eport generator ime out if the

ected.) ne F5 function the displayed with no verifi-This seems when neighkeys are used through the sed, and press-ill restore the ng the deletion g a warning or

andling probly minor, and hey're serious nt a less than

re offers a 30guarantee if ot compatible oftware, or if ppy with its you need the th media, you y mail — and

ware is workducts in this s, including a foreign-lans, and gramware.

port is availm 8 a.m. to 5 The number is prominent-: manual and ndex entry in support poli-

calls to evalusupport, Both ugh immediian we talked ledgeable, aceager to

me fixes for a Hercules Plus t work, so we information. d from him a one lanse we n's technical

ainly fulfills a users, and is a a fiexible data There are ilities that let cific types of ually appoint-Rolodex files. Tate's Front

iple, lets you ent Dbase apnce File is an venient, and pose database

cellent value r John Walkmer research

ading savings on in Southern

A ID Printer Pitch/Fr Created Edited

Select Printer, Pitch/Font and Press 60 to Continue, Fi8 to Exit

Office Writer, Version 6.0 contains a very detailed document history screen that includes a comment section in addition to a document description.

Office Writer, Version 6.0

# **Upstart Word Processor Adds New Features, Improvements**

By John Lombardi Review Board

Among word processing cognoscenti, Office Writer is the upstart whose continuing bid to challenge Wang's dedicated word processing and Multimate's PCbased Wang clone inspires admiration. Over the years Office Writer has continued to improve as an office/professional word processor, and the new Version 6.0 is a useful upgrade with a variety of new features and improvements

Office Writer's Wang/Multimate imitation places it in the page-processing class of word processors, requiring manual repagination. But it performs as easily as most document-processing packages and offers several advantages over Multimate, its primary competitor.

Our review of Office Writer 6.0 is based on criteria established in the March 28 Office/Professional Word Processing product comparison and uses the same test files and hardware configuration for testing.

Office Writer's principal distinguishing feature is and always has been its effective imitation of the Wang system's user interface and design. The program menus and keyboard closely emulate Wang terminals, and in environments where dedicated Wang systems coexist with PC-based word processing, this emulation makes Office Writer an obvi-

ous choice.

Office Writer will move, copy, and paste text or columns. It will also move sections from one document into another, although the process is a little cumbersome and would be much better implemented through a multiple-document window system. The program can delete formatting codes, center indi-vidual lines, handle decimal columns, jump from word to word, underline and boldface, and handle other basic formatting and editing requirements. Its print-time formatting includes features such as headers and footers, page numbering and offsetting, proportional spacing support, and the like.

Version 6.0 contains a number of

enhancements for laser printers. There are drivers for HP fonts, and Office Writer allows you to use 60 resident fonts at once. Postscript is supported, and although the program is not WYSIWYG, word wraps and line breaks are arranged according to character widths, so the onscreen line breaks match the final output.

Office Writer's core module of basic word processing can be enhanced in a variety of ways. Office Solutions sells a separate graphics package for inserting graphics elements into Office Writer documents. Keyboard macros are provided as a separate memory-resident utility, and they can be used outside of Office Writer in other programs. While it's nice having the macros as a memoryresident utility, it uses memory that becomes unavailable for Office Writer documents - although it only occupies a total of 16K.

Office Writer supports standard document transfer formats through the inclu-sion of Officelink, an add-on module, which has special capabilities for Wang-originated documents. Adding to its utility in an office environment, the Office Writer mail-merge and form letter module is sophisticated and includes variables, sorting, and selecting. Math capabilities for columns or rows in text also enhance the program's utility.

The program has a superior graphics preview system for illustrating what the final document will look like, including scaled font sizes and a zoom feature Complete with rulers that expand with the zoom to indicate line and text length,

the preview system is quite effective.

When compared to other high-end PC word processors, however, Office Writer's features list is average, and editing functions can occasionally be clumsy. For example, to delete text you must block it out using the Delete key and cursor, although there are facilities for simply deleting single characters or words. Inserting text is quick and effective in Office Writer's "push-ahead" mode and operates like most word processors, but the program blocks out most editing commands when using the antiquated "drop-down" insert mode, a throwback to the days of dedicated word

processing.
Office Writer lacks many bells and whistles that characterize top products such as Word Perfect 5.0 or Wordstar Release 3. For example, the program does not center blocks or provide automatic case changing, and lines cannot be positioned flush right. Conditional end-of-page breaks require

user interaction during pagination, and the program can't insert non-printing comments into the text. A code for the date and time can be included, but it will not automatically spell out the date and time in the document. The program cannot number lines or generate specialized lists. Another weakness is that the program limits file size to 304K - less than the previous version - or about 90 single-spaced pages on a 640K system.

#### PERFORMANCE:

For correspondence, Office Writer per-forms well overall. Tab support is limited but easy to use, and tabs can be moved with little effort. The column copy is effective, and the find and replace feature maintains capitalization. The drop-down insert mode is less effective than the push-ahead method, but both features work well. Based on our criteria, we rate memos and correspondence good.

