

however, there are too many keystrokes built into much of the menu interaction and some of the menus could have been streamlined. There are shortcut control keys, but no command card or templates. Making use of these shortcuts, then, turns out to be time-consuming until you master the program.

Our main gripe is that there are no illustrations of the fonts or the supplied images, and no library management system — just a disk full of individual files. We had to create our own font and image reference material.

The script editor program is slick and obvious; you fill in particulars on a scrolling form, using one or more lines per image for your specs. To make things less painful, there are defaults as well as pick-and-choose lists of the options.

For the impatient, there is an admirable feature called Auto-build, which will generate a script for you, alphabetically listing the pictures in the current directory. This gives you a head start; you can cut and paste or otherwise modify the script as needed. Another of our favorite features is View, which will run all or part of the show while you are working on the script, so you can see a sneak preview of your "movie" as you create it.

Overall, we were quite impressed with the ease of use of this collection of programs, considering just how polished they can make your presentations look. Once we had invested some time to create our own supplemental documentation, we could speed along quite quickly, so we rate Show Partner very good in ease of use.

ERROR HANDLING:

In general, Show Partner handles user mistakes with polite protectiveness, and we were unable to deliberately mess things up with illegal acts. You get a warning if you are going to overwrite an existing file and you can always save an edited image under another name. You cannot inadvertently erase a file because there is no File Delete command, a mixed blessing since to clean out the debris you have to go to DOS. Despite the problems we detailed earlier, however, we never lost any data.

Overall, we found error handling to be satisfactory.

SUPPORT:

The program is not copy-protected, and telephone help is available, though there is no 800 number. The first time we called, the technical expert was not in. We called the next day and found him very knowledgeable.

There is a no-strings 30-day money-back guarantee. After 30 days, users can still recover 75 percent of their money, and there is a 30-day replacement warranty on the disk itself. Registered owners of Grafix Partner, a graphics editor from the same publisher, can upgrade to Show Partner for \$30.

The unconditional money-back guarantee, knowledgeable phone help, and lack of copy protection easily earn this product a very good rating in support.

VALUE:

For its low price, Show Partner is remarkably full-featured. PC Storyboard from IBM costs \$250, and VCN Concorde from Visual Communications Network Inc. has a high-altitude price tag of \$695. VCN Concorde and PC Storyboard perform as slide-show programs, like Show Partner, but they also have some fancy features, particularly in terms of generating graphs from data, that are not included in Show Partner. VCN Concorde can make music, while Show Partner just makes little noises, and Storyboard is mute.

But Show Partner outshines both products in terms of its freehand drawing and paint program capabilities. Storyboard lacks freehand drawing, and Concorde, surprisingly, does not support tablets for freehand drawing.

Show Partner is an astonishing bargain at \$79. If you buy a new Microsoft Mouse (\$125 to \$200, depending on the version), Show Partner comes free as a Crackerjack prize, bundled along with Microsoft Paintbrush.

There are some pricey add-ons available, including clip-art disks, available for Sales and Marketing, Finance Administration, and Executive and Management editions, at \$129 each (or \$99 each when purchased as a package of three). Additional drivers are available on a \$30 disk for graphics tablets, a joystick, other graphics adapters, and printers. For software developers, Memshow Exec is a memory-resident run-time module with extra features that interfaces with other applications so you can access its animation features from another program; it has a list price of \$250, or \$600 in the version that doesn't run the publisher's credits.

Rating Show Partner on its own, we think this is an unbeatable value with remarkable power and sophistication; we rate its value as excellent.

Sharon L. Rufener is a section editor of The Whole Earth Software Catalog and a microcomputer writer and consultant.

Office Writer, Version 5.0

With Update, Word Processor Matches Its High-End Rivals

By John Lombardi Review Board

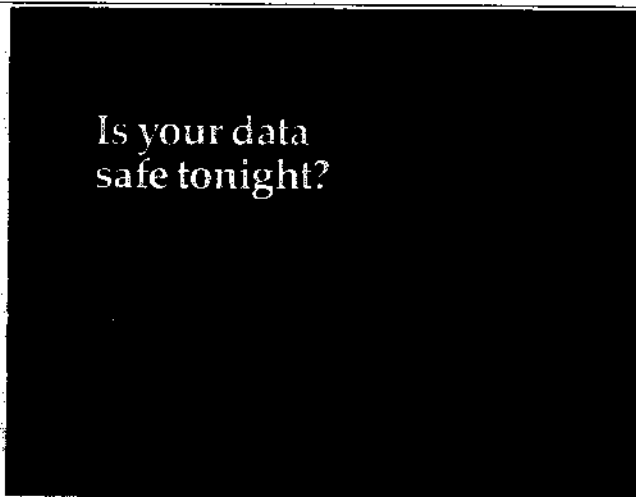
In Version 5.0, Office Writer, a Wanglike word processing program for the IBM PC and look-alikes, becomes more competitive with top-of-the-line corporate rivals such as Multimate Professional and Word Perfect 4.1.

