APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Hamilton C Shell Speeds Development Of OS/2 Applications

By Ann Sussman

Hamilton Laboratories, of Wayland, Mass., this month shipped the Hamilton C shell, one of the first tools to streamline OS/2 application development. The program makes writing large OS/2 programs faster and more convenient, said Douglas Hamilton, the firm's founder.

"If you're doing OS/2 software, you need a language to describe things that you can't easily do by just pointing and clicking with a mouse," he explained.

Based on the C shell that comes with most versions of Unix, the Hamilton C shell provides an environment for OS/2 that Unix developers will find familiar, Hamilton said.

"It adds a nice working layer on top of the standard OS/2 working environment," according to Scott Kukshtel, a

Hamilton \C Shell Brings DOS, OS/2 To Unix Programming Environment

senior software engineer at Lotus Development Corp., in Cambridge, Mass., and an early purchaser of the product.

"It's something an ordinary user can benefit from, not just professional developers," he added. "It has everyday features that would be handy, for example, for someone who wants to build their own batchstyle applications."

Another early user, Bill Hazard, a senior software engineer at Cadre Technologies Inc., in Providence, R.I., called the product a neat bridge between the DOS and Unix programming worlds.

"OS/2 doesn't provide some of the richness of a C programming environment that folks familiar with Unix know," he explained. "The Hamilton C shell takes the DOS and OS/2 user to a Unix environment which was designed to support C application development."

The new C shell provides constructs for condition testing, iteration, procedures and aliases, as well as for variable and expression manipulation, Hamilton said.

It also can handle complex programming functions, including arbitrarily nested commands, and has features for recalling a previously entered command. Taking advantage of OS/2's multitasking capability, the tool also lets a user specify programming tasks to run in the background.

The Hamilton C shell comes with 37 utilities, including ones for locating and moving files. It features 28 built-in functions, or algorithms, for manipulating file names, character strings and mathematical values.

The C shell, which Hamilton developed on his own, is composed of some 35,000 lines of code. It is the only C shell on the market for OS/2, according to Hamilton and other software engineers.

"Other software houses haven't had the time to develop one yet," Hamilton said.

Priced at $350, the C shell runs under OS/2 1.0 or in a Presentation Manager window under OS/2 1.1, and is available immediately in both 3½-inch and 5¼-inch disk format.

The Hamilton C shell is shipped with its own 56-page manual that assumes users have a certain amount of Unix programming expertise.

"The documentation would be all right for a Unix developer," according to Hazard, "but DOS developers will need to supplement it with a book on C shell language."

"If they learned a DOS shell, users should have no problem going on and learning an OS/2 C shell based on Unix," commented Lotus' Kukshtel.

For information, call Hamilton Laboratories at (508) 358-5715. ∎