Executive Word Processors

InfoWorld examines 11 easy-to-use word processors for the busy executive.

By John Lombardi, Review Board

The rapid explosion of high-powered and expensive word processing programs has created a market for less sophisticated, less expensive products that are easier to learn and use. Known in the trade as executive word processing programs, these systems generally offer a reduced set of features at a reduced price with a special emphasis on snazzy menus, elaborate help screens, and transparent printer support.

The theory is that executives need writing tools capable of good output and effective performance, but they don't require great sophistication or control. Executives may only use the product occasionally and cannot be expected to maintain familiarity with the complicated options in the professional packages.

In every case, executive products are less powerful and less expensive than their office/professional counterparts. Most lack footnoting, columns, or elaborate cross-referencing for tables or citations, indexing of tables of contents, thesauri, style sheets, outlining, or other facilities for large document preparation. However, for almost every feature available in the more powerful packages, in most cases at least one program in this group has that feature, although none has the complete professional list.

DAC Easy Word II, Version 1.0

DAC Software, a company famous for its low-priced, high-performance software, issued an update of its word processor about a year ago. DAC competes with other strong executive performers such as Q&A Write and Professional Write. At a list price of $39, DAC is a bargain.

In the features competition, DAC holds its own with the basics plus significant enhancements. In addition to standard editing commands working with the document, DAC also handles a variety of on-screen formatting such as bolding, hanging indents, hard page returns, super- and subscripting, and automatic reformating to new margins. The program supports a wide range of printers and permits the addition of printer features not explicitly supported by the program by editing printer tables. Large documents can be edited — more than 500 pages can be accommodated — since the program keeps only a small portion of the document in memory at any time.

You can have four windows open showing different documents or multiple copies of the same document. The windows can all show on-screen, or a selected window can be zoomed to full screen size. The program supports the insertion of IBM extended character set key code and provides an ASCII chart showing which symbols correspond to which codes.

For correspondence work, DAC does an effective job. The four-window screen is an unusual advantage in a product in this price range, and the inclusion of a macro keystroke recorder is an additional plus, up to 26 macros per document with directions permitted. Although it has an effective editor, its implementation of search and replace either searches for the word exactly as entered, or ignores all capitalization, which means the replacement word does not match the capitalization of the original word. Cursor movements include a jump-to-page operation, but tabs, converted to spaces in the text, can't be removed automatically. DAC has a decimal tab feature, and it can insert the system time and date into a document, and in headers or footers you can insert a code that will insert the current data at print time. DAC's correspondence meets our criteria for a good score.

The DAC spelling checker is adequate at
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For more information contact the PC Publisher Kit at 415-966-5400.
Product Comparison

IBM DISPLAYWRITE ASSISTANT, VERSION 1.0

IBM's executive word processing entry belongs to the Assistant series, a group of executive-style programs for a variety of word-processing tasks. DisplayWrite Assistant offers convenient editing, menus, and features, all within the framework of the Assistant series. Transfer of data among this group is easy, according to the IBM. Assistant also includes the menu system where critical features are grouped under the help of a convenient toolbar. In addition, external editing devices such as printers, plotters, and pointing devices, even if the product does not support one of these devices, are supported. Although the program supports a form of metafile, it is not as effective as a similar feature in the other programs reviewed here. The full line of formatting commands, both on-screen and at print time, are workable and omit only items such as a page offset command. Unfortunately, proportional spacing is not supported.

Within the context of executive word processing systems, DisplayWrite Assistant's features offer a variety of useful capabilities with some limitations.
Product Comparison

When in doubt, just sc...
Product Comparison

September 24, 1982

by terrible technical support, support policies, and printer support. The $195 Assistant represents at most a satisfactory value.

MS WINDOWS WRITE, VERSION 2.1

Included as one of the applications supplied with Microsoft Windows 286 and 286, Windows Write offers a slick, Macintosh MS-Word-like word processing environment. With a cost of just over $100, Windows Write can serve as an effective word processing solution for those who have already invested in the Microsoft Windows/Presentation Manager environment.

Key to Write's utility, the graphical interface and mouseability features greatly facilitate the product's use, although it can also be used within a keyboard-only environment. Windows Write offers a reasonably complete collection of editing commands, manipulation of text, capable of editing very large files (over 1600 characters in one file), and maximum advantage of the WYSIWYG font management feature set.

Windows Write makes no sense outside of the Windows environment. A very high-powered analog to the Word Perfect Executive menu system, Windows Write benefits from another and power to the support of Write more than the application really needs.

Windows Write did well in basic correspondence tasks. The status line displays the page number only. Tab support is provided (redefinable left and right margin) and search and replace mimics all but wildcard capitalization. Line spacing is adjustable. But Write is still not Microsoft Word.

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Product Comparison

Office/Professional Word Processors Reviewed

In our office/professional word processing product comparison last spring (March 28), we reviewed 12 high-end systems. Since then, there have been several major updates and two new products (Total Word and Spyrilis). Here we compile and capitalize word processors from the product comparison and individual reviews, including a report card with new scores for technical support. We discuss technical support only when our reviews differed from earlier ones. Error handling now consists of only one score (1) used to indicate data integrity and error messages, three products' scores rose by one point, or by one or two points. However, most word processors are still not very reliable.