By adding more power, this release of Office Writer follows the trend of corporate word processors moving away from their predecessors, the dedicated word processing systems. While still not as

feature-filled as Multimate, Office Writer remains one of the easiest to use of the corporate word processors.

FEATURES:

Although the 5.0 version of Office Writer is not as rigorously page-oriented as earlier versions (see "Wang-Style PC Program For Office Improved," April 21, 1986), the program still insists that the user give each page its own format



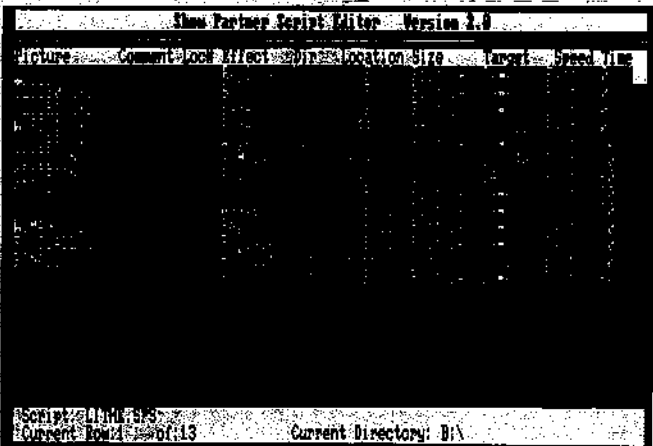
Sleep tight with data protection by DSBACKUP+™

All new from Design Software, DSBACKUP+ is the most advanced hard disk backup utility available. It lets MS-DOS and PC-DOS users quickly back up and restore single files or directories, multiple directories or an entire hard disk drive. And DSBACKUP+ does it all with more power than products costing twice as much, plus features formerly available only in mainframe environments. Among them:

- **Critical safety** — as DSBACKUP+ automatically verifies data while backing up and/or restoring, assuring data integrity.
- **Exceptional speed** with the new SPEEDBAK feature — backs up a 10 megabyte hard disk in 5 minutes (10 times faster than DOS!)
- **On-Line Statistics** — full drive and backup statistics continuously updated on your screen.

- **True data compression** — for up to 40% more data on each disk or cartridge.
- **Multiple volumes** — to let you backup and restore from more than one drive at a time, i.e., your A and B floppy or your D and E Bernoulli cartridges and to your mainframe.
- **Directory and file scrolling** — to scroll through all selected backup files prior to the backup process and take full advantage of the inclusion/exclusion filespec capabilities.
- **Easy to use** — DSBACKUP+ is completely menu or command-line driven, with all functions simple to follow during step-by-step backup/restore procedures.

Finally, at \$79.95, it's not only the most helpful but the most cost-efficient utility of its kind.



Using the Show Partner script editor, you can give instructions for special effects such as fades, wipes, and splits. Defaults and menu selections make it easier than it looks.

Yes, I will sleep better with your data protection.
 Please rush me _____ copies of DSBACKUP+ @ \$79.95 (add \$50 Shipping and Handling)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____ Payment: VISA MC AMX CHECK
 Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

DESIGN SOFTWARE 1275 W. Roosevelt Road • West Chicago, IL 60185

line, specify page breaks while typing, and repaginate before printing. Office Writer does allow users to scroll smoothly between pages, though; Multimate and Displaywrite 3, by contrast, show only one page at a time.

Nonetheless, the difference between the page orientation of Office Writer (which developed from the world of dedicated word processors) and the document orientation of a program like Word Perfect (developed directly on microcomputers) has become largely stylistic, 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), boilerplate document assembly, comprehensive

mail merge and footnoting. Beefing up these capabilities are such powerful new additions as sorting and selecting of mail merge files, creation of indexes and tables of contents, and outlining. A new hyphenation feature uses a hyphenation dictionary for accuracy.

