

Close-Up allows one PC to look at what the other PC is running. PC operators can talk via the chat window, and the Support user can control the Customer's program remotely.

The session-auditing features are outstanding. The transaction log provides a handy mechanism to capture billing and management information. The screen snapshots and the session recorder are good tools for a number of purposes, including analyzing problems, saving the session for later review, documenting, and creating visuals for a presentation. When the session is done and Support hangs up, the status on the Customer's menu still shows "Connect." It should show "Off-Line."

We consider the problems we encountered

in our testing to be minor in view of Close-Up's overall versatility and wide range of features, which earn it a very good performance rating.

DOCUMENTATION:

There are separate manuals for Customer and Support. We feel the Customer manual is too long for customer needs and a bit intimidating. Most Customer users would be better off with a short manual just covering the steps necessary to connect with Support, and a non-technical discussion of the menu choices. Both manuals offer full explanations of all functions, but a walk-through illustrating most of the features would be most helpful.

The Support manual should include full information on the Customer program, since Support controls Customer's computer and can call up the Customer menu.

The appendices offer good technical advice. The writers of the troubleshooting section anticipated most of the problems we encountered. The sections on message and modem settings are clearly worded and valuable.

The manuals convey the purposes and use of the programs quite adequately, and we give documentation a satisfactory rating.

EASE OF LEARNING:

The menu structure is straightforward and easy to follow. There are no commands to learn. Once you get past the initial setup phase, working with Close-Up is simple. Unfortunately, you may have to go through that setup phase with each unique configuration you deal with. Again, users should follow the checklist of steps in the "Getting Started" chapter of the manuals to avoid fumbling around. There are no written or on-line tutorials, but it is not hard to figure out how to use the program.

Close-Up was designed so that it is quickly evident what the program is meant to do at any given point in its use. We felt familiar with the product after just one or two sessions, and we give it a very good rating for ease of learning.

EASE OF USE:

The menu system is easy to use. The screens are organized, and functions are intuitively clear.

Of the features, only the voice-to-data switch is tricky to use. Even after we used it several times, we dropped the connection occasionally.

There is no on-line help. You must

refer to the manuals if you have questions.

Coordinating activities would be difficult without the chat window. We had some confusion in chat when both users typed at the same time. We recommend the use of a special character to signal the end of a message. For example, when one person types an @, the other person can start his reply.

If either user changes modem settings between Close-Up sessions, you must remember to reset the switches. This, and other technical considerations, could be annoying if you service many customers. A set-up log in the phone directory would help recall each customer's needs.

We give ease of use a very good rating, primarily because of the menu system and well-defined functions.

ERROR HANDLING:

The message and troubleshooting guides are informative. They helped us with many of our questions and problems. We did get a message not listed in the book during some unsuccessful file transfer attempts. The message was "waiting for file information. Press ESC to abort," which wasn't too clear, considering we think we entered everything correctly.

The program froze one or both systems at times, requiring a warm reset (Control-Alt-Delete) or cold restart (turn machine off and then on). The manual provides no information about these problems. Upon investigation, we found that, except for the problem mentioned regarding loading the Customer program, our difficulties were due to an unusually noisy phone line (it was receiving a nearby radio station) and incorrect modem settings. When the phone line was fixed and the modem settings corrected, we had no further problems. The transaction log records were the only data loss on either side when the session ended abnormally (such as with a reboot).

Close-Up's error handling is as good as expected for this type of program, considering the complexity and wide variety of hardware and software mixes. Close-Up does a satisfactory job of coping with the problems.

SUPPORT:

Norton-Lambert's phone number is not listed in either manual. We found their number (not toll free) in a sales brochure. A spokesman explained that the firm was moving to a new location; the sales brochure is intended to provide the desired number.

We called Norton-Lambert a couple of times. The service staff didn't have any immediate ideas about some of our more exotic problems, such as our occasional difficulty in starting the Customer program or the unsuccessful file transfer from drive B. They agreed that if we used Close-Up's session-recording feature to document the problems, they would review it. On our other questions, they were informative and helpful.

