Professional Write Plus is a new Windows word processor that excels in the category of an executive word processor and the elaborate enhancements of professional products. Professional Write Plus is much better than its predecessor product, Professional Write, and it also exceeds the capabilities of LastPerfect and WordPerfect, the lightweight versions of WordPerfect and Ami Professional. Although Professional Write Plus is a winner in the executive category, it lacks the features required to compete in our professional category represented by Word for Windows, Ami Professional, and WordPerfect.

This review is based on the criteria we used in our last executive word processor review (see LetterPerfect, October 29, 1990, page 100). However, we have changed our platform from an AT to a Compaq 386/20. We also changed our version of Microsoft Windows from Version 2.11 to Version 3.0.

FEATURES:
Professional Write Plus’ host of features and capabilities cause this product to reside in the executive word processing category. It offers a standard Windows word processing screen that provides intuitive keyboard and effective operation. The product also supports a mouse. There are multiple editable views from draft through master level, as well as elaborate import and export options for text and graphics, and a host of other features that professional users consider standard in the professional market. Professional Write Plus also offers style sheets, which are presented effectively.

What keeps Professional Write Plus in the executive category is the absence of features such as tables, tables of contents, and indexing, executive word processors, however, need not have such features in their product. But the absence of some core features, in addition to a superior grammar checker, allows Professional Write Plus to shine over its competition.

PERFORMANCE:
Despite its cost, Professional Write Plus has all the expected Windows editing tools including cut and paste through the Clipboard, although there is no,columnar cut and paste. The program can hyphenate automatically or you can type in an optional hyphen with a hyphen. However, you can’t hyphenate automatically with user approval, as you can in most professional word processors. Paragraph formats include full, center, left, and right justification. Tabs can be redefined by inserting new tab rules that controls all subsequent text.

There is only one page layout per document. However, the program does support frames that can include either text or graphic elements, but frames cannot include both. Frames with text can have a layout different from the page that contains it, but frames may not be larger than one page. Professional Write Plus will do multiple newspaper columns and supports column balancing. Its search and replace tools are strong.

Professional Write Plus does allow you to insert the system and revision date.

Professional Write Plus has an impressive list of options for an executive word processor, one of which is a four-level undo.

Professional Write Plus Loads on High-End Features
Extensive graphics features and file formats make this a near-professional word processor.

By JOHN LONSDORF

You also have the capability to attach nonprinting notes to a document. The program supports a file manager that is easier to use than Windows, but it has the peculiarity that it can cause/receive directories, but not create them. Professional Write Plus can edit only one document at a time, although, with enough memory, you can run multiple copies of the program in edit mode in two windows. Once the executive word processing level, we rate basic editing excellent.

Proofing tools: The spelling checker works well in both draft and layout modes, and the product offers reasonable word suggestions. The spell checker parses global and projects; however, there is a limit of 1,000 characters for the global file. You can use user dictionaries, but the program will not check the spelling of a replacement word you type. The thesaurus is superb, as it offers synonyms, parts of speech, and definitions. The grammar checker is GrammarPlus for Windows, modified to take only Professional Write Plus files. GrammarPlus leads the field in grammar checking, and is a major addition to the program. We rate proofing tools excellent.

Mail merge: Professional Write Plus offers a basic mail-merge feature. It will not print and requires that you combine fields and labels, and if necessary, fixed-field data in ASCII format. It will also merge a large number of other delimited files by importing them first into Professional Write Plus. Data files created in the program can have any delimiter. There are no conditionals or selection criteria possible, and the program does not contain any sort functions. We rate mail merge satisfactory.

Fonts: Professional Write Plus draws on Windows’ fonts in addition to the fonts supported. Also included is the support of true type fonts. Professional Write Plus supports all Windows printers.

Support: The support is excellent.

GRAPHICS:
Professional Write Plus has superior graphics. It integrates graphics through frames that may be as large as one page. Frames accept graphics in a wide range of formats, including Lotus PIC, EPS, PCX, and TIF. Depending on the type of graphic, objects can be scaled and rotated, although graphics may not be cropped. There are no graphics editing tools and the program lacks a line-draw facility, although you can draw lines around frames. We rate graphics excellent.

