

## REVIEWS

# DOS word processing is revived

Robust WordPerfect 6.0 is as good as high-end Windows packages

BY JOHN LOMBARDI REVIEW BOARD

For a while there we thought the evolution of the DOS word processing program might have come to a dead end, with nothing left but minor-league enhancements. With WordPerfect Corp.'s major upgrade of the hugely successful WordPerfect for DOS, however, the first salvo of a new round in the war of the words has been fired.

Sporting a new look, lots of new features, and a hefty increase in power, WordPerfect 6.0 resets the high standard that has kept it atop the word processing heap for many years. It has better graphics, better editing, better frames, more sophisticated formatting, and many minor improvements.

We tested the program according to word processor criteria in our comparison of February 10, 1992, page 78.

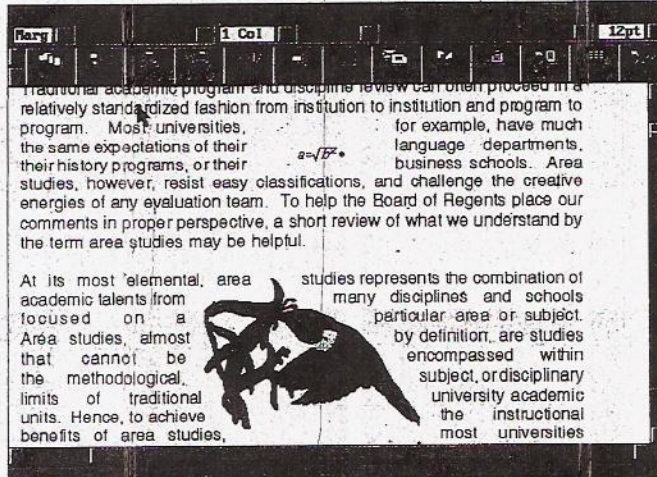
## PERFORMANCE:

**Basic editing:** Always a fine editing engine, WordPerfect keeps its outstanding management of columns, permitting different justification in different paragraphs. It searches and replaces better than before with wild cards, formatting, and any other special character available in the large WordPerfect collection. You can choose whether to search the main text or reach into headers, footers, and notes. The program has many ways to do time-stamping, and its revision marking includes not only redlining and strikeouts but also document comparisons. You can include nonprinting comments, turn them into printed text, or turn regular text into nonprinting comments. Justification options include the standard left, right, and full. Full justification has an option to justify all the lines including the last line in a paragraph. In addition, you can center the text on a page if you like or fix it to an absolute point on the page.

The program has side-by-side newspaper columns that you can balance or not. Your columns can be of uneven width with variable gutter widths. WordPerfect also retains its capability to handle the parallel columns of differing widths that you might use with a script. You can cut and paste rectangular areas in the text (such as columns made with tabs). New to this version is the capability to drag and drop text within a document, pioneered in Windows word processors. The hyphenation module uses the spelling dictionary to hyphenate words at the ends of lines if you choose, and it lets you determine when to hyphenate.

You can have nine document windows open, and you can have the same original document in different windows, although each document represents a separate copy, and changes in one window do not affect the document in other windows. We rate basic editing excellent.

**Proofing tools:** The spelling checker lets you use your own dictionaries (and you can make them hyphenated if you like); it backtracks, checks corrections you enter, guesses for you, and will even



WordPerfect's editable graphics mode offers a WYSIWYG view of graphics, line endings, and type styles, but it doesn't show footnotes, headers, or footers.

guess phonetically if you choose. You can ignore or replace words once or throughout the document.

You can create supplemental dictionaries, and you can chain five of them to the main dictionary. Supplemental dictionaries can include suggestions and replacements. You can also attach a special supplemental dictionary to an individual document. WordPerfect sells a separate program to edit the main dictionaries for special words and phrases. You can buy a variety of foreign language main dictionaries. The thesaurus has the usual synonyms, antonyms, and parts of speech.

WordPerfect uses the Grammatik grammar checker, a separate program that is well integrated into the basic WordPerfect package. When you bring up Grammatik, the program saves your file, puts you into the Grammatik program, runs you through the grammar checking, and then returns you to your corrected document in WordPerfect. Although the integration is smoother than it sounds, it's not quite as good as a grammar checker that is part of the program and shares its conventions and operating styles. We rate proofing tools very good.

**Layout:** WordPerfect 6.0 has outstanding layout capabilities. Its facilities for managing frames and pages include what it calls "logical pages." These are what other programs usually call frames; they define a space on the physical page that can have completely different layout characteristics than other parts of the page. Logical pages make such tasks as brochures and newsletters with odd-sized page areas very easy to produce.

