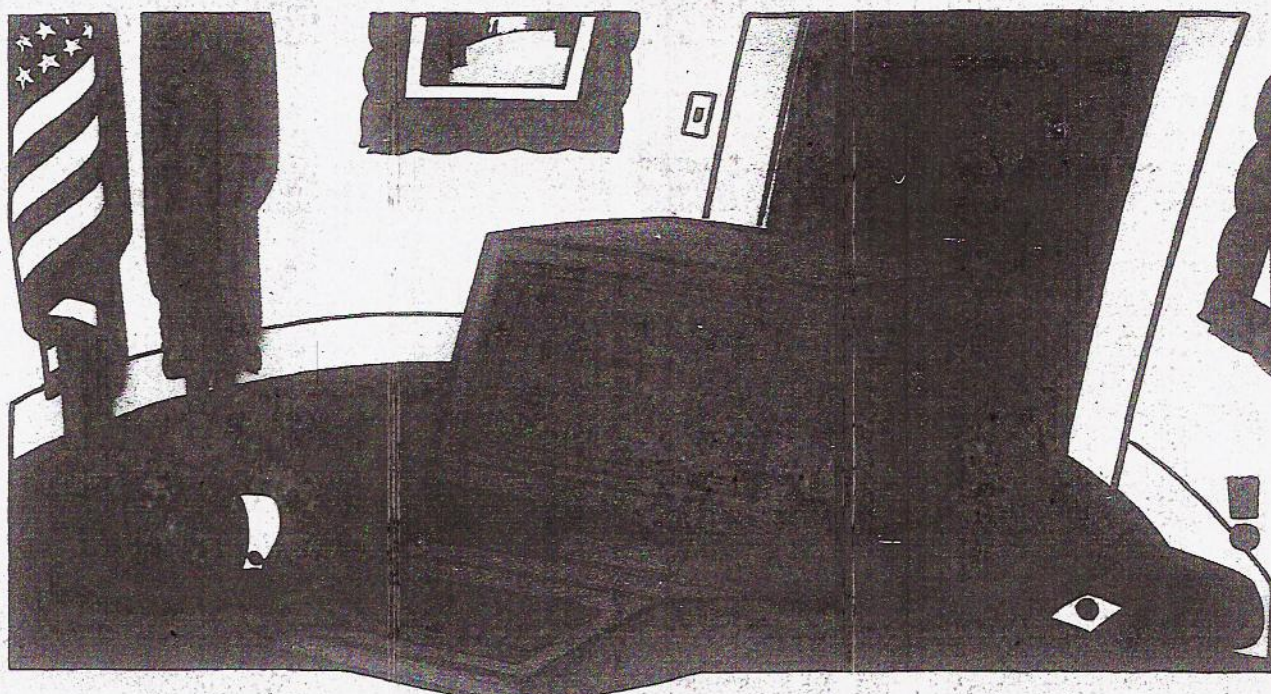


## PRODUCT COMPARISON

EXECUTIVE  
WORD PROCESSING

By JOHN LOMBARDI REVIEW BOARD

**I**n the word processing business, to stand still is to decline. Even in the lower-powered executive end of the market, nothing is surer than innovation and feature inflation. What used to be super-duper for an executive word processing program is now just ordinary, and the competition for this class of word processors has grown as fierce as the battle between powerhouses Microsoft Word and Word Perfect.

Executive word processing programs are by definition less expensive and less powerful than their professional counterparts. They have fewer features with fewer options. Executive word processing is for busy "executives" who need competent word processing but have neither time nor need for the complexity and sophistication of a product

*InfoWorld evaluates seven applications that are fast, easy to learn and use, and optimized for all those chief-executive memos and correspondence.*

## PRODUCTS REVIEWED

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Ami, Version 1.00A .....                        | 53    |
| Beyond Word Writer, Version 1.1 .....           | 56    |
| Microsoft Windows Write, Version 2.1 .....      | 57    |
| Professional Write, Version 2.1 .....           | 58    |
| Q&A Write, Version 1.01 .....                   | 60    |
| Volkswriter 4, Version 1.02 .....               | 60    |
| Word Perfect Executive, Version 1.0 .....       | 65    |
| InfoWorld Report Card .....                     | 70    |
| Professional Word Processing Report Cards ..... | 64-65 |
| Executive Summary .....                         | 70    |

like Microsoft Word 5.0. In many cases, an executive word processor is used to prepare drafts that a professional word processing expert or secretary will later turn into sophisticated documents using a higher-powered program. For other offices, an executive word processor can easily handle any job. As a direct result of their relative simplicity, executive word processing programs are usually easier to learn and use than the office/professional programs, if only because there is less to learn and there are fewer choices to make.

With the recent mushrooming of desktop publishing products and users, executive word processors are handy tools for preparing text that is to be imported into desktop publishing software. Many popular desktop publishing packages do not provide even basic word processing features. At the same time, they are slow for editing and are limited in what kinds of word processing documents they can import; you will not, for example, be able to import a Microsoft Word document with



many styles, footnotes, or other embellishments into very many desktop publishing programs. As a result, an executive word processor lets you prepare documents that are refined in content but not necessarily in formatting.

While executive word processors compete in feature lists just as the professionals do, the trick is often more in the

combination of features than in the actual number of functions available. Some do mail merge better, some handle fonts effectively, and others contain built-in mail-list programs.

We recommend you carefully examine the features of any executive word processing program to make sure it matches your needs.

As long as the price differential between these executive word processing programs remains at less than half of the professional programs (around \$200 compared with \$500), we can expect to see continued differentiation between market segments.

We can also expect to see executive word processors optimized as front ends

to desktop publishing. On a stand-alone basis, however, the products that will proliferate are those that can keep up with current trends and market demands: graphical interfaces, laser printer and ink-jet support, and strong compatibility with desktop publishing, office/professional word processing, and other types of software.

## How We Tested Executive Word Processors

**W**e tested all executive word processors using the same hardware system: an 8-MHz IBM AT Model 339 with 640K of RAM, EGA, and a 30-megabyte hard disk.

In this product comparison, we have updated our tests and benchmarks for executive word processing. Specifically, we have refined our testing criteria for performance categories such as basic editing, mail merge, etc. As a result of these changes, scores for products may have changed since previous reviews, even if the products have not. Please note that *InfoWorld* distinguishes between *executive* and *office/professional* word processors; executive word processing contains fewer rated performance categories, omitting such areas as outlining and footnoting. For all products, scored categories and report card weightings are based on the results of an *InfoWorld* survey of 1,000 readers involved in the purchase and use of executive word processors.

### PERFORMANCE

For all performance categories, we establish a core set of requirements that constitute a satisfactory score. If any features in the core are missing or poorly implemented, points are subtracted from the score. If any features are especially well, robustly, or innovatively implemented, points are added to the score. Also, additional features in a given category can constitute bonus points. In the write-up for each word processor, we mention highlights of performance subcategories. We do not, however, mention every feature that fits our basic core requirements for a satisfactory score. The following section itemizes what constitutes basic and extended executive word processing features.

