

untitled window, and user-defined rectangle options, and although it captures only to the clipboard, it adds the abilities to rotate images in ninety-degree increments, and to shrink and expand the bit maps it grabs. Launch Pad can either flash an icon, present you with a message, or run other programs or *Synergy* command scripts at predetermined intervals (figure 2), the aforementioned *Psychic* helps with many of the repetitive file-related tasks that DOS-based computers are so clumsy at, and *Eclipse*, the gem of the package, lets you create customized button palettes to quickly call your most frequently-executed tasks, and either assign them to individual programs, let them work globally, or serve as clients of Program Manager (see figure 3). Unfortunately, all have problems. Launch Pad is clumsy to work with, especially when rescheduling tasks or making them repeat automatically, and on some systems, you may not be able to reload saved Launch Pad files, which SynApps has no explanation for. Also, if an event's assigned time passes and Launch Pad is inactive, the event simply goes away—options regarding how this problem is handled are imperative. *Psychic* doesn't work with all applications, and may work for a given program when you open files, but not when you save them (or vice versa). *Eclipse* has the potential to delete buttons when you resize your button palettes, and although it includes the welcome ability to superimpose captions over the icons that other similar programs are limited to, it requires several steps to resize a button palette, which can get old, fast.

Beyond any of this, the central focus of *Synergy* is its scripting language. In hDC's *Power Launcher*, this feature is thinly documented but easy to use, allowing you to build complex scripts by clicking buttons. In *Synergy*, the scripting language requires some programming acumen, but enables you to do much more and provides enough text to let you figure out how, if you're inclined. Unfortunately, this approach plays to programmers, instead of users. There's some really terrific introductory prose on programming theory, and the language includes both low-level commands and some interesting high-level ones like `AppendClipboardText` and `MCISend`, plus a great editor that prompts you with command syntax automatically, but it's a programming language, period. If *Power Launcher* is appropriate for power users, *SSL* is aimed at an even more proficient target.

We'll stand by the statement that *Synergy* is a great value, but on the whole, it just isn't very good software. yet. SynApps is working on many of the problems we've enumerated, and we'll let you know when this one is ready.

Synergy
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\$129.95

Rooms for Windows
XSoft

Imagine that you're Xerox.

You were, arguably, the company that invented the idea of the graphical user interface, and you've sat by passively as everybody and their sister has claimed a piece of the huge market in software that the conceptual advance has created. It's time to act. You start by seeking retribution in the courts, but you also jump into end-user software. XSoft is born.

As their first product, XSoft released *Rooms*. In a twist on the already-popular "virtual desktop" idea that has made products like Attitash Software's *WideAngle* a top seller and extended the usefulness of hDC's *Power Launcher*, *Rooms* presents *Windows* users with the best thought-out metaphor for work areas yet. You start *Rooms* in a hallway area ("Overview"), and put your tools (programs) in different "Rooms", where they serve as windows . . . aww, you get it.

Yes, it's cliché, but it works.

We've had opportunities to examine many different software solutions to the problem of too-little monitor space and weak organization skills, and *Rooms* comes closest to being