As in previous versions, the spelling checker and thesaurus offer effective performance in Version 6.0. The speller performs global replaces, and case sensitivity is selectable. The thesaurus is great, with alternatives provided as either synonyms or related words. Overall, the spelling checker and thesaurus are very useful and well-designed, and we rate them very good.

Mail-merge functions take maximal advantage of Office Writer's useful form template system, Inform. Entering data into specially defined fields in an onscreen, custom form is very easy, and user-prompted information is accepted. The system also accepts ASCII data files. Mail merge permits a full set of condi-tional selection criteria (equal, not-equal, or, etc.) but still has awkward single-character field labels for variables in form letters or other documents. Office Writer's mail merge is useful, fullfeatured, and generally easy to use. We

rate mail merge very good.

Office Writer's outline feature renumbers the outline as changes are made and permits a user-definable numbering system. It supports up to seven levels. It does not include, however, the capability to expand or contract the body text within the outline, which reduces its utility as a classic outliner. After editing an existing outline, you often need to repaginate to see proper numbering. According to our eriteria, the Office Writer outlining feature rates a score of good.

. The table of contents and indexing capabilities are effective, although outline and section markers remain in the text, which is undesirable. The index uses

a keyword-type file and lets you create a special set of keywords used for indexing many different documents. You can gencrate a table of contents from an outline Table of contents and index generation meet our standards for a good score

The footnoting capability uses a nice vindowing system, and its performance is on a par with the better high-powered word processors. You can jump between footnoting and references, and in general the feature operates well. We rate footnoting good.

Although Office Writer has a nice document history screen and supports strikeout, it does not have a redlining facility. Consequently, we rate document tracking poor.

Font and style management uses menus, and macros can be used to define styles: Office Writer contains greatly upgraded font support. Font selection is simple once you have selected the appropriate printer. The page preview feature does not show fonts, but it does show other attributes such as underfining, size, and page line lengths. system for selecting fonts is great if your font is in portrait mode and the exact font file exists for your printer font combination. Any differences require the use of a powerful printer driver and font file manager for changing codes to get landscape orientation or to adjust a selected font's character set. We rate fonts and style sheets satisfactors

Office Writer provides no internal graphics integration, although a separate program is available from Office Solutions that provides graphics support Unfortunately, there is no discussion in the Office Writer documentation as to how this utility is integrated.

Speed of operation has been improved significantly, mostly through the capability to turn off screen updating during lengthy search and replace tasks. A speedier-than-average performer, we rate Office Writer's speed good.

With a special set of document translation utilities that do Wordstar. Multimate, and Wang formats, in addi-tion to the standard DCA REL and ASCII, we rate compatibility of Office Writer excellent

#### DOCUMENTATION:

The Office Writer package contains a variety of manuals and booklets. The large "Learning Office Writer" manual offers the best guide to the program, with chapters covering increasingly complex and specialized features. Examples are good and explanations complete

Macagine Committee of the Committee of the	THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE	NFOWORL		
	Office Writer 60	Office Writer 50	Microsoft Word	Word Perfect
File				
Load	1.7	2.6	1.4	1.5
Save & continue	1.1.	- 1.3	41	5.6
Import ASCII	7.4	91	act at 1.1	18.3
Export ASCII	20.2	17.9	55.3	22.5
Import DCA	13.1	. 1478	587 .	50.9
Cursor movement		11 1 1 1 1 1 1		Mile Son
Top to bottom	1.5	. 0.7	0.5	. 29 -
Manual scroll	94.3	103 3	941	97 7
Reformat	15.0	39.0	10.8	25.9 *
Search	MENUTAL PROPERTY.			
Last word	3.6	2.4	2.2	2.7
Replace-	4.5	31.0	14-4	5.5
Append document	2.6	4.1	0.7	0.8

4

However, the reference manual did not cover Office Writer features as extensively as we would have liked. For example, we found no discussion of macros or cursor movement. A number of features that should be in the reference manual were only found in the learning manual, inconvenient when you need to quickly access information.

The printer booklet and supplement provide a host of useful information for using Office Writer printer driver and font editing/creating tools. Both are clear and helpful but require more experience and technical expertise than the average

user may have.
On-screen help is great although the index is not as effective as in other programs. The context-sensitive help is particularly useful, but the program does not give any help at the main menus other than a quick index of all available menu functions. This is better than in Version 5.0, but it is not true context-sensitive help. Error messages are useful, and the program's on-screen tutorial is a nice



(25) Satisfactory

NIA

Good

Excellent

Satisfactory

Very Good

Good

Good

Very Good

Good

(25) Satisfactory

(25)

(30)

(100)

(150)

(100)

(125)

#### PRODUCTSUMMARY

Company: Office Solutions Inc., Gustomer Services Department, 49 Kessel Court, Madison, WI 53711; (608) 274-5047.

List Pricet \$495

Graphics integration -

Speed

Compatibility

Ease of use

Error handling

Support policies

Ease of learning (125)

Technical support (25)

Requires: IBM PC or compatible; PC/ MS-DOS 2.0; 384K of RAM; two floppy

MS-DUS 2.0; 394K of HAM; two noppy drives, hard disk rectmended.

