In the word processing business, to stand still is to decline. Even in the lower-powered executive end of the market, nothing is sure than inflation and feature inflation. What used to be super-duper for an executive word processing program is now just ordinary, and the competition for this class of word processors has grown as fierce as the battle between powerhouse Microsoft Word and Word Perfect.

Executive word processing programs are by definition, less expensive and less powerful than their professional counterparts. They have fewer features with fewer options. Executive word processing is for busy "executives" who need competent word processing but have neither time nor need for the complexity and sophistication of a product like Microsoft Word 5.0. In many cases, an executive word processor is used to prepare drafts that a professional word processing expert or secretary will later turn into sophisticated documents using a higher-powered program. For other offices, an executive word processor can easily handle any job. As a direct result of their relative simplicity, executive word processing programs are usually easier to learn and use than the office/professional programs, if only because there is less to learn and there are fewer choices to make.

With the recent mushrooming of desktop publishing products and users, executive word processors are handy tools for preparing text that is to be imported into desktop publishing software. Many popular desktop publishing packages do not provide even basic word processing features. At the same time, they are slow for editing and are limited in what kinds of word processing documents they can import; you will not, for example, be able to import a Microsoft Word document with

**PRODUCTS REVIEWED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ami, Version 1.004</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond Word Writer, Version 1.1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Windows Write, Version 2.1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Write, Version 2.1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q&amp;A Write, Version 1.01</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volkswagen 4, Version 1.02</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Perfect Executive, Version 1.0</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InfoWorld Report Card</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Word Processing Report Card</td>
<td>54-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How We Tested Executive Word Processors

We tested all executive word processors using the same hardware system: an 8-MHz IBM AT Model 338 with 468K of RAM, EGA, and a 30-MHz hard disk. In this product comparison, we have updated our tests and benchmarks for each word processor version. The tests for each product have been refined to provide a more accurate picture of performance and to reflect the capabilities of the latest versions.

In this product comparison, we have updated our tests and benchmarks for each word processor version. The tests for each product have been refined to provide a more accurate picture of performance and to reflect the capabilities of the latest versions.

**Performance**
For all performance categories, we established a core set of requirements. A word processor must provide a complete set of word processing features including: basic editing, spelling, and document management capabilities. In addition, we evaluated the quality of the printed output, the speed of the system, and the ease of use of the software.

**Basic Editing**
Basic editing includes such features as line spacing, paragraph formatting, page setup, and the ability to insert and delete text. In this category, we tested the ability to edit documents quickly and accurately.

**Spelling Check**
Each executive word processor must include a spelling checker and a dictionary of common words. In this category, we tested the accuracy and completeness of the dictionary and the ability of the spell checker to identify and correct errors.

**Mail Merge**
Mail merge is the capability to merge information from a database (such as names and addresses) with a form letter. Rated features include the ability to skip records with invalid addresses and to automatically format the merged letters.

**Support**
Support includes on-site assistance and technical support. We tested the availability of support staff, the response time, and the ability to resolve issues quickly.

**Value**
Value is a measure of the price of the software in relation to its performance and features. We compared the price of each product to its performance and features to determine its value.

**Conclusion**
In conclusion, we have updated our tests and benchmarks for each word processor version. The tests for each product have been refined to provide a more accurate picture of performance and to reflect the capabilities of the latest versions. We hope that this product comparison will help you make an informed decision when choosing an executive word processor.
layout mode. Because of these problems, we rate speed poor.

The documentation is well done. It lacks some technical information and
offers little about printers; much of this is
handled by Microsoft Windows docu-
mantion. On-screen help and a special
booklet about styles help considerably. We
rate documentation very good.

With all the graphics and Windows
style icons, Ami is easy to learn. It takes
about 30 minutes to get up and running
effectively, and a run-time version of
Microsoft Windows is included with
Ami. There are plenty of materials
included with the package to help you
learn the program. We rate ease of
learning very good.

As you gain experience, Ami grows
closer to one with a choice of mouse or
keyboard and effortless formatting.
However, the flow on some operations
— especially in layout mode — limits our
otherwise excellent ease-of-use rating to
very good.

Ami handles simple errors easily along
with a single-level Undo which handles
deletions and formatting changes.
File-save options are easily accessible and extra-
checks for saved files. There is no timed
backup. We rate error handling good.

Support policies include BBS support
and a 30-day money-back guarantee. The
support department is open from 8 a.m.
to 5 p.m. weekdays Eastern time. We rate
support policies very good.