Many veteran WordPerfect users have struggled with the arcane explanations of the graphics box construct, but in this version, the graphics box has taken on a whole new set of characteristics that

make it a more effective tool. You can size and place a graphics box visually on a WYSIWYG screen with a mouse; you can manage graphic images, text, tables, and other material in boxes; and boxes can overlap, become transparent, or change colors or contrast. You can still draw graphics lines using text graphics or variable-width lines. The program also has a layout feature called a watermark that prints graphic images in gray on the paper while the text prints on top. You can print two different watermarks on alternate or different pages. WordPerfect's graphics editing capabilities include rotation, scaling, cropping, contrast manipulation, extensive color control, and reversing black to white. The program does not do bit-map editing or drawing.

WordPerfect uses three modes for editing. A draft mode has text in the familiar monospaced font, which often forces users to shift the screen from right to left and back as they type along. A graphics mode offers a WYSIWYG view that shows line endings and type styles much as they will appear on paper. This view doesn't show footnotes, headers, or footers, but it does show graphics and boxes. If you want an exact view of the page, you can edit in page mode, which shows you everything exactly as it will appear on paper. All of these modes permit all editing activities. This is a major enhancement for layout because it makes the guessing about codes and their effects a thing of the past. Users won't have to look at the infamous Reveal Codes window to manage the layout of their text.

In addition to these benefits, WordPerfect has an effective formula editor. It permits you to enter complex formulas with large, small, and exotic symbols. Editing multiline formulas is effortless, and the range and arrangements of symbols are quite remarkable.

## REPORT CARD INFO WORLD

DOS PROFESSIONAL WORD PROCESSOR

WordPerfect

VERSION 6.0



Criteria	(Weighting)	Score
<b>Performance</b>		
Basic editing	(80)	Excellent (80)
Proofing tools	(80)	Very Good (60)
Layout	(80)	Excellent (80)
Mail merge	(50)	Excellent (50)
Style sheets	(50)	Very Good (37.5)
Font and printer support	(50)	Excellent (50)
Reference tools	(50)	Excellent (50)
Import and export	(50)	Excellent (50)
Networking	(50)	Very Good (37.5)
Speed	(50)	Satisfactory (25)
Macros	(30)	Very Good (22.5)
<b>Documentation</b>	(75)	Very Good (56.25)
<b>Ease of learning</b>	(75)	Excellent (75)
<b>Ease of use</b>	(130)	Excellent (130)
<b>Support</b>		
Support policies	(25)	Excellent (25)
Technical support	(25)	Very Good (18.75)
<b>Value</b>	(50)	Excellent (50)
<b>Final score</b>		<b>8.9</b>

## PRODUCT SUMMARY

**Company:** WordPerfect, in Orem, Utah, is at (801) 225-5000; fax: (801) 222-5077.  
**Price:** \$495 for full package; upgrade from previous DOS WordPerfect is \$129; upgrade from competitive word processor is \$149.  
**Requirements:** DOS 3.1 necessary for full functions (DOS 6.0 recommended); VGA or better for optimal performance, 16MB disk space (7MB minimum); Intel 286 or better (386 recommended); 520KB minimum memory with extended or expanded memory recommended. Runs under Windows and OS/2 with installation instructions included.  
**Pros:** Feature rich; excellent user interface.  
**Cons:** Substantial hardware investment; complex; slow on low-end systems; no macro manual.  
**Summary:** WordPerfect 6.0 is a major upgrade of the best-selling word processor for DOS. Newly designed with a fine user interface, WordPerfect 6.0 is the best in its class.

WordPerfect can provide actual bells and whistles through its sound capabilities. If you have the right hardware, you can record and play sound clips along with your documents. WordPerfect supports MIDI for playback and lets you record and play back digital audio files. You can also send and receive faxes if your fax/modem is among the many that WordPerfect supports. And you can use buttons in your documents to implement hypertextlike features that let you jump to another place in your document or execute a macro. Due to its extensive layout capabilities and great improvement in the layout ease provided by WYSIWYG editing, WordPerfect 6.0 earns an excellent score in layout.

**Mail merge:** Mail merge has long been a WordPerfect strength, and this version simply improves on a good thing. The mail merge can handle files prepared in WordPerfect's coded format, data from a WordPerfect table, or ASCII-delimited files. The merge facility has a wide range of programming constructs, depending on the data in each record. You can create form letters with customized contents that may involve math selections, different content in a letter for different ZIP codes, and so on. You can use conditional statements to control the process of the merge, and a merge can automatically print envelopes from the data that match the form letters. The combined merge and layout capabilities allow automated completion of fixed-field forms. A special module manages mailing labels. We rate mail merge excellent.