**Basic editing** — This section includes the word processor's basic capability to edit and manipulate text, and how effectively you can navigate through text. Rated core features include cursor movement, block and column cut/copy and paste, automatic hyphenation, paragraph reformatting, redefinable tabs, case-sensitive search and replace, and status-line indicators (an on-screen display showing the page number or document line number). Bonus sections include document tracking (such as a record of the date showing when a document was last changed and who worked on it), macro support, time/date stamping, and windowing (multiple or the same files simultaneously).

**Spelling checker** — Each executive word processor must include have a spelling checker with a dictionary of at least 75,000 words. Other rated basic features include the capability to maintain capitalization during word replacement, the quality and accuracy of suggested replacements for suspect words, and the availability of multiple user dictionaries. Bonus territory includes real-time spelling checking, grammar checking, or a thesaurus.

**Mail merge** — Broadly defined, mail merging is the capability to merge information from a database (such as of names and addresses) with a form letter. Core rated features include the capability to skip records with data-entry errors, support for "named" fields (instead of numbered), and varying field orders. We give bonuses for other features, like an included flat-file database, programming capability (with conditionals, user prompting, etc.), and data-format support (Dbase, for example).

**Font support** — The core requirements for font support include the capability to change fonts, to change font styles (boldface, underlining, italics), and on-screen display of fonts (at least a display of boldface as such). We give bonuses for support for super/subscripting, style sheets, and WYSIWYG on-screen font display.

**Graphics** — We divide graphics into two broad categories: the capability to create graphics and to import predrawn graphics. We require each executive

word processor to draw two styles of lines and to be capable of importing at least one type of graphics file. Bonuses are in order for packages that provide box/circle drawing tools, text wrapping, freehand drawing tools, image scaling, cropping, and/or rotating.

**Compatibility** — It is important for an executive word processor to be capable of importing from and exporting to other file formats. At the very least, we require each word processor to import ASCII and DCA/RFT formats in addition to its own native format. (DCA/RFT is IBM's formatted text transfer format for document exchanges. Some programs, like Ami, only support DCA/FFT, which is the much less commonly supported IBM file format used primarily to allow printing of formatted documents prepared in other programs; this format is used more in the minicomputer and mainframe than in the PC world.) Bonuses are given for additional text-oriented file format support.

**Speed** — Our speed scores are based on the results of a series of benchmark tests on all word processing packages. We have listed the actual times it took the products to achieve the various tasks. The field of tests is divided into three basic categories: translating or converting files from one format to another, saving and loading files, and editing files (e.g., search and replace). Scores represent a compilation of how each product behaved in all tests and how its results compared with other products of its type.

Most of the executive word processors were fast enough to rate a good score, and a few exceeded the average and were speedy enough for a very good score.

The following list briefly describes the individual speed tests:

**File load:** Time required to load a 15K (approximately five-page) test document.

**File save:** Time required to save the same 15K document.

**Import ASCII:** Time required to import an ASCII version of the test document. This file contained no formatting commands, and each line in the file ended with a carriage return-line feed pair.

**Export ASCII:** Time required to export (write to disk) the 15K test file to an ASCII file.

**Import DCA:** Time required to import the test file from DCA/RFT format.

**Cursor movement, top to bottom:** Time required to jump from the top of the document to the bottom and then back three screens (backing up three screens puts the cursor on the page preceding the last page). The backward scroll is intended to offset programs that are optimized to jump to the last line of the document. This tells how quickly the product handles active files.

**Manual scroll:** Time required to scroll through the document one line at a time (with the down-arrow key depressed). This gives an indication of the relative evenness and speed of screen handling.

**Reformat:** Time required to reformat and repaginate the test document after reducing the text's width by 12 characters. Since our test document contains three sections, some word processors require that each section be reformatted individually. We do not penalize the speed score for this method. Some packages reformat automatically; the timing in such cases measures how long it takes to repaginate (establish page breaks).

**Search for last word:** Time required to search for the last word in the test document.

**Search and replace:** Time required to replace a series of characters appearing five times in the test document.

**Append document:** Time required to append a document to the end of our test document. Both documents are approximately 15K.

### DOCUMENTATION

Documentation scores reflect the quantity and quality of both written and on-line information. At a

minimum, documentation should describe the product and how to use it. Bonus points are awarded for a quick-start guide, on-line tutorial and help programs, a quick-reference card, and a written tutorial. Poor organization, missing information, or an incomplete index lower the score.

Error messages are also considered under documentation: Bonuses are awarded for programs whose error messages clearly explain the problem or, ideally, that offer suggestions on how to resolve the problem.

### EASE OF LEARNING

Ease of learning scores depend on the user interface and the intuitive design of the products. Other factors that influence this score include the complexity of the program and the quality of documentation and tutorials. To earn a satisfactory score, a program must be learnable by novices.

### EASE OF USE

Like ease of learning, ease of use is in large part a function of the program's design, and evaluates how easy the average user would find the program to use once the basics have been mastered. A menu system that is easy to follow and command shortcuts are two features that can simplify using a program.

### ERROR HANDLING

To earn a satisfactory score in error handling, a program must prompt you to save files and shouldn't do anything to corrupt data or make it easy for you to lose information. Packages that offer basic error messages get a satisfactory score in this area. Bonuses are awarded for an Undo command and timed backups.

### SUPPORT

Support is divided into two areas: support policies and technical support. In scoring for support policies, we begin with a satisfactory score and award bonuses for product usability warranties, money-back guarantees, a toll-free line, and corporate extended support; we subtract points when vendors provide no technical support or limit the support to 30 or 90 days.

Technical support scores are based on the quality of service we actually received in the course of multiple anonymous calls to the vendor, and the availability of knowledgeable technicians. We will call technical support up to 10 times over a period of days to confirm the existence of support problems. If we easily reach technical support and the staff is friendly and helpful and competently answers our questions, we rate technical support satisfactory. From there, staffers must display a high level of product knowledge and give hints or suggest better ways of approaching your problem. This constitutes a very good score; a good can only be attained by subtracting demerits from a very good or an excellent score.

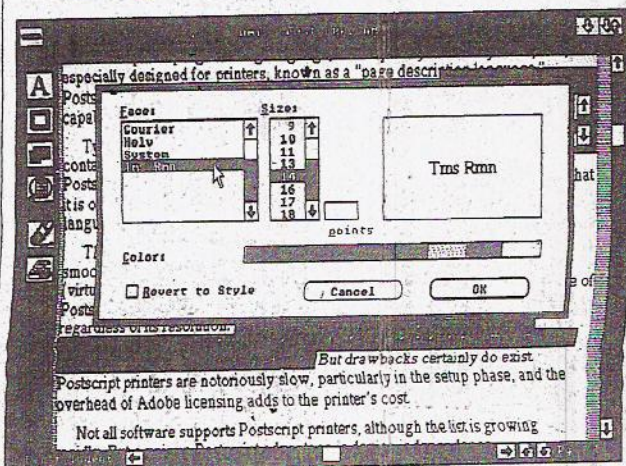
An excellent score requires staff members to go far beyond answering your question, even to the point of providing fixes on-disk or writing patches just for your problem.