Compatibility: Professional Write Plus offers a large range of file import and export formats. The program includes creations for Enable, Microsoft Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, Microsoft Word, and Word for Windows, OfficeWriter, MultiMate, WordPerfect, WordStar, and Windows Write, among others. Professional Write Plus has various forms of ASCII imports and exports, and it includes the IBM standard DCA/RTF format. We rate compatibility excellent.

Summary: Professional Write Plus was a solid performer against Microsoft Windows, Write, Version 3.0. Professional Write Plus loads on high-end features and offers a range of features that make it a near-professional word processor. It also offers superior graphics and compatibility with other programs.

PRODUCT SUMMARY
Company: Software Publishing Corp., P.O. Box 7210, (101) Landings Drive, Mountain View, CA 94039. (415) 963-3530.
List Price: $240. $65 for upgrades. Professional Write and OfficeWriter, individual LAN versions are $185, five-user pack is $350, 20-user pack is $3,330. Requires: Intel 8088 or compatible, or IBM or compatible (recommended) with 1 megabyte of RAM, 2 megabytes of RAM recommended. DOS 3.x, Windows 3.1.
Proc: Integrated grammar checker, strong spell checker and thesaurus, superior editing and formatting, strong graphics integration.
Device: Large hardware overhead is required to run program. License restrictions are provided for mail merge, frames limited to one page, only one layout per document.
Summary: Professional Write Plus is a high-powered executive word processing program that offers a well-integrated grammar checker, recommended for offices with complex document needs that do not require sophisticated mail merge.
Write Plus was a little slower in loading our test file, but much faster at the end of the document. We rate speed good.

**DOCUMENTATION:**
An alphabetical index manual serves as the main resource for Professional Write Plus. Well organized, with strong index and cross-references, the manual offers examples and explanations that are sufficient for most users. There is also a quick-reference booklet, a L.V. Administrator's Guide, and a separate manual for Grammar Plus for Windows. We rate documentation excellent.

**EASE OF LEARNING:**
Like most Windows products, Professional Write Plus is easy to learn, especially if you have experience with Windows products. Its menus are clear, and the help system is generally effective. However, when the context-sensitive help is invoked and then exited, the original menu also disappears, which is an irritation. The dialog boxes are well laid out and completion ease of learning excellent.

**EASE OF USE:**
With experience, Professional Write Plus gets faster and other shortcuts enhance ease of use. The product does not offer a wide range of customization options, but you can change the appearance and some other features. This product is extremely easy to use, especially among executive word processors. We rate ease of use excellent.

**ERROR HANDLING:**
Professional Write Plus has automatic backup of files, an efficient backup routine, and a strong Undo that also captures formatting. There is also a feature for reverting to the original style. Normal errors and mistakes are captured harmoniously, and the program prompts you to save before exiting an unraveled file. Error handling is excellent.

**SUPPORT:**
Support policies: Software Publishing offers unlimited free, although not toll-free, support to registered users. Support hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central time. Monday through Friday. SPC offers toll-free support and BBS support via CampusServe. Support policies are good.

**Technical Support:** We called the support line with several questions, and we found the technical staff to be competent, effective, and helpful. We rate technical support very good.

**VALUE:**
For $249, Professional Write Plus offers superior performance in the executive word processing category. However, because it runs under Windows 3.0, it requires a heavy-duty hardware platform to be maximally effective. The program will run considerably slower on a 386 machine. We rate its value very good.

John Lombardi is president of a major university and author of five books. He has been working with PCs since 1987. Jeff Esmond of the InfoWorld Test Center contributed to this review.

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**BENCHMARKS**

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Times are in minutes seconds. Lower numbers indicate better performance.

- Windows CorePlus 3.0
- Full-featured Windows 3.1
- 80486 with sound card
- Exact timing under Windows 3.1
- Professional Write Plus 1, Professional Write Plus 1.0, and Windows Write 2.0 were on the same disk. Times are the second of four tests on each product.

- Professional Write Plus 1 was installed on a standalone system with an Executive Word Processor system.
- Times vary according to disk.
- Professional Write Plus 1.0 installed on the same system as the one used for Windows Write 2.0.