There is a 90-day media-only warranty. The program is not copy-protected. Free customer technical support by telephone is provided from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific time.

The lack of copy protection and the reasonable support earn Close-Up a satisfactory support rating.

VALUE:

Close-Up is obviously made for customer service. It is just the product to provide on-line consultation for systems houses, or for in-house support staff at businesses where the computer users are widely scattered. It can dramatically reduce

travel time and allow you to serve customers quickly.

Close-Up is more expensive than many other remote programs, but for some applications it will do a lot more than its competitors (such as recording the session and keeping a transaction log). It is less optimal, but still workable, as a method for controlling your office computer from another location. Other less expensive products (PC Anywhere, Carbon Copy, Remote) are even more competitive for those who want to collaborate with someone on a program or a project.

But as a customer support package, in-house or out, we recommend Close-Up and rate it a very good value.

Glen Tapanika and Bob Peak are systems analysts for the state of Washington. Tom Bigley, an experienced microcomputer user, operates a computer retail store.

New World Writer

Webster's Has Solid Editing, Formatting Capabilities

By John Lombardi, Review Board

Start with a dictionary and a superb thesaurus, add a word processing module, and what do you get? Webster's New World Writer from Simon and Schuster, a word processor that is a solid performer, strong on editing and formatting.

Webster's is not as powerful as Word Perfect, Multimate, Wordstar 2000, or Volkswriter 3. Instead, Webster's offers a quick, effective word processing program that is easy to use and learn. Unless you need to produce form letters (which Webster's won't handle), New World Writer is a competitive product in a market that includes PFS Professional Write, PC-Write, Volkswriter Deluxe Plus, and Easy Extra.

FEATURES:

In the battle of the checklist wars, Webster's makes a respectable showing. As an editing program, Webster's has most of the general editing commands for moving the cursor, inserting and deleting text, rearranging blocks, and saving and retrieving information.

As a word processing formatter, Webster's has a reasonable complement of features. Webster's will produce justified or ragged margins and hanging indents. It's easy to boldface or underline text, and Webster's can center individual lines or align them along the left or right margins.

The program will handle up to three predefined formats, which you can mix as many times as you like within the same document. In addition, you can protect any portion of your text from reformatting, so your charts and tables and special formats stay intact.

Your files are limited to single, double, and triple spacing. You can set the number of characters per inch at either 10 or 12, and you can reset margins as often as needed. The program will also draw box diagrams using lines from the IBM character set. (Not all printers can print the diagrams,

however. Although automatic to insert when it comes to words between justifications.

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REPORT CARD

SOFTWARE
CLOSE-UP

6.9

	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Close-Up is a remote communications program especially for customer support applications. **Pros:** Works well, easy to learn and use, many features useful for customer/client service and consultation. **Cons:** Customer manual too long, modem settings are crucial, more expensive than less specialized competitors.

PRODUCT DETAILS

List price, \$195 (Customer) and \$245 (Support). Version tested (1.10) available for the IBM PC, PC XT, PC AT, and compatibles, and Hayes-compatible or user-defined modems. Support program requires 128K, Customer requires up to 48K and one floppy disk drive. Norton-Lambert Corp., P.O. Box 4085, Santa Barbara, CA 93140; (805) 687-8896.

however.)

Although Webster's does not do automatic hyphenation, it will allow you to insert a soft hyphen that is printed only when it is appropriate to divide a word. The program allows you to keep two words together so they aren't split between two lines. Webster's shows all justification on-screen.

As should be clear, Webster's does not offer the same range of features found in more expensive word processing programs. For example, Webster's does not handle footnotes, indexes, tables of contents, or outlines. Nor does it support proportional spacing or provide sorting or math.

However, Webster's also lacks form letter and mailing list capabilities, features found in other similarly priced programs.

Webster's also includes a dictionary of some 114,000 words and a highly rated thesaurus program.

The screen is divided into three areas: a status and menu area of four lines at the top, a ruler line with margins and tabs at the bottom of the screen, and the main text area in between.

PERFORMANCE:

Editing is fast and effective, even with large documents. Cursor movement is quick and natural. Such functions as deleting, inserting, and moving blocks all perform as you would expect.