### VALUE

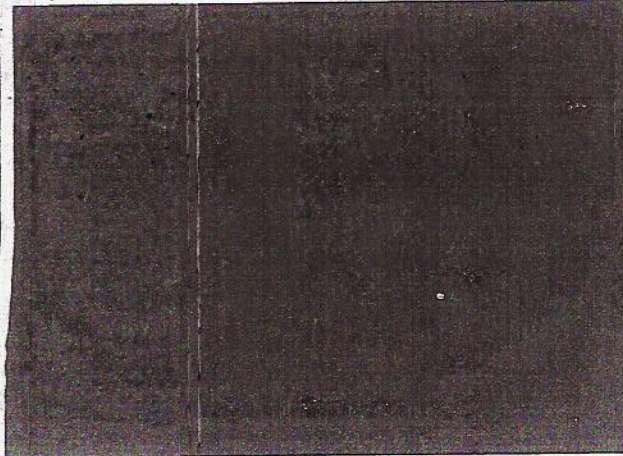
Value scores reflect the price vs. the performance and features of each package tested, taking into account the competition and the intended market. Sometimes value is a trade-off of other features, which we explain where relevant upon scoring. Generally, we look at how well-rounded the program is in relation to its price and competitors.

Comparison developed by John Lombardi, contributing editor; Steve Irvin and David Schmidt, *InfoWorld* Test Center; Greg Smith, *InfoWorld* test development specialist; Serge Timacheff, associate reviews editor.





Ami's font-selection screen lets you type in font sizes or choose them from a menu.



The menu-driven Beyond Word Writer is well-designed. Above is a thesaurus listing.

layout mode. Because of these problems, we rate speed poor.

While documentation is well-done, it lacks some technical information and offers little about printers; much of this is handled by Microsoft Windows documentation. On-screen help and a special booklet about styles help considerably. We rate documentation very good.

With all the graphics and Windows-style icons, Ami is easy to learn. It takes about 30 minutes to get up and running effectively, and a run-time version of Microsoft Windows is included with Ami. There are plenty of materials included with the package to help you learn the program. We rate ease of learning very good.

As you gain experience, Ami grows easier to use with a choice of mouse or keyboard and effortless formatting. However, the slow speed on some operations — especially in layout mode — limits our otherwise excellent ease-of-use rating to very good.

Ami handles simple errors easily along

with a single-level Undo which handles deletions and formatting changes. File-save options are easily accessible and exits check for saved files. There is no timed backup. We rate error handling good.

Support policies include BBS support and a 30-day money-back guarantee. The support department is open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays Eastern time. We rate support policies very good.

Technical support personnel were easy to reach and provided competent answers to our questions about importing documents and file-size limits (there is no limit on file size). We rate technical support satisfactory.

At \$199, Ami is a strong value, especially for anyone using a laser printer and with a need for complex formatting with fonts. Ami is also the only reasonably full-featured word processor available for Windows. However, remember that unlike most executive word processors, Ami needs plenty of memory, a graphics card, and a hard disk. Using a fast system — at least 10 or 12 MHz — is

also a good idea. If you add the cost of the hardware, Ami may not be a wonderful value unless you need the hardware for other tasks. We rate value good.

## Beyond Word Writer

### VERSION 1.1

A relative newcomer to this category, Beyond Word Writer offers standard-issue, highly competent word processing. While not oriented toward graphics or fonts, this executive system outperforms the other executive word processors in most categories. Since the main program runs easily on one 3½-inch disk, it is ideal for a laptop computer.

Notable among its many features, Beyond Word Writer offers footnotes or endnotes, three windows onto the same or different document, indexes, tables of contents, a spelling checker and thesaurus, column addition and subtraction with a simple calculator, and an excellent file-conversion utility. There are macros,

user-selectable interfaces, hyphenation, newspaper columns, line sort, and a mouse interface, although there is only a simple mail-merge capability without select or sort. Beyond Word Writer has only minimal font support.

The program has basic but effective correspondence capabilities, including standard one-tenth-inch ruler units. However, all line space is at six lines per inch, there is no rectangular column block move or copy, no auto reformat to new margins, and reformatting large documents can be slow. Beyond Word Writer produces clean ASCII files but only has left and decimal tabs. We rate basic editing satisfactory.

While the spelling checker and associated word tools are well-done, the checker runs through the entire document before beginning the in-context check, a less than desirable process. There is a thesaurus that shows parts of speech, a proof-reader for catching irregular punctuation and capitalization, a Fog index checker, and parts of speech are identified. Multi-

## BENCHMARKS

### Executive Word Processors

|                        | Ami<br>Version 1.00A | Beyond<br>Word Writer<br>Version 1.1 | MS Windows Write<br>Version 2.1 | Professional<br>Write<br>Version 2.1 | Q&A Write<br>Version 1.01 | Volkswriter 4<br>Version 1.02 | Word Perfect<br>Executive<br>Version 1.0 |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>File (15K)</b>      |                      |                                      |                                 |                                      |                           |                               |  |
| Load                   | 6                    | 1                                    | 2                               | <1                                   | 2                         | 2                             | <1                                       |
| Save & continue        | 4                    | 1                                    | 2                               | <1                                   | 1                         | 3                             | 3  |
| Import ASCII           | 13                   | 1                                    | 5                               | 7                                    | 3                         | 2                             | 3  |
| Export ASCII           | 7                    | 2                                    | 2                               | 2                                    | 2                         | 2                             | 9  |
| Import DCA             | N/A <sup>1</sup>     | 22                                   | N/A <sup>1</sup>                | 14 <sup>2</sup>                      | N/A <sup>3</sup>          | 17                            | N/A <sup>1</sup>                         |
| <b>Cursor movement</b> |                      |                                      |                                 |                                      |                           |                               |  |
| Top to bottom of file  | 9                    | <1                                   | <1                              | 1                                    | <1                        | 3                             | 2  |
| Manual scroll          | 1:37 <sup>4</sup>    | 27                                   | 60                              | 28                                   | 30                        | 26                            | 29                                       |
| Reformat               | 3                    | 1                                    | 5                               | 10                                   | 2                         | 12                            | 7 <sup>5</sup>                           |
| <b>Search</b>          |                      |                                      |                                 |                                      |                           |                               |  |
| Last word              | 3                    | 2                                    | 2                               | 1                                    | <1                        | 2                             | 2  |
| Replace                | 5                    | 4                                    | 2                               | 3                                    | <1                        | 6                             | 2  |
| Append document        | 12                   | 2                                    | 5                               | 1                                    | 3                         | 38                            | <1                                       |

All products tested on an 8-MHz IBM AT Model 339 with 640K of RAM, EGA, and a 30-megabyte hard disk.

