Word Processing
For Professionals and Offices
By John Lombardi, Review Board

No other microcomputer software application has the universality of word processing, for virtually everyone with a keyboard and screen wants to process words. The heavy-hitting market campaigns and feature races have given us products that are bigger, better, and easier to use, but individual users can seldom sort out the value of their competing claims.

In this product comparison, we look at 12 high-end office and professional word processors, generally the most powerful packages available. If your only need is to generate memos, you'd be better off with an executive word processor, like PFS Write or Q&A Write. The packages compared here are so powerful that using one only for simple tasks is like buying an 18-wheeler to haul your weekend groceries.

However, for those responsible for producing the final copies of large, complex documents, form letters, extensive mailing-list projects, or technical materials, the capabilities of the products in this review are essential. Even so, it's hard to evaluate the performance and capabilities of word processing systems as complex and varied as these. While two products may, for example, handle multilime formulas (as found in technical papers) with equal facility, each will do it in a different way. Others claiming special features such as graphics may have significantly different capabilities and approaches.

The recognized market leader in this field is still Word Perfect, but its leadership is closely challenged by Microsoft Word and, more recently, Wordstar 2000. Other challengers, further back in the race, include DisplayWrite 4, Big Blue's self-imitation of a dedicated word processing system; Lanier's Deskworks, a translation of the vendor's dedicated word processing system; Mass-11, a recasting of a DEC minicomputer word processor; Multimate II, that venerable imitator of Wang word processing, which has slipped from leadership with the decline in the installed base of dedicated Wang systems; Office Writer, another Wang workalike; Summa IV, a Lanier carryover; Xywrite III Plus, an infinitely customizable editing engine; and Lotus Manuscript, a niche product that is gaining a wider audi-
Product Comparison

INFO WORLD

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ence among those who create complex, high-speed desktop documents. Because the market for word processing software is so large and diverse, the kind of market dominance enjoyed by WordStar in the mid-1980s is essentially out of reach. Indeed, Version 4.0 really isn't competitive in the field. WordStar once dominated the market and continues to be the most popular among the major word processors. However, the majority of users divide the responsibility for creating the standards, while a sizable number of companies continue to produce different word processors that are compatible with each other.

At the risk of being too general, we can summarize the current situation as follows: With the advent of the popularly priced laser printer, we have seen a growing number of users who don't want to sacrifice quality for speed, and we have seen a growing number of users who don't want to sacrifice speed for quality. The result is a market that is divided into two major segments: those who want high-end quality and those who want high-end speed.

A COMPLEX ISSUE. To take full advantage of the products in this review, you need a hard disk. Without it, there is little point in spending money for the software which either requires it or works less effectively without it. You would also benefit from a full 64K of memory and possibly an AT-class machine.

In addition, the feature list of complex packages can often demand a lot from the user. For example, a word processor that includes features like mail merge, page layout, and printer interface, not to mention drop-in graphics, will require users to invest a lot of time in learning how to use the features. But even the manufacturers have a hard time explaining things to perplexed users who call a support line. While most support lines have helpful technicians, they rarely can handle truly complicated questions.

In our discussions with word processing supervisors and training centers, we found that most users end up with a very good command of a relatively limited subset of a word processing system's functions. Very few can do it all, and fewer still can teach others what they know.

The current investment in training, combined with the fact that each manufacturer works hard to make its system look different, means that large organizations will have to change word processing systems once their people are trained.

CHANGES IN THE MARKET. Most of the current competition in word processing focuses on two related but separate areas. First are document processing tools. The ubiquitous mailing list and form letter systems represent the fundamental applications, but the category includes tools for assembling complicated documents from standard sources (text, graphics, and printer interface, not to mention drop-in graphics). Various systems for managing preprinted forms or standardized forms are also available. More sophisticated systems include complete document management systems for not only word processing but also for document preparation and management. We have reviewed one of these systems in a recent issue of the magazine.

The second related area is document appearance tools. Originally, we discussed document appearance tools in an earlier article, and we noted that the capability to produce high-quality output will come to be a major criterion in the selection of word processing systems. But now, with the advent of the popularly priced laser printer, we expect the appearance of these systems to change. The current trend is toward devices that can handle proportionally spaced fonts in multiple sizes and styles, justified, and printed in black and white. Graphics capabilities, both to import graphics and to create lines and boxes, are also much in demand.

Other significant capabilities include footnoting, tables of contents, indexes, cross-references, dictionary hyphenation, spelling checkers, thesauri, and tables of authorities.

Word processing systems must cope with an immense number of choices and combinations. For example, the HP LaserJet, the bestselling laser printer, offers a proliferation of font cartridges and other add-ons that make standardization difficult.

How the Word Processors Were Reviewed

To evaluate products of this complexity and sophistication, we first identified and listed the features included in each package. The InfoWorld Test Center then tested those features to see what they do that we want to see, and we evaluated how well they accomplished the intended task.

For this review, we've refined our standards for word processors based on a survey of InfoWorld users. We asked them what they want in a word processor. As a result, we have a list of features that we believe will help us evaluate the products.

Much of a word processor's score is based on its capability to produce specific types of documents, such as reports, letters, and spreadsheets. We also evaluate the ability of the word processor to create and modify documents. We evaluate how well the word processor supports these features.

In addition to identifying the capabilities and performance characteristics of these products through testing and benchmarks, we closely examine their ease of use. We use a simple, user-friendly interface, and we provide detailed documentation.

Small differences in the evaluations may be of little importance to an individual user. For example, we've found that preferences for the style and appearance of the screen and user interface are often as important to users as the performance variations in speed and power. We also know the cost of retraining is so high that most people give up considerable power and effectiveness to maintain a familiar working environment.