DESKWORKS LEVEL II REV. 2.1A
Deskwork is a big, reasonably powerful but not quite a competitive system. As a desktop word processing system, Deskwork 2.1A performs well as well as IBM's Deskwriter 4.

DISPLAYWRITE 4
IBM's heavyweight word processor, derived from its dedicated word processing systems, is powerful, ponderous, effective, and best suited to long documents. It is not a good system for requiring users to conform to its somewhat idiosyncratic operating style.

IBM's diligent support is varied, and technical support from IBM is nonexistent. However, Displaywrite has a robust feature list and does a good job of managing complex documents, such as assembling tasks or mail list operations. Its facilities for these purposes compare with Multimate or Officewriter.

This product is a consideration for offices with strong support staffs and a major commitment to IBM hardware and software. IBM Corp., Old Orchard Road, Armonk, NY 10504; (800) 447-4700 (for dealer information; $495).

LITHE SCRIPT 2.0
Has a reputation as a program of choice among technical writers because of its highly structured editing mode suitable for complex documents. Based on an outline, this method of editing allows users to think in sections and blocks, but the result is a highly polished system that handles complex documents well. Its structured text with graphics and tables is smooth, providing links for automatic print-out of integrated worksheets. It also handles equations and tables superbly.

Within the context of professional word processing systems, Lotus Manuscript 2.0's features and performance may well serve as a model for the program. WordPerfect on WordStar 5.0 for richness of features, and its special characteristics have been developed, and it just underpins a scripting model rather than a dedicated word processor. Word sees itself through the typesetter's eyes on the market. At least one more structured document is simple in the best sense.

Lotus Development Corp., 555 Cambridge Parkway, Cambridge, MA 02142; (617) 577-8500; $495.

MASSIVE 11 PC/TREE HOUSE 2L
Originally the word processor of choice for Digital Equipment minicomputers, Mass-11 has evolved into a sophisticated professional and scientific PC word processor. Organized like the other structured, page-oriented systems, such as Multimate or Office writer, Mass-11 has a strong features set, outstanding laser printer support, and seamless integration into a DEI environment.

Targeted at complex word processing tasks, including scientific formulas, languages, and tables, Tree House 3.0 is an effective and versatile graphics support, and line and box drawing. Mass-11 adds much more capability, including columns, tables, and formatting. It is a good choice for small to medium-sized offices, and within this context, we consider Mass-11 to be a fine performer.

Mass-11 ranks about on par with Multimate or Office Writer, and its DEC compatibility is impressive. It is not as easy to use as WordPerfect or WordStar, but its ability to merge graphics, tables, and fonts makes it a worthwhile system.

Microsoft Word 4.0: Microsoft Word has always had superb formatting. It is capable of producing the best output on any printer. Through style sheets and macro formatting, Microsoft Word has the advantage of ease of use.

Orifice is a typesetting model designed for use with a dedicated word processor. Word sees itself through the typesetter's eyes on the market. At least one more structured document is simple in the best sense.

Lotus Development Corp., 555 Cambridge Parkway, Cambridge, MA 02142; (617) 577-8500; $495.

Outlook (29)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Excellent
Satisfactory
Excellent
Satisfactory
Excellent
Poor
Good

Table of contents and indexing (25)
Poor
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good
Very Good
Very Good

Outlining (29)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Excellent
Satisfactory
Excellent
Satisfactory
Excellent
Poor
Good

Documenting (19)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good
Very Good

Fonts and style sheets (29)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good

Indexing (25)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good

Optional features (15)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good

Documentation (19)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good

Base of learning (10)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good

Ease of use (10)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good
Very Good

Error handling (7)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good

Support (25)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good

Support policies (25)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good

Satisfactory
Very Good

Technical support (25)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good

Support system (10)
Satisfactory
Satisfactory
Very Good
Satisfactory
Good
Very Good

Average scores for products in this category:

IBM

Mass-11

Microsoft

Outlook

4.2
4.7
7.0
5.6
7.4
5.5
6.2

Satisfaction levels range from Satisfactory (3) to Satisfactory (5) with a total score of 100. The product that scores 100 is the best product in that category. The product that scores 0 is the worst product in that category. The product that scores 50 is the average score for that category. The product that scores 25 is the average score for that category. The product that scores 0 is the worst product in that category. The product that scores 100 is the best product in that category.

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of new features. Office Writer performs as a word processing program in the best sense and it offers several advantages over Multimate, its primary competitor.

Basic editing and formatting features, including program macros, and keyboard commands that closely emulate Wang terminals, are the obvious choice in environments where desktop publishing systems can coexist with PC-based word processing. Office Writer handles editing and basic formatting well and includes a variety of high-powered features. Office Writer 6 lacks many bells and whistles characterizing top products like Word Perfect or Wordstar 5.0, such as spelling checking and automatic case changing, but it is still a good performer.

Office Writer 6.0 provides strong basic word processing capabilities, but it is less effective with longer documents or tasks requiring extensive formatting. Office Solutions Inc., Customer Service Department, 47 Kent Court, Madison, WI 53711; (608) 274-5947, $495.