Because you cannot turn off the required four lines at the top of the screen, some users may find them an annoyance. Nonetheless, the program works quite well.

Search and replace functions are very effective, with a wide range of search options not found in many programs. With Webster's, for example, you can specify the beginning and end of a passage and ask the program to find the passage, however much text might be in between.

The spelling program, not memory-resident, is the type that reads the entire file first and then gives you a list of words not found in its dictionary. Unlike programs such as Turbo Lightning, it does not operate in background mode, on one screen at a time, or while you type. Webster's presents the suspect words in context. When you replace or correct a word, Webster's does not automatically reformat the paragraph; you can have the dictionary mark word changes so you can reformat those paragraphs yourself.

Although the speller works well, it is limited in the number of suspect words it

In the battle of the checklist wars, Webster's makes a respectable showing.

can process at one time. We found no mention in the documentation about the number of suspect words that the speller can accommodate, but we have a document with a substantial number of proper names in it that made the speller quit trying after about 20 pages of text.

Normal text with fewer proper names or other unique words can obviously be much longer. Conversely, text with many technical terms might pose a problem. We think this is an annoying limitation in an otherwise superb spelling program, especially since the only solution is to physically split the document into two parts in order to check spelling.

For those whose vocabulary needs a boost from time to time, the thesaurus is a wonderful tool — in fact, it's one of the program's major strengths. At a keystroke it brings a whole set of alternative words to the screen. For example, when we entered the word *difficult*, Webster's Thesaurus offered 25 alternatives arranged in three groups representing different meanings. We could browse from this word up or down the alphabet, or pursue some of the suggested alternative meanings also provided.

Webster's will handle back-to-back printing with alternating margins. The supported printer list includes most of the major printers, but it is not as comprehensive as some others in its class (Volkswriter Deluxe Plus, for example).

The printer drivers included may not always make the most effective use of your printer. We have a Diablo 630, and while Webster's could do microjustification, it couldn't produce boldface text, even though the Diablo is capable of it. Instead, we got double strike, which produces a different effect. However, you can manually enter special printer codes into the text to produce effects not supported directly by Webster's.

The heading and footing options perform well, permitting three lines at the top or bottom of the page. The program will produce page numbers, and they can be expressed as "Page 3 of 10,"

for example, without the user having to know how many pages are in the document.

We think Webster's should provide a conversion utility like those available in other programs such as PFS Professional Write, Easy Extra, and Volkswriter Deluxe Plus. DCA (IBM Document Content Architecture), or at least Wordstar file conversion, is of growing importance among word processors these days.

We tested this program using a fixed disk. Although you can run Webster's using two floppy disk drives, we do not recommend it. Considerable disk swapping is required, and the program's performance is less impressive.

Our performance rating is based on use with a fixed disk. Within the realm of easy to learn and use word processing

programs, Webster's New World Writer has a good collection of features and capabilities. Its chief bonus is the fine thesaurus; its chief shortcoming is the lack of a mailing list capability. On the balance, we rate it a satisfactory performer.

DOCUMENTATION:

Webster's comes with a clear, comprehensive, and well-written 116-page manual. In addition, you get two supplements that include a writer's guide and other writing aids. Following all this is an index.

The documentation includes an installation and setup booklet and a handy quick-reference card that contains a command map and extra information.

Webster's also has elaborate and comprehensive on-line help. If you like,

A Christmas Miracle

'Twas the night before Christmas,
and I cried in my house,
"someone stole my computer,
my keyboard, my mouse!"

So downtown I drove,
in my car without care,
in hope the police
would have my system there.

"In an old, empty lot,"
is where it was found,
beat up and frozen,
and tossed on the ground.

When they brought in my AT,
all covered with frost,
I thought all my data
had surely been lost.

But then I remembered,
just one month before,
I'd replaced my old hard drive
with a new one from CORE.

Now I'd heard they were fast,
they were tough, they were strong,
but frozen for two days!
That's too much, too long.

So I flipped on the switch,
and wiped off the frost,
when I looked at the screen,
there was no data lost.

