Introducing LogoEnsemble

by Gary Stager

Logo Computer Systems, Inc. recently released a new and exciting version of Logo called *LogoEnsemble*. LogoEnsemble is built on the foundation of a robust version of LogoWriter, but is enhanced by never before available functionality.

LogoEnsemble combines word processing, telecommunications, database, and spreadsheet capabilities in a Logo environment. The software is currently available for a 1 meg Apple IIgs. (LogoWriter for the Macintosh is now also available from LCSI.)

A Bigger and Better LogoWriter

Users of other LogoWriter versions will feel at home with LogoEnsemble. Everything you know how to do will still work. In fact, you can import Logo programs and text from the Apple IIe version of LogoWriter and entire pages from the Apple IIgs version. You can even use pages created on a PC, if you use the telecommunications features.

Text in LogoEnsemble can be displayed in 40 or 80 columns. You can create 4 color graphics in the 80 column mode and 16 color graphics in the 40 column mode. You can also change the color of the text and it's style with new primitives for Bold, Italics, and Underlined text.

LogoEnsemble allows you to use the mouse to edit shapes, text, and move the turtle (all of the cursor key movements work also.) Every LogoEnsemble page has it's own shapes editor complete with 90 shapes. This means that you no longer have to worry about running out of shapes or creating subdirectories! You can rotate shapes in the shape editor in 90 degree intervals and with the push of a button print either side of the shapes page!

New primitives (and some long-missed ancestors, such as Local) have been added to LogoEnsemble. *(see sidebar on page 5)*

A Complete Logo Environment

In a landmark 1971 article, *Twenty Things to Do with a Computer*, Cynthia Solomon and Seymour Papert provided a vision of the many ways computers (and Logo) might be used effectively in the educational environment. The technology is just now becoming powerful enough to make some of their predictions reality.

There is considerable debate in the Logo community with some people arguing that Logo has lost its way as an environment for learning mathematics. Proponents of this view contend that the addition of other features, such as word processing, to Logo may detract from the power of Logo as a "Mathland." These advocates use the heavy math content of *Mindstorms* in support of their view.

I have a different perspective on this matter. All one needs to do is read *Twenty Things to Do with a Computer* or any of the early MIT Logo memos and you will find that many of the the initial and current developers of Logo environments viewed Logo as an intellectual laboratory and vehicle for self expression in which children can construct personal meaning in many ways and in many different domains. The Logo philosophy (and the NCTM Standards) is the antithesis of segregating mathematics from other disciplines and intellectual pursuits. Mathematics was highlighted in *Mindstorms* because Seymour Papert is a mathematican and the book needed a vivid and unifying metaphor.

When LogoWriter was first published, Seymour Papert was adamant that kids needed better tools than business - not "hand-me-downs." The tool provided to children must be able to be shaped by the educational culture and each individual learner. Tens of thousands of copies of Appleworks have been purchased by schools, yet few substantive educational benefits have been demonstrated by schools using Appleworks (or other similar "productivity tools"). The relationships between learners, knowledge, the curriculum, and the larger educational community has not changed significantly in "Appleworks"