SAMMA WORD IV 3.0. Samma Word IV is also derived from the dedicated word processor market. Its features match high-end machines like Wordstar 5.0 and WordPerf 5.0. Many of its strengths lie in its user-friendly interface and its superior output features. It is priced at $995.

Feature-rich, Samma Word offers a variety of functions, although it is somewhat slow. In this comparison of high-powered processing market, the impressive pace is not fast enough for now. However, Samma's relative position is due to the fact that Samma has improved and customers have come to expect even more. Samma's word processor shouldn't be a disappointment. If you have a user base familiar with the product, if you want an integrated spreadsheet/word processor, or if you do lots of forms processing and printing. It is not recommended for long documents because of its slow speed or for complex formatting tasks using fonts.

SAMMA Corp., 3601 Glennridge Drive, Atlanta, GA 30342; (800) 831-9679; (404) 831-5007; $635; $995 for non-Plus version (word processing only).

SPRINT: Belord's Sprint shines into the buyers' context market with a superior editor, a powerful text formatter, and an innovative programming language for text processing. Sprint partially imitates the operations of popular word processors so that complex staffs can extend and modify word processing with formal retraining. Within the context of high-powered, professional word processing programs, Sprint falls somewhere in the upper half. Flexible, with an impressive complement of editing commands, SPRINT divides editing and formatting into two steps much like word processors of the past, which is less common.

Sprint's special feature, shared with Xywrite IIIi, is the word processor programming language. Sprint can be customized into almost anything you want that handles text.

Sprint's is a good company-wide standard that allows for individual user preferences. At just under $120, Sprint is a bargain in this group.

Belord International, 1800 Green Hills Road, P.O. Box 660001, Scotts Valley, CA 95066; (408) 438-8400; $1995.

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No matter what business you’re in, chances are your company produces more words than anything else. So the crucial decision for a company-wide or department-wide word processor boils down to four tough questions:
1. Does the system have the advanced features and the ease of use to satisfy all user groups—including secretaries, documentation writers, managers, engineers and the legal staff?
2. Is the learning curve gentle—so it’s brick wall?
3. Is the system truly a corporate word processor capable of supporting single users and multiuser networks in both DOS and UNIX environments (including SCO XENIX)?
4. Will you be in direct and continuing contact with the vendor’s sales and support people, even if you buy the product from a local dealer?

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Evaluate word processors like the big companies do: Ask those four questions, plus all your other key criteria.

You’ll see why the clear choice is Samna—at companies like AT&T General Motors, Lloyds Mutual, American Busch and Chemical Bank. At government agencies like NASA, the Secret Service, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, the Executive Office of the President and United Nations International.

Institute of Higher Learning, such as the University of Texas and the University of Colorado. And at businesses of all sizes, including health organizations and law firms.

Those organizations wanted to look good on paper. So their evaluators took a long, hard-nosed look at Samna. They found a user-friendly combination of productivity, versatility and ease of use. And they found outstanding field support, tailored to a corporate clientele.

Corporate-Class Word Processing

When you select Samna, you’ve made an irreplaceable choice sure to please everyone who produces your company’s documents—from memo to manuals.

For the casual user, Samna is a pleasure to work with. For the power user, it’s sheer bliss.

Here’s why: Samna word processors have the power to integrate text with graphics. To preview the printed page. To display two documents at once. To edit, display and move columns. To process forms, merge files, hyphenate words and make revisions. To manage your printers and fonts and print-wheel fonts. To type, edit and display equations. And to find dozens of short cuts for producing long documents.
Product Comparison

September 24, 1988

Windows applications permit substantial ease of use benefits. Where fonts complicate a screen issue, Wine has no equal in this group for fast, effective, and simple management. We rate ease of use very good.

Wine has a variety of ways to present user data, including backup file generation on saving warnings when clicking an unsaved file and being able to retrieve data from a Delete, Move, or Copy command.

If you manage to get through to the right support group at Microsoft technical support is fine. The technicians are knowledgeable, helpful, and willing to spend time with you on the phone. Technical support earns a good rating.

Unlike telephone support, written documentation is dependent on the user's ability to vary the subject with the name, a phrase, a date, a reference number, anything—you can find all occurrences in more seconds. Then review each reference, editing as you go. Suddenly a disk fill of files becomes a research library. You'll find dozens of nifty examples. To compile a report from diverse sources, purged out listed files. Search personnel files for these and other combinations of your favorite phrases in past letters. Find obscure facts buried in trim of legal dispositions. In short, find the proverbial needle in a haystack.

Wine plus IV, our top-of-the-line product available for both DOS- and UNIX users, offers even more: A built-in, full-text retrieval system and a built-in spreadsheet system. If you need an outstanding business productivity system, Samna Decision Graphics is a powerful option.

Digital is a first for Word. When you're typing a document, you'll be able to insert graphics, tables, and other graphics into your document. This feature allows you to create a document that is both visually appealing and functional. The program also includes a spell checker and a thesaurus, which helps you find the perfect word.