Most of these products are quite good and provide a satisfactory solution to office and professional word processing needs. Still, there is no substitute for an expert individual evaluation of products within your own specific operating environment.

PERFORMANCE

Correspondence: To earn a satisfactory score, a word processor must include a quick, easy-to-use dictionary feature, and it must also support the creation of mailing lists and other types of correspondence. A word processor that is easy to use and that can handle complex documents is a good word processor.

Spelling Checker and Thesaurus: A satisfactory score requires inclusion of a spelling checker and a thesaurus that offer a selection of alternative words. A good spell checker calls for a spelling checker that is very effective at catching and correcting spelling errors. A good thesaurus must include a variety of substitute words.

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We Test Word Processors the Way You Would

The Infoworld Test Center has just completed a product comparison of office/professional word processors, and we're delivering what we think is the most significant advance in testing usefulness ever. The products were tested not only quantitatively, but also for their various qualitative weaknesses and strengths.

The testing for this comparison, like the report cards, was shaped by a survey of Infoworld readers who rate sites where word processors are used intensively. They told us what they use their word processors to do, which helped us tailor our test documents. They told us what they are looking for in their next product—and a lot of them are looking for a change—and that told us what features we should test for. They told us how they would test for the strengths of these features, and we implemented the strongest of the suggestions.

This truly word processor way the readers could if they had a sophisticated test center and extraordinary technicians at their command.

A MATTER OF TASTE: Qualitative testing is one of the most valuable—and touchy—areas for testing word processing. People vary in the things they like and overall preferences among them is a matter of taste and very personal. So while qualitative analysis of word processing is an absolute necessity for any kind of meaningful evaluation, it's also a main field for tests.

To neutralize the taste factor as much as we could, we first divided the products among several test centers (from one perspective). But we also made sure that all testers tested certain products in common to serve as reference points. The testers then negotiated a definition for satisfactory performance for each product.

The testing for this comparison included features and compared notes frequently.

The testers designed sample documents to cover each of the nine categories from simple memos and memos to lengthy documents with version-control information. We tested each product under the same conditions and the same set of conditions to ensure that each document has a product comparison based on actual user's needs.

and Tested for This Product Comparison

ing that is complemented by hidden text. An excellent score requires redlining and document tracking features that extensively describe how and when the document text was changed, by whom, and why. This must be created and accessed easily and quickly.

Font and Style Sheets: A satisfactory score is given to programs that incorporate graphics (PC, PCX, TIP). A good score includes the capability to insert, edit, print, preview, and a program that supports several fonts. A very good program alters graphic style and size and offers Paste in place. Excellent scores mean the program offers substantial graphics support and includes a great variety of manipulative functions in addition to the capabilities already enumerated.

Speed: A good score is based upon the results of a series of benchmark tests on all word processing packages. We have listed the actual times (in seconds) that it took to achieve the various tasks. The field of tests was divided broadly into three types: translating or converting files from one format to another, saving and printing files, and editing files (e.g., search and replace).

Scores represent a compilation of how each product behaved in all tests and how its results compared with other products of its type. To achieve a satisfactory score, the product had to perform quickly and efficiently in the majority of tests. For a good score, the word processor had to perform all tests quickly and generally exceed the mean time for a very good, it had to exceed the mean time in all cases, and for an excellent it had to be significantly better than the mates in a majority of categories.

Compatibility: Word processors store, in addition to a document's text, all formatting commands associated with the text. Unfortunately, each stores this information in its own unique file format. While ASCII is adequate for transferring text, no special ASCII program can import incompatible word processors, it does not provide for transferring a document's formatting commands. (Document Control Architecture, DCA). DCA provides the transfer of the most commonly used format commands (boldface, center, headers, footers, footnotes, line spacing and others). Many vendors rely on DCA as a "standard" format for transferring documents between incompatible word processors.

Overall, this comparison scores the capability to import and export ASCII and DCA format files. A good program lets the user import and export ASCII files as well as other character-oriented format files. A very good includes at least two additional formats. An excellent in compatibility includes at least six additional file formats.

DOCUMENTATION

In word processing documentation we look for clarity: good examples, a thorough index, and easily accessible information. A satisfactory score in documentation also requires coverage of all aspects of the product combined with an adequate table of contents and indexes. A good score includes the same, but adds better example describing the product's features. A very good score demands additional special documentation, such as a user's guide, installation and printer driver manuals, and a file, Excellent documentation is, of course, the most complete of all, requiring flawlessness explanations and an exceptional level of completeness.

EASE OF LEARNING

Ease of learning is a function of clarity and the intuitive nature of the interface and the command structure. Generally, we look for correct written guides and instructions as well as on-line help and tutorials (on-line or written).

Good error messages, while judged separately under error handling, support ease of learning as well. To gain a satisfactory score, the program must have reasonable on-line help, a tutorial, sample document files, and a "tutorial" feature. A good score calls for an on-line tutorial and an all-around better help system. Very good includes more elaborate on-line tutorial with added features combined with a comprehensive help system. To earn an excellent, the product must include a superb on-line help system with full descriptions, almost to the point of making the manual obsolete. The full on-line tutorial should cover each special feature. Special features such as the capability to access the tutorial from the screen help system can boost the scores.

EASE OF USE

A better score in ease of use typically reflects features such as customization of the user interface and the capability to turn off/on elements. Menu capacity and the command structure are also considered in the score. For a satisfactory score, the product should operate as it claims it can without surprises, with the user never forced into a graceful, efficient, manageable manner. For a good score, you should be able to choose to use command keys instead of the menu. Turning off the screen help function is also an expected option.

For a very good rating, the word processor must have reasonable macro capabilities and some customization features. An excellent program combined all these features plus is flexible in default arrangements and has a highly consistent command structure. The macro capabilities for this score should be extensive.