The new version also offers as added capabilities multiple columns (up to 15) in either newspaper or parallel column style, decimal-aligned tabs, and five-function columnar math. A 40,000-word thesaurus has been added that gives short definitions, as well as synonyms and antonyms. (Specialized dictionaries for legal or medical terms are available as free options to registered users.) Line and box drawing are now available, as well as paragraph numbering, smooth horizontal and vertical scrolling across 250 columns, and support for EGA in 43-line mode and for full-page monitors such as the Genius in 66-line mode.

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

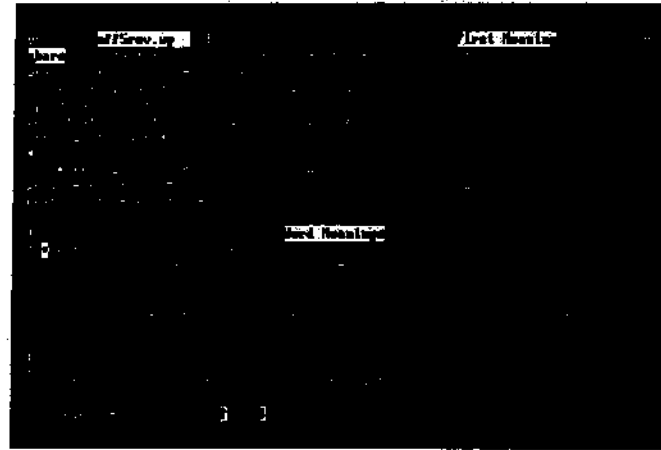
An optional add-on program, called Officegraphics (\$145), can capture graphics screens from any other programs, including Lotus 1-2-3 or any graphics program, and insert them into an Office Writer text file. (Samna Word and Wordstar 2000 recently added similar graphics import capability.)

Office Writer includes extensive document management capabilities including the capability to group related documents into subdirectorylike libraries, and a nifty procedure that searches for any word or phrase in any document on the drive.

(For reviews of competing products, see Samna Word III, August 4, 1986; Displaywrite 3, May 5, 1986; Wordstar 2000, April 4, 1986; Word Perfect 4.1, November 4, 1985; and Multimate Advantage, September 23, 1985.)

PERFORMANCE:

While Version 4.0 of Office Writer was far down in the pack of high-end corporate word processors, the many additional features and improved performance of Version 5.0 make Office Writer just about an equal match with feature-



Version 5.0 of Office Writer word processing package has added many strange features such as a good thesaurus, indexing, multiple columns, and EGA support.

packed competitors.

The program now performs screen handling noticeably more quickly, and responsiveness to keystrokes is good. Most editing takes place even more quickly. There is a fairly complete 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 clumsy 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

the file if it doesn't already exist, without having to leave the source document.

But 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 best 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 Word Perfect'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-enter*, *follow-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 both synonyms and antonyms to help writers choose the right word.

Office Writer's new hyphenation dictionary is accurate, but slow. An article of some 3,000 words took about seven minutes to hyphenate on an 8-MHz AT.

In performance, we judge Office Writer 5.0 as speedier in most functions than Samna III, Wordstar 2000, or Displaywrite 3, and almost as full-featured as any of its competitors. Quick screen 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, a long reference section appendix that summarizes every command, and a series of appendixes that cover printers and printer customization, 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 OfficeLink, the set of routines that converts documents between Office Writer and other program formats, is complete and clear.

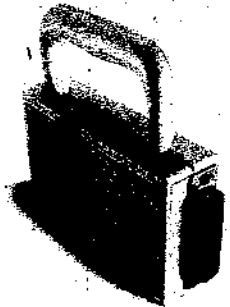
The context-sensitive on-line help is good; however, help is not available from the main menu or during nonediting functions.

Overall we again rate documentation as satisfactory.

EASE OF LEARNING:

There is no disk-based tutorial per se;

THE MODERN FOR PEOPLE WHO TAKE THEIR ACT ON THE ROAD.



When you travel with your portable computer, make sure your communications go with you. The WorldPort 1200™ Portable Modem is the only modem you need, whether you travel across the country or around the world.

While most portable computers offer an optional modem of some type, only the WorldPort 1200 gives you all the features required for true portability. Features like battery-powered, Hayes™ Command Set compatibility, Bell and CCITT standards, direct and acoustic cups interface for 300 and 1200 bps, and compact size.

