Paperback Disappoints

WORD PROCESSORS

EXECUTIVE WRITER COULD BE GOOD WITH SOME WORK, PAPERBACK WRITER IS NOT WORTH BUYING AT ANY PRICE

BY JOHN LOVIXARD

Every kind of software seems to be a candidate for Adam Osborne's Paperback Software approach of making packages as inexpensive as possible—and word processing is no exception. In this case, Paperback has delivered two word-processing packages, Executive Writer and Paperback Writer, the latter being a subset of the former. Neither is going to amaze you, though for about $34.95 ($59.95 for Pentagon), Executive Writer offers satisfactory word processing, and for another $19.95 ($30.95 for Pentagon), Paperback Writer should never be more than a middle-range program. It has some interesting features, and a new, coprocessor-based disk drive make the paperback packages worth considering for those who don't care about a full-featured word processor.

EXECUTIVE WRITER handles all of the chores of editing and formatting the text on a document and can handle documents, headers, and footers, including, and can even insert a graphic image into the text (if you have a graphics printer and an IBM graphics board). The program can make use of a reasonable list of fonts and printers. We tested the program with the IBM 633 and Epson FX-100.

Test entry and modifications occur quickly and easily within the editing portion of the program. Print and replace and other common editing tasks work as expected. It is easy to switch between insert and overwrite modes, although it is a bit tedious to use the insert mode with the program, you will find it useful for editing your documents.

The program has some nice features for which there has been some demand. Instead of keeping your entire worksheet in memory, you can store it on floppy disk. In addition, you can store documents in a spreadsheet format, which is useful for managing large documents. The ability to save documents on disk also makes it easy to share documents with others.

PAPERBACK WRITER is a subset of the Executive Writer program and is intended for users who don't want or don't need all the features of the full program. It is less expensive than Executive Writer and offers some basic features for those who don't require a full-featured word processor.

PRODUCT DETAILS

Executive Writer

Pentagon

Price: $34.95

Executive Writer is a subset of the full program and offers basic features for those who don't require a full-featured word processor.

Paperback Writer

Pentagon

Price: $19.95

Paperback Writer is a subset of the full program and offers some basic features for those who don't require a full-featured word processor.

SUMMARY

Executive Writer is a powerful tool, but it lacks some features that are common in other word processors. Paperback Writer is a good choice for those who want a simple, inexpensive word processor.

STAFF PAIRED

1986

The InfoWorld staff paired with the Executive Writer and Paperback Writer programs and found both to be useful for their needs. Executive Writer provided the features needed for in-depth editing and formatting, while Paperback Writer offered a simpler, more straightforward approach to word processing.

The InfoWorld staff recommends Executive Writer for users who require advanced features and Paperback Writer for those who need a basic word processor.

STAFF PAIRED

1986

The InfoWorld staff paired with the Executive Writer and Paperback Writer programs and found both to be useful for their needs. Executive Writer provided the features needed for in-depth editing and formatting, while Paperback Writer offered a simpler, more straightforward approach to word processing.

The InfoWorld staff recommends Executive Writer for users who require advanced features and Paperback Writer for those who need a basic word processor.

STAFF PAIRED

1986

The InfoWorld staff paired with the Executive Writer and Paperback Writer programs and found both to be useful for their needs. Executive Writer provided the features needed for in-depth editing and formatting, while Paperback Writer offered a simpler, more straightforward approach to word processing.

The InfoWorld staff recommends Executive Writer for users who require advanced features and Paperback Writer for those who need a basic word processor.

STAFF PAIRED

1986

The InfoWorld staff paired with the Executive Writer and Paperback Writer programs and found both to be useful for their needs. Executive Writer provided the features needed for in-depth editing and formatting, while Paperback Writer offered a simpler, more straightforward approach to word processing.

The InfoWorld staff recommends Executive Writer for users who require advanced features and Paperback Writer for those who need a basic word processor.
SOME WORK, AT ANY PRICE

EXECUTIVE WRITER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Executive Writer</th>
<th>InfoWorld</th>
<th>Executive Writer</th>
<th>InfoWorld</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error Handling</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY

Executive Writer has potential but it needs work. It has a flexible printing program and can handle smaller documents well enough to merit a better rating. It is slow on larger documents, and its user interface is somewhat confusing. We found errors that are not explained in the documentation.

PRODUCT DETAILS

List price: $199.95. Version tested: 1.1. Available for the IBM PC, PS/2, and PC XT, AT, and compatibles running MS-DOS 2.1 or later. Requires 10MB RAM (20MB for one disk driver). One disk drive recommended. Published by SmartStar, 1550 S. Ocean Dr., North Bay Village, FL 33062. (305) 848-1111.