ERROR HANDLING

Data Integrity: A satisfactory data integrity means the program handles errors and mistakes user entries without damaging data and/or unexpected exit from the system. A good score requires the presence of helpful error messages and hints for back up files automatically combined with a reasonable Undo command. A very good supports a multicolor Undo command and the loss of no more than one page of data in the event of a system crash due to a power failure. An excellent score requires all of these features combined with no loss of data in the event of a power failure.

Error Messages: To score a satisfactory in this area, the program displays error messages in the manual and basic accuracy and readability of on-line messages. A good score is awarded for short but informative on-line messages. An excellent score is given for error messages that suggest solutions. An excellent score demands that the messages suggest solutions combined with a complete description of alternatives. In all cases, the manual should include clear and accurate error messages.

SUPPORT

Technical Support: A satisfactory score requires an on-line documentation with support personnel who know the product and can answer questions knowledgeably. A good requires the same, but the support staff should be helpful. For a very good, technical staff should know the product and offer technical tips or other additional helpful advice. An excellent requires technical staff who are knowledgeable, friendly, and beyond the call of duty. Bonuses are awarded for toll-free numbers and on-line support, and points are subtracted when the user must leave a message and be called back.

Support Policies: Support policies are calculated by awarding bonuses to the basic policy for product availability, warranties, money-back guarantees, and corporate extended support. We subtract points for limited support periods or no cost-free support. Points are also subtracted for copy protection.

VALUE

Value is always trade-off among performance, features, ease of learning and use, and, of course, price. Within a competitive range, value is judged by determining how well a program scored in other categories compared to its own and price. Lower prices are also expected to have a price higher. The better the performance-price mix, the better the value. An excellent score requires top performance at a reasonable price. It should be noted that a product that does not perform well but is inexpensive could not rate an excellent. It must have, within reach, the best in each category.
What's the most logical way to connect everyone to a laser printer?

$695

Most offices have only one laser printer. So user access can be a real pain. But a Local Area Network can cost twice as much as the printer. And buying a laser for each user is out of the question.

That's why The Logical Connection makes everyone happy. But, because the cost is low, your employees, because they each get a laser virtually at their fingertips.

With The Logical Connection you can put the printer in a central location. Users access it in seconds from their own terminals with the new

Everybody's happy with the Logical Connection.

From Fifth Generation Systems
The makers of FASTBACK and FASTBACK PLUS
conform to its somewhat quirky use of editing keys. Moreover, the program will not reverse-wrap the cursor from a subsequent line to a previous line with the arrow keys; there is no document history feature. The spelling checker is merely competent; there is no thesaurus, and the program can only be accessed with the Del key, not the backspace.

DisplayWrite 4 can do a good job of managing complicated document assembly tasks or mailing list operations. Tables of contents, indexing, and table of authorities capabilities are available in an optional $125 package called IBM DisplayWrite Index Support. However, even the improvements of DisplayWrite 4 do not bring it into contention for the championship of page-oriented word processing systems.

Documentation is exceptionally clear, with good examples. We rate it good.

IBM’s printer support is among the worst in the business. The product supports only IBM-brand printers, although it is possible for experts to prepare printer drivers for other products. Support for non-IBM laser printers is available separately through dealers at no extra cost. IBM provides no support to individual users, presumably expecting corporate support staffs to handle this otherwise satisfactory product use an unacceptable rating for technical support and a poor for support policies.

We do not recommend this product except for offices with strong support staffs, or a major commitment to IBM hardware and software, and many workarounds that are already familiar with IBM word processing products. For those offices, DisplayWrite’s capability to support IBM systems is strong. While holding its own in some areas, DisplayWrite 4 is not as competitive in power, ease of use, ease of learning, or performance. We rate DisplayWrite a satisfactory value.

LOTUS MANUSCRIPT

Version 1.0

Lotus Manuscript is a phenomenon. Although this product appears to be a powerful word processor, it actually what a spreadsheet fanatic would think a word processor should be. The program is structured. Everything has its place, the places are labeled and marked, and the program works with the contents of its own.

Manuscript is a good performer, handling complex documents such as technical reports, proposals, and similar highly organized materials with headlines, subheadings, tables, graphics, charts, sections, and so on. We can imagine fewer more effective tools for assembling and constructing a document than Lotus Manuscript. It handles complex multi-level formulas with aplomb, and it is a Lotus 1-2-3 file formatted in the text with...
Product Comparison

MARCH 20, 1985

A Survey of Grammar/Style Checkers and Reference Tools

STYLEDTH

The AP Stylebook is a dictionary-based version of the style guide beloved by journalists and businesses. The AP Stylebook is memory-resident and adaptive, which is one of the tools to facilitate and guide you to the entry. A search word automatically adjusts to the appropriate rules.

THE KEY NOTES WRITEHANDBOOK

This is a simple, easy-to-use, style, grammar, and handwriting checker. The Writer's Handbook divides a section of rules and guidelines that are appropriate for the manuscript or document being written. The Florida Phrasebook is a phrasebook that can be used when writing in English.

A NEW KIND OF ENGLISH

The Grammar is a comprehensive and flexible analyzer that produces a readable list of errors and suggestions for correcting them. It has a large vocabulary of up to 50,000 words, and it can handle up to 100 different grammatical categories. The package generates a readability analysis and makes suggestions that can be enhanced with additional features.

GRAMMATIKK

Grammar is an overall favorite grammar and style checker. It is comprehensive and flexible analyzer that provides a readable list of errors and suggestions for correcting them. It has a large vocabulary of up to 50,000 words, and it can handle up to 100 different grammatical categories. The package generates a readability analysis and makes suggestions that can be enhanced with additional features.
75 Reasons Why Samna Word IV is a Legal Precedent.