Technical support personnel were easy
to reach and provided competent answers
to our questions about importing docu-
ments and file size limits (Ami has no limits
on file size). We rate technical support
satisfactory.

At $199, Ami is a strong value,
especially for anyone using a laser printer
and with a need for complex formatting
with both. Ami is also the only rea-
sonably full-featured word processor avail-
able for Windows. However, remember
that unlike most other word processors,
Ami needs plenty of memory, a
graphics card, and a hard disk. Using a
fast system — at least 10 or 12 MHz — is
also a good idea. If you add the cost of the
hardware, Ami may not be a wonderful
value unless you need the hardware for
other tasks. We rate value good.

Beyond Word Writer

VERSION 1.1

A relative newcomer to this category,
Beyond Word Writer offers standard-
slide, high-speed word processing.
While not oriented toward graphics
or fonts, this executive system outperforms
the other executive word processors in
most categories. Since the main program
runs on not one 3 1/2-inch disk, it is ideal
for a laptop computer.

Beyond Word Writer offers many features.
Beyond Word Writer offers line feeds or
end-of-line characters. It allows more
features on the same character, such as
tabs, alignment, columns, and subroutines
with a simple calculator and an excellent
file-conversion utility. These are macros,
user-selectable interfaces, hyphenation,
newspaper columns, line feeds, and a
repeat interface, although there is only a
simple mail merge capability without select or sort. Beyond Word Writer has
only minimal font support.

The program has basic but effective
convenience features, including
standard setup and a menu interface.
However, lack of features is six times per inch, there is no rectangular column block
move or copy, no auto format, and no
macros. Features and functions are
limited. We rate basic user interface
satisfactory.

While the spelling checker and associ-
ated word tools are well done, the checker
races through the entire document before
beginning the in-context check. It is less
than desirable. There is a thesau-
us that shows parts of speech, a pro-
verb checker for catching irregular pronouns
and capitalization, and a Pug index checker,
which shows parts of speech identified. Multi-

Executive Word Processors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Screen</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Printer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Memory</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard disk</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Speed</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All products tested are MS-DOS (or compatibles)
used at 320 dpi with draft, normal, and a 10-point
resolution and 100%-type menu and input.

* Ami requires a Windows NT, and WordPerfect Executive does not import DOC/RTF.
* Professional Write cannot update the writer file, which allows selection and conversion.
* Q&A Write cannot print DTP/RTF. This feature is available from the writer that will perform the conversion.
* Word Perfect Executive does not print DTP/RTF. Each section has to be selected individually.

INFOWORLD
Beyond Word Writer

VERSIOH 1.1

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Cever: Good selection of text and layout features; highly portable to various printers; works with PostScript and PCL.

Requirements: IBM PC or compatible, DOS 3.0 or later, 512K RAM, and soft drive.

Price: Good selection of features and good performance; highly portable to various printers.

Beyond Word Writer is a strong competitor with many features, powerful functions, and a friendly user interface. Suitable for normal office correspondence, it also includes automatic mail-queueing and simple networks. It does most things well except for productivity-related systems.

Microsoft Windows Write

VERSIOH 2.1

Included exclusively as part of Microsoft Windows. Write is a simple, graphically oriented, word processing system. It integrates smoothly with the other applications in Windows such as Notepad, Calendar, Calculator, Paint, and the clipboard, permitting seamless data transfer. In addition, the program makes use of the various Windows characteristics, such as multiple windows, cut and paste, transfer to other programs, and the like. Although Windows write heavy emphasis on mouse use, it can also be used with a keyboard interface.

While Write may seem out of place at first, it is actually a valuable tool for users who need a simple, yet powerful word processing application. It is designed to be used with the Windows interface and integrates smoothly with other Windows applications.

Write's user interface is clean and intuitive, with a simple, yet powerful set of features. It supports cut, copy, and paste functions, and allows for easy navigation through the document. Write's features include a word count, the ability to change the font and size, and a spell checker that can help you avoid spelling mistakes.

Write's compatibility with other Windows applications is a major advantage, as it allows you to seamlessly transfer data between applications. It also supports a variety of file formats, including popular text formats such as .txt and .doc.

Write's performance is excellent, with fast response times and smooth operation. It is a reliable tool for creating and editing documents, and its ease of use makes it accessible to users of all skill levels.

Write's ability to work with other Windows applications is a major advantage, as it allows you to seamlessly transfer data between applications. It also supports a variety of file formats, including popular text formats such as .txt and .doc.

Write's performance is excellent, with fast response times and smooth operation. It is a reliable tool for creating and editing documents, and its ease of use makes it accessible to users of all skill levels.
more than "just basic text and font manipulation under Windows, you'll want to access to Summary.

