



One of Dac's strengths is that you can have as many as four windows open on-screen simultaneously. You can also zoom in on a window and make it full size.

other program and then return to Dac Word II with the document intact. This version also supports up to 26 different macros per document subdirectory.

Dac Word II has a rather nice mailing-list manager that operates with a flexible format adequate for all but the most sophisticated mailing-list operation to produce form letters and automated mailings.

PERFORMANCE:

We tested Dac Word II on an AT clone, and found that the program's speed is exemplary for most functions. For example, Dac Word II is especially fast at searching and replacing (see accompanying benchmark table).

The editing commands work quickly, and the previous difficulties with the insert mode have been completely eliminated. The program does its work with admirable facility.

Unfortunately, print enhancements such as boldface type and underlining show up the same way on a monochrome screen. If you have both enhancements in a document, you can't tell which is which. Since the hardware is capable of displaying underlining, we're unsure why this anomaly exists.

The mailing-list database is quite good, although not as snazzy or as powerful as Q&A Write's. However, it is more than adequate for most mailing-list applications. It sorts, selects, and manages data files that can have no more than 14 lines per record but any number of fields. The file manager will sort on any combination of fields, select records, and support multiple indexes (but not update the indexes automatically). It can print labels, lists, or form letters.

A separate utility program converts data files from ASCII delimited format and from the original Dac Easy Word format to Dac Easy Word II. However, Dac Word II does not support the popular DCA file format.

The speller is adequate at best. It's reasonably quick, but it flagged many common words — including "campus," "places," and "education" — as misspelled. When you choose the hyphenate feature, the program asks you to approve each recommended hyphenation.

We did encounter a few performance problems. The ASCII import feature is not bulletproof, and Dac Word II hung when we tried to import an ASCII file we had created in another program. (A Dac spokesman said the firm has heard of the problem and has been working to correct it.) The program will also hang with extremely large files, starting to have problems at a point somewhere between

500 and 1,000 pages.

Dac Easy Word II is a quick performer, although this is offset somewhat by the weak speller and the lack of support for the DCA file format. We rate it a good performer.

Dac Easy Word II is one of the least expensive word processors available. Its features are many, its performance strong, and its capabilities extensive.

DOCUMENTATION:

The manual is written and organized well, though it could have a better index and include more technical information.

There is a printed tutorial, but it is still difficult to find out about the characteristics of the program — how large a document it can handle, how many records it holds in the mailing-list file, what structure a Dac Easy Word II "ASCII delimited" data file uses, and similar information.

Information on macros and their construction is less than clear and appears in two different places in the manual. The Undo function is never mentioned or described but can be inferred from the description of the cut and paste process.

On-line help is good, although it is menu-sensitive, not context-sensitive. There is only one help screen for each menu, covering all the functions in that menu. Further, there is no index from which you can branch to any other help screen without going through a menu.

A quick-reference card provides a useful summary of Dac Easy Word II commands and features, although it's printed in really small type and is hard to read.

We rate documentation as satisfactory.

EASE OF LEARNING:

With its clear drop-down menus, good on-line help, and printed tutorial, Word II is easy to learn.

Although most of the problems in the previous version's menu system have been eliminated, some minor difficulties remain. For example, in the File menu, when you make an incorrect selection from a submenu and back out with the Escape key, you are sometimes dropped completely out of the menu rather than

being returned to the main File menu.

Nonetheless, let's make it clear that these are not major stumbling blocks. We rate ease of learning as very good.

EASE OF USE:

Experienced users can dispense with most of the menus and use speed key combinations (the Alt key plus a letter) for most common functions. You can build macros from existing text or from command or keystroke sequences. You can save these macros to disk for later recall.

The windows are very effective for work requiring multiple documents on-line at the same time. The help system provides adequate information, so experienced users rarely need the manual. The program has some system utilities that report a document's number of words, paragraphs, lines, and pages, as well as the amount of system memory available.

Although the printing module is flexible and operates well, special features of individual printers may require you to custom edit printer control codes. This is a tedious job in any case, but Dac Word II has a separate Install program that simplifies the entry and testing of printer commands.

the program shows you its suggested hyphenation and prompts you for approval.

Balancing the pros and cons, we rate ease of use as good.

ERROR HANDLING:

The program's Undelete function uses the cut-and-paste buffer, letting you restore the most recent block deletion because all block deletions, cuts, or copies, go to the paste buffer. There is no Undelete function for word or line deletions that do not use the block command.

Many simple errors are routinely handled with good error messages. Whenever exiting the system, you are queried on whether you want to leave without saving the document. The previous version's tendency to let you overwrite program or other sensitive files has been corrected, and the file management system is quite effective.

We rate error handling as satisfactory.

SUPPORT:

Users are entitled to just 10 minutes of free support (at least the call is toll-free). For \$60, you can sign up for an extended support plan and get an hour of toll-free support, a newsletter, and some discount coupons. We tried several times to reach tech support, but on each call we got a long wait with recorded messages.

The program is not copy-protected and comes with a 30-day money-back guarantee.

Because we never were able to reach a support technician and because you get just 10 minutes of support, we rate support poor.

VALUE:

With a list price of \$49, Dac Easy Word II is one of the least expensive word processors available. Its features are many, its performance strong, and its capabilities extensive.

You could spend more money — \$199, in fact — and get PFS Professional Write and Q&A Write. Both programs are more powerful and quite easy to learn and use, but you pay for those capabilities. We rate Dac Easy Word II a good value.

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Executive Word Processor Benchmarks

Test	Dac Easy Word II	Easy Edit Ver. 1.50	PFS Professional Write Ver. 1.0	Q&A Write Ver. 1.0	Whaker's New World Ver. 1.05
Load File	.02	.01	.01	.01	.03
Save/Continue	.08	.07	.01	.01	.09
Save/Exit	N/A ¹	Varies	N/A ²	Varies	.09
ASCII Import	.24	.01 ³	.07	.08	.03 ⁴
ASCII Export	.11	N/A ¹	.05	.04	.08
DCA Translate	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	.45	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
Cursor Top/Bottom	.01	.06	Immed.	Immed.	.02 ⁵
Manual Scroll	1.35	1.34	1.39	1.34	1.34
Margin Reference	.11	N/A ²	.15	.03	.19
Repage 20 Pages	Auto.	Auto.	Auto.	Auto.	Auto.
Search	.03	.08 ⁶	.11	.01	.13
Search/Replace	.08	5.34	2.09	.29	4.53
Append Document	.02	.14 ⁷	N/A ¹	.12	.12
File Size	58K	56K	55K	66K	56K
Number of Pages	10	10	10	10	10

System Configuration: IBM AT with 640K, 1MB Expanded Memory.

1. Feature not available.
2. Program reads in ASCII with carriage returns after each line.
3. Can only reformat documents one paragraph at a time.
4. First of four line tests approximately twice as long as remaining three tests.
5. Document or copy-buffer size limit prevents executing this test.
6. Saving and exiting a document are separate procedures.
7. Save is a general command after which you may exit or return to edit.