1. By marking the citations in a legal brief, you can automatically generate a Table of Authorities.

2. Samna Word IV is the first word processor to pass the strict guidelines set by the country's toughest jury: The American Bar Association.

3. Would you like to search and retrieve text from a disk full of documents? That's just one of the powerful options available.

4. Context-sensitive help screens, intuitive commands and computer-based training make Samna Word IV a piece of cake to learn and use.

5. Forms Processing makes it a breeze to fill out and print any preprinted form.

6. Keep track of edit time, number of keystrokes and page-oriented. You can even transfer the data automatically to spreadsheet, databases or time and billing systems.

7. Who is in a law office with a Samna? Anyone who prepares documents. From a one-page memo to the most demanding legal brief.

8. "Samna has one of the easiest command structures we have ever seen..." said appellate reviewer. That means new users are productive sooner.


All in all, there's one big reason to put Samna in charge of word processing. Quite simply, its combination of power, ease of use and productivity is unrivaled in the law profession.

Samna Word IV. All the word processing power your law office will ever need.
When you use Spell Checking, or Spell Word or Spell Page, DisplayWrite 3 looks into the standard dictionary (03862.W) unless you change its contents (03862T, which includes its new). You can get dictionaries appropriate to no other, both, or English, French, and other languages. You may then use the English Dictionary or one of the others. In this method, when you want to delete a spelling error, you either use the dictionary on the error or select another language. In the dictionary, words are arranged in alphabetical order. If you do not have a spell check dictionary or a foreign language dictionary, you may need to use a dictionary on your system, but it would not appear as the name of the dictionary, you cannot select it. If you use a supplementary dictionary, you can add words in the dictionary. Supplementary dictionaries can be added to the package to add new words, and you can use supplementary dictionaries under different names, for different purposes, different clients, and different kinds of special language. Support for both English and other languages is available, for example, being able to use a supplementary dictionary to add new words to the English language.

Product Comparison

Lotus Manuscript is focused on generating complex and technical documents.

one should do better. We give error messages a good chance. Any text was lost and since Mail-11 offers an automatic backup feature, we assigned a good value to Mail-11's data integrity. The technical support staff is helpful but slow. This may be due to the fact that IBM PC products. Support policies are acceptable and rate satisfactory, as does technical support.

For offices with a strong commitment to VAX mainframe computing and Mail-11, the Mail-11 Toolkit Mail-11 on the IBM PC without retooling will make this the package of choice. Balancing its strong performance and versatile capabilities against its generally satisfactory ratings in other categories, we derive this product is a satisfactory value. We do not, however, recommend this package for users without substantial computer experience.

MICROSOFT WORD

Microsoft Word has always provided a superior formatting capability, providing the best output on any printer. Through style sheets, with an elaborate set of formatting specifications, a consistent presentation of a document can be developed and saved. On subsequent projects, these preserved style sheets can be easily attached to a new document and all the specifications reused. Derived from a typewriter model rather than a dedicated word processor, typewriter, or computer editor model. Word has always seen its text through the typewriter's eye, focusing on precision control of the printed page. The disadvantage comes in the form of unfamiliar terminology, complex commands, and clumsy operation when compared to competitive programs.

Word's list of features is impressive. A slick interface and an improved spelling program enhance a writer's tools that continues to include automatic hyphenation and document revision marking and line numbering on output are welcome features. Word's reliance on hidden text can be accomplished by hidden text. Powerful mail-merge, form-letter, and special form-processing make this product well-adapted to business needs.

The formatting capabilities of Word are superb, and style sheets are created from the format of existing text. You can use the regular Word commands to boldface, italicize, and change margins for your current document. Then, when you are done, you can choose Word to record that format into a style sheet to be reused later on with other documents. You can also search and replace hidden formatting marks, making changes much easier to achieve.

Spreadsheets stored in Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, or Multiplan formats can be imported directly into a Word document. Further, they are imported in such a way that the source file name is preserved.

Vendors Offer a Multitude of Word Processing Packages at a Variety of Prices

UNDER $100

Bank Street Writer Plus, $78.95, Brochure Software Pac., 17 Park Dr., Chula Vista, CA 91910, (619) 996-3000.


Easy Extra, $29.95, Version 1.0, Mirror Image, Inc., 3331 S. 29th Ave., P.O. Box 3186, Milwaukee, WI 53201, (414) 277-3000.

Einstein Writer, $175, Version 1.0, Peripherals Inc., 6791 Equity Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367, (213) 712-1600.


Galaxy, 49.95, Version 3.0, Circlesoft, P.O. Box 277, Portland, OR 97207, (503) 225-7627.


My Word, $49, Version 2.1, TXT Software, 34068 Baldwin Road, Round Lake, IL 60073, (708) 776-2100.


PO-Plus, $59.95, Version 1.0, Button Inc., P.O. Box 5878, Bellevue, WA 98009, (206) 462-8600.

PO-Write, $18, Version 2.7, Quicksoft Inc., 212 First N. 224, Seattle, WA 98109, (206) 688-3088.


Paradox, $59.95, Version 5.0, Paradox International, P.O. Box 590, New York, NY 10014, (212) 395-7218.


Reeback Word, $99.95, Version 2.0, Knowledge Engineering, Inc., 1300 Circle Fridge, Austin, TX 78746, (512) 453-8888.

$100 to $300

Command Writer, $100, Version 1.27, Office Software, 2771 General, 800 North St., Berkeley, CA 94710, (510) 525-3330.

Confident Writer, $159, Version 1.0, Office Software, 1111 Main Ave., Woodstock, CT 06798, (203) 527-9175.


EasyWriter, $15, Version 1.6, Spool Software, 1111 Main Ave., Woodstock, CT 06798, (203) 527-9175.

