

incorporated into a footer but not into a page number.

DOCUMENTATION: For the most part, the documentation for PFS Write does provide a good role model. The content of PFS Write's documentation is comprehensive, but in our opinion, the writing style is not quite as easy to follow as the language of Micropro's documentation for Easy.

EASE-OF USE: The program's simple menus and good documentation combine to make any user feel like a fast learner. An increase in power in comparison to earlier versions is offered in Version C. All 10 function keys and 10 shift-function key combinations are used for commands during the type/edit mode. If you have a short memory for such commands, pressing the help key will display their purposes. Shift-F8 opens a window and displays options for enhancements: boldface, italics, superscript, and subscript.

We don't particularly like the requirement of pressing F5 and marking the letters, words, or lines to be changed before using the shift-F8 key to select the specific enhancement. It is not the easiest way to do it, though it isn't terribly difficult. And it is an improvement over the method used in the earlier releases of PFS Write.

Text deletions can be restored or undone. The last deletion made is stored in a block buffer. If you make an incorrect deletion or change your mind about it, you just position the cursor and press F6. The last deletion is instantly inserted.

A unique, useful feature is the addressing of envelopes for the letter you have just completed and printed. While in the print menu, select E at the option "single/double/envelope (S/D/E):" and press the enter key. The screen clears and displays the instruction, "Put a new envelope in the printer." Do so and press the enter key. The program seeks and instantly finds the address lines at the start of the letter and prints them onto the envelope.

ERROR HANDLING: The program is bomb-proof in that it survived intact all our serious attempts to destroy it, crash it, or lock it up. Beeps alert your attention and error messages are clearly and unambiguously displayed.

SUPPORT: Our NEC Spinwriter, model 7710, was not listed among the 72 choices on the printer menu. Seven other NEC models were listed, none of which produced usable printouts with the 7710. Our call for customer support, on a Friday morning, gave us the answer within two minutes of the first try: Use selection 0 from the printer menu. It worked fine, properly printing boldface and underlined text exactly where called for.

Volkswriter's Revision Sports Better Manual, Improved Speed

Volkswriter, one of the first, best, and easiest to use of the IBM PC-compatible word processing programs, has undergone several revisions, improving each time. The current revision, Version 2.2, offers enough refinements over Version 2 to warrant an updated review. (See "Volkswriter Deluxe," April 16, 1984.)

Volkswriter Deluxe, Version 2.2 offers a better manual, faster operation, and support for the IBM PC AT and Topview. Most of the program's other features remain unchanged.

The manual has been improved. It is well-presented, excellently written, and fairly complete, although we would have liked a more elaborate index. It is especially clear on the procedures for adapting various printers to get maximum benefit from the program's great flexibility.

This incarnation preserves the capability to display any IBM PC character on the screen and print any available character on the printer. The fact that the screen characters and the printer characters can be defined independently represents an advantage of Volkswriter. Moreover, Version 2.2 includes a much larger range of supported printers, among them the HP Laserjet. The printer files now also include the simple but much needed feature of software handshaking, through an XON/XOFF feature, which informs the user that the printer and the computer are communicating with each other.

Volkswriter now works at least twice as fast by our benchmarks and accommodates documents up to 1 megabyte, providing sufficient disk space is available for text that is larger than the available internal memory. Version 2.2 comes with one utility program that takes advantage of the capability of IBM's Enhanced Graphics Adapter to produce a 43-line display. We tested this on an IBM PC AT with the IBM color monitor and found the results excellent. Another utility sets the repeat rate for the IBM PC AT keyboard within an effective range of two to about 30 repetitions per second, producing some interesting effects.

Volkswriter now works under Topview.

Several copies of Volkswriter can be running at the same time; with Topview, it is possible to cut and paste between copies with some care. As long as the window is large enough, Volkswriter works well in this mode.

While Volkswriter remains a leading contender in the word processing derby, many of the minor problems identified in the previous review remain unresolved in this version. There are still no hyphenation facilities, no place markers, and minimal on-line help. However, the annoying lack of documentation for printer installation has been fixed, so you no longer have to be a printer expert.

This version continues the Volkswriter tradition of flexibility, power, and ease of use, and adds enhanced speed, a variety of IBM PC AT features, and extended printer support. The price remains the same at \$295, and the program is not copy-protected. (Version 2.0 and 2.1 owners can upgrade for \$30, and owners of Versions 1.0 and 1.2 can do so for \$103.)

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— John Lombardi

PFS Plan Adds Enhancements In New Version For Apple II Line

Although rows and columns by any other name are still a spreadsheet, Software Publishing Corp. has made some creative enhancements to the old micro workhorse. Loyal PFS users will probably love the Apple II PFS Plan with its occasional use of the return key. Visicalc or Multiplan users, on the other hand, may be surprised at how different it seems.

We used an Apple IIe with an extended 80-column card and two disk drives for this review. The program requires 128K of random-access memory, which allows storage of up to 70 rows and 36 columns in the computer's memory. We recommend two disk drives to avoid disk swapping. This program accesses the main disk frequently and at unexpected times.