Equally at home on your desktop, the WorldPort 1200 works with virtually any computer with a RS-232C serial port. No more of those complicated internal modems that can only be used with one computer.

The WorldPort 1200. At only \$199, you can't afford to leave home without it.

For more information or your nearest dealer, contact us today.

TOUCHBASE SYSTEMS, INC.
16 Green Ave. East
Middletown, NY 11765
(516) 291-0423
Telex 6302940028

REAL-TIME CLOCK-CALENDAR



FOR IBM PCs AND COMPATIBLES **dClock™** **\$59.95**

Now there's a simple and inexpensive way to get time and date functions automatically on your computer. dClock, from Microsync is a real-time clock-calendar which enters the date and time into your computer system each time the computer is turned on. An internal battery maintains precise time and date functions when the system is shut down. dClock fits directly onto your system motherboard and does not occupy an expansion slot. dClock comes with installation software instructions, complete documentation, a 30 day free trial period and a 1 year limited warranty.

To order dClock call: (214) 789-5198 \$59.95 (Please add \$2 for shipping and handling.)



P.O. BOX 116302 • Carrollton, Texas 75011
dClock and MICROSYNC are trademarks of MICROSYNC Inc.
IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corp.

instead, the written tutorial accompanies a sample document on disk. However, the straightforward tutorial does provide a strong introduction to all the program's major features. Other helps to the beginning user include an easy-to-learn command system and a variety of keyboard templates.

New users accustomed to hitting the Enter or Return key to execute pending commands will have to get used to using the gray plus key to the right of the keypad for this purpose. Office Writer calls this the GO key, a carryover from dedicated word processing systems.

This is merely a bump on the road to learning an otherwise easy product. In other respects, the context-sensitive help is a plus to the beginning user. If a function is in process, pressing Escape will provide you with a screen-full of descriptive material on that function. If you call up help directly from the editing screen, you'll see an index to function key commands. When you press any function key, the appropriate screen of information appears. While not quite as sophisticated or comprehensive as the help available in some other products, it is fine.

By design, Office Writer is very easy to learn, has generally good on-line help, sensible menus, and good documentation; we again rate Office Writer's ease of learning as very good.

EASE OF USE:

Office Writer's good screen layout, display of dots for spaces, automatic save, and easy-to-read function keys make this program easier to use than its competi-

tors in the high-end professional-word processing community.

First-class document management utilities are a strong benefit. For more experienced users, a comprehensive keyboard macro facility is helpful, and the powerful mail-merge and document-assembly features make large projects such as mass mailings much more manageable.

There are shortcomings. The speller, while reasonably comprehensive, requires many more keystrokes than Word Perfect's, for example. Similarly, the clumsy insert mode represents a real irritation when you need to add a character or two. The absence of a cursor control that moves left by word is mildly annoying.

Finally, Office Writer does not handle subdirectories very gracefully. At various points in the program, subdirectories are inaccessible. Furthermore, when you are converting documents, the program permits only single-letter drive assignments, so you can't specify a subdirectory path.

These shortcomings somewhat offset Office Writer's otherwise fine ease of use features, design, and speed. On the balance, we rate Office Writer 5.0 as improved over its previous version in ease of use, and we give it a score of very good.

ERROR HANDLING:

Office Writer protects the user against most basic errors. There is a limited form of Undelete by which your most recent deletion can be replaced, but only if you haven't entered any other keystrokes since the deletion. A timed backup facility automatically saves the document being edited at intervals specified by the user. (The feature can be turned off if desired.) Other errors, such as those generated by an open drive door or mistyped function keys, are effectively trapped without complications.

Office Writer 5.0 has an Exit to DOS function, that lets you suspend the program, perform some DOS operations, and even run some other programs, then return to where you were in Office Writer with just a few keystrokes. Although it is possible to accidentally exit from Office Writer altogether when doing this, the automatic Save feature ensures that you don't lose any text anyway.

The disappointingly limited Undelete function is offset by good error handling and especially the automatic backup feature. Again, we rate error handling very good.

SUPPORT:

Office Writer 5.0 comes with the usual guarantee on the media only. However, corporate buyers can get an evaluation copy on 30-day trial. The program is not copy-protected. Those who have bought Version 4.0 since September get the upgrade free; those who bought it earlier pay \$75 for the upgrade from any prior version.