EasyWriter, $15, Version 1.6, Spool Software, 1111 Main Ave., Woodstock, CT 06798, (203) 527-9175.


The next time you load the Word document, the source spreadsheet is reimported with any changes. A relatively limited capability for importing graphics files automatically into a Word document is also included. Word's main menu is either by recording keystrokes or by writing a sequence of commands, saving them, and then executing it. These macro commands can be used as named files or assigned to control key combinations. The power of this facility is as good as the number of separate keyboard macro programs.

Word requires explicit repagination to get page breaks right. When changing and editing text, it does not automatically adjust page breaks, and you must invoke a repagination command to redo the entire document to review where the breaks occur. Text columns do not appear side by side on the screen.

Documentation is clear and complete. It includes several extra documents such as a large printer information booklet, a starter document with a "road map," and a pocket guide. It has a thorough table of contents, index, and error message section. Documentation rates excellent.

Word's windowing is good, with eight possible windows, and it is capable of doing complex indexes (as in a document only) and lists as well as footnotes. It also has a fine math facility. A table of contents can be generated from an outline. These features make Word a superior product. Its only serious performance drawback, the lack of automatic pagination, may be of only minor concern to many users.

Word is quite easy to learn, and experienced users will find its ease of use excellent thanks to speed keys, extensive macros, and other tools. We rate ease of learning good and ease of use very good.

Data integrity is enhanced by a useful Undo command. Error messages were helpful. We rate data integrity very good and error messages good.

Technical support, when we were able to get through, was acceptable. Although we have rated it good in the past, the numerous busy signals make it down-grade to satisfactory. Support policies are good, although only a 10-day replacement warranty for defective media is offered. We rate support policies good.

Given its strength in performance and ease of use and its generally good evaluation in other areas, we rate Microsoft Word an excellent value.

MULTIMATE ADVANTAGE II
Version 1.0
This powerful package includes most features expected in a major office product. Its greatest strength is in list processing, or the combining of data from a list into a standard template form for mailing lists into the word processing system as well as a card file system that permits rather interesting and elaborate arrangements of the kind of data that fit on a 3-by-5 card. In addition, it has a strong set of standard features, including math, newspaper columns, side-by-side columns, footnotes, outline numbering, and discretionary or global search and replace. Graphics integration is available as an option.

Multimate does not have redlining (it does have strikethrough). Its outlining feature, which fails to meet our minimum requirements, can only be printed as a table of contents. We give outlining a poor rating.

Graduate to XyWrite III Plus

You've learned so much since you purchased your first word processor that it's time you graduated to #1, XyWrite III Plus.

Graduate to XyWrite III Plus and we'll send you a diploma and a graduation present of $45. Purchase XyWrite III Plus before June 30, 1985 and you'll receive a 10% discount. Then fill out the coupon below, send us your sales receipt and the master diskette from your current word processing program and you're a graduate!

Graduate to XyWrite III Plus, rated #1 in Software Digest's January 1985 Ratings Report on Advanced Word Processing Programs. Hailed as the fastest, XyWrite III Plus makes an ordinary PC fly.

Yes, I want to graduate to XyWrite III Plus!

Enclosed is the original sales receipt from the purchase of XyWrite III Plus and the program master from my current word processing program. Send me my diploma and $45.

To graduate to XyWrite III Plus
P.O. Box 3392, Dept. D, Wallingford, CT 06492

Serial number of my new XyWrite III Plus:

Word processor you are graduateing from:

Name:
Company:
Street:
City:
State:
Zip:

Coupons (or facsimile) must be filled out completely and postmarked no later than June 30th, 1985. Allow 6 to 8 weeks processing time.

*Offer not valid for XyWrite III Plus purchased under educational discounts, corporate sales or volume pricing agreements.

Word processing programs eligible for redemption include Multimate, Wordstar, WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, MultiMate, WordStar, Cornely, Wordstar, WordWrite, and WordPro. All other programs are specifically excluded from this offer.

Trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners.
While keeping the same keystroke commands that mimic the old Wang system, Multimate Advantage II has added pull-down menus and an improved help system. The program also permits the old-style drop-down insert mode, in which text can be inserted by entering a special mode that clears the screen and puts the next line of text at the bottom. However, the user must press the "push ahead" insert simply allows text to be inserted in the middle of existing text, pushing the old text instead of the new text and reformatters the paragraph as it goes along. Multimate Advantage II also has a document manager that allows users to ignore page boundaries and automatically places page breaks. The original page-oriented operation is also still available.

Multimate Advantage II is a much-improved product over its predecessor. However, it can only handle documents up to 128K, or typically about 40 to 50 text pages. In offices using a program only for correspondence and short reports, this limit may not matter. In businesses that routinely turn out lengthy reports and other documents of considerable size, however, the 128K limit is a real annoyance. We therefore rate speed poor.

PRODUCT SUMMARY

MULTIMATE ADVANTAGE II

Version 1.0

Company: Ashton-Tate, 2301 Hamilton Ave., Vernon, NJ 07462 (201) 680-2000
List Price: $995 ($995 8-bit version), $995 ($995 and $995 8-bit version together).
Innovation: Not PC or compatible, 994/994X.0 or later. Hard disk recommended.
Features: Punches, Wang emulation, data file management, form letter and mail merge management; ready-to-use program.
Summarize: Currently the definitive corporate word processor. Multimate is still good for routine correspondence work.

The documentation for this product is extensive and packaged in eight different booklets. We rate documentation very good.

Overall, Multimate Advantage operates intuitively and simply, supported by pull-down menus and full on-line help. Ease of learning earns a good and ease of use receives a very good.

