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printer brands.
Even though
IBM has improved
Displaywrite 4,
IBM has primarily
added elementary
features that all of
its competitors
have had for quite
a long time.
These additions
are still not enough
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between Displaywrite
4 and such leading
competitors in the
corporate word
processing market
as Office Writer,
Microsoft Word,
and Word Perfect—
all of which are
faster and much
more fully featured.
Still, Displaywrite
4 can get the job
done, and, like its
predecessor, earns
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printing only.
As in Displaywrite 3,
custom printer
definition is possible,
though this is a job
for professionals.
Displaywrite 4's
printer support
doesn't compare
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hundreds of
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Thankless job,
nobody has to do it.



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Displaywrite 4

IBM Word Processing Program Polished Up But Still Not Good

By John Lombardi Review Board

IBM's Displaywrite 3 reminded us of a tank — big, powerful, clumsy, ugly, and hard to use. Its successor, Displaywrite 4, offers some valuable new features and a much improved user interface, but performance remains much the same. This is still not the vehicle for sleek, powerful word processing. Consider it now a high-priced tank with some extra gizmos, a new paint job, and better handling.

FEATURES:

Here's what IBM has added. The program lets you mark revisions when editing. Cursor control keys now let you move forward or backward a word at a time, and the program now supports a variety of popular mouse devices. If you need to quit the program and then reload it, a "paper clip" feature will automatically return the cursor to its last location. You can also use the program's "notepad" to restore your latest block deletion or to transfer text from one document to another.

Much-needed improvements have also been made to the spelling checker, the document save routines, and file pagination.

In addition, for \$1,250, you can buy a voice communications kit (which con-

sists of an add-on board, software, a speaker, and a microphone) that lets someone add comments by voice to a particular point in a file without changing the document or its formatting. The typist can then play back the notations while revising the file.

You get most of the conventional editing features, with one notable exception. To delete a word, you must still use the Block command or delete character by character.

The standard formatting features are here, including underline, boldface, indents, margins, tabs, spacing, and multiple columns. Formatting codes appear whenever the cursor lands on one and a message in the status area identifies the code. You can have the program display all codes on-screen, or hide them to reduce screen clutter.

Among its many advanced features, Displaywrite 4 is particularly strong in mail merge, list processing, and document assembly. The program also includes a comprehensive outline feature.

Displaywrite 4's commands have been reorganized and placed in colorful pull-down windows, accessed by the function keys or the mouse. This is the most immediately noticeable change from the earlier program.

Displaywrite 4 does not let you split your screen or have windows. (But it will work with Topview 1.11, which we did not test.)

Displaywrite 4 uses approximately 340K of memory.

PERFORMANCE:

Like Displaywrite 3, the new version is still slow at many tasks, especially when they involve loading individual program modules or loading and saving files. However, Displaywrite 4 is markedly faster at scrolling through a document. With Displaywrite 3, you had to wait while the program stored one page and looked for the next.

Displaywrite 4 appears to treat page breaks differently. For one thing, page breaks are entered automatically when you reach the 60th line during text entry. Page breaks are still not dynamic, though; when you revise the document, you must paginate before printing to format the document with the proper number of lines per page.

Although the editor is flexible, Displaywrite 4 maintains some peculiarities that characterized its predecessor. For example, the Left-Arrow key will move the cursor left to the beginning of the line, and the Backspace will delete characters to the left until it reaches the left edge of the screen, but neither will reverse-wrap to the end of the previous line above. Neither will the Backspace key delete codes; you must use the Delete key instead, confirming each code deletion one by one. Some codes can only be deleted with the block delete command.

These limitations, unchanged from the previous version, affect the editor's performance, although you can learn keystrokes that get around the problems. Displaywrite 3 users will discover that many function and control key combinations have been altered somewhat. For example, the Home key now goes to the beginning of the line instead of to the top

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REPORT CARD

SOFTWARE
DISPLAYWRITE 4

4.6

	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
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"/>
Ease of Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Error Handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DISCUSSION:

Displaywrite 4 is improved and enhanced. It is best suited for environments with major document assembly and list processing tasks using all IBM-brand equipment and having substantial technical support capabilities. For the IBM PC and compatibles. Not copy protected. *Pros:* Excellent match to IBM equipment, strong mail list and document assembly. *Cons:* Slow, poorly supported, fewer features than competitors, still has error handling problems.