Telephone support is provided for registered users only. We called the customer support number in the manual and asked some questions about the program's ability to use the EGA card and expanded or extended memory, and we also asked about a spacing problem we had with our printer. The customer support representative was friendly but had little knowledge about these issues; in fact, this individual was uncertain about what expanded memory might be. We were referred to another customer service 800 number, where we talked to an equally friendly individual, who could not answer the question completely but thought that Office Writer did not

support EGA. (Office Writer does support EGA but does not support extended or expanded memory.)

The poor advice is countered by the lack of copy protection, the availability of toll-free support, the good upgrade policy, and the evaluation copy. On balance, Office Writer 5.0 again rates satisfactory in support.

VALUE:

Office Writer 5.0 has a list price of \$495, which is \$50 higher than Version 4.0 but still makes it cheaper than most high-capacity, professional office word processing products. Multimate Advantage and Wordstar 2000 Plus, for example, are \$595, and Samna Word III is \$550. Only Word Perfect, the most powerful of the group, is \$495.

While not as powerful in features as

Word Perfect, Office Writer 5.0 is quite full featured and is much speedier than Multimate Advantage, as well as easier to use in some ways. Good mail-merge function, index, outline, and table of contents features and math functions are all here. Only the lack of strikeout for legal documents and the lack of sorting within word processing documents will limit the market for this product.

Overall, we feel Office Writer 5.0 has improved in value over its previous version more than enough to offset the price increase. For its competitive features, superior speed, and slightly lower price, we rate this product very good in value for its class.

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

It's a thankless job,
but somebody has to do it.



If you do business projections, you're only as good as your last forecast. And each forecast is a whole new ball game.

The Wisard® Forecaster is a consistently dependable tool that gives you statistically accurate results time and time again. Its expert systems logic lets you use sophisticated statistical techniques without any knowledge of statistics. It makes impressively accurate projections even with limited historical values. It extracts and replaces a range of cells directly with Lotus® spreadsheets—without complicated file transfers or editing. And shows you a future you'd never see with Lotus alone.

Because reality has its ups and

downs, Wisard Forecaster quickly adapts to change. It even works with negative figures and zeros. Automatically compensates for seasonality. Produces confidence intervals and other statistics.

Wisard Forecaster is menu-driven, simple, straightforward and easily recalled. It's hard to make a mistake. But if you do, its full editing features make it easy to correct.

A thankless job just got a whole lot better—thanks to Wisard Forecaster.

For \$99,
you get a lot of credit.



Written in C. Not Copy Protected.
Hardware Requirements: 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or above, 1-386K floppy drive IBM PC™ XT™ or AT™ or true compatible.
Lotus is a registered trademark of Lotus Development Corporation. IBM-PC, XT and AT are registered trademarks of International Business Machines Inc. Wisard is a registered trademark of SHADE Information Systems Inc.

No Risk, 30 Day, Money Back Guarantee

Wisard® Forecaster \$99
Also available:
Wisard® Professional Forecaster \$249.00
Wisard® Commercial Forecaster \$1,995.00

For orders only:

800-538-8133 outside Wisconsin

800-242-2595 in Wisconsin

For information only: 414-436-2341

Or complete this form:

Please send me (#/type).

@ \$_____ est. Add \$10 for postage and

handling for a total of \$_____

Payment: VISA MasterCard AMEX

Check

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Company/Title _____

Last/First Name _____

Address (No P.O. Box) _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____

Mail to: WISARD® Software Company

Dept. 110, P.O. Box 19730

Green Bay, WI 54307-9730

WISARD® Software Company

A Division of SHADE Information Systems Inc.

INFO WORLD THE NEWS WEEKLY

REPORT CARD

SOFTWARE
**OFFICE WRITER,
VERSION 5.0**

7.1

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"/>
Ease of Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Error Handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Office Writer 5.0 adds many strong features such as mail merge with sort, graphics interface, outlining, indexing, and more. Not copy-protected. Pros: Easier to learn and use than many in its class; speedier than most; strong thesaurus. Cons: Lack of strikeover, in-document sorting; weak spelling checker.

List price: \$495. Version tested: 5.0 available for the IBM PC or compatibles running PC or MS-DOS 2.0 or greater. Requires 256K of memory; hard disk required when using thesaurus. Supports a variety of network applications through special installations available from Office Solutions, Office Solutions Inc., 2802 Coburn St., Madison, WI 53713; (800) 228-0747; (608) 274-5047 in WI.