Professional Write

VERSION 2.10

King of the executive word processing throne, Professional Write still is comfort-
ably perched at the top not just because of its superior performance, but also be-
caus of the solid core of features that it offers. A good case in point is its ability to
handle complex documents efficiently. The program provides a robust set of pro-
tion tools for creating and editing documents, including a powerful spell-checker,
a flexible thesaurus, and a variety of formatting options. Its interface is user-friendly,
making it accessible to both novice and experienced users.

In addition to its strong document management capabilities, Professional Write
also excels in handling graphics and images. The program supports a wide range
of file formats, enabling users to seamlessly integrate visual elements into their
documents. Whether you're working with photographs, charts, or diagrams,
Professional Write offers the tools you need to create professional-looking
output.

As a testament to its versatility, Professional Write is available on multiple plat
forms, including Windows and Mac OS. This cross-platform compatibility means
that users can rely on the program for reliable performance regardless of the
operating system they are using.

In summary, Professional Write is a powerful tool for executive-level word
processing. Its robust feature set, user-friendly interface, and powerful document
management tools make it an ideal choice for professionals who require a
flexible, efficient, and reliable word processing solution.

Professional Write's font capacity lets you choose the size, style, and layout.

Executive Word Processing Survey

To prepare for this product comparison, we surveyed 1,000 InfoWorld readers involved with executive word
processing. We used the information we gathered to create a list of features and their
weights, and to help us decide which products we should include in our survey.

The following numbers represent the percentage of readers who considered the corresponding features critical to executive word
processing. The higher the number, the more important the feature was to the majority of respondents.

Spelling checker: 92%
Thesaurus: 76%
Laser printer support: 75%
Ability to create and save plans for transfer to other
professional word processors: 72%
Support for desktop publishing and office professional word
processing file formats: 63%
ASCII file conversion: 63%
Automatic formatting: 58%
Conditional formatting: 58%
Windowing two or more files simultaneously: 56%
Support for multiple fonts: 56%
Importing graphics: 55%
Columnar display and paste: 55%
Integration of text and graphics: 54%
Recoverable tab: 53%
Outlining capability: 52%

Types of Output Devices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laser printers</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-pin dot matrix printers</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain paper printers</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ink-jet printers</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermal transfer printers</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pin recorders</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typical Activities of InfoWorld Readers Using Executive Word Processing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email word processing</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate an outline</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filing documents and permissions</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line drawing</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importing spreadsheets</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document management</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail merge</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network (LAN) support</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tables of contents</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting text for use in desktop publishing</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouse support</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows integration</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math capabilities</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulating graphics (tracing, rotating, etc)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCS file standards</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical justification</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style sheets</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft fonts support (e.g., Bitstream Postscript fonts)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indexing</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postscript support</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating notes for electronic mail</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document handling</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the Hewlett-Packard Design</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redlining</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard reconfiguration</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write is speedy overall, compared with the competition. We rate speed very good.

Documentation includes a general manual, a printer manual, and on-line help. The manual has a good index and clear explanations. We rate documentation good.

Learning to use Professional Write is about as hard as it is to learn to operate a microwave oven. The simple menus, clear-cut printer installation, and effective page preview all contribute to a product that welcomes one and all. We rate ease of learning excellent.

Ease of use, likewise, is optimally implemented. The vendor has done as much as possible to help users feel comfortable with word processing at the executive level. The menu orientation and layout features (such as the preview) all contribute to an excellent score in ease of use.

Error handling includes a simple undetectable feature through a cut-and-paste buffer, although there is no standard-issue Undo command. You are prompted before committing a destructive act. We rate error handling satisfactory.

Professional Write support policies include unlimited telephone support and a help system. We rate support policies satisfactory.

Technical support proved much better than average. Service was quick and effective with a staff willing to go out of its way. We rate technical support very good.

A lot of $1,299 program. Professional Write offers an extensive features list for an executive product. It has improved and matured over time and continues to be easy to learn and use. We rate value very good.

Q&A Write

VERSIO 1.03A

Another long-lived and strong competitor, this quick and graceful executive word processor offers a strong complement of editing commands accessed through an effective set of menus and context-sensitive commands. It will count words, lines, and paragraphs. It will print, but not display, up to eight newspaper columns. Each feature that we've come to expect in this group. However, columns must be established for the entire document, not just part of it, and Q&A Write does not support footnotes or endnotes. Like most of its competitors, it lacks enhancements such as tables of contents and does not produce tables. While it comes with a strong package and has some attractive features, Ami, Beyond Word Writer, and Professional Write now surpass it overall.

