetic graphical design.
K-U-I 1.1	Softac Corp. Winchester, MA	617-721-1010	\$39.95	K-U-I, a Task Manager replacement, lets you use Windows with hotkeys rather than mouse clicks. It also includes a command line, file management, and a mouse-simulation feature.
METZ Task Manager 2.11	METZ Software Inc. Bellevue, WA	800-447-1712	\$49.00	METZ Task Manager's strengths as an enhanced Task List lie in its 20 quick-launch buttons for applications. It also includes a Run box, a search utility, file management tools, and a resource monitor. METZ Task Manager is on the light side but easy to use.
The Norton Desktop for Windows 3.0	Symantec Corp. Cupertino, CA	800-441-7234	\$179.00	The huge Norton Desktop collection is a giant bundle of useful add-ins, including an enhanced shell and file manager, myriad viewers, the best set of disk utilities available, a powerful batch language, antivirus tools, and backup features.
OnTop 1.0	Thoughtware Inc. Helen, GA	706-865-9688	\$49.95	The least obtrusive launcher we saw, OnTop is an ultrathin strip about the size of a title bar. But its scant ten launch buttons, high system-resource usage, and problems running at high screen resolutions make it a poor choice.
PC Tools for Windows 2.0* (*EDITORS' CHOICE)	Central Point Software Inc. Beaverton, OR	800-964-6896	\$179.00	PC Tools shines with an ultraslick desktop, a virtual desktop manager, a system consultant, an icon editor, and a superb file manager. Its batch language and disk utilities don't match Norton's, but its strong core makes it the kitchen-sink utility of choice.
Plug-In for Windows 2.2	Plannet Crafters Inc. Alpharetta, GA	800-651-1000	\$20.00	Plug-In's substantial improvements to Program Manager include multiple routes for quick-launching applications, the ability to nest groups, and large icons. It's comparable to WindowMagic but offers more launching power.
Praxim 1.0* (*EDITORS' CHOICE)	Wesson International Inc. Austin, TX	800-634-9808	\$39.95	This versatile enhanced command line will delight DOS diehards, and the power of the Praxim Command Set will extend their reach. If you love your keyboard, this is a heavy hitter.
Salvation 1.2	Vitesse Inc. La Puente, CA	818-813-1270	\$20.00	Salvation offers a comprehensive, integrated replacement for both File and Program Manager in a single desktop. File-launching and -management functions are only a mouse click away.

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SideBar for Windows 1.0	Quarterdeck Office Systems Inc. Santa Monica, CA	800-354-4757	\$59.95	SideBar provides nested folders, launchable desktop icons, and launching from file lists on a fully drag-and-drop-enabled desktop. But weak file management is the Achilles' heel of this otherwise nicely functioning shell.
SpinWizard 1.1.1a	Tanisys Technology Inc. Austin, TX	800-460-7746	\$79.95	SpinWizard offers quick access to up to 96 file applications and macros through macros placed on what looks like a rotating carousel. It's great for basic launching—but not much else.
TabWorks 1.1	XSoft (a division of Xerox Corp.) Palo Alto, CA	800-428-2995	\$49.00	A simple but effective shell based on a visual three-ring-binder metaphor, TabWorks is especially helpful to new users. Its unobtrusive on-screen task switcher lets you easily shuttle between files and applications.
Third Dimension 2.1	Lucid Corp. Richardson, TX	800-925-8243	\$49.95	Third Dimension, a Program Manager replacement, offers 20 tools that provide file and disk management, automated backup, a resource monitor, and several ways to dress up Windows. Its promise is offset by a complex interface and a few bugs.
ToolPAL 2.0	Digital Artistry Plano, TX	214-232-3310	\$34.95	The most flexible of the button-palette creation tools, ToolPAL uses buttons not just to launch applications but also to send menu commands to applications or paste in saved Clipboard contents. It is marred by rather terse documentation and on-line help
WindowMagic 3.0	WinWear Inc. Bellevue, WA	800-803-9358	\$49.95	WindowMagic enhances Program Manager by letting you assign icons to closed Program Manager groups and pop up a launch menu of group items when you right-click on a closed group. Additional modules include a printer-driver manager and an enhanced Windows exit.
WinMaster 1.52	PC-Kwik Corp. Beaverton, OR	800-274-5945	\$129.00	WinMaster's strong suit is the ease of setting up toolboxes for launching applications or other toolboxes. Disk utilities round out the package. The only downside is the relatively high price.