However, there are limitations to this feature. The spell checker and thesaurus may not be as accurate as other programs on the market. The graphic features may not be as sophisticated as those found in more expensive programs. Overall, Digital is a good program for those who need a basic word processing tool with some extra features.
The system date and time may be inserted and edited by pressing [F2] and [F3]. The system date and time can be changed by pressing [F2] and [F3].

Unscreen information is now available on disk and can be accessed through the system menu. This allows for more efficient management of disk space and improved performance of the system.

Screen information is now available on disk and can be accessed through the system menu. This allows for more efficient management of disk space and improved performance of the system.

The system menu now includes a new feature that allows for easier access to screen information. This feature is particularly useful for users who frequently need to access screen information for their work.

Screen information is now available on disk and can be accessed through the system menu. This allows for more efficient management of disk space and improved performance of the system.

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Anyone can learn Professional Write in a couple of hours. The screen is as familiar as a piece of paper. Pull down menus and an on-line tutorial make learning nothing to memorize. Our follow-along tutorial is written in plain English, and our context-sensitive help is one of the best available.

Professional Write offers a wide range of sophisticated features. Information on laser printers is especially good with valuable information and advice.

Online help includes a series of full-screen dialog boxes covering major topics and features with a good index. Designed to provide a quick, short-hand reminder rather than comprehensive instruction, the help system achieves its purpose, but something more detailed online help would be appreciated. Error messages are informative.

We rate the program's documentation very good.

PC Write is easy to install and setup, taking about 30 minutes. However, getting to an acceptable level of beginning use is something else again. For most users, PC Write is a challenge for anything beyond simple correspondence. The immense range of possibilities and the infinite malleability of this program delays learning while users sort through options and select on things they need to know. About two or three hours of work were required to get to a beginning level of competency and several days are necessary to achieve a reasonable level of mastery.

Contrary to programs such as Q&A, Professional Write and Webster's this is a difficult program to learn. As a result, we rate its ease of learning no higher than satisfactory.

In spite of a great deal of flexibility and power, some characteristics of the program may cause some users difficulties. PC Write does not dynamically paginate. Registration to repaginate the file so page breaks can be seen correctly after editing is not necessary. We see the program since the print formatting program will automatically paginate the file after printing.

Comma, period, and other punctuation problems, and similar features can be implemented through dot commands. When this file goes through the printer program PC Write offers a remarkable opportunity to fine-tune editing and printing to match the exact needs and preferences of each user. However, without the context of actual printer commands, understanding some of these features can be a critical factor. For the occasional or occasional user, the advanced features are of limited use. A disadvantage of this is that PC Write's ease of use no higher than satisfactory.

PC Write automatically creates backup files when beginning and concluding editing, preserving multiple versions of a file. An interface command will recalculate and undo the most recent replace. Other routine errors are handled well. We rate error handling satisfactory.

PC Write offers a 90-day money-back guarantee for users who have fully registered the product. In addition, new users get one year of support after registering and paying the fee (program purchase price). Additional years of support cost $20/$35 depending on whether the magazine is purchased or not.

Registered users receive a free newsletter. No support is provided without a registration number except for installation advice and help on printing the tutorial (which requires no sophisticated printing techniques). We rate support policies very good.

Technical support personnel were well-informed and provided more than enough help. Our calls about support for LaserJet printers were answered immediately. From a user support perspective, PC Write was an excellent product.

A shareware product, PC Write is as inexpensive as any executable program reviewed here. However, the kind of casual use typical of this category will find what they need. On the other hand, PC Write is more powerful than most of the programs in this group, yet it lacks the advanced corporate word processor features that have become popular in the high-end market. PC Write might fit best in a third category, which is that we did not label personal word processors. This category's adherents use the products often enough to be over the learning curve and to appreciate the power, yet they don't regularly produce sophisticated output for others. Programmers and freelance writers are two examples of users, and WordStar is another example of the type. As an executive word processor, PC Write doesn't rate as well overall as its remarkably high market share might lead one to predict. Nevertheless, users who like lots of power at a low price would still find this tool approachable. Aren't we afraid of the learning curve, and have no real intentions of creating graphics or talk DCA. Will find this powerful, low-priced word processor a very good value.

Professional Write, Version 2.0

Professional Write holds the ease of use championship title. Its menus are...
Systat. Because other statistics and graphics packages are not enough.

Systat now offers more statistics graphical than any other PC or mainframe package. And we will give you less bulk with more statistics.