All times in seconds unless otherwise noted (1.00 is one minute).

<sup>1</sup>Ami, Windows Write, and Word Perfect Executive do not import DCA/RFT.

<sup>2</sup>Professional Write could not globally alter ruler during import. Time shown includes each section being altered individually.

<sup>3</sup>Q&A Write does not import DCA/RFT. A separate utility is available from the vendor that will perform the translation.

<sup>4</sup>Ami's scroll time using arrow keys in layout mode; using the mouse, time was 1:54. Using draft mode, scroll time is significantly faster.

<sup>5</sup>Word Perfect Executive could not globally alter ruler. Each section had to be altered individually.



ple dictionaries are also supported. We rate the spelling checking very good.

The basic mail-merge facility handles simple form letters and mailing lists, but you can only name fields numerically. We rate mail merging poor.

You can change fonts and styles. Text enhancements for mono-spaced fonts are well done and printing can be done by page, range of pages, or just index or table of contents, for example. However, like many executive word processing systems, Beyond Word Writer does not support soft fonts on the Laserjet very well and has no true justification of proportionally spaced text. If font formatting and word wrapping are on, it will automatically justify to accommodate the fonts displayed. We rate fonts satisfactory.

There are no graphics capabilities other than line drawing. We rate graphics poor.

A good file-conversion program and a mode that mimics other popular word processors' command structure — much like Borland's Sprint — provide strong compatibility, although very complex documents may not convert reliably. We rate compatibility very good.

While benchmarks indicate that Beyond Word Writer is much better than the average in speed — and overall the product is the fastest executive word processor we tested — we found that some large document tasks slowed down somewhat, although this was not part of our test suite. We rate speed very good.

Documentation is easy to read and clear. There's plenty of information, a good index, and many examples, plus a very nice on-screen, context-sensitive help system. However, the lack of printer information or a discussion of memory program memory limitations impairs the documentation's completeness a little. Otherwise excellent; we rate documentation very good.

With all the help, ease of learning is a snap — getting up to speed in Beyond Word Writer is no sweat. Thirty minutes ought to get even computer novices up and running. We rate ease of learning excellent.

Using the program is also very easy, especially thanks to the macros, pull-down menus, and customizable user interface. Laser printer setup and use,

overhead and give a p  
efficiently. Satisfactory  
all printers received a  
was measuring output  
The output tests inclu  
decided to place the v  
people, whose ranking  
InfoWorld an director

Each printer had to have a minimum of 100,000 characters per second to be considered satisfactory. Installation, troubleshooting, and a glossary all add up to an acceptable level of use. We took into consideration such features as easy ribbon replacement, a front panel LED or LCD, clearly marked platen controls, easy paper installation, accessible switches, and other factors common to other standard InfoWorld printer tests.

The same rating in serviceability could only be obtained by the vendor offering a one year warranty combined with other acceptable support policies and technical support. We made a

In the Write character menu, you can easily and automatically change font sizes.

however, could be improved. We rate ease of use very good.

Error handling includes a timed backup, warnings before destructive functions, a single-level undo, and user-changeable space in the undo buffer. However, there is no notation that problems may occur running Beyond Word Writer with some memory-resident programs, such as Sidekick. We rate error handling very good.

Support includes 60 days of free support, after which it costs \$100 per year. If you buy the product directly from the vendor, there is a money-back guarantee. If you buy it from a dealer and you decide you don't like it, the vendor will buy another word processor, of your choice, for you (given price adjustments). A product usability warranty is also provided. We rate support policies good, limited by the short free support period.

Technical support answered our questions about fonts and other issues quickly and competently. We rate technical support satisfactory.

At \$199.95, Beyond Word Writer is a superior value. Its strong collection of tools, reasonably quick operation, and availability of features make it a powerful competitor with such products as Q&A Write or Professional Write. We rate value very good.

#### PRODUCT SUMMARY

### Beyond Word Writer

VERSION 1.1

Company: Timeworks Inc., 444 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield, IL 60015; (312) 948-9200.

List Price: \$199.95

Requires: IBM PC or compatible; PC/MS-DOS 2.0 or later; 512K of RAM; one floppy drive.

Pros: Good selection of features and strong performance; highly adaptable to user keystroke preferences; fine word tools; nice help system; easy to learn and use; extensive features list including footnotes, columns, index, macros; and tables of contents; fastest overall program.

Cons: Mail merge weak; minimal HP Laserjet and proportionally spaced font support; no graphics inclusion.

Summary: Beyond Word Writer is a strong competitor with many features, good editing, and excellent compatibility. Suitable for normal office correspondence and reports, handles modest mail-list applications and simple newsletters. It does most things well except for proportionally spaced fonts.

### Microsoft Windows Write

VERSION 2.1

Included exclusively as part of Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Write is a nifty, simple, graphically oriented, executive word processing system. It integrates smoothly with the other applications in Windows, such as Notepad, Calendar, Calculator, Paint, and the clipboard, permitting seamless data transfers. In addition, the program makes use of all the various Windows characteristics, such as multiple windows, cut and paste, transfer to other programs, and the like. Although Write places heavy emphasis on mouse use, it can also be used with a keyboard interface.

While Write makes no sense at all outside the Windows environment, and indeed can't exist outside it, the program must be considered within the Windows context much as Word Perfect Executive's word processing module only makes sense within the Executive Library shell. Write operates reasonably efficiently even on 8-MHz systems.

In correspondence tasks, Windows Write has effective tabs, search/replace,

to produce quality text quickly and using one color printer and two others, and special features. The tough one of this bunch is breathing down our necks at every turn. graphics only, and a transparency. We usually in front of a carefully chosen group of grouped. The panel was headed by

and adjustable line space. Headers and footers are supported, and the ruler shows tab stops. You can also window multiple documents by running the Write program for each window (many Windows programs have trouble with this since they get bogged down by memory problems; Write is small enough that it's no problem). However, the status line only shows page number and requires explicit pagination or printing to get the page numbers right. With multiple versions of Write running in different windows, exchange of text is effortless. We rate basic editing good.

No spelling checker is provided.

While Windows has a card-file system, there are no provisions in Write to handle mail merging or form letters.

Fonts are WYSIWYG using the graphical Windows environment. Font names appear on the select screen; you can change fonts in the document, and fonts can be downloaded to the printer. Font names appear on the selection menu and can be changed in the document. Write supports Postscript printers. There is a multitude of printers supported by Windows. On-screen WYSIWYG font display is good but not, however, as high-quality as in Samna Ami. We rate fonts very good.