Like its IBM PC counterpart (see "PFS Plan," December 31, 1984), PFS Plan tries hard to avoid computer jargon both on the

screen and in the manual, all in keeping with the corporation's philosophy of making its programs accessible to new or casual users. Formulas refer to row or column heading names or groups of similar names rather than individual grid locations. Formula boxes appear on the screen at your request to the left of the row headings (column one) and above column headings (row one). By entering formulas such as total sales for a row, totals for all columns are automatically placed in that row. Thus, the chores of formula entry and replication are greatly simplified. Disk access is also simple and comes from a main menu, from which you can design, edit, get, save, or remove files and print, clear, or copy disks.

Plan takes advantage of the Apple's function keys and includes a handy template to make editing and cursor movement easier. You can access a variety of specific functions such as formatting, formula entry, quick entry of dates, special cursor movements, and recalculations with just two keystrokes. You also have the luxury of columns that automatically adjust if you make an entry that won't fit.

Although you can create your own formulas, Plan has several keyword formulas built in. These include total, average, minimum, maximum, cumulative, grow, previous, start, NPV (net present value), FV (future value), and payment.

PFS Plan can use data files from PFS File, the firm's file management program. However, you must first create a worksheet to correspond with your PFS File data, and all data must be converted into an 80-column format, which may require a little extra-planning. We moved data from PFS File to a worksheet fairly easily. PFS Plan files can be read by PFS Write for further editing, but the trip from File to Plan to Write is one way only.

The manual is comprehensive and well-written. It focuses on examples from the world of accounting in the tutorials. Procedures for accessing other PFS products are also explained well. Our only complaint here is the lack of diversity in the examples.

PFS Plan is a good value for \$125, especially if you're hooked on the other PFS programs — they do offer a high degree of integration.

After using all of the popular spreadsheets, we were surprised at how different PFS Plan was from the others, with its heading indentations and other unusual features. This product should appeal to new spreadsheet users and old-timers alike.

Software Publishing Corp., 1901 Landings Drive, Mountain View, CA 94043; (415) 962-8910.

— Doug and Denise Green

Software

Summaries of reviews before September 2, 1985, used a four-disk rating system. We now use a five-disk system.

■■■ **Ability (Xanaro Technologies)** — Ability is a complete, well-integrated program with a common command structure throughout, easy movement of information from one module to another, and an excellent tutorial and on-line help. Its few weaknesses are slow screen updating, limited printer support, and toll calls to Canada for support. (5/13/85)

■■■ **Accountant (Decision Support Software)** — Appropriate even for accounting novices, the Accountant can be used for keeping track of home or small-business accounts and can transfer either current or end-of-month balances for the current year to Visicalc, 1-2-3, or Multiplan for further studies. (8/12/85)

■■■■ **Advanced Business Ac-**

countant (Manzanita Software Systems)

— A well-designed, complete double-entry bookkeeping system for the Apple II, this program is as close to a "10" as we've found among accounting packages. It is easy to install, even though it requires a hard disk, and easy to use, with a complete menu structure. It handles errors well and the documentation is top-notch. (8/12/85)

■■■ **Bank Street Filer (Broderbund Software)** — A nicely done, low-end file manager for home or school use. It will satisfy some small-business needs, but if it had an integral mailing label printing routine, which is available now as a separate, \$70 package, it would be even more useful. For ease, the program is hard to beat. (8/19/85)

■■■ **Business Management Series (IBM)** — The General Ledger Edition is massive in its capabilities and requirements but targeted at small and medium-size businesses that probably cannot afford the price of software, hardware, and the necessary training for the series. Unfortunately, support is an additional, substantial

expense for this series. (5/6/85)

■■■ **Click On Worksheet (T/Maker Graphics)** — A spreadsheet with graphics packaged as a desk accessory. Click On Worksheet is a good product at a reasonable price. It serves its role with aplomb and has been written well enough to keep the novice out of trouble. (7/29/85)

■■■ **Connectables (Touchstone Software)** — A low-speed, software-only network scheme. The Connectables permits IBM PCs and compatibles, Macintoshes, Unix-based machines, and DEC VAX superminicomputers to be interconnected either directly or by modem. Although the maximum speed is rather slow, no special hardware is needed, making this an interesting — though probably temporary — solution for those needing a network system now. (7/15/85)

■■■ **Cornerstone (Infocom)** — A relational database program with the unusual capability to allow multiple entries in one field. Despite some easy-to-use features, its confusing menu structure detracts from its

simplicity of operation, and it is flawed by slowness and lack of a macro or programming capability. It is a potentially good product, though. (5/6/85)

■■■ **Crunch (Paladin Software)** — This powerful and well-designed spreadsheet with graphics and database capabilities makes excellent use of the Macintosh's interface and even performs its own audits. It lacks a macro facility, is difficult to navigate about the worksheet, and cannot transfer files to or from any other application in its current version. (8/5/85)

■■■ **Deskset Plus (Bellsoft)** — Deskset Plus is a series of RAM-resident programs that gives you instant access to a number of desk accessories such as calculators and telephone dialers. Performance varies among the available modules, but the strengths of the series can outweigh the limitations. (7/1/85)

■■■■ **Desqview (Quarterdeck Office Systems)** — Desqview is an inexpensive MS-DOS windowing program that lets you run up to nine programs at once. It is