Statistics
- Basic statistics, frequencies, t-tests, one-way analysis of variance, regression, and correlation
- Parametric and non-parametric tests
- Multivariate analysis, including factor analysis, principal components analysis, and cluster analysis
- Time series analysis, spectral analysis, and wavelet analysis
- Survival analysis, Cox regression, and Kaplan-Meier survival estimation
- Logistic regression and other generalized linear models
- Mixed-effects models, repeated measures ANOVA, and MANOVA
- Longitudinal data analysis, using generalized estimating equations (GEE)
- Mixture models, latent class analysis, and item response theory
- Non-parametric methods, including permutation tests and bootstrap methods
- Distribution fitting, goodness-of-fit tests, and nonlinear regression
- Time series analysis, including ARIMA models and state-space models
- Spatial and spatio-temporal models

Graphics
- Two-dimensional: Line plots, bar charts, scatterplots, histograms, box plots, and density plots
- Three-dimensional: Surface plots, contour plots, and 3D histograms
- Interactive graphics, including zooming, panning, and selecting
- Customizable layouts, legends, and tick marks
- Export to various formats, including PDF, EPS, and SVG
- Animation and interactivity

Data Management
- Import from Excel, SPSS, SAS, and other formats
- Export to Excel, SPSS, SAS, and other formats
- Import and export of data in various formats, including CSV, Excel, and SPSS
- Integration with database engines, such as SQL and Oracle
- Customizable data transformations, including recoding, imputation, and data cleaning
- Data manipulation, including sorting, filtering, and merging

Systat. Intelligent software.
Product Comparison

Windows Write's graphical interface facilitates use on part of the Microsoft Windows operating environment.

PC Type offers fast editing, strong text manipulation through block controls, and multiple editing.

PC Write's on-line help includes a series of full-screen displays with short-hand reminders on major features.

We've been put on hold. This is greatly improved since June 6 review, when we had difficulty getting through to support. Service was impressive, and we rate technical support very good.

At $199 Professional Write represents a strong complement of features for an executive word processing program. The great address book feature, strong support of mailing list types and multiple file formats, plus the ease of the interface all combine to earn a very good value rating.

Q&A WRITE, VERSION 1.01

Quick, graceful, and effective describes this word processor extracted and enhanced from the popular Q&A integrated database/work processed program. Q&A has a particularly graceful set of menus and cursor keys. It has a cursor feature that displays a count of words, lines, and paragraphs. Q&A can print (but not display) up to eight screens at a time. The cursor does not stop as you print.

Professional Write is a high-quality, high-end word processor capable of handling most any high-level word processing demands. Correspondence performance is very well in our tests. Cursor movement is easy and fast and cursor features offer standard capabilities. If your computer does not replace does not maintain capitalization. Tabs can be changed, but the text does not. Reformatted to meet the new rules. Lines can be set at print time for single, double, or envelope spacing, and codes can be embedded in the text for other line spacing. Actual spacing shows up when printed, not on-screen. Q&A supports tabular data and a date command inserts the system date at printing. The macro command is versatile and easy to use.

We rate technical support very good.

Q&A's 100,000-word spelling checker is quick and intuitive. Options to space and continue, add words to dictionary, and the like are well-implemented and the suggested alternatives are very helpful. The spell checker also detects duplicate words. A thesaurus is available optionally for $49.95. We rate spelling checking good.

Mail merge works from a card file database, performing basic functions without difficulty and formatting paragraphs with the merged information. The card system holds up to 100 cards with 2,000 characters per record and 240 characters per card. It allows more flexibility than older mail merge systems and Q&A needs no field separators. Fields are called by name and conditions are provided through card file search and select functions. Q&A imports and exports Data, ASCII, and comma and decimal tabular data and a date command.

Fonts and styles are well-implemented in general, however, and earn a good score.

Text and box drawing is available and Lotus 1-2-3 graphics can be integrated with Q&A. Although text and box breaks may occur at unusual places and text printing may be necessary. While graphic text and box output is not a Q&A feature. Font and character color changes can be integrated at print time, there is no way to tell how the page breaks when the document is printed. We rate graphics satisfactory.

Q&A is speedy, performing fast on long text lines.

Word Processing Conversion Software

WordPerfect 4.1/4.2/4.3/5.0
WriteMaster Word Multimate Word StarOffice Wordstar

Q&A WRITE

Version 1.01

Q&A WRITE

COMPANY: Symantec Corp., 1201 Torrey Ave., Cupertino, CA 95014 (408) 233-5500

Price: $199

Features: Reliable processing, fast editing, strong text manipulation through block controls, and multiple editing. Q&A's 100,000-word spelling checker is quick and intuitive. Options to space and continue, add words to dictionary, and the like are well-implemented and the suggested alternatives are very helpful. Spell checker also detects duplicate words. A thesaurus is available optionally for $49.95. We rate spelling checking good.

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Q&A is speedy, performing fast on long text lines.
enough to rate a good in speed when matched against the other word processors.

Q&A supports ASCII, WordStar, PFS Write, and 1-2-3/3.5/fm Symphony files. It also supports creating ASCII and PFS files, and the capability to insert Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheets at print time is handy. We rate compatibility good.

Generally clear and complete, the printed documentation has a poor indexing system but lettering and numbers to identify section and page. The letters in no particular order, and hence a reference to page A-1 requires that a reader refer to A-1, making the location of indexed items something of a challenge. On-line help is at times much less obvious of command functions and a page reference in the manual for further information. The combination of poor indexing balanced by ease on-line help and clear documentation earns Q&A a good in documentation.

Q&A has a well-deserved reputation for ease of learning. It takes no more than an hour to get up and running and be writing correspondence, and two or three hours to become very competent. More time may be required to fully understand the use of fonts and the various limitations of the import system. Most users find the menu system greatly eases learning, and we rate ease of learning very good.