I will never forget,
on that cold night before,
how my Christmas miracle,
was delivered by CORE.

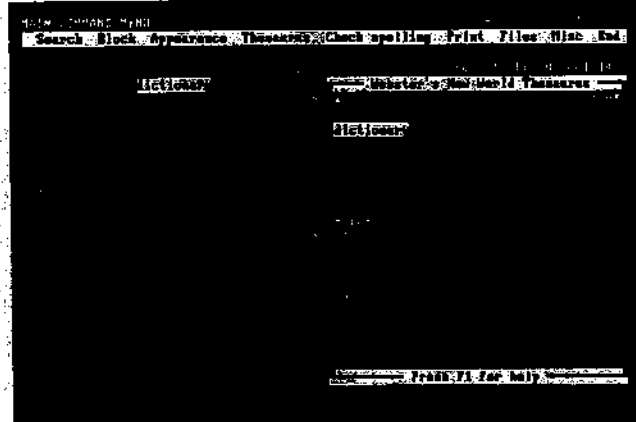
Testimonial:
John E. Johnston, III
Louisiana Geological Survey
IBM PC-AT

John Johnston wisely replaced his existing AT drive with CORE's 5 1/4" high performance drive and is eternally grateful he did. By doing so, he not only guaranteed preservation of his precious data but also doubled his AT's speed and performance.

Another miracle? This performance and reliability is now backed by our full 3-year replacement warranty and is compatible with Novell 286, Xenix, and SCO. If you too are interested in everyday miracles like these, call us at 305/997-6055.



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Webster's New World Writer from Simon and Schuster uses the popular and powerful Webster's Thesaurus, which is one of the highest rated programs that we have seen.

pop-up information windows will appear automatically whenever appropriate. (In addition, the program will allow you to turn off this automatic help feature.)

The manual is generally clear and complete. It provides an easy way to learn the system, although the index is less complete than we prefer. For example, we found no entry for microjustification, even though that is an option on one of the menus. The documentation also does not mention the limits we found on the number of suspect words that the dictionary program can handle at one time.

In spite of the omissions that we have mentioned above, we rate Webster's documentation as very good because of its superior help and the fact that the writers' aids are included with the program.

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— Softletter, 4/20/86

"Its low price, superb performance, and range of applications practically guarantee that it will be widely used. Four Floppy Rating (8.0)"
— InfoWorld, 3/31/86

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— Computerworld, 4/7/86

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— PC Tech Journal, 3/86

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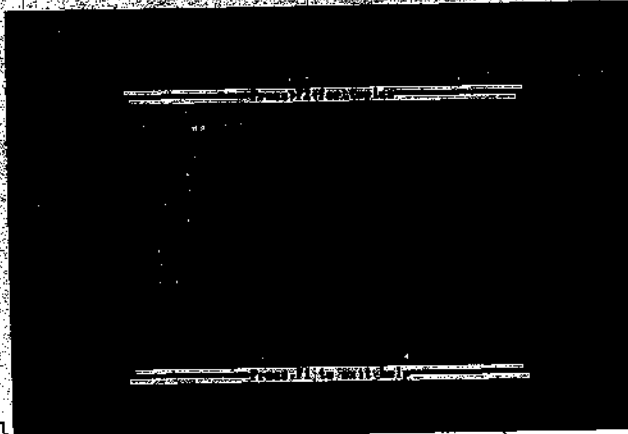
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SOFTWARE GARDEN
Dept. N
P.O. Box 373, Newton Highlands, MA 02161



This full-feature word processor offers comprehensive on-line help. In sequences that require two keystrokes, if you pause after the first one, the help screen will appear.

EASE OF LEARNING:

Webster's is easy to learn. It is a well-organized program with benefits such as good documentation to make it easier for the beginner to learn the system. The menus are excellent and easy to understand. And if you fail to complete a two-stroke command, Webster's menus and help screens pop up, providing instant help.

The many menus and pop-up explanations, and the good documentation, make this program so easy to learn that we rate it excellent in ease of learning.