PAPERBACK WRITER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Paperback Writer</th>
<th>InfoWorld</th>
<th>Paperback Writer</th>
<th>InfoWorld</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY

Paperback Writer is a powerful form of Executive Writer with all that program's features but fewer of its drawbacks. Although it is slow compared to the printing program offered by the manual, it provides an excellent set of tools for creating and editing documents. It does require more memory than most programs, but this is offset by its speed and flexibility. The manual is well written and easy to follow.

PRODUCT DETAILS

List price: $99.95. Version tested: 1.2. Available for the IBM PC, PS/2, and PC XT, AT, and compatibles running MS-DOS 2.1 or later. Requires 128KB RAM (256KB for one disk drive). Second disk drive recommended. Published by SmartStar, 1550 S. Ocean Dr., North Bay Village, FL 33062. (305) 848-1111.

As long as the file size is smaller than 32,000 to 40,000 characters — about 35 single-spaced pages — the editor works quickly and conveniently and meets a higher rating than it has received. Once the file exceeds this limit, however, the program begins to slow down, greatly slowing operation. In a small file, movement from top to bottom is instantaneously. The same action in a file of 72,000 characters took two minutes, twice as long as WordStar (3.55) on the same diskette.

Layouting and printing the entire document is rapid for files of less than 32K and considerably slower for larger files. Blocks of text no larger than 32K characters can be moved, deleted, or stored on a diskette. It is possible to restore a deleted block under most circumstances. Another feature allows the creation of macros of up to 100 characters, accessible by typing STuff and a number on the top line.

Executive Writer does not tell you when you are within a document. There are no page numbers on page breaks on the screen, and the program does not show line numbers or column markers, making it difficult to work with large documents. It does provide some counters that can be used to count words, documents, or anything on a page (up to 999). Although the manual does not mention this feature, the counters can be used to count a letter, word, or any number of characters. A special command allows the entry of footnotes that will be printed at the bottom of a page with the correct number. Unfortunately, the program allows only 320 words for all the footnotes, even for a single footnote on a single page. Executive Writer's printing program has been improved.
RABBITS INSTEAD OF TURTLES

EXPERLOGO GIVES THE MAC A TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL TOOL THAT IS POWERFUL AS WELL

BY STEPHEN SATCHELL
Postnet Board

E ver heard of turtle graphics? How about LOGO? If you have, you probably heard about them from a kid who was learning about computers with the LOGO programming language, one of the best ways to get acquainted with the technical underpinnings of computer systems. The most popular and widespread version of LOGO uses the color and graphics capabilities of the Apple II computers.

The Macintosh, however, does not have colored graphics. Although the Macintosh does warn the user to check for adequate disk space, there is no indication of how much extra space should be reserved for the color overfile disk used in creating a large document. The help screens are quite good.

Nevertheless, in some cases the information appearing on the screen, such as maximum block size, is not in the manual, leaving the user to wonder where to look for desired information. Some error messages have no explanation, either on the screen or in the manual, such as the message: "NEGATIVE BUFFER" we received while trying to reorient a file.

Even worse, a similar message indicates that if you have a full disk, you may lose some files. But you must edit the program to check disk space. When you fill the disk, the program stops and does not allow you to recover; it also stops the current process. This is not as bad as it sounds, however, because when you try again, you can simply go back to the point at which the program saved the current state.

Paperback Writer, for its part, merits a short mention. It is just a stripped-down version of Executive Writer, not worth investigating. It has the same editor with fewer editing features. It does not have a print or page number, and it has the date and time.

 educational software

A special feature of this program is its capability to insert graphic screen images into the printed text. The image reproduced on the paper is an exact duplicate of the graphic screen and resides in a special disk file available during printing. A separate program converts any visible graphics screen image into the correct format for printing on a graphics printer, such as the Artograph 2000. This feature works well, although the quality of the printed graph is not as good as that produced by the 2000 printer.

Executive Writer is relatively easy to use. The paperback manual offers a methodical approach to the program, but the main documentation for the program suffers from serious defects. In an effort to present an easy-to-use program, the manual avoids technical information. Although this is understandable, it is not adequate for the serious user, who needs advice on the technical issues that arise in using a computer.

The manual is vague about file size. It says nothing at all about what the program does with large files and gives no warning about the amount of disk space required to handle large files. Although the manual warns the user to check for adequate disk space, there is no indication of how much extra space should be reserved. The manual does warn the user to check for adequate disk space, but it is not clear how much extra space should be reserved.

This review was written by Stephen Satchell, who is currently a senior staff engineer at IBM.

"Time"

Every fri
Now.
Mar 13 83

Harvard, MA

8

83 • May 13, 1983 • InfoWorld