The product is easy to use. Q&A limits file sizes to about 140 lines of doublespaced text, but Q&A handles all. A general rule is that if a product has a consistent complement of editing commands has polishability: The Jump-to-Blanking and Jump-to-Comment commands are effective. Niemack is disabled on an AT keyboard. The rule line to indicate line length or margins is displayed as an option. Single- and double-spacing can be accomplished with Q&A commands, and the current system date can be inserted. Search and replace works well, but Q&A does not have on-screen help. The on-screen help is a handy feature, and the beginning of a word but not mimicking other capitalization. Correspondence earns a satisfactory score.

The spelling checker includes two dictionaries, one with 75,000 words and a second with 16,000 user-definable words as needed. The spellers learns new words and automatically adds new words to dictionary files. The spellers can be set for automatic replacement, and Q&A can add new words to dictionary files.

With Q&A's spellers earn a good rating. There is no mail-merge function for Q&A, although limited to 60K files and lacking a mail merge, Q&A's features offer a handy complement of editing and formatting commands for basic word processing.

This version of Q&A includes a variety of new features that improve basic operation, enhance spell checking flexibility, expand printer and enhance menus. There is also a nifty page preview feature that takes advantage of all the enhancement of graphics on Q&A. Accurate spelling and justification tested the whole page preview function is an advantage, and fonts can be changed anywhere in the document. According to our tests, fonts and styles earn a good rating.

There is no graphical support provided.

The exception of a slow reformatting feature that requires manual intervention, Q&A is quick performer, as is an on-screen program. We rate speed good.

Q&A imports ASCII files and handles other formats as, we rate compatibility good.

Q&A has a substantial amount of paper-handling intelligence with good explanations of command functions. However, the manual for the previous version has updates and you must turn to the 5.2 disk for an extensive addendum. The vendor takes the position that the on-screen help is so good and extensive that no manual is required. That is almost true, although a number of questions arise related to some items on-screen instructions do not fully explain. Nonetheless, the on-screen help is useful and complete. From the documentation, we can see that Q&A is installed and operating, taking only about 20 minutes. An exemplary on-screen tutorial brings you up to speed in less than 45 minutes. The speed of the tutorial can be varied for user's differences. The tutorial can be skipped. Given the relative limited range of features and the use of the program will take two hours or so, we rate ease of learning excellent, primarily because of the superlative tutorial.

As users gain familiarity with the program's keystrokes and menus, the learning curve should not be severe, and can be reduced with practice.

Q&A has two versions: one for 80-column only and another for wide-screen monitors. The wide-screen version adds an additional 40 columns to the screen, allowing for easier reading and editing.

Q&A Deluxe uses the same basic interface as Q&A, but adds support for wide-screen monitors and additional features. It can handle up to 120 columns of text, allowing for easier reading and editing of wide-screen documents. The wide-screen version also includes a built-in spell checker, grammar checker, and thesaurus, making it a more powerful tool for writers and editors.

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provided, and search and replace is not case-sensitive so each capitalization counts as a separate word. Column cut and page are available and line spacing can be set. We rate correspondence satisfactory.

The 100,000-word spelling checker checks for capitalization error and provides useful ways to remove accidental punctuation or blanks in a space. While the checker displays alternatives, it does not offer learned words in the subject area list. Each capitalization error is counted as a separate word and must be learned separately. Even possessives with apostrophes can be learned as separate words. The spelling checker meets our criteria for a good score.

The program uses standard fonts which are displayed clearly, skips improper words without bothering subsequent words, and text can be read in the displayed fonts. The file management programs. No provision exists inside the program to sort or select. We rate the喵的 match facility good.

There is no graphics support. A host of other printers are supported and the file format allows access to four numbered fonts at any time. The printing shows pages layout but not the displaying fonts. We rate fonts good.

There is no graphics support. A host of other printers are supported and the file format allows access to four numbered fonts at any time. The printing shows pages layout but not the displaying fonts. We rate fonts good.

The user interface is well-implemented, although there is no PostScript support. A host of other printers are supported and the file format allows access to four numbered fonts at any time. The printing shows pages layout but not the displaying fonts. We rate fonts good.

Volkswagen includes a pagebreak automatic with default, comprehensive instructions and complete information about the program. There are technical appendices and a helpful index. Volkswagen's minimalist approach to on-line documentation provides a single four-line box at the top of the editing screen with a map of the function-key options. Other messages at the directory or when selecting printing options are equally terse. We rate documentation satisfactory.

Installation, setup, and the til option take about an hour to complete, after which most users can select a style sheet and key sequences to suit their tastes. The options are not detailed in the manual, and most programmers have found ways to hide the solution to printer problems from the user. Volkswagen's approach requires at least a minimal knowledge of printing, and it is included in the core of the program. The options can be read in a stand-alone mode and the output can be printed later using a different printer. Although Volkswagen has no undo capability, it handles most changes without losing text and it offers the option for automatic backups. We rate error handling satisfactory.

Lifeforce guarantees user satisfaction with a 10-day money-back promise. There is no unlimited regular phone support, a newsletter, and corporate support. We rate support policies very good.