Graphics support is unusually good, thanks to the Paint program included with Windows. Graphics can be captured from a screen and printed in whatever screen resolution is involved. Although you can't include other graphics formats, you can capture and paste a Lotus 1-2-3 graphic or any screen that runs under Windows. Graphics can be sized and moved around on the page. We rate graphics very good.

Write supports ASCII and Microsoft Word, although most Word formatting is lost on transfers to Write, and Write files transferred to Word lose their graphics content. We rate compatibility poor.

File appending and scrolling were slower than with most products, although speed was acceptable and is faster than Ami. Because Write uses lots of compute power to handle the graphics screen and needs of Windows, at least an 8-MHz AT with a reasonably fast hard disk is needed to take full advantage of the system. You also need at least 640K of memory. Without this hardware, Write becomes sluggish. We rate speed satisfactory.

Write documentation is included in a book that also covers Windows, Paint, and Windows desk accessories. Write documentation is augmented by lots of

#### PRODUCT SUMMARY

### Microsoft Windows Write

VERSION 2.1

Company: Microsoft Corp., 16011 N.E. 36th Way, P.O. Box 97017, Redmond, WA 98073; (206) 882-8080.

List Price: \$99 for Windows 286; \$195 for Windows 386.

Requires: IBM PC or compatible, AT recommended; PC/MS-DOS 3.0 or later; 512K of RAM; two floppy drives; hard disk recommended; graphics support.

Pros: Nice features; superior font management; fine graphics integration; consistent Windows interface; outstanding laser printer support.

Cons: No spelling checker or mail merge; no footnotes; no on-line help; minimal compatibility; no columns.

Summary: A slick graphical interface and superior support for fonts and laser printers distinguish Write, part of Windows. It's best for users with a commitment to and installed base of Windows-compatible applications.

other information useful for Write in the Windows sections. No on-line help or in-context assistance detracts from the documentation, but the clear menus, consistent user interface, and good dialog boxes make use clear. We rate documentation satisfactory.

Not counting the Windows overhead, Write couldn't be simpler to learn for a Windows-literate user. But since using Write requires using Windows, it will take a completely novice user at least a couple of hours to get up and running. Substantial Windows complexity and the lack of on-line help detract somewhat from ease of learning. Overall, we rate ease of learning good.

Once up and running, Windows Write is a cinch to use. The effective user interface and the capability to move text and graphics from one place to another under Windows is a real benefit. Outstanding font management also helps considerably; for example, fonts can be automatically reduced or enlarged from the menu without specifying point sizes (you can't do this in Ami). We rate ease of use excellent.

Write error handling includes backup files, warnings when closing unsaved files, and undo from delete, move, or copy. If you have not saved a file and you exit from Write or from Windows, you are prompted. We rate error handling good.

Support policies include updates and unlimited telephone support. Support hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Pacific time, and there is a 30-day money-back guarantee. We rate support policies good.

Technical support involves an elaborate telephone system that routes you to the right support group; when you get there, you get competent and well-informed help from a friendly, anxious-to-please staff. We rate technical support very good.

The value of Windows Write as an individual program cannot be calculated, since it does not exist outside Windows. However, since you can get Windows 286 for about \$99 including Write, we rate the program a very good value. While lacking features available in other executive word processors, it has superb font handling and excellent integration and is one of a very few word processors available under Windows. As a front end for generating raw text to be transferred to Pagemaker, Write works fine. If, however, you need



more than just basic text and font manipulation under Windows, you'll want to ascend to Samna Ami.

## Professional Write

### VERSION 2.10

King of the executive word processing heap, Professional Write still is comfortably perched at the top but has significant competition nipping at its heels from the likes of Beyond Word Writer, Q&A Write, and Ami. Still one of the easiest word processors to use, Professional Write continues to upgrade its basic high-quality engine to meet the current users' needs. Version 2.10, the most recent upgrade, includes an elaborate graphics page preview as one of its most significant new features.

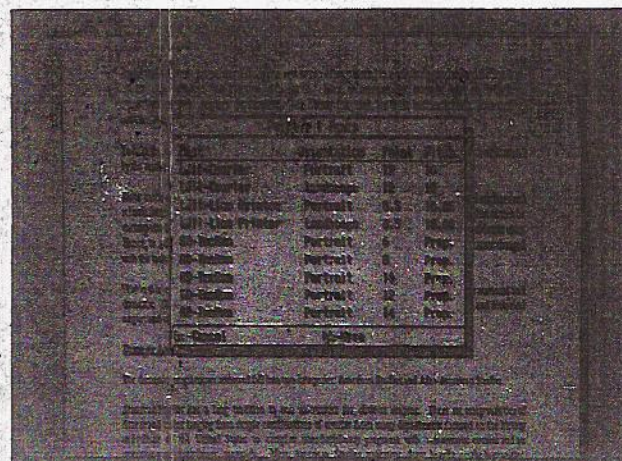
In addition to the normal complement of editing and formatting tools, Professional Write has exceptionally strong forms and mail-merge support which use either the nifty built-in address file or data files prepared with Dbase or other ASCII-delimited files. Complex search and select criteria can also be used. Professional Write supports several graphics packages, including Harvard, Professional Plan, and PFS:First Choice graphs using a tag

line. The program automatically provides white space for the graphic. The preview shows the graphic as a shaded box.

Basic editing capabilities are reflected in the solid cursor commands, good cut and paste including rectangular blocks, and an effective search-and-replace function that supports wild cards. A useful keystroke macro facility includes a pause command but no other programming constructs. There is no automatic hyphenation support. We rate basic editing very good.

The good spelling checker dictionary includes 77,000 words, a user-definable dictionary, and a thesaurus. We rate spelling checking good.

Mail merging, one of this program's notable strengths, supports both standard data file formats such as Dbase and comma-delimited ASCII as well as specialized Professional Write Address Book format (a fixed field and format address manager). The built-in Address Book offers quick, effective mail-list management for up to 2,000 records with sophisticated search, sort, and selection criteria. Although mail merging uses select and sort facilities only with the Address Book, mail merging is very well implemented for an executive-class word processor, and we rate it very good.



Professional Write's font capability lets you choose orientation, point size, and pitch.

Fonts and styles work well with Professional Write, greatly enhanced by the ability it gives users to preview the printed page. The program handles pro-

portionally spaced fonts well, downloads directly to a laser printer, and supports Postscript and Laserjet printers, but it doesn't show true line breaks on-screen except in preview. The preview is effective but slow. It has two viewing levels: one too small to read, the other just readable. One neat feature allows you to change the font while viewing a document in preview, which is an advantage. Fonts were rated good for the previous edition (Version 2.0) but now rate very good with the addition of the page preview.

