

**From:** Christopher Graham [chrisgr]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 24, 1993 5:37 PM  
**To:** Bob Atkinson; Chase Franklin; Craig Wittenberg; Harel Kodesh; Philippe Goetschel; Rao Remala; Tony Williams  
**Subject:** Office Shell Plan



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Here's an updated draft of the Office shell plan. Paul Maritz has asked me to present it to a group of senior people including him, JimAll, BradSi, PeteH, etc. next week. Whether do it depends on whether we can demonstrate enough benefits that apps would take advantage of, to outweigh the obvious risks.

Comments appreciated.

Thanks,  
Chris

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## Office Shell Ideas and Issues

### Plan

Bundle a Windows shell with "Chicago Office": Enhanced shell designed for great app synergy.

### Schedule

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Q2/94                        | - Chicago ships with a "non-extensible" shell (See below for details.)  |
| Chicago + 6 months           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OLE extensible shell optimized for Office ships with Office.</li> <li>- Not initially available with Windows itself</li> <li>- Office includes versions of apps designed to work well with the enhanced shell</li> <li>- The Office shell should be conceptually a superset of Chicago shell (although maybe based on Cairo code base.)</li> </ul> |
| Any time after Office ships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cairo ships with a shell that is a superset of the Office shell, but excluding any components or extensions that we choose to keep only for Microsoft Apps.</li> <li>- Cairo shell extended to use special features of Cairo</li> </ul>  |
| When Cairo ships             | - Enhanced shell added to Chicago   |

Note: An alternative would be to add the Office shell back into Chicago when Office ships. MS Apps should still have a significant development lead, and making the Office shell immediately become the Chicago shell would reduce the window of opportunity for other ISVs to do their own shells.

### Pros:

- Chicago team can concentrate on shipping within their memory targets and schedule because they don't need to add OLE support or provide as much extensibility.
- Office gets a shell optimized for its use.
- Office gets a big jump on competitors in creating apps optimized for the new shell.
- Since the new shell is bundled with Office, we don't have to assume that it needs to run on Win 3.1. (Issue: Actually, this would require bundling all of Chicago with Office.)
- Assuming the Office shell is upward compatible to the Cairo shell, then Office apps will be automatically much more optimized for Cairo.

### Cons:

- Risk of ISV retaliation.
- Negative impact on corporate image.
- Might delay release of Excel 6, Word 7 and other Office apps to do work necessary to leverage shell.
- Might require some delay of Chicago to allow non-shell enhancements needed to support Office shell

### Features

Chicago shell includes:

- Combined program manager and file manager
- New visuals
- Context menus, drag/drop, NDD, etc.
- Not extensible e.g. Explorer not extensible (Capone hard coded into explorer)
- OLE 2.0
- Simple Idispatch enabling of shell. (So Excel 5 VBA can get the benefit of being the only language that can program the shell.)
- If there is a tray, it is not extensible, and not replacable
- No vbasic

- No "simple shell"?
- Same applets as currently planned, but more limited version of mail
- Should we push switching to SDI?

Ideas for what the Office shell could add:

- OLE extensible Explorer
- OLE extensible desktop
- OLE extensible tray
- Some solution to MDI/SDI issue
- Explorer extensions to browse into app document types: OLE Objects in Docfiles, Excel workbooks, Clipart files, etc.
- VBA, including ability to automate cross-app scenarios that include the shell.
- New tray designed for maximum benefit to cross-app requirements of Office
- OLE-based workbook
- Enhanced commdlg.dll
- Enhanced mail: Add back what we took out of Chicago mail. Also add features for synergy with Office apps.
- Useful objects that could be placed on the OLE-container enabled desktop:
  - Information displays such as Post It Notes, data fields, tables.
  - Controls like buttons or sliders, that could activate VBA scripts.
  - Graphical indicators like warning or status lights, gauges, or even charts.
  - Special purpose information containers such as "document piles", "parts bins", etc.
  - Communication devices or devices that interact with the "Microsoft At Work" office
  - Decorations, such as clip art, pictures of one's family, etc.
- Can some support for smart folders and/or project folders be added at this point? VBA programming of smart folders.
- LoisO's document library. Supported on desktop and in File Open, etc. Cairo doc mgmt should be upward compatible.
- Commdlg code sharing with apps in shell/office bundle
- Toolbar code sharing with apps in shell/office bundle?
- Ren?
- Investigate feasibility of adding multiple, switchable desktops

Cairo shell adds

- Query based Explorer
- Smart folders
- Project folders
- Other features necessary to work with OFS/DFS, security, etc.
- Infobooks

**Assumptions**

- The Office shell would start with the Cairo shell code base, but would be subsetted and adapted to run on Chicago, and shipped in time for Office.
- The office "shell infrastructure" would still be developed and productized by Systems. However, the Integrated Office group would in parallel develop extensions that would ship simultaneously and appear as a seamless part of the shell and Office. Some of these extensions might eventually become part of Cairo and Chicago 2.
- Since Chicago shell does not need all the bells and whistles, it should now be easier to meet its schedule and memory goals.
- Office shell can require (a little) more memory
- We would have a little more time to design apps synergy features into Office shell
- Changing apps to SDI would be more feasible because of the opportunity to optimize the shell itself as the working environment for Office.

- "Integrated Office 1" would be redefined as Office Shell + Office Apps.
- There is lots more brainstorming to do about how to leverage this opportunity.

#### Issues

- Will OLE and docfiles have the performance for Chicago to support the above features well enough?  
I assume we will do a lot of performance tuning, but will this be enough, especially for storage.
- Need to determine ASAP any features needed in Chicago to support enhanced shell. e.g. What do we need in USER for planned features?
- Can enhanced shell change handling of minimized windows using tab bar?
- Can we change window title bars in enhanced shell?
- Relation to Ren? Probably Ren should be targeted at enhanced shell.
- Would need to ensure compatibility of enhanced shell with 3rd party apps
- What staffing would be required? How to organize?
- Keeping in sync with Chicago and Cairo versions. There's no way we can support three complete separate code bases. We'd need to divide the responsibilities clearly.
- Base enhanced shell on Cairo shell code?
- Do we also include the shell with the non-office versions of our apps?