Technical support on the Lotus manual is quick and reasonably well-informed; our calls were placed by helpful and friendly technicians. We rate technical support good.

Within the context of executive word processing packages, at $99 Volkswagen represents a good value. While the product is sound and effective in what it does, the missing features, limited on-line help, and poor printer support reflect its relative value. Significant was its superior product in its market niche has been outsourced over time by the competition.


tary.

We rate correspondence satisfactory.

The 14,000-word dictionary with a user-defined auxiliary dictionary supports a convenient spelling checker. While it does not maintain midword capitalization, it supports additional dictionaries and specialized word lists can be purchased. The spelling checker can be used in a real-time mode, automatically fixing if you make a mistake while typing.

WordPerfect's Executive offers users an insert button, 1-2-3 worksheets directly into the text.

Webster's spelling checker has a real-time mode, which automatically fixes if you make a mistake while typing.

WordPerfect Executive allows users to insert their own 1-2-3 worksheets directly into the text.

Volkswagen offers a sparse command summary box instead of an extra pull-down menu or detailed help screens.

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WordPerfect Executive allows users to insert their own 1-2-3 worksheets directly into the text.
Product Comparison

September 24, 1980

Although the full integration of the various functions through a graceful menu offers some interest. Our review found the text processor of Word Perfect Executive offers a scaled-down version of the Word Perfect Library as its menu. From this menu, a user can perform most functions likely to be needed by a non-technical user. For example, a calendar, a calculator, and a spell checker. It is integrated with the text editor and can be used in the main screen.

The spreadsheet module is based on Lotus 1-2-3, and provides a powerful tool for numerical analysis. Its principal advantages are its good set of financial and mathematical functions, its extensive file (256 columns by 8,192 rows), and a command set compatible with other Word Perfect products. This wordprocessor module can import spreadsheets effortlessly, but cannot automatically import a current spreadsheet at print time.

At a word processor, Word Perfect Executive is fundamentally less powerful than its competitors, yet it contains limited features implementers. Word Perfect Executive has most of the standard editing commands, and it prints acceptably. However, its printer drivers are primitive, and it takes only limited advantage of printers such as the Hewlett-Packard LaserJet. Many users will buy Word Perfect Executive to produce basic documentation that will later be enhanced and printed on the top-rated Word Perfect 5.0, but as an added-alone word processor, Executive is not worthwhile the competition.

Basic correspondence performance did well overall. Cautious and editing is standard, and search and replace maintains capitalization only at the beginning of words. Tabs can be well-defined, and the text line shows page and line numbers. We rate correspondence good.

The relatively small 50000-word dictionary can ignore correct, correct, or leave words. Alternative spellings are displayed, and the program will detect areas of double words. Spell checking is rated good.

Mail merge is carried out in collaboration with Word Perfect Executive's printing and design of mail runs. It is similar to the mail merge feature in Lotus 1-2-3, but with text editing and the capability to handle long documents, make it useful for people preparing reports for final printing on other systems. Users can also prepare their own mailings using the program's built-in mail merge feature.

There's ANS-74 COBOL
And there's ANS-83 COBOL
WHY NOT HAVE IT ALL?
RM/COBOL-85 is really QA certified error-free for both COBOL standards in one compiler.
If you need high-level 74 features like SORT and MODIFY, RM/COBOL-85's got it for you. The big difference our newest version compiles your applications two times faster and runs them up to eight times quicker compared to our earlier RM/COBOL. Plus your files can store up to five times more data.

Protect Your RM/COBOL Investment
RM/COBOL-85 is upward compatible with all of your existing RM/COBOL applications. They can be recompiled, with minimal modifications, to give you the high performance of the Y-86. It offers new features available in RM/COBOL-85. Because you can mix and match 74 and 85 features the way you want, you can move your applications to the Y-86 standard when it's convenient for you.
Plus, RM/COBOL-85 now includes RESOURCE, a powerful tool that greatly improves the speed of compilation.
Either way, RM/COBOL-85 delivers flexibility and convenience, whether you're in a DOS, UNIX, or XENIX environment.

WORD PERFECT EXECUTIVE, VERSION 1.0

Bearing a noble family name in word processing, Word Perfect Executive offers a scaled-down version of the COBOL office/professional word processing engine, matched with less power but of a variety of other programs in an integrated environment adapted for executives. The result is a disk package that includes a word processor, spreadsheet, calendar, calculator, and menu shell, all combined into a reasonably well-integrated whole.

Putting it all together this system would have been ideal for executives in an office with full-featured Word Perfect products and hands-on technical and clerical workers. However, it is now dated, and among executive word processors represents a feature poor product.

PRODUCT SUMMARY
WORD PERFECT EXECUTIVE
VERSION 1.0


System: IBM PC, IBM PC XT

List Price: $499

Requirements: IBM PC or compatible MS-DOS or CP/M operating system.

CalComp, the 8088 microprocessor, supports standard 8088 commands.

Glossary: Includes several key features treated in some detail, a short glossary of terms will be included with other Word Perfect programs.