In our tests, Q&A Write proved to be a successful combination of ease of use and power. While the search process is reliable, it does not provide sufficient help. You can turn on the tutorial at any time, but it will not be available when you need it. The user interface is easy to use, although the user can be of any age and capture any keystrokes. Although there is some document versioning and comparison, the system is not designed for large projects. We rate document management satisfactory.

The Q&A Write card file database, most updating is easily accomplished. It performs basic functions quickly, reformattin paragraphs, and merged information. The card file holds up to 1,000,000 records of 2,000 characters each. Each field is limited to 255 characters, and the system allows for a total of 10 fields per record. Q&A Write provides an extensive set of features, including sorting, filtering, and searching. We rate document management very good.

Q&A Write and the industry's best capabilities implement consistent and easy access to the text. This effort is enhanced by the system's ability to handle different file types. The system provides easy access to the text, and the user interface is intuitive. We rate document management very good.

Q&A Write's best capabilities implemented consistent and easy access to the text. The system provides easy access to the text, and the user interface is intuitive. We rate document management very good.

If you're new to word processing, you'll find Q&A Write easy to learn, with its user-friendly interface, quick response, and comprehensive setup. The manual is well written and covers all aspects of the program. We rate user documentation very good.

Q&A Write offers a plethora of on-screen text/document information. All information is available at one glance, and the user can customize the information shown. We rate on-screen text/document information very good.

Volkswagen 4

VERSIO 4

Take a pretty good executive word processor and add a pinch of full-featured grammar checking, and what pops out of the box? Volkswagen 4 is an executive word processor. It offers a full range of features, including grammar checking, editing tools, and a sophisticated user interface. We rate Volkswagen 4 very good.
While the program will accept fonts and allow selection of different fonts for a document, its limitations on justification and the handling of multiple fonts reduce its effectiveness. The printer is not extremely expensive, including Postscript printers, and the program has style sheets. While there is no page preview, you can print to the screen. Vollmer is not very fast on disk. We rate font satisfaction. Vollmer does not support graphics. The only file formats supported are DEARFF and ASCII. If you need Word Perfect, Wordstar, Microsoft Word, or others, you can send us a list for a disk with the right conversion as is. The
**PRODUCT COMPARISON**

AUGUST 7, 1986

Since our last product comparison of office/professional word processors on January 31, 1985, Page 47, we have reviewed updated versions of WordStar Professional and Microsoft Word. Here we list all office/professional word processors reviewed in and since our comparison, with the latest scores available for each.

**REPORT CARD**

**Office/Professional Word Processors**

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<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio editing</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell checking &amp; thesaurus</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail merging</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlining</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewer reading</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryptography</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macros</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphics</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer support</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
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**USE YOUR OWN WEIGHTINGS**

To calculate your score

**GUIDE TO REPORT CARD SCORES**

- Microsoft Word 1.0 was reviewed with 9.0. Microsoft Word II was reviewed with 11.0, and so on.
- Product review ratings ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent in various categories are derived by multiplying the weightings (parameters) of each criterion by its rating, where: Exceeds expectations = +1.0 — Outstanding in all areas.
- Meets the 9.0 to 10.0 to meet minimum standards or lacks this feature.
- Meets the 9.0 to 10.0 to meet minimum standards or lacks this feature.
- Meets all the criteria and offers some significant advantages.
- Meets several criteria and offers some significant advantages.
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WordPerfect Executive is a basic word processor, complemented by Word Perfect Executive, which provides a subset of Word Perfect word processing features. Also included are limited versions of a variety of programs from the Word Perfect Library. In addition to word processing, Executive includes a mail-in, file called notebook, a small spreadsheet, a regular calculator, an appointment book, and a phone dialer—all encoded in a neat menu shell.

The idea is good, providing busy executives with simple versions of more powerful programs. Thus you can draft a memo or a short report, do some off-the-cuff calculations, keep a calendar and track word lists, all in formats laid out with that exchanges with the larger, more powerful versions that others in the organization might have. This last item, however, is the crucial point. Without the full-featured versions of these programs available as backup, the modules in Word Perfect Executive serve only as the most limited applications. As a stand-alone product, Word Perfect Executive is obsolete, in features and capabilities.

The Calculator and Calendar parts of the Library are used even within the organization. The spreadsheet, based on Word Perfect's Mathplan, is a component tool with many functions. It has 256 columns by 3,192 rows, a good complement of...
As a word processing tool, Executive is fundamentally less powerful than its competitors.