**Style sheets:** Over the years we have criticized WordPerfect for its management of styles. In this version the style management has improved. You can build styles from existing text, store them in a glossary, use most of WordPerfect's layout capabilities in styles, and apply them anywhere in the document. Styles can include fonts, columns, and graphic characteristics. WordPerfect maintains its distinction between open styles and character styles but introduces a paragraph style. If you link styles, one will be turned on when the other is turned off. Styles in the glossary are recallable by name. We rate style sheets very good.

**Font and printer support:** In addition to a long list of supported printers, WordPerfect provides support for a variety of scalable fonts including TrueType, Type 1, GC Intellifont, and Bitstream, among others. The font management is considerably improved and much easier to use, with a dialog box that shows a sample of the font. Almost anything your printer can do, WordPerfect can support, whether it is two-sided printing, color printing, or reverse printing. Color is becoming a major interest for many word processor users, and Version 6.0 has full color support for both color displays and printers. If you have an obsolete or unusual printer that WordPerfect does not support directly on the installation disks, you can probably find the printer driver in the WordPerfect section of CompuServe or from the company, or you can get a copy of the printer definition program from the company and write your own printer support. We continue to rate font and printer support excellent.

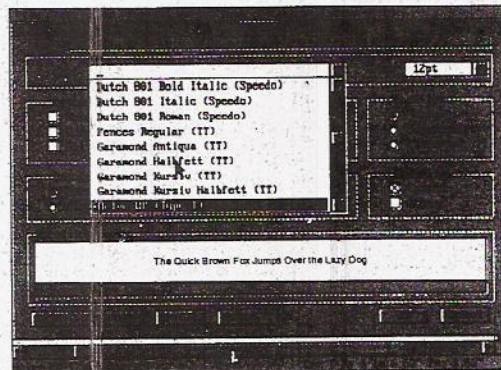
**Reference tools:** This upgrade of WordPerfect has much-improved reference tools. WordPerfect's tables of authorities, indexing, tables of contents, and lists remain outstanding, but the addition of true outlining with collapsing and expanding subdivisions fills a major gap in this program's features. WordPerfect will

put footnotes at both the end of the document and the bottom of the page at the same time, and you can now put footnotes in columns.

You can have bookmarks in a document so you can return to specific places, and you can put a "quickmark" that, with a keystroke, will return you to that spot. The quickmark remains with the document at the end of a session, so when you return, a keystroke brings you back where you last placed the marker.

You can use a master document to manage a multifile document, such as a book with many chapters, then you can run document utilities across all the files covered by the master file. WordPerfect 6.0 has three-level page numbering (volume, chapter, and page). Line numbering can skip lines, restart on each page, and number paragraphs or lines. It has many formatting and organizing variations for indexes, lists, and tables of contents, and the program permits extensive cross-referencing in the text and the index.

WordPerfect's file management utilities include the impressive QuickFinder, which creates indexes of directories or drives. It allows searches of keywords,



WordPerfect 6.0's font dialog box lets you see a sample of the font you choose.

phrases, or other items. You can organize your documents and directories with a QuickList, which categorizes files, and you can sort the files shown in the File Manager by name, extension, date of creation, and file size. The last four files opened remain listed in a special area for quick retrieval.

Document comparison produces text that shows deleted, added, and moved text and can work by word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph. The comparison does not reach into boxes, headers, footers, and comments, but it does work on footnotes, endnotes, and tables. We rate document utilities excellent.

**Import and export:** You can work with files from Ami Pro (1.2 to 2.0), two kinds of ASCII, DCA RFT and FFT, Microsoft Word for DOS through 5.5, WordStar for DOS through 6.0, Word for Windows through 2.0b, and obscure formats such as DisplayWrite 4 to 5. WordPerfect 6.0 can also handle the following graphic formats: BMP, CGM, EPS, HPGL, PIC, Mac PICT, PCX, TIFF, WMF, and WPG. As this alphabet-soup indicates, WordPerfect supports almost any graphics package on the market and most word processing formats. Translation of word processing files works fine, if not absolutely perfect. Some layout characteristics such as columns do not always transfer, but almost all formatting, such as fonts, crosses over. Conversion is quick. We rate import and export excellent.