Professional Write's graphics capabilities include importing graphs from Harvard and PFS system products but not Lotus .PIC files. Graphs make their own white space, show up as shaded boxes in the page preview, and have whatever characteristics come from the original program. Line drawing includes several available patterns. We rate graphics satisfactory.

Professional Write can convert a wide range of word processor and spreadsheet formats. However, unless imported word processing files are simple, the resulting Professional Write file will likely break lines in unusual places. This is the only real limitation, and we rate compatibility very good.

Except in reformatting, Professional

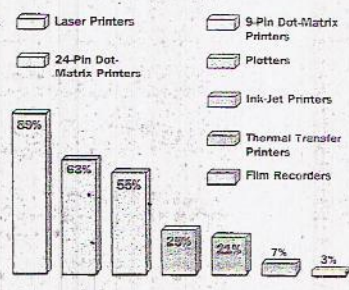
## Executive Word Processing Survey

In preparation for this product comparison, we surveyed 1,000 InfoWorld readers involved with executive word processing. We used the information we tabulated to establish testing parameters, to determine scores and their weightings, and to help us decide which products we should evaluate. The following are some results from our survey.

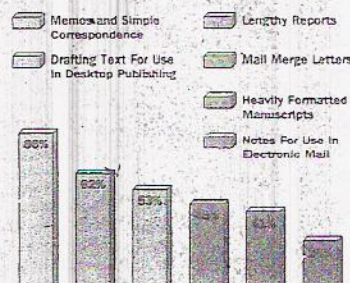
The following numbers represent the percentage of readers who considered the corresponding features or uses of executive word processors important.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Spelling checker  | 92 |
| Thesaurus   | 76 |
| Laser printer support   | 76 |
| Capability to create and save plain text for transfer to office/professional word processor | 73 |
| Support for desktop publishing and office/professional word processing file formats         | 64 |
| ASCII file conversion   | 63 |
| Automatic reformatting  | 61 |
| Grammar checker   | 61 |
| Windowing two or more files simultaneously  | 58 |
| Support for multiple fonts  | 56 |
| Importing graphics  | 55 |
| Columnar cut and paste  | 55 |
| Integration of text and graphics  | 54 |
| Redefinable tabs  | 53 |
| Outlining capability  | 52 |

### Types of Output Devices Used By InfoWorld Readers to Print Executive Word Processor Files



### Typical Activities of InfoWorld Readers Using Executive Word Processing



|  |    |
|--|----|
| "True" electronic outlining                      | 39 |
| Generate an outline format                       | 32 |
| Portrait/landscape orientation                   | 51 |
| Line/box drawing                                 | 49 |
| Importing spreadsheets                           | 49 |
| Date/time stamping                               | 48 |
| Macros   | 46 |
| Table generation                                 | 44 |
| Mail merging                                     | 44 |
| Network (LAN) support                            | 42 |
| Tables of contents                               | 42 |
| Drafting text for use in desktop publishing      | 43 |
| Mouse support                                    | 41 |
| Widow/orphan control                             | 40 |
| Math capabilities                                | 37 |
| Manipulating graphics (cropping, rotating, etc.) | 36 |
| DOS file management                              | 36 |
| Vertical justification                           | 36 |
| Style sheets                                     | 35 |
| Soft font support (e.g., Bitstream Fontware)     | 34 |
| Indexing   | 30 |
| Footnoting                                       | 30 |
| Postscript printer support                       | 29 |
| Generating notes for electronic mail             | 28 |
| Document history                                 | 26 |
| Support for the Hewlett-Packard Deskjet          | 24 |
| Redlining  | 20 |
| Keyboard remapping                               | 11 |

### PRODUCT SUMMARY

#### Professional Write

##### VERSION 2.1

Company: Software Publishing Corp., P.O. Box 7210, 1901 Landings Drive, Mountain View, CA 94039; (415) 962-8910.

List Price: \$229.

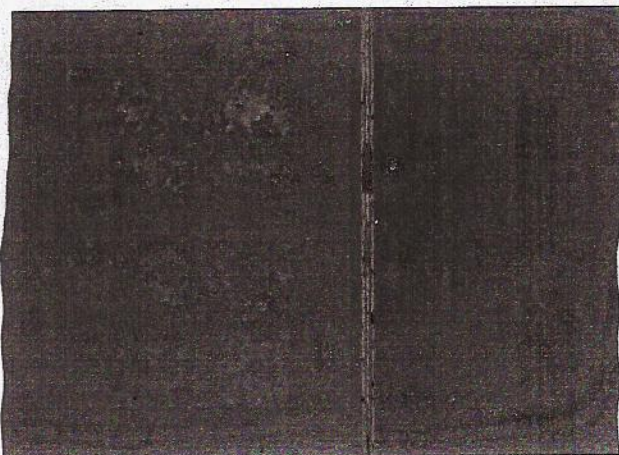
Requires: IBM PC or compatible; PC/MS-DOS 2.0 or later; 512K of RAM; one floppy drive; hard disk recommended for font use; graphics support required for page preview function.

Pros: Strong ease of learning and use; good performance with fonts; nice features set; strong mail merge and address file management; effective editing and menu system; good page preview.

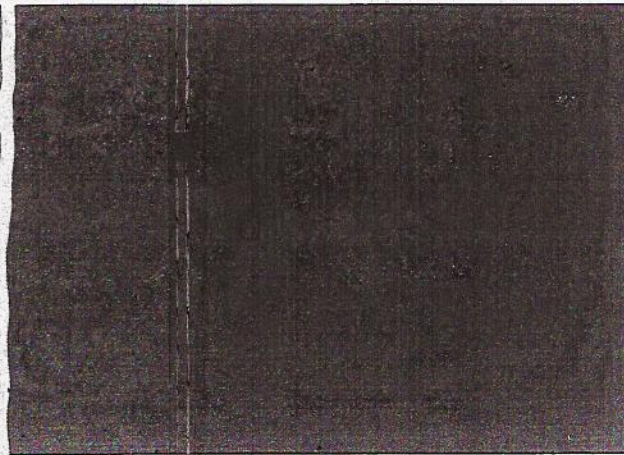
Cons: Rigid address file format; no line sort; weak undelete; no footnotes.

Summary: Professional Write serves executives and simple-need offices with powerful, well-implemented features. This is the epitome of top-notch executive word processing.





Q&amp;A's font assignment window allows comments and abbreviations with font specs.



Volkswriter offers a plethora of on-screen text/document information.

Write is speedy overall, compared with the competition. We rate speed very good.

Documentation includes a general manual, a printer booklet, and on-line help. The manual has a good index and clear explanations. We rate documentation good.

Learning to use Professional Write is about as hard as it is to learn to operate a microwave oven. The simple menus, clear-cut printer installation, and effective page preview all contribute to a product that welcomes one and all. We rate ease of learning excellent.