RECOMMENDATION:

List Price: \$495. Hardware needed is available for IBM PCs, XTs, ATs, and compatibles. Requires DOS 2.1 or later, 512K, two floppy disk drives or a hard disk drive. IBM display. IBM Corp., P.O. Box 152560, Irving, TX 75015; (800) 447-4700.

generic printer table that will do basic
The 100,000-word spelling c
reasonably fast, and it catch
words. But it still did not recog
specialized terms such as *Disp
notepad, typestyle, or file name*
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for misspelled words. New in th
is the welcome capability to st
without marking them.
We complained that Disple
supported only the NEC Spin
addition to a mere five IE
printers. In Displaywrite 4,
added support for the IBM Pag
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satisfactory rating in performance.

DOCUMENTATION:

The manuals have been completely rewritten and condensed from two loose-leaf binders to one. A "Getting Started" section does a good job of giving an overview and walks you through setting up the program and creating, editing, and printing a file. The main manual consists almost entirely of an alphabetical listing of the program's major features. A third booklet is a useful technical reference manual for systems people and includes information on such topics as printer definitions, hardware considerations, and supported options. A helpful keyboard summary card completes the documentation. Context-sensitive on-line help is available.

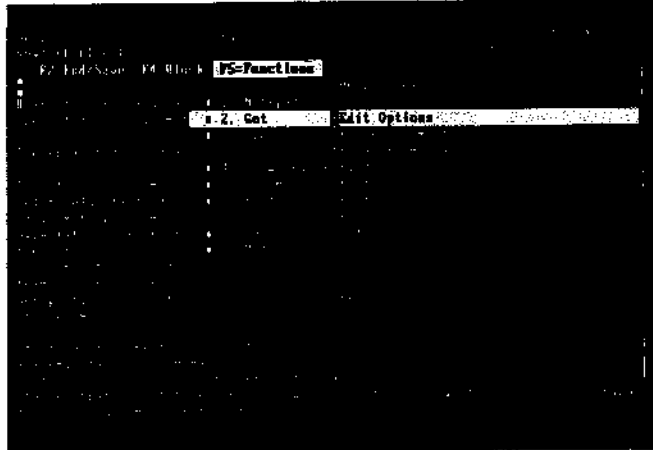
Unfortunately, the indexes for the

three manuals are fair at best, and the manuals have no glossary. There is no list of changes from the previous version, a summary former Displaywrite 3 users would very much welcome.

The documentation has improved. Much the same information is provided in a more accessible form. It's still not as comprehensive as it could be — examples are kept to a minimum, making it harder to learn, especially advanced topics. Sites with in-house training or special support arrangements with IBM will be able to make better use of Displaywrite 4 than individuals can. But the documentation is well-organized and easier to use than Displaywrite 3's. We rate documentation satisfactory.

EASE OF LEARNING:

Because of the improved manuals and



With Displaywrite 4, IBM has developed a user interface that employs pull-down menus and pop-up windows, which can be accessed by function keys or a mouse.

help system, this version of Displaywrite is much easier to learn than its predecessor. The on-line, context-sensitive help is much easier to use than before. Now you can scroll through an alphabetized list of topics and quickly choose one from the menu, rather than having to execute a series of commands and enter topic numbers.

There is no on-disk tutorial, and the few examples in the documentation make it difficult for inexperienced users to learn how to manage some of the more complicated features.

However, because of its better documentation, on-line help, and user interface, we think Displaywrite 4 is enough of an improvement over Displaywrite 3 to earn a satisfactory rating for ease of learning.

EASE OF USE:

The redesigned user interface is the most important difference between Displaywrite 4 and its predecessor. Where Displaywrite 3 was entirely menu-driven — with full-page menus for every major function and one-line menus at the

bottom of the screen for function-key selections — the new version uses pull-down menus and is not as closely tied to the function keys. (You can use a mouse, for example.) Improved are the menus, which are better organized and more detailed; the help screens, which are easier to use; and the cursor controls, which are more extensive.

Displaywrite 4, a direct descendant of IBM's dedicated word processor, is a page-oriented system; page breaks are major elements in the structure of a document, and the program insists on providing a new screen whenever your file crosses a page boundary. Fortunately, the program will now automatically insert a page break when you cross line 60. Unfortunately, this happens only when you first enter text or add text to the end of the document; it does not work when you insert or delete text later. In those situations, you have to invoke pagination to rearrange the page breaks.

On the other hand, pagination is now part of the save-document routine. By executing one menu choice, you can now save and paginate in one step, a vast

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improvement over the cumbersome pagination procedure that had its own main menu entry as a separate task in Displaywrite 3.

There is also now a Save and Return function, a significant omission in Displaywrite 3. In addition, the program now has an Abandon-Document command, so you can quit a document without saving changes. There is also a new View option that lets you look at files without risking unintentionally altering them.