The program's error handling is generally satisfactory, but several error messages related to the use of the sort and mail facilities proved remarkably unhelpful and required a call to technical support to decipher the problem. Consequently, we rate error messages poor.

Data integrity was preserved at satisfactory level.

Overall, given its strong showing in mail merge, documentation, ease of learning, and ease of use, balanced by the document size limitation, performance, and problematic error messages, we rate Multimate Advantage II a satisfactory value within this group.

OFFICE WRITER

Version 5.0

In this category of first-rate word processing systems, Office Writer and Multimate have for years been locked in competition for the title of most effective Wang imitator. Generally, Office Writer's features are somewhat fewer and its capability to handle very complex forms and document assembly mail list tasks is more limited, but it is overall a much more graceful package.

Although originally page-oriented, Office Writer 5, like Multimate, now has automatic pagination and handles insertions and deletions as easily as most document-oriented systems. Very fast in editing, Office Writer 5 can hold a document considerably larger than Multimate (444K). Office Writer also has
an optional program that integrates graphics (not reviewed) into text, allowing it to do more than just manage files. The program comes packed with features and options for managing documents efficiently, including file search and sorting capabilities, document manipulation tools, and a comprehensive help system.

For the office word processing user, Office Writer is a great addition. Its user interface is simple and intuitive, making it easy to navigate and use. The program comes with a comprehensive suite of tools for creating, editing, and managing documents. It supports a wide range of file formats, including Microsoft Word, making it easy to transfer documents from one program to another. The program also includes a built-in spell checker, making it easy to ensure that your documents are error-free.

In summary, Office Writer is a powerful and versatile tool for managing documents in the office. Its user-friendly interface and comprehensive features make it an excellent choice for anyone looking to streamline their document management process.

SAMMA WORD IV

SAMMA Word IV is another dedicated word processing spin-off, placing heavy emphasis on specialized control keys and page orientation. Its screen display shows the entire page, including the left and right margins. Quick and effective in editing, SAMMA has somewhat fewer cursor and editing commands than its competitors in this class and handles pagination in a much less effective way. The program has a preview feature that provides a miniature picture of the printed page, helping clarify page breaks. But even so, this is no substitute for automatic pagination.

A table of content can be created with three levels, and footnotes are easily edited through footnote windows. Document tracking provides on-screen display and allows for printing with marked revisions. The user, however, must insert desired text, then go back and mark text as redline. The program provides a complete document history screen.

The great strength of this program, however, is in its text management capabilities. SAMMA Word IV has some of the most complete facilities for handling forms, forms letters, selective mailing lists, and complex document assembly that we have seen. Sorting, selecting, and managing data files are covered with an impressive range of capabilities.

As is the case with most of the programs in its class, SAMMA Word IV has extensive printer support. It handles proportionally spaced text with style and offers a variety of features to indicate

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<th>PRODUCT SUMMARY</th>
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<tr>
<td>OFFICE WRITER</td>
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<td>Version 5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company: Office Solutions Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requirements: IBM PC or compatible, 256K, DOS 2.0 or later, hard disk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price: $595</td>
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<td>Features: Superb printer support, comprehensive help system, document management tools</td>
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<th>OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL WORD PROCESSING SOFTWARE &amp; REPORT CARD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Office Writer</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Mail Merge (20)</td>
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<td>Outlining (25)</td>
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<td>Table of Contents and Indexing (20)</td>
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<td>Footnotes (20)</td>
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<td>Document Tracking (15)</td>
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<td>Fonts and Style Sheets (25)</td>
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<td>Final Scores</td>
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when changed fonts in proportionally spaced text may produce unexpectedly long lines.

Although its spelling is only adequate, Sanna IV supports dictionary hyphenation. There is no thesaurus, which limits the spelling/thesaurus rating to poor. The product is also less expensive, but it's far less powerful than its competitors. Sanna IV has no built-in dictionary, but it includes a built-in dictionary, and it's easy to add custom dictionaries. Sanna IV supports multiple languages, including Spanish and French.

WordPerfect 4.2 remains the market leader, but it is no longer the power of features champion. WordPerfect 4.2's market share is partly due to its two related characteristics. First, it is one of the easiest products to learn and use. Second, it has been around longer than any of the others. Although it may not be as quick, it's good for people who need a lot of features in the same product.

WordPerfect 4.2 contains many of the same features as WordStar 3.1, but it has some improvements. WordPerfect 4.2 has a more powerful spell checker and a better thesaurus. It also has a more powerful word processor, which includes features like automatic spelling correction and advanced formatting options. WordPerfect 4.2 is still a powerful tool for anyone who needs to create and edit documents.
Product Comparison

INFO WORLD

screen, and the program does not show the last revision date on the document summary screen. Because the program is easy to learn and use, it does not require the level of technical support that characterizes a DisplayWrite 4 or Microsoft Word office. Although lacking the telecommunications module (WordStar 2000) or a way to redefine keys, Word Perfect's indexing, footnoting, table of contents, and mail merge are powerful and provide a remarkable power combination. Word Perfect, Version 4.2, reviewed here, did not lose support capability.

Word Perfect's strength, of course, is its flexibility. The program serves the needs of secretaries, mail-list managers, scholars, editors, report writers, and casual memo writers equally well. Its user interface allows novices and experts to be at home and effective within the same system, making the document and text- exchange of documents among a wide range of staff simple and effective. We rate Word Perfect very good in ease of learning and use. Error messages are clear and well-documented; we rate them good. Data integrity is maintained through a multi-level undo command and an auto backup feature. Unfortunately, Word Perfect seems to be rather sensitive to memory-resident utilities. We rate data integrity very good.

Technical support has been better when we called Word Perfect for earlier reviews. The staff was knowledgeable, but the answers we received about LaserJet soft fonts were not terrible or entirely wrong. We rate technical support and support policies good.