Ease of use, likewise, is optimally implemented. The vendor has done as much as possible to help users feel comfortable with word processing at the executive level. The menu-orientation and layout features (such as the preview) all contribute to an excellent score in ease of use.

Error handling includes a simple undelete feature through a cut/paste buffer, although there is no standard-issue Undo command. You are prompted before committing a destructive act. We rate error handling satisfactory.

Professional Write support policies include unlimited telephone support and BBS support on CompuServe. We rate support policies satisfactory.

Technical support proved much better than average. Service was quick and effective with a staff willing to go out of its way. We rate technical support very good.

A \$229 program, Professional Write offers an extensive features list for an executive product. It has improved and matured over time and continues to be easy to learn and use. We rate value very good.

## Q&A Write

### VERSION 1.01A

Another long-lived and strong competitor, this quick and graceful executive word processor offers a strong complement of editing commands accessed through an effective set of menus and control-key commands. It will count words, lines, and paragraphs. It will print, but not display, up to eight newspaper columns and offers most of the features we've come to expect in this group. However, columns must be established for the entire document, not just part of it, and Q&A Write does not support footnotes or endnotes. Like most of its competitors, it lacks refinements such as

tables of contents and does not produce indexes. While it remains a strong package and has some attractive features, Ami, Beyond Word Writer, and Professional Write now surpass it overall.

In our tests, Q&A Write proved to be a reasonable correspondence tool. Cursor movements are extensive and the cut/paste feature provides adequate support. While the search works reasonably, replace does not preserve capitalization. You can change tabs, but the text will not reformat to match the new settings. You can, however, import temporary margins. Lines can be set at print time for single, double, or envelope spacing, and print codes can be embedded in the text for other spacing. Macros are easy to use, and editable macros can be of any length, capturing any keystrokes, although there are no programming constructs. We rate basic editing satisfactory.

The 100,000 word spelling checker is quick and sports options to ignore, continue, add words, and suggest alternatives. An add-on thesaurus is available at extra cost. With its good suggestions scheme and larger-than-average dictionary, we rate the spelling checker good.

Using the Q&A Write card-file database, mail merging is easily accomplished. It performs basic functions quickly, reformatting paragraphs with

merged information. The card file holds up to 1,000 records of 2,000 characters each with fields limited to 240 characters. Q&A Write needs no field separators, and selection criteria can be implemented through the card-file system. It imports and exports Dbase, ASCII, and comma- or carriage-return-delimited files. We rate mail merging very good.

Q&A Write's font capabilities implement normal text enhancements of bold, underline, super/subscripting, italics, and other enhancements. Pitch can be changed and different font styles assigned. The program supports the Laserjet printer but only with the US ASCII character set (Roman 8 is available upon request for free), leaving foreign characters out of the printable set (most other word processing programs support these). Moreover, it supports only the "AC" Times Roman/Helvetica soft fonts and not the more recent and common "AD" set. While the program produces very nice proportionally spaced text (but does less well with justified proportionally spaced text), Q&A Write does not show accurate page or line breaks on the screen. You have to test-print to see them. We rate fonts satisfactory.

Q&A Write supports line and box drawing combined with a graphics include facility. However, while the program will insert PIC files from Lotus 1-2-3 at print time through a tag line in the text, and create the necessary white space, you can't tell how the graph will fall on the page until you test-print. We rate graphics satisfactory.

ASCII, Wordstar, PFS:Write, and 1-2-3/Symphony file formats are supported among others, and Q&A Write will include spreadsheets directly at print time. However, the program does not import DCA/RFT, although the conversion utility is available as an extra-cost option. Q&A Write optionally exports ASCII files with carriage returns at the end of the line. We rate compatibility satisfactory.

A quick performer, Q&A Write earns a very good in speed comparisons with the rest of the group. While not quite as fast as Professional Write, the results were close.

Q&A Write has nice documentation, with clear and effective explanations coupled with a capable on-line help system that refers to page numbers in the manual. However, the idiosyncratic numbering system in the manual puts a page labeled M-5 ahead of one labeled A-1, which makes the location of indexed

items clumsy. We rate documentation good.

If you're new to word processing, you'll find Q&A Write easy to learn, with an hour being sufficient to get set up, running, and producing correspondence. Other features take somewhat longer to learn, especially the forms and card-file system, but the good menus and help system give Q&A Write a very good rating in ease of learning.

Also easy to use, Q&A Write's well-designed menus, clear organization, and effective operation are slightly offset by the need to test-print proportionally spaced text. We rate ease of use very good.

Error handling includes a one-level undo which uses the cut/paste buffer, thereby making the latest cut or copy the only text available to be undone. It will handle about a page full of deletions. Other errors are handled routinely with good messages. We rate error handling satisfactory.

Support policies for Q&A Write include unlimited phone and CompuServe BBS support. There is also a 30-day money-back guarantee. We rate support policies good.

Technical support proved somewhat difficult to get to on the phone, but when we finally connected, the answers were knowledgeable and the people helpful. We rate technical support good.

At the common executive-level price of \$199, Q&A Write is a superior value as an executive word processor. Quick, effective, and reasonably powerful, Q&A Write has a fine card file, close integration with Lotus 1-2-3, and some graphics and font support. It would be less effective with large, complex documents requiring elaborate formatting with proportionally spaced fonts. We rate value very good.

## Volkswriter 4

### VERSION 4

Take a pretty good executive word processor and add a pinch of full-fledged grammar checking, and what pops out of the oven is a highly useful writing and editing tool. While not as visually effective as Samna Ami, Volkswriter is a good, general-purpose word processing program. Recently it began shipping with Correct Grammar, one of three popular and effective grammar checkers that actually evaluates the grammatical quality of a document.

As a word processing program,

## PRODUCT SUMMARY

### Q&A Write

#### VERSION 1.01A

Company: Symantec Corp., 10201 Torre Ave., Cupertino, CA 95014; (408) 253-9600.

List Price: \$199.

Requires: IBM PC or compatible; PC/MS-DOS 2.0 or later; 384K of RAM; (512K recommended); two floppy drives.

Pros: Nice features and quick, effective performance; great for mail-list applications; easy to learn and use.

Cons: Inability to see proportionally spaced page and line breaks; no preview of graphics or spreadsheet inserts; limited on-line support; no footnotes; limited document size; rigid newspaper columns.

Summary: Q&A Write's nice set of word processing features is easy to learn and use. One of the best executive word processing engines, although Q&A Write now labors under considerable competition.



Volkswriter 4 shows its age. The ease-of-use features that once made this an executive word-processing warrior no longer stand up to the features weapons and performance strength of products such as Professional Write, Beyond Word Writer or Ami. Nonetheless, Volkswriter 4 does all basic word-processing tasks with modest effectiveness. Editing is reasonably quick, formatting mostly effective, and the range of enhancements about average. There is a file converter and a word-counting utility. Without automatic indexing, table of contents, summary, or any graphics support at all, however, the program has a limited range of applications, although it does have a good view function and an effective mail merge. It continues to allow customizing the printer, font, margins, and spacing, a commendable use of printers, but an awkward and inefficient one. The program's interface is dated, and the help system is limited. The program is a good example of a product that is still useful, but not competitive.

The program's interface is dated, and the help system is limited. The program is a good example of a product that is still useful, but not competitive.

## Volkswriter 4's grammar checker plus spelling is nifty and very effective

ditionary, a global replacements and displays alternative word choices. A thesaurus is only available optionally for \$19. We rate the spelling checker (including the grammar checker) very good.

Volkswriter includes a mail-merge system for form letters and other repetitive tasks. It can merge data into a

template, automatically reformatting paragraphs, and will skip over incomplete or improper records. The mail merge handles user-prompted information and named variables. While it doesn't handle conditionals, the mail merge recognizes different field separators. We rate mail merging very good.

While the program will accept fonts and allow selection of different fonts for a document, its limitations on justification and the handling of multiple fonts reduce its effectiveness. The printer list is extensive, including Postscript printers, and the program has style sheets. While there is no page preview, you can print to the screen. Volkswriter does not show exact font spacing. We rate fonts satisfactory.

Volkswriter 4 does not support graphics.

The only file formats supported are DCA/RFT and ASCII. If you need Word Perfect, Wordstar, Microsoft Word, Samna, or others, you can send in \$10 for a disk with the right conversion on it. The

# Fastback Plus. Backing You Can Trust.



## FIFTH GENERATION SYSTEMS INC. Fastback Plus

Without warning, your hard disk fails, an electrical storm blitzes your data, or you accidentally delete your entire set of budget worksheets.

One of the fastest, easiest, and least expensive ways to protect against data loss is to invest in Fifth Generation Systems' Fastback Plus. Version 2.01 wins the prize for speed, convenience, user interface that responds to level of sophistication you want from a backup program.

Backup and restore is launched from a command file automatically, if you want to bypass the menu.



Fastback Plus takes the guesswork out of the backup process by showing subdirectories and their contents on a split screen. Files can be selected for backup by name, date range, directory, or archive bit, or they can be marked individually. A particularly nice feature is Fastback's ability to estimate the

size of your hard disk, to back up your data, and to estimate the time it will take to back up your data. The program is fast and easy to use. It's the only backup program that can back up your data, and it's the only backup program that can back up your data.

With this program, we've copied 38 megabytes of data from one machine to another in 28 minutes (which included formatting the disks). Fast

Fastback Plus is a program that backs up your hard disk, fast and easy to use. Now Fifth Generation has improved it. The company fixed the manuals and then put in help files that make the manuals nearly superfluous. Then it added data compression to save disk space and a utility that estimates how many floppy disks and how long the job will take.

With this program, we've copied 38 megabytes of data from one machine to another in 28 minutes (which included formatting the disks). Fast

## PCWORLD

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Fastback Plus 2.0

Hard disk backup utility

Fastback Plus has state-of-the-art backup features and such extras as a keyboard macro recorder and menu-selectable novice and advanced interfaces. The program is first.

|                      | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.3 |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Speed                |     |     |     |     |
| Backup selectivity   |     |     |     |     |
| Security             |     |     |     |     |
| Floppy disk handling |     |     |     |     |
| Overall value        |     |     |     |     |

## Fastback Plus 2.01: No More Backup Excuses

### PC HANDS ON

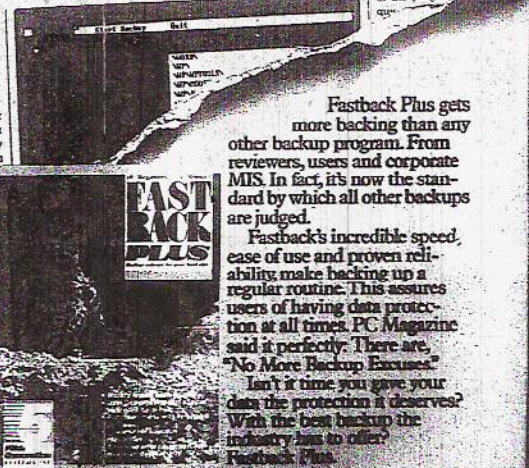
BY EDWARD MENDELSON

The best backup program is the one that gives you the fewest excuses not to use it. Fifth Generation Systems' \$189 Fastback Plus, Version 2.01, pulls out the rug from under almost every anti-backup excuse you can imagine.

Do your backups take too much time? Fastback Plus can back up 10MB of a real hard disk to a single floppy in 4 minutes.

Do your backups take too much time? Fastback Plus can back up 10MB of a real hard disk to a single floppy in 4 minutes.

Never Trust Your Data To Anything Less.



Fastback Plus gets more backing than any other backup program. From reviewers, users and corporate MIS. In fact, it's now the standard by which all other backups are judged.

Fastback's incredible speed, ease of use and proven reliability make backing up a regular routine. This assures users of having data protection at all times. PC Magazine said it perfectly: There are "No More Backup Excuses." Isn't it time you gave your data the protection it deserves? With the best backup the industry has to offer, Fastback Plus.

11200 Lakeshore Blvd.  
Darien, IL 60558  
(800) 673-4394, (312) 754-7721

## Call for free trial disk

Users of versions prior to Fastback Plus V2.0 can call (504) 291-1881 for more information.

Fastback Plus is a registered trademark of Fifth Generation Systems, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.





complete set is available for \$40. Basic support for ASCII and DCA/RFT file formats earns the program a satisfactory rating in compatibility.

Volkswriter's speed is moderate and slower than the average. Operation was still acceptable, however. We rate speed satisfactory.

Documentation includes a general manual with good text and illustrations. We found the explanations concise and complete and the index good. A printer booklet provides useful information on the printer capabilities. Volkswriter has on-line help (not context sensitive) with a modest command summary and some menus for selecting various features.

Compared with other competitive programs such as Beyond Word Writer or Professional Write, this level of on-line support doesn't fare well. Nonetheless,

the prompts are good and the menu screens clear. Error messages are quite clear and effective. Overall, we rate Volkswriter 4 documentation good.

Always known for its relative ease of learning, this version of Volkswriter continues that tradition. It hardly takes an hour to get up and running. Most functions work as you would expect. The keystroke menu can be left on the screen as a reminder, and the program is relatively forgiving of mistakes. The point-and-pick file menu is a big improvement, and the tutorial that uses regular Volkswriter document files to walk through a variety of standard skills helps get new users started. We rate ease of learning very good.

Another couple of hours should bring most users up to an operational level, although some of the special features, such as mail merging, may take somewhat longer to master. The quick editing, style sheets with layouts, and automatic reformatting all facilitate editing and printing. The sorting and math utilities, column and block copy/move, and append to file also contribute to effective use. However, the difficulty in using proportionally spