

Groupware Pioneer

LiveWire leads the way into the future of collaborative computing

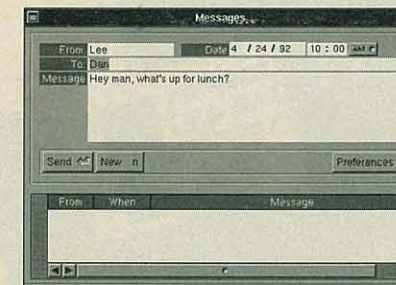
by LEE SHERMAN

Interpersonal computing has been one of NeXT's key buzzwords for several years, but only NeXTmail was trotted out to prove the concept. Now Adamation has shipped the first true piece of groupware for the NeXT. LiveWire is a technology for near-simultaneous group work across a network. In its current incarnation, it focuses on a group-document editor but also includes an intercom-like module called Bureau and promises of future hooks to other software.

LiveWire's document editor is on a par with Write Now but allows for multiple simultaneous users. Currently, collaborations are limited to text editing and the ability to drag in RTF, EPS, and TIFF files with their contents immediately reflected in the LiveWire window. Using the Lip Service panel, you can record voice messages for others in your workgroup. Voice cannot be transmitted across the network in real time, though, so it can't be used for live conferencing. LiveWire will also work via a modem hookup, assuming you've already established a dial-up con-

nection. Adamation promises to add graphics tools in the future.

Bureau is used to send messages across the network like NeXTmail, but without the delay. It also doesn't require you to keep track of user addresses. Instead, it maintains a link to NetInfo, providing Bureau with an internal database of network information.



Bureau can be used to send live messages to other users across a network

LiveWire is a shrinkwrapped product but provides an architecture for other third-party developers to turn their single-user applications into fully functional groupware. Users will see real benefits as developers like Pages and Right-Brain use LiveWire's architecture to turn their single-user versions into groupware.

For groupware to work, you need a virtual network to which individual users can be instantly added and new groups can be established on the fly. LiveWire takes a democratic approach to the virtual network — anyone can join the group at any time and each user is an equal participant in the process of composing a document.

Group editing requires a means for locking down a portion of a

document to prevent conflicts when

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LiveWire



One of the first true pieces of groupware, LiveWire allows multiple users to work collaboratively on the same document over a network. Limited to simple text editing and sharing of sounds and graphics.

\$195 per node (four-node minimum)

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