Thanks to its performance and ease of learning and use, we continue to rate Word Perfect an excellent value.

WordStar Professional

Version 4.0

Long the standard of microcomputer word-processing programs, WordStar Professional (still to be called WordStar in the future) occupies a special place in the hearts, minds, and nervous systems of a number of users of the MS-DOS and early PC-DOS worlds. As one time the ubiquitous word processor, WordStar's classic characteristics continue to be admired and appreciated by many users. Some attribute Word Star's success to its usability. However, the spirit of its capabilities has been acquired by many WordStar users.

Whatever its pedigree, WordStar offers the high-powered word-processing market too little, too late. While the product has three-line headers and footers, some laser printer support, a built-in spell checker and very good spell-checker, integrated indexing (with exclusion list), table of contents, table of contents, and mail merge, support, these are not enough to make it a contender. WordStar Pro only offers an optional file conversion utility that converts WordPerfect or IBM DC/RTF format files.

For this review, we used either version 3.0 for DOS or version 4.0 for Windows. We found both programs to be extremely easy to use and to provide excellent power. We rate them good in ease of learning and use. Error messages are clear, well-documented, and comprehensive. It gives easy-to-understand and accurate messages. We rate it good in this category.

Over the years, WordStar 2000 has grown from a clumsy, slow program...
into a graceful, fast competitor in the professional word processing category. Within this highly competitive context, the package, fast, more powerful, and much more complex, and WordStar 2000 Plus raises the ante in this contest. Release 3.0, offers an awesome features list, great performance, excellent documentation, and supports all users.

The program has three parts: a main program that does the word processing; a set of supplementary features that handle mailing lists, letter form, telecommunication, and file conversion; and a collection of programs that manage graphics (Inset I I), produces page-sized text displays (Show Text), handles outlines (PC-Outline), and formats the use of preprinted forms (Fill-A-Form). In addition, the package includes HiPrint and HiPrint for managing LaserJet and PostScript fonts. These elements vary from the complete integration of word processing and telecommunications functions to the virtual stand-alone operation of Fill-A-Form. Taken together, they constitute one of the most powerful word processing tools currently available.

Although it operates much like its predecessor, WordStar has been significantly enhanced. The great increase in speed represents a new feature for a program long known for its slower operation. Cursor operations, locating text, formatting, and general operations all show a speed gain, even for less competitive programs that are on the market.

Release 3 includes a list of new features, including enhanced laser printer support with special emphasis on HP Laserjet printers and PostScript printers; and Inset II, a major graphics program can be called from within WordStar 2000 to capture any screen image and inset it into a text document.

The program can do graphic editing that allows expansion, rotation, cropping, adding, and moving of a captured image. Further, an inserted graphic can have text flow around it. This is much superior, for example, to the graphics libraries included with WordStar 2000. The fixed-field mail list program has longer fields and adds a second phone number and a post-telephone list such as MD or Jr. In addition, Mail List includes an alternative fixed-form feed for inventory management as well as the capability to automatically print Reloc-er cards.

The Telemage program supports an expanded set of commands for building automated scripts for calling data services and now supports the Xmodem protocol.

Fill-A-Form allows the user to fill in a screen form and then have that information correctly printed on a preformatted program. The program also keeps a file of client names and addresses, PC-Outline is a stand-alone outliner with good capabilities but only modest interaction with WordStar 2000, Show-Text, a program to create pieganoid graphs, using text of different sizes, colors, and type styles, is a useful tool. The index feature includes cross-referencing, subtopics, and complex numbers. The document history is very thorough. The user must have a highlighter or tulles feature, however, as a substitute for redlining. Finally, WordStar 2000 includes a very good thesaurus.

Documentation is excellent, with plenty of extra and organization. We rate it excellent. Technical support via a toll-free number is also excellent, with a knowledgeable staff that is eager to help. There's a lot of support for special printers and other odd items, and our

**PRODUCT SUMMARY**

**WORDSTAR 2000 PLUS**

**Release 3**

**Company:** MicroPro International Corp., 423 Paseo Ave., San Rafael, CA 94901; (800) 927-5629.

**List Price:** $99.95 Personal Edition; Disk, Large Edition.

**Requirements:** IBM PC or compatible, 512K, 256K video, 1 megabyte disk, 128K of core.

**Price:** Particularly strong for form letter and mail list management, formatting, and long documents.

**Ease of Use:** Complex and use of some support programs makes learning more difficult.

**Summary:** A high-powered, full-featured office product. WordStar 2000 offers strong editing, superior formatting, great printer support, and a wide range of complex programs for graphics, telecommunications, and outlining. One of the top packages.

Release 3 of WordStar 2000 Plus also along as fast or faster than any competitor.

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**OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL WORD PROCESSING SOFTWARE - INFOWORLD BENCHMARKS**

The following descriptions correspond to our benchmark chart using the time, in seconds, that it took the word processors to perform a variety of tasks. Our tests were conducted using a 200K test file that included a variety of formatting commands (division, subtotals, headers, footers, and the spacing). We divided the document into three paragraph sections, each with a slightly different size.

**File Load:** Time required to load the 200K test document.

**Save Time:** Time required to save the same 200K file.

**Import ASCII:** Time required to import an ASCII version (50K) of the test document.

**Table of Contents:** Time required to create a table of contents (200K).

**Export ASCII:** Time required to export the ASCII version (50K) of the test document.

**Export DCA:** Time required to export the DCA version (200K) of the test document.

**Reformat:** Time required to reformat and reposition the last document after reading it from a floppy disk (for each new test).

**Append Document:** Time required to append a 10K file at the end of the last document.

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**Search:** Time required to search for the last word in the last document.