Displaywrite still hasn't jumped to the top of the pile in ease of use. It won't, for example, do windowing, and you can't move across the menu bar with the cursor keys. Displaywrite 4 is more flexible than its stodgy predecessor, but it's still intended as an office word processor, where work is entered from prepared text and edited as a separate task. We rate Displaywrite 4 satisfactory in ease of use.

ERROR HANDLING:

Displaywrite 3 didn't automatically create backup files, so you were always working with your original. Furthermore, creating a backup with Displaywrite 3 was so tedious as to discourage all but the most determined. Displaywrite 4 has introduced a significant improvement, a Save and Continue function on the Save menu. Although it still doesn't automatically create backups, you can now easily create a backup yourself.

We strongly recommend that you do so, and frequently, because Displaywrite 4 still suffers from the shortcoming of losing data if the current file is not closed properly. If there is a power failure or other problem, you will lose some or all of the current file — not just the current edits, but the file on-disk. There is a recovery utility, but it is spotty.

The program does not handle open drive doors well. When we attempted to save to a drive with the drive door open, we lost the entire file every time. We rarely see this kind of error handling failure these days.

Displaywrite 4 is better than Displaywrite 3, which received a score of unacceptable in this category. The Save and Continue, Abandon File, and View File features are welcome additions that make it easier to maintain data integrity. However, Displaywrite 4 still lacks automatic backup, easily loses files, and is unable to handle elementary DOS error situations. As a result, we rate error handling as poor.

SUPPORT:

Displaywrite 4 is not copy-protected.

IBM provides no telephone support for retail buyers. You must rely on your dealer if you buy this program from a store. If you have trouble, IBM asks you to fill out a lengthy form and mail it to a post office box in Texas. It does not agree to respond nor does it agree to fix any problems. In addition, this mail-in service is available only for the first 90 days you own the program.

Most copies of Displaywrite 4 are sold directly to corporate volume buyers, who will have their own support arrangements with IBM or in-house support that makes these retail support policies irrelevant.

However, we can't rate unspecified corporate support policies. Since the product is offered retail, we will rate it based on IBM's stated support policies for the retail buyer. Our conclusion: The retail buyer will find IBM's support insufficient, especially since competing programs such as Word Perfect offer

such superior support. Unless you have access to an experienced technical support staff or to an unusual dealer, we think you'll find support to be poor.

VALUE:

Displaywrite 4 is improved over its predecessor. It offers a better user interface, improved handling of pagination, powerful document assembly and list processing capabilities, and additional features over Displaywrite 3. Displaywrite 4 will do most word processing jobs reasonably well and with reasonable ease and speed.

However, at \$495, this product is much less of a value than Office Writer 5 or Word Perfect 4.2. For a similar amount of cash, you can get more features, better performance, and much better support.

Displaywrite 4's one real value is to the corporate site where IBM compatibility across all systems is a vital requirement. Displaywrite 4 is file and command compatible with related versions of the same product that run on dedicated systems, minicomputers, and mainframes. It can transfer files to and from related IBM text processing systems. Although the individual retail buyer or small business will have no particular reason to buy this product when better ones are available for the same price, IBM shops will gain enough extra benefit from its compatibility to rate Displaywrite 4 a satisfactory value.

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

Inline

Handy Outliner Converts Files Into Word Processor Formats

By Charles Spezzano Review Board

While some outlining programs offer extensive text-editing capabilities, many users prefer to import a finished outline into their favorite word processor for polishing. Inline, a new outliner for the PC, offers the special benefit of converting its outlines into the file format of any of several popular word processors.

You can then edit, enhance, and expand your outline as if it had been created with Word Perfect, Microsoft Word, Multimate, Wordstar, or Wordstar 2000.

FEATURES:

Inline is an application outliner like Thinktank (see review, August 26, 1985), not memory-resident like PC Outline (May 12, 1986), Ready (October 21, 1985), or Streamline (February 9, 1987). Inline includes word wrap so your headings and subheadings can be in the form of paragraphs of text.

Inline letters and numbers its headings and subparagraphs according to standard outline format. When you collapse an outline, Inline also inserts a plus sign to mark headings that have subordinates.

Inline has a Get function and a clipboard to allow convenient merging of outlines and outline sections. Macros can

be created and assigned to the 10 function keys. Inline also has a convenient internal file directory. A limited number of text editing functions are provided, as are Search and Replace.

PERFORMANCE:

Inline is a fairly basic outliner in its capabilities. A given heading or subheading can hold 700 characters (about half a screen) of word-wrapped text. This con-

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