**Networking:** WordPerfect 6.0 adapts well to networks. The program supports all common network systems and some not-so-common ones. WordPerfect 6.0 has an enhanced setup utility that allows supervisors to effectively manage the .SET files for individual users or groups of users. Updating .SET files is flexible. A wide range of security options exists for protecting files of various types, and the facilities for managing complex network setups of WordPerfect are extensive. We rate networking very good.

**Speed:** The many fancy features of WordPerfect come at the price of some sluggishness in editing and formatting complex documents in graphics or page mode. Occasionally, especially when moving from one module or dialog box to another, you will lose your cursor while WordPerfect gets everything ready to display. The standard draft mode is quicker. We rate speed satisfactory.

**Macros:** Superior word processing programs now have macro languages that contain just about everything a modern programming language should include, and WordPerfect's macro facility is easily as good as any. You can manage any

word processing task through a macro, and of course you can automate very complex and repetitive tasks with this system. The macro facility includes a macro recorder to capture keystrokes and other WordPerfect actions. Commands let you construct automated data entry applications, form generation and completion tasks, and a host of form mail or other activities. The macro language includes functions, math, graphics, and activities such as opening a file and formatting a word. A subset of this language is part of the mail merge facility to help automate complex merge tasks. We rate macros very good.

#### DOCUMENTATION:

WordPerfect comes with a *Getting Started* booklet and a workbook that serves as a guided tutorial for the program's major capabilities using real applications and files on the disk. A small booklet describes the WordPerfect Shell program, which ships with the program. It also includes a small booklet with a quick reference to all the commands and keystrokes.

Most of the operations are covered in the reference manual, which explains commands and functions and provides hints about limitations or exceptions, and it has reasonably frequent examples. The on-line help remains strong, and the new user interface makes it easier to read. Error messages work fine.

Unfortunately, there was no documentation for the macros at the time of our review. WordPerfect plans to ship a new macro manual right away, but we did not get to see it by press time. The company, however, offers fine on-line help for macros. We rate documentation very good.

#### EASE OF LEARNING:

WordPerfect 6.0's new user interface and graphics mode make it easy to learn. Its

drag-and-drop editing encourages new users, and its WYSIWYG mode keeps neophytes from getting lost in the maze of WordPerfect codes. Many functions have dialog boxes with clear instructions. In addition to a printed workbook, WordPerfect offers an on-line tutorial with basic instruction on how to use the program and a series of "coaches," or minilessons, that you can find in the help system. Both will help novices find their way through a sophisticated product. Though many of the complex features such as tables of authorities of the macro language will elude new users at first, the program's well-designed menus, help system, reference manual, and better user interface all contribute to an excellent ease of learning score.

#### EASE OF USE:

The capable macro language, customizable button bars, dialogs for graphics boxes, and WYSIWYG interface make this program easy to use. Where once a complicated system of embedded codes inhibited easy use, the WYSIWYG interface removes most of these problems. The customizable windows can be resized, cascaded, or tiled to help you edit complicated documents. The spreadsheet facility makes management of tabular data effective, and the equation editor's power resolves complicated issues in preparing technical documents. The program has a wide range of customizing options, keyboard reconfigurations, and an infinite variety of special functions and commands that you can create with the macro language. WordPerfect has an undo and an undelete. You can reverse any action and most functions, including text and table operations, and you can undelete text up to three levels either at the same or a different location. It prevents you from making most foolish errors and works hard to prevent you from losing text. We rate ease of use excellent.

#### SUPPORT:

**Support policies:** WordPerfect provides a money-back guarantee for 30 days. Support is toll free from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mountain time, weekdays. It has a limited after-hour support line (11 days a week on a single toll line). You can get help via fax, CompuServe, and a computer BBS. Hearing-impaired users can call the TDD and TTY phone numbers. We rate support policies excellent.

**Technical support:** More than a dozen different aspects of WordPerfect have their own separate telephone numbers. We had no trouble getting through to technical support, and technicians were friendly and offered step-by-step instructions. They went beyond the call of duty and gave us unique solutions. We rate technical support very good.

#### VALUE:

WordPerfect 6.0 lists for \$499, upgrades for users of previous WordPerfect DOS versions are \$149. The program has an outstanding complement of features and capabilities that match and usually exceed the competition at the same price. Among DOS word processors it is clearly the program of choice, and with its various enhancements it challenges all but the best of the Windows word processors such as Ami Pro and Word for Windows. We rate its value excellent.

John Lombardi is president of a major university and the author of five books. He has been working with computers since 1967.