

# REVIEWS

**P**rofessional Write Plus is a new Windows word processor that falls somewhere between the basics 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 LetterPerfect and Ami, 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 criteria that 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 386/20e. 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 redefine the executive word processing category. It offers a standard Windows word processing screen that provides icons and speed keys for effective operation. The product also supports a mouse. There are multiple editable views from draft through various zoom levels, as well as elaborate import and export options for text and graphics, and a host of other features that *InfoWorld* readers consider standard in the professional market. Professional Write Plus also offers style sheets and handles them gracefully.

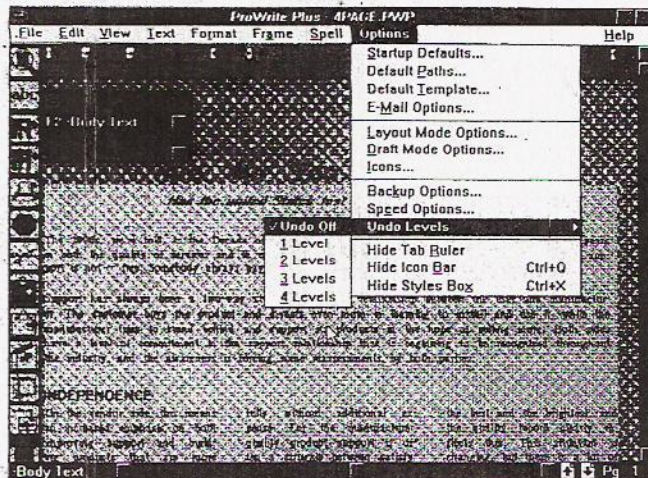
What keeps Professional Write Plus in the executive category is the absence of features such as macros, tables, tables of contents, and indexing. Executive word processors, however, need not have such elaborate toolkits, and the strength of its core features, in addition to a superior grammar checker,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

#### PERFORMANCE:

**Basic editing:** Professional Write Plus has all of 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 insert an optional hyphen with a keystroke. 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 a new tab ruler 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 LOMBARDI, REVIEW BOARD

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 erase and rename 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 to edit in two windows. On 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 speller permits global replaces and global skips; however, there is a limit of 1,000 characters for the global skip file. You can have 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 Grammatik for Windows, modified to take only Professional Write Plus files. Grammatik 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 function. It skips bad records and is capable of merges from a wide range of external data files, including DIF, comma-delimited, and 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 delimiters. 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' printer drivers, but its font support also includes effective tools for selecting and viewing fonts. Text enhancements include underlining continuously or by word, uppercase and lowercase type, super and subscripts, strike-through, and overstrikes. Professional Write Plus supports all Windows printers. Font support is excellent.

**Graphics:** Professional Write Plus has superior graphics support. 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 TIFF. 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 conversions for Enable, Microsoft Excel,

Lotus 1-2-3, Microsoft Word and Word for Windows, OfficeWriter and Multi-Mate, 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/RFT format. We rate compatibility excellent.

**Speed:** Professional Write Plus was a solid performer against Microsoft Windows Write, Version 3.0. Professional

### REPORT CARD INFO WORLD

EXECUTIVE WORD PROCESSOR

#### Professional Write Plus

VERSION 1.0

Criterion	(Weighting)	Score
<b>Performance</b>		
Basic editing	(125)	Excellent
Proofing tools	(125)	Excellent
Mail merge	(50)	Satisfactory
Fonts	(100)	Excellent
Graphics	(25)	Excellent
Compatibility	(75)	Excellent
Speed	(50)	Good
Documentation	(75)	Excellent
Ease of learning	(100)	Excellent
Ease of use	(125)	Excellent
Error handling	(75)	Excellent
<b>Support</b>		
Support policies	(25)	Good
Technical support	(25)	Very Good
Value	(25)	Very Good
<b>Final score</b>		<b>9.3</b>

#### PRODUCT SUMMARY

**Company:** Software Publishing Corp., P.O. Box 7210, 1901 Landings Drive, Mountain View, CA 94039; (415) 962-9010.

**List Price:** \$249; \$65 for upgrades from Professional Write and OfficeWriter; individual LAN versions are \$185; five-node pack is \$925; 20-node pack is \$3,330

**Requires:** Intel 286 or compatible (386 or compatible recommended) with 1 megabyte of RAM, 2 megabytes for Grammatik; 4 megabytes of disk space minimum; EGA or Hercules display; mouse highly recommended; DOS 3.X; Windows 3.0.

**Pros:** Integrated grammar checker; strong spelling checker and thesaurus; superior editing and formatting; strong graphics integration.

**Cons:** Large hardware overhead to run program optimally; no conditional search 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.

#### ALSO IN THIS SECTION

ObjectVision, Version 1.0..... 89



Write Plus was a little slower in loading our test file, but much faster in the manual scroll from the top to the bottom of the document. We rate speed good.

#### DOCUMENTATION:

An alphabetically arranged manual serves as the main resource for Professional Write Plus. Well organized, with a 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 *LAN Administrator's Guide*, and a separate manual for Grammatik 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 complete. We rate ease of learning excellent.

#### EASE OF USE:

With experience, Professional Write Plus' speed keys and other shortcuts enhance its ease of use. The product does not have 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, timed backup (selectable), 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 harmlessly and the program prompts you to save before leaving an unsaved 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 fax support and BBS support via Compu-Serve. 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 286 machine. We rate its value very good. □

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*Jeff Eckert of the InfoWorld Test Center contributed to this review.*

#### BENCHMARKS

#### INFO WORLD

#### Executive Word Processors

	Professional Write Plus <sup>1</sup> Version 1.0	Professional Write Plus Version 1.0	Windows Write <sup>2</sup> Version 3.0
<b>File<sup>3</sup></b>			
Load	0:03	0:02	0:01
Save	0:01	0:01	0:02
Import ASCII	0:02	0:02	0:03
Export ASCII	0:01	0:01	0:02
Import DCA/RFT	0:04	0:03	N/A <sup>4</sup>
<b>Cursor movement</b>			
Top to bottom	0:03	0:01	0:01
Manual scroll	0:06	0:05	0:26
<b>Reformat</b>			
Reformat	0:03	N/A <sup>4</sup>	0:05
<b>Search</b>			
Last word	0:01	<1	<1
Global replace	0:02	0:02	0:01
Append file	0:14	0:12	0:11

Times are in minutes:seconds; lower numbers indicate better performance.

<sup>1</sup>Professional Write Plus has two modes: a layout mode and a draft mode. The times in the first column are the default layout mode; the times in the second column are the draft mode.

<sup>2</sup>Windows Write 3.0 is retested to provide a comparison on our new Executive Word Processor platform.

<sup>3</sup>File size is approximately 15K.

<sup>4</sup>Windows Write does not support DCA/RFT formats.

<sup>5</sup>Professional Write Plus cannot reformat margins in the draft mode.

