Software Reviews

Microsoft Word 4.0
Quantum Leap Puts Microsoft Word Out in Front
Greater Speed, Improved Interface Help Improve a Champion

By John Lamberton
Review Board

Microsoft Word for the PC — long famous for formatting power and sophistication — offers speed and polish in its Word 4.0 version. It is also easier to use and adds a raft of features to a list that was already quite long. These improvements in speed and ease of use put Word 4.0 in the top rank of corporate word processors.

FEATURES:
- Derived from a typesetter model, rather than a desktop publishing, typesetter, or computer editor model
- Microsoft Word has always seen its text through the typesetter’s eye, which given it the advantage of precise control of the printed page. The disadvantages of using Word have been unfamiliar terminology, complex commands, and clumsy operation compared to competing word processing products.
- Version 4 addresses many of these problems while enhancing the basic package. The list of new features in Word 4 is impressive in itself — an excellent typesetting feature, an improved spelling program, document revision marking, and item numbering are just some of the additions.
- Microsoft Word has always had superb formatting and has been capable of producing the best output on any printer.
- Through an elaborate set of formatting specifications known as style sheets, you can develop and save a complete description of a document. When you enter subsequent projects, you could access these style sheets in a new document and reuse all the specifications.
- A new feature lets you create a style sheet from a file’s existing text. You can use the regular Word command to boldface, italicize, change margins, and the list for your current document. Then, when you be finished, you can save Word 4.0’s format into a style sheet to be reused later with other documents.

You can also now search and replace hidden formatting codes, making changes much easier to achieve.

Word 4 implements improved disk management and capabilities, it can attach a short summary statement to a document. This summary does not get printed with the rest of the document, but you can view it when you’re selecting a document from the directory. You can search for documents in this summary by word by file name. This word is also in the text of the document.

In addition, you can directly import spreadsheets in Lotus, Excel, or Multime files into a Word document. Further, they are imported in such a way that the source file name is preserved, and the next time you load the Word document, the source spreadsheet is reimported with any changes.

Word 4 has a relatively limited capacity for importing graphics files (but not Lotus .PC file) automatically into a Word document. A Lotus spreadsheet expert told us that a newly announced companion product, called Microsoft PageView (349), would, among other things, let users import Lotus .PC files.

Another significant change is the addition of a superior keyboard macro language. Word can now use macros you prepare either by recording keystrokes or by writing a sequence of commands, saving them, and recalling them as a macro. You can use macros as named files or you can assign them to context-key combinations.

The power of this facility is as great as in any of the separate word-processor macro programs. The program not only allows you to record keystrokes, but it can also include a wide variety of programming constructs for editing, branching, and conditionally processing text. This word processing control language permits you to use most of the variety of specialized applications.

Word offers an IBM DOS/KLF utility for converting formatted text files learned from other word processors.

PERFORMANCE:
- The most noticeable difference in Word 4 is its increased speed. The program is now at least twice as fast as any of its major competitors. In test mode — which shows underlining and block outlines but not italics or block caps — Word is lightening fast. It’s so fast, in fact, that a special command is needed to slow down the cursor and the scrolling to humbly comprehendable speeds.

In graphics mode — which draws characters and shows italics and block letters — Word is slightly slower than the competition. Of course, graphics speed is dependent on the quality of your system’s graphics hardware. If your system has a Hercules graphics card, for example, you will find Word faster than on a CGA system.

Word does not show proportionally spaced fonts at the normal or inverse font sizes on the graphics screens; hence, the graphics would be of limited value. Newspaper columns do not show and are not cut by size on the screen.

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Thanks to excellent documentation and tutorial, Word can use Dac-Easy in a reasonable amount of time, even if not easily or quickly. We rate its ease of learning good.

EASE OF USE:

Once learned, Word is easy to use. It's an easy tool with multiple means of editing through function keys, mouse, or mouse, or to type next to the computer, or best to type the keyboard. The macro language offers the possibility of putting any function in your environment. Word is always good at almost any set of control keys.

After you understand them, the style environment works well. Handling of formatting tools relatively little effort. Word's capability is to handle style sheets from existing files is another plus.

Formatting commands do much more than is present in previous editions. You can use the shift, control, and alt and the mouse keys with most function keys to preview editing and command sequences. They can also be used with the keyboard to accomplish additional editing tasks. And a combination of alt and other keys handles the majority of characters and paragraph formatting. Hence, it is possible to do most of your work without using a mouse or the infamous Word tab-key menu.

Even these features are better. You can remove the menus and a paper screen border, leaving a clean editing screen. Moreover, you can navigate through menus with the arrow keys. The tab key allows previous navigations. And while the mouse is still there, keyboard commands can just about work without it, thanks to the much-improved keyboard implementation.

Word still requires explicit

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Peterscaple: the spelling program is good, if not the best in the business, and the therapists in superior. Formatting, Word's strength, simply gets better with the addition of the capability to record an existing set of formatting characteristics into a stored style sheet. The search and replace capability for formatting commands also helps to speed performance.

Word read spreadsheet files from Lotus and Multiplan 3.0 without any difficulty, but it could not handle a spreadsheet model based on older versions of Multiplan 1.05. A Microsoft spokesperson said Word is compatible with Multiplan, Versions 1.1 and later.

Word's windowing is good, but there are eight possible windows. The program's capability to do complex indexes, lists, and footnotes, along with a very fine math facility, makes this a superior product.
regeneration to get page breaks right. When you're editing text, Word does not automatically adjust page breaks, and you must issue a Reprint command to redo the entire document to see where the breaks are going to occur.

In short, whatever the task, Word does it easily and well. We rate its ease of use very good.

**ERROR HANDLING:**
By now, Microsoft Word has learned how to handle most errors. Common ones like open drive doors are handled without our problem.

The Undo command works reasonably well, although Word 4 apparently will no longer undo a sort operation.

Overall, the program is well protected against normal errors, and we rate Word's error handling very good.

**SUPPORT:**
Microsoft offers free (not toll-free) telephone support. We called the company with a number of questions and received good answers.

Microsoft will replace defective media for 90 days. Word 4 comes in a package that includes both 3¼-inch and 5¼-inch disks. The program is not copy-protected.

In short, we rate Microsoft Word's support good.

**VALUE:**
Microsoft Word has become a fast and effective office word processing product.

The addition of real-time revision, macros, formatting by example, an excellent thesaurus, and a variety of other features makes Word 4.0 more than just a word processor. It's a smart buy, because you get more for your bucks than a box. Witness Hyundai's XT Turbo—the 8.0 Mhz Super-68.

It sports all the standard features you want, like 640K of RAM, six expansion slots, serial and parallel ports. A real-time clock with battery backup. But, on top of that, you also get Electronic Quick—easy-to-use, integrated software package that gives you word processing, spreadsheets and database programs. Plus a 100,000 word spellchecker and a communications program to manage your modem.

Another standout feature is Hyundai's 18-month warranty. Longer than many computer companies will be in business.

It's backed by a network of Hyundai dealers, carefully selected and specially-trained to give you the best service and support in the business.