Press: Wang emilatiog; easy to learn; nice forms management features.

Cesses: Not as good with larger documents: dumsy operation with some features; graphics only available onlineable.

optionally. Summary: A great choice for Wang-oriented offices, Office Writer provides strong basic word processing capabili-ties, although it is less effective with longer documents or tasks requiring extensive formatting.

Although we gave the previous version of Office Writer's documentation a good score, because of the incomplete reference manual we cannot rate this version's documentation higher than satisfactory.

#### EASE OF LEARNING:

Office Writer's highly structured menu system and help screens combined with good information in the learning manual makes this an easy program to learn. For the average user, Office Writer can be set up, the on-screen text tutorial completed, and the program learned to the level of reparing basic correspondence in less than two hours.

Full knowledge of Office Writer will take four or five hours depending on the expertise of the user. Complete mastery of the most complex aspects of the

program may take longer.

We rate Office Writer's ease of learning very good.

#### EASE OF USE:

Office Writer's many features and capabilities make it an easy system to use, especially when preparing multiple form letters or filling out templates for a database. Highly structured menus move the user from major function to major function, often requiring a complete exit from one to access the features of another, which controls the user's interaction with the system.

Combined with the clumsy editing features, this inhibits ease of use once you've passed through the learning curve. Quite good with small documents, Office Writer's effectiveness declines as it

approaches its maximum document size. making this system much less easy to use for large documents.

We previously rated Office Writer's ease of use very good. However, with a new version that still contains ease of use problems we would have liked to see eradicated, we must limit our ease of use score to good.

#### ERROR HANDLING:

Office Writer has a timed backup feature and will create backup files when compiling indexes or doing other procedures. The one-level Undo command is weak, permitting deleted text to be lost if the cursor is moved before Undelete is invoked.

Simple user errors such as an open disk drive door or mistyped keys do not lose data, and the system generates extensive prompts for operations that could cause data loss, such as exiting without saving.

We rate error handling good.

**SUPPORT:**Office Writer technical support is provided by mail and on a non-toll-free line during normal working hours. We therefore rate support policies satisfac-

We made several calls to technical support and each time received assistance promptly from a very well-informed technician. On general questions about the product's capabilities and functions, the answers were provided quickly and correctly.

We posed a problem to technical

support that involved using Office Writer

with an HP Laserjet II. Even though technical support never completely resolved our problem, the staff was very helpful and went out of their way to assist us. We give technical support a score of very good.

#### VALUE:

At \$495, Office Writer falls in the middle of the pack with other office/professional word processors in both price and perfor-mance. The program is easy to learn and is great for performing a variety of basic word processing tasks. For the office accustomed to the Wang system, Office Writer is the word processor of choice. We rate Office Writer a good value.

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

# Repeat a good thing.

InfoWorld editorial reprints are reformatted on 81/2 x 11 glossy coated paper. Choose from black and white, 2-color or 4color reprints.

For complete details, call Stephanie Beach at ext. 268 (800) 227-8365. In California, (800) 344-4636.

### YOUR POWER STATION: THE AT&T UNIX™ PC NOW ONLY \$ 1.495 !!

#### STANDARD HARDWARE

3 tlp/ring RJ11 ports
Serial & Parallel ports
Serial & Parallel ports
3 internal expansion bus slots
Battery backup clock/calendar
1200 autobaud internal modern
UNIX PC Keyboard and 3 button mouse
Floppy compatible for UNIX and MS-DOS
High-res 20MHz 720 X 348 bit mapped screen
90 day bil free aupport from ATAT
90 day ATAT warranty on hardware

## **PERFORMANCE**

Motorola 10MHz 68010 32-bit processor Fast <28ms access hard disks System can have up to seven serial devices

Complete computers NOW ONLY 2MB RAM with 40MB HARD DISK....... 1,495 2MB RAM with 67MB HARD DISK ......... 1,995

**BRAND NEW DIRECT FROM AT&T** 

#### SOFTWARE

COLLINALE	
UNIX SYSTEM V Release 3.51	29
UNIX Utilities 3.51	35
SmartWare Integrated Software	69
UNIX PC Paint Power	19
Wordstar 2000	41
Multiplan	25

All prices are COD / FOB Los Angeles and limited to quantities in stock.

Call or write for our UNIX PC Catalog which includes many other options and software packages for these powerful desktop computers. We can also service and upgrade your existing UNIX PC.

#### **HUNDREDS** of packages available

Technology Resource Center has a full line of ATaT products, please call for



TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE CENTER

7157-7159 Beverly Boulevard Los Angeles, California 90036



Toll free in the USA (800) 433-4904 International and California (213) 935-4100
Facsimile (213) 937-9034
AT&T Mail < Itro>
Telex 159211426 TRC UT

AT&T Mail < ltrc> UUCP: {uunet} emgltrc!

# We welcome dealer and international inquiries.

Repeat a good thing.