INFO WORLD THE LEAGUE		REPORT CARD				
SOFTWARE		WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD WRITER				
	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent	
6.4						
Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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SUMMARY:

Competing with programs like PFS: Professional Write and Easy Extra, Webster's New World Writer offers quick editing, as well as full formatting and print control. It is not copy-protected. *Pros:* Easy to learn and use, superb thesaurus. *Cons:* lacks mailing list and form letter capabilities.

PRODUCT DETAILS:

List price, \$150. Version tested (1.03) available for the IBM PC, PC XT, PC AT, and compatibles. Requires 256K of memory, DOS 2.0 or higher (DOS 3.0 on an IBM AT), two double-sided disk drives; hard disk drive recommended. Simon & Schuster, Gulf+Western Building, 1 Gulf+Western Plaza, New York, NY 10023; (800) 624-0023.

help in getting Webster's to produce boldface on our Diablo 630. We also asked about transferring files from other programs into Webster's (no conversion programs are available except ASCII in and out). The technical support was quick and accurate.

We rate support as satisfactory.

VALUE:

Webster's, which costs \$150, is a fine product. It has strong editing and formatting capabilities, and its dictionary and thesaurus are bonuses. Most competing programs are almost as good at editing and formatting, and also have good spellers. Much of the competition also has some form of mailing list management; and some are quite sophisticated (PFS Professional Write at \$199 and Easy Extra at \$149, for example). Even Volkswriter Deluxe Plus (\$99) has form letter capabilities, even if it doesn't include the database to manage the mailing list.

If you don't need mailing list capability, this product could be a fine choice. But the lack of this capability will be a real hindrance in the small business market, where mailings and form letters represent significant uses. The splendid thesaurus is a strong advantage, but this will likely appeal to a different type of user.

We rate Webster's New World Writer a satisfactory value.

John Lombardi is a professor of history and author of five books. He has been working with computers since 1967.

Software Index

Software Review Index lists recent reviews; date of full review is shown. For back issues, call InfoWorld customer service at (215) 768-0388 in Pennsylvania.

Able-1 (Able International) — Score: 4.7 — An integrated package with a database, spreadsheet, word processor, and communications module. Not copy-protected. For the IBM PC. (7/28/86; score updated 11/10/86)

Acto (Symmetry) — Score: 5.8 — An outline processor for the Macintosh implemented as a desk accessory. Not copy-protected. (8/11/86)

Alpha-three (Alpha) — Score: 6.1 — A menu-driven database manager for the IBM PC that reads and writes Dbase III Plus data and index files directly. Not copy-protected. For the IBM PC. (9/29/86)

Autocad, Version 2.5 (Autodesk) — Score: 8.5 — Autocad is a professional-level drafting program for the IBM PC. Version 2.5 also has a copy-locking device. (9/29/86)

BMDPC (BMDP Statistical Software) — Score: 4.6 — An IBM PC version of the mainframe statistics package. Copy-protected. (9/1/86)

Callmate (Clarity Software) — Score: 5.6 — A spreadsheet annotator, analyzer, and auditor for 1-2-3 and Symphony. Not copy-protected. For the IBM PC. (10/27/86)

ERROR HANDLING:

Webster's is quite resistant to user error. It never modifies the original file, working only from a copy held in memory (except for the first time you create a file). When saving files, Webster's operates much like Wordstar, saving the working file, renaming the original with a BAK extension, and then deleting any previous version.

It is difficult to lose text with Webster's, especially if you save your text as you go along. To help with this, Webster has a timed backup feature that will save your file to disk at specified intervals. This can slow a user's editing, however, so the program allows you to turn off the automatic save feature.

Webster's also has a Whoops command that will restore the most recent deletion of more than two characters. We tested this, and it works well.

Finally, the program recovers from Printer Off, open drive doors, and similar common user errors.

The program's strong error-handling features, plus its file backups, automatic save, and Undo capability, earn Webster's an excellent rating in error handling.

SUPPORT:

Webster's New World Writer is not copy-protected. Like many programs, Webster's is sold without any warranty about its usefulness or functionality. The company will replace defective disks for free within the first 30 days.

You can reach technical support (not toll free) from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern time. We called the hot line for

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