Goes well beyond the requirements of a desktop publishing package. Word Perfect Executive is recommended for other use, however, before purchase, for those who have no need for powerful features available in competitive programs.
Product Comparison

EXECUTIVE WORD PROCESSORS • REPORT CARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>DEC EasyWrite II</th>
<th>DisplayWrite Assistant</th>
<th>MS Windows Write 2.1</th>
<th>PC Plus Type *</th>
<th>PC Write 2.71</th>
<th>Professional Write</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling/Checker/Thesaurus</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mail Merge</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms and Styles</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphics</td>
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<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compatibility</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error handling*</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Poor</td>
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<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
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EXECUTIVE WORD PROCESSORS • REPORT CARD

<table>
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<tr>
<th>QW Write</th>
<th>TextEase Deluxe Plus</th>
<th>Webster's New World Write II</th>
<th>WordPerfect Executive</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GUIDE TO REPORT CARD SCORES

Scores are rounded to the nearest .5. "Satisfactory" includes all essential features. "Excellent" also includes many additional features.
Executive Summary

The products summarized here fall into several categories. Most appropriate for stand-alone executives are Professional Write and Q&A Write, which have superior user interfaces, reasonable complemen-
tary power, and the flexibility to be used by non-computers. Writer's New World Writer II falls loosely into this mold, although it is more effective for writers needing long document capability, a template, or an outline.

Telex is easy to learn and use, a solid program with a reduced feature set. It is an inexpensive, efficient package with good menus and help. Likewise, Pageant II has many attractive features, especially windows and large document support.

Volkswagen Deluxe Print and Word Perfect Executive use dated word processing technology. Volkswagen is quick and effective, but rather sparse and lacking updated printer support. Word Perfect Executive's integrated environment has limited word processing balanced by spreadsheet, calendar, calculator, and other modules.

IBM's DisplayWrite Assistant edits and prints effectively, a nice choice for basic correspondence and short documents. Integrated with other IBM products, shops choosing the IBM product line will want to consider Assistant. The 32K file size limitation, however, is a significant drawback.

Microsoft-Windows Write is part of the Windows operating environment, a GUI graphical shell with a collection of utilities and application programs and many third-party products available. Write contains features less powerful or complex than those in Microsoft Write, but it is still effective. If a user has Windows installed, Write is fine as an executive word processor, although it creates features such as mail merging and spell checking.

PC-Write is an anomaly. As a shareware product available at no cost, it has a steep learning curve for the casual user, typical of this category, it's also more powerful than most of the other products. As an executive word processor, PC-Write isn't for everyone, and it doesn't rate that strongly yet; its high market share stems from its budget-friendly interface and its toolkit approach to word processing.

PC-Write, another shareware program, is less flexible than PC-Write but performs like a champ. It offers a superior integration of file manager and word processing with less power in printer commands or editing capabilities.

When choosing an executive word processor, you need to consider several issues, since all the products score well in general. Aside from cost, first look at your requirements. If you have Microsoft Word or Windows installed throughout, Windows Write is an obvious choice, and compatibility gives it a major advantage. IBM standard office with a commitment to DisplayWrite or Assistant series will likely find DisplayWrite Assistant a good fit. Similarly, if your office uses the Q&A integrated package, Q&A Write will be ideal for executives.

But organizations with Word Perfect 5.0 word processing may find even the compatibility with Word Perfect Executive insufficient to put up with the limitations. This would also apply to organizations committed to Volkswriter 3 or Total Word when reviewing Volkswriter Deluxe Print.

Several products can include spread-
sheets and graphics, Q&A and Professional "Write handle Lotus 1-2-3" spreadsheets very well. Others connect with other spreadsheets, such as Q&A Perfect Executive's seamless integration with Plan Perfect and Windows Write's ability to import Excel or Multitab sheets. Similarly, graphic needs determine whether the point-and-click inclusion of a Lotus graphic file, for example, is sufficient or whether the drawing capability of a Windows Paint program will be needed as part of the word processing system.

Laser printer support is a significant area of difference between the programs. Windows Write's handling of fonts and display of type sizes and styles represents the most effective currently available solution, although Q&A and Franklin Write also do well. For many, file compatibility with other laser-printing programs may be insufficient.

Finally, some users need mail-merge capabilities, many in this group of word processors do an especially good job of mail merge, although some none as sophisticated as can be found in the professional programs.

Buy only after testing the product using typical documents and chores. Satisfaction often depends as much on operating style and 1000betas as on objective evaluation of capabilities.

Introducing TurboSearch.

"That's pretty much the idea behind TurboSearch," from Ashton-Tate.

"Whether it's a complete file, or just a single word buried deep inside one, TurboSearch will find it. Quickly and effortlessly."

"No longer will you have to go through those tedious file-by-file searches. You just place your files in a TurboSearch "library," and then type in what you're looking for—words, filenames, or even the date you think you worked on a project. In seconds, your information will be right in front of you. Ready for a more detailed search, if necessary, for printing, right from the program, or to move back into your word processing program for editing."

"What price this security? Only $179. And there's a 30-day, unconditional money-back guarantee, to boot. Just give us a call at our toll-free number 1-800-227-6900, and we'll send you an authorized Ashton-Tate TurboSearch Disk for free."

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