**Replace:** Time required to replace the last document's first character string that appeared 774 times in the document.

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**Analysis:** The test results are presented in the following table:

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<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>Save and Continue</td>
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<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>15.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>147.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>271.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td>18.3</td>
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<td>25.6</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>143.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>59.4</td>
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<td>33.7</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>33.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Analysis:** The tests were performed under identical conditions.

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**Summary:** The WordStar 2000 Plus offers strong editing, superior formatting, great printer support, and a wide range of complex programs for graphics, telecommunications, and outlining. One of the top packages.

---

**Search:** Time required to search for the last word in the last document.

---

**Replace:** Time required to replace the last document's first character string that appeared 774 times in the document.
calls were answered quickly by technicians who weren't stumped by even our most messy system error questions. Support policies are also excellent; the Xywrite III Plus manual is easily accessible and available anywhere. It includes unlimited, toll-free support for the life of the release plus six months after release.

The program includes an undo function, and we rate data integrity good. Error messages include all pertinent information and suggestions; in other words, the program supplies an easy-to-use recording feature.

Xywrite has superior printer support and a very effective with proportionally spaced fonts. The fonts handle many newspaper columns, not displayed on-screen, and excel in. The default character display shows different print qualities, and the math capability is excellent. Xywrite does forms and mail merge, but it doesn't handle automatic mail merge with criteria. The editor is superior, and the features are a joy to use. Multiple windows that can be split vertically or horizontally increase the program's usefulness.

Xywrite has a print preview function that allows you to see a screen version of the final layout with pages breaks, headings, footers, and similar page formatting characters. While the editor shows all formatting commands, you can find the page breaks, pages do not show on the on-screen. This is consistent with the text editor model which sees the text as an unbroken flow of characters, but the page layout and text on the screen may irritate some users.

Documentation includes several tutorial sections and a user's guide. One of the best feature key templates is poorly designed, overall documentation is good.

Feeling flexible and customizable, this program lets users do almost anything in any way that pleases them, but only if they like solving complex puzzles processing, offering math, formula, and graphics capabilities. Unfortunately, it is tedious to configure and learn. The office already using DEC minicomputers will benefit from an easy learning curve afterwards.

Yet another crossover product, Multimate Advantage, provides full-featured Wang extension. It has many useful features, including strong data file management and mail-list and address book processing. It isn't recommended for large documents, with a file size limitation of 128K. Office Writer, while not matching the power of some of its competitors, is a good editor and handles large documents admirably. It is easy to learn and use.

One of the field's powerhouse packages, WordPerf, is a great personal word processor for very light editing and research. The office uses it to crunch form letters and mail lists. Not so much suited for minor word processing or lengthy editing tasks, it does not include a thesaurus. If you demand complex mailing tasks, however, this may be your answer.

WordStar Professional, while it contains word processing, is still more robust than programs such as DeskWrite or DisplayWrite 4 and somewhat less full-feature than Microsoft WordPerfect 5.2.1. For example, Xywrite's graphics commands for integrating graphics are primitive compared to those of WordStar 5.2.

Executive Summary

Word processors take the lead in the professional/executive category. WordPerfect WordStar, and Microsoft Word. These products offer fast, efficient, and feature-rich performance with a variety of editing capabilities. For the vast majority of mainstream office and professional word processing, any of these products is an excellent choice.

Lanier Desktops, brought to life for personal computers from dedicated word processors, enters the market as a strong contender still in need of some features and fine-tuning. It handles large documents well and it's a natural choice only for offices using the Harris-Lanier dedicated word processing system.

IBM's DisplayWrite 4 is a new and enhanced product compared to earlier releases, but it still suffers from Blue's lack of support for its constituency. It offers superior mail merge capabilities and is well-suited to large document assembly and list processing tasks.

Lotus Manuscript performs well, handling large, complex documents like a champ. It also offers fine data management and help centers, and is a good choice for technical document production. Another niche product, Xywrite III Plus, offers additional implementation features, but demands a high degree of user sophistication.

Multimate Advantage II for DEC VAX, Version 2.

Product Comparison: DOS Professional Word Processors, April 13, 1987
Lotus Manuscript 3.1
Lotus Manuscript 3.0
Microsoft Word 3.1
DesktopWrite 2.71
WordPerfect 4.2
Wordstar Professional 4.0
Xywrite III, Version 3.18

PRODUCT SUMMARY
Xywrite III Plus
Version 3.52
Company: Xyquest Inc., 44 Manning Road, Milltown, MA 01861; (617) 877-4996
Last Price: $449
Resources: IBM PC or compatibles, 384K, DOS 2.1 or later
Support: User's manual, documentation, and support available free of charge. A single users' group charges $25 per year.

Xywrite's customization routines are suitably extensive to be intimidating. Incredibly complex macros are possible and every key and command can be rearranged with different keystroke combinations. Many printers are now defined, and laser printer support is supported command-line orientation and complexity inhibit ease of learning but these problems are offset by the tutorial. The tutorials contain detailed information on the use of the program, and the product's flexibility is limited by the complexity of its many options and capabilities.

Xywrite is accessible, however, is very good as a result of the great effectiveness that can be achieved by tailoring the program to your specific needs and preferences. If you don't understand ASCII, you'll have a hard time with Xywrite: each option appears in an usable file (printer definitions, default characters, space, key, board definitions, and the text plus all its attributes). Files and data from Xywrite go anywhere in the ASCII world.

Xywrite offers first-rate technical support. The technicians call back promptly and can answer your questions. If you leave your questions and are technically correct and completely in your questions. We rate technical support excellent. Support packages earn a satisfaction.

Best for those who write a lot, especially literary professionals, Xywrite III belongs near the top of its class for power and flexibility. Its extensive menu of corporate word processing. Combin-