We rate basic editing satisfactory. The spelling checker has a relatively small dictionary of 50,000 words. The spell-checker detects and catches doubled words. We rate spelling checking satisfactory. Mail merging works with the program's cardfile system or with data files prepared in Word Perfect merge format. Long variables are reformattable at print time when included in the baseline document. We rate mail merging satisfactory. Font support includes boldfacing and underlining, but no italics or other forms are selectable. You can't change pitch in the document. We rate fonts poor.

PRODUCT SUMMARY

Word Perfect Executive

VERSION 1.0

Company: Word Perfect Corp., 1555 N. Technology Way, Orem, UT 84057

List Price: $249

Features: IBM PC or compatible, PC MS-DOS 2.0 or later, 64K of RAM, two floppy drives.

Pros: Lightweight, intuitive interface, good printing capability, easy to learn, and use.

Cons: Limited to word processing, no graphics, and cannot handle complex documents.

Summary: A good, integrated package for WordPerfect users, but may not be enough for others with WordPerfect Stenographer or executives who need more powerful features available in competing programs.

RELATED REVIEWS

Antik, February 13

Vellum, April 4

Beyond Word Writer, May 1

Product Comparison: Executive vs. Word Processor, December 26, 1988

Doc Essay: Word 7

Display and Performance: Microsoft Windows vs. PC Type Plus

PC Writer: WordPerfect

Professional Writer: QWERTY Deluxe Plus

Word Perfect Stenographer
Executive Summary

Executive word processors fall into several categories. All the programs are fine for basic tasks and correspondence. From there, however, the similarity ends. Some programs support all major word processing systems, while others do not. A few are adept at serving as complements for office-professional word processors. In short, beyond basic needs, you must assess what tasks you want your word processor to perform before you make a qualified buying decision.

Two programs, Ami and Microsoft Windows Write, operate with graphical interfaces, use a mouse extensively, and run within the Windows operating environment. Because of the special characteristics of the Windows operating shell, these two programs have similar characteristics and do not compare easily with the other executive programs. Windows Write is a very basic program, its only flaw being its font-handling and capability to include graphics. If you prefer Windows-based programs, you may want to give Ami a try with its excellent font handling, superior handling of newspaper-style columns, page layout, spelling checking, and better-than-average graphics inclusion. Also, Ami will soon release Ami Professional, providing an office/professional partner in the executive version. If you have programs that support Windows, Ami and Windows Write may be sufficient for simple word processing. Working both with Windows Write and Ami is a straightforward configuration, since Windows Write is specialized for generating a letter, memo, and Ami is better suited for tasks with a little more complexity.

Three executive word processors compete for the championship title of most effective and powerful, with similar features and characteristics. Professional Write, Beyond Word Writer, and Q&A Write all offer some components of features, ease of use, and different strengths and weaknesses. While similar in many ways, a choice among these programs will depend greatly on the specific mix of required tasks, with special attention to mail merge, fonts, spelling, graphics, and columns. Q&A Write and Professional Write are both strong in mail merging, and the latter has a graphics preview feature that aids in layout. Beyond Word Writer can emulate other word processors' program sets, such as WordPerfect's. Also, its features set is very broad.

For general-purpose word processing needs, Professional Write or Beyond Word Writer will do the job just fine. As executive word processors go, these two stand at the top. You may also like the column/row math in Q&A Write, but its price is a bit high.

The last executive word processing program evaluated is a professional word processing program that compiles its own form letter. WordPerfect Executive is a comprehensive suite of scaled-down Word Perfect modules for spreadsheets, word processing, calendarizing, scheduling, file management, and communications. While it's in concept, the programs are weak—especially the word processing modules, which fall well below par. WordPerfect Executive has very little to recommend it unless you have access to the real thing with WordPerfect 3.0 in your office. Volkswriter 4, however, has strong word processing and a neat grammar checker but unfortunately under a chatty design with printing deficiencies that remove it from the mainstream. Unless your grammar is bad enough that you need Volkswriter's grammar correction abilities or you have special keyboard substitution needs, Volkswriter is not the product of choice.

None of these executive word processors is a clone of the other. While one may be the ideal solution for a small department or a small business, another may work well as a front end for an office/professional word processor or desktop publishing program. If you work in an environment where high-powered word processing programs are commonplace, you will want to make sure your executive word processing program can export or import files supported by the higher-powered systems.

Over the next few weeks, expect to see more sophisticated graphics and font management come to these programs, as well as those other ProWrite 2.10x page preview a harbinger of these things to come.