however, there are too many keystrokes built into some of the menu items in Office Writer Version 5.0, which makes using the program a little tedious. The program is also a little slow to respond, even on a high-end computer.

Office Writer Version 5.0

With Update, Word Processor Matches Its High-End Rivals

By John Lombardi

Review Board

In Version 5.0, Office Writer, a Wintel-based word processing program for the IBM PC and look-alikes, becomes more competitive with top-of-the-line corporate rivals such as Multimate Professional and WordPerfect 4.1.

In version 5.0, Office Writer included an update to its own word processor, and the changes improve its performance and usability. The new version also includes additional features, such as a spell checker and a thesaurus, that make it more useful for large documents.

FEATURES:

Although the 5.0 version of Office Writer is not as rigorously page-oriented as earlier versions like "Wintel-Style PC Program for Office Improved," April 21, 1986), the program still maintains the high level of word processing that is still not as feature-filled as Multimate. Office Writer remains one of the easiest to use all of the corporate word processors.

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line, specify page breaks while typing, and postpone breaks before printing. Office Writer does allow users to scroll smoothly through pages, though Multimate and DisplayWrite II, by contrast, show only one page at a time.

Nonetheless, the difference between the page orientation of Office Writer (which deviates from the world of dedicated word processors) and the document orientation of a program like WordPerfect (developed directly on microcomputers) has become largely aesthetic, without significant impact on performance.

Office Writer includes almost all the popular features of professional word processing programs. Office Writer can handle long documents (up to 444 pages with 640K of memory), bookmark document assembly, comprehensive mail merge and formatting. Bearing in mind that capabilities are such powerful new add-ons as sorting and selecting of mail merge fields, creation of indexes and tables of contents, and outlines. A new enhancement feature adds a hypertext dictionary for accuracy.

The current version also offers as standard capabilities multiple columns (up to 12), in either newspaper or parallel column styles, centered-aligned text, automatic column_Password functionality. A 40,000-word thesaurus has been added that gives short definitions, as well as antonyms and synonyms. Specialized dictionaries for legal or medical terms are available as free options to registered users. Line and box numbering, smooth horizontal and vertical centering across 250 columns, and support for EGA in 4.5-line mode and for full-page monitors such as the Gemini at 8-line mode.

One feature still missing from Office Writer is the strike-out function necessary for editing legal documents.

An optional add-on program, called OfficeGraphs (S145), can capture graphics screens from any other programs, such as Lotus 1-2-3 or any graphics program, and insert them into an Office Writer text file (Samantha Wood and WordPerfect, 300 recently added similar graphics import capabilities).

Office Writer includes extensive documentation on the capabilities in the documentation included in the self directory. There is a good procedure that allows you to add a new word or phrase to the dictionary on the drive.

(For reviews of competing products, see Samantha Wood 11. August 4, 1986; DisplayWrite 3, May 5, 1986; WordPerfect 3, April 4, 1986; WordPerfect 4, November 4, 1985; and Multimate Advantage, September 23, 1985.)

Performance:

While the performance of Office Writer was far down in the pack of high-end word processors, it is still missing some of the many additional features and improved performance of Version 5.0 that Office Writer just about equal matched.

The program now performs screen-handling noticeably quicker and more responsive to keystrokes is good. Most editing takes place even more quickly. The display is fairly consistent range of cursor move commands, though there is still no word-left cursor command. Also as before, the insert mode can be something of an annoyance, because not all editing functions are available while in insert mode. It works fine but will seem clunky if you need insert only a single character or word.

We thought the commands for copying or moving text from one document to another (Supermove and Supercopy) were clumsy. You must already have created the second document before you can copy or move from the first document. Moreover, the process is done backwards from most other word processors. You enter the second document, invoke the Supercopy command, and then switch to the first document to mark the text to be copied. Other word processing programs will let you write out text to another existing file, or create a new file if it doesn’t already exist, without having to leave the source document. (See on second look, the Office Writer approach has some advantages. You can mark an exact portion of the file you want to send and the specific place in the receiving file where it should go. Other programs at least merely append text to the end of an existing file, or only let you read in whole files. There are advantages to both approaches.)

Although the spelling program works well, it is not as fast or convenient as WordPerfect’s, nor does it find as many words. Office Writer can’t check the spelling of a word split with a hyphen (for example, re-enters, follows-up). The keystrokes required to respond to flagged words and correct misspellings are unnecessarily complex.

The thesaurus is good; it provides both a definition of the word and a set of synonyms and antonyms to help writers choose the right word.

Office Writer’s new hypertext dictionary is accurate, but slow. An article of some 3000 words took about seven minutes to hypertext on an 8-MHz, AT.

In performance, we judge Office Writer 5.0 as superior in most functions than Samantha Wood, DisplayWrite 3, and almost as fully featured as any of its competitors. Quick scans handling and editing, solid performance, and well-designed functions again earn Office Writer 5.0 a very good score in performance.

Documentation:

As before, Office Writer’s documentation includes a main manual that is logically ordered and clearly written, a Getting Started booklet and tutorial, and a longer reference section appendices that summarizes every command, and a series of appendices that cover printers and printer cushions, installation options, and error messages. The main manual has superb descriptions and explanations, the reference material is quite complete, and the index is usable.

The manual for OfficeDemos, the set of routines that converts documents between Office Writer and other programs formats, is complete and clear.

The context-sensitive on-line help is good; however, help is not available from the main menu or during nondocument functions.

Overall we again rate documentation as satisfactory.

Ease of Learning:

There is no disk-based tutorial per se.
instead. The written tutorial is a valuable resource that will help you get started quickly and effectively.

New users are recommended to use the Help or Reference key to execute pending commands. You can use the gray plus key to add the gray key, which is referred to in the on-screen keyboard. Office Writer calls this the GO key, a key that is automatically included in the standard keyboard. This key is a plus key for use in adding new commands to the keyboard.

You can use the keyboard on the road to learning as an otherwise easy product. In other respects, the on-screen keyboard is particularly helpful. If you run into problems, you can easily find which function keys are represented on the on-screen keyboard. If you have a problem with a specific function key, you can usually find the appropriate screen of information in the Help menu. When you press any keyboard function key, the appropriate screen of information is displayed. While Office Writer's documentation is more complete, you can usually find the on-screen keyboard to be very helpful. If you need more information, you can usually find the appropriate screen of information in the Help menu.

EASE OF USE:
Office Writer has a good screen layout, display of data for users, automatic save, and easy-to-read function keys. This program is easy to use because it is easy to learn, it is easy to use, and it is easy to use the keyboard.

Office Writer 5.0 is well designed for basic users. It is a good program for basic users. It is easy to learn and use and is especially easy to use for users who are not familiar with computers. The program is easy to use if you need to enter data quickly.

Use of the keyboard and the on-screen keyboard is relatively easy. The keyboard is relatively easy to use, but the on-screen keyboard is relatively easy to use. If you need to enter data quickly, the on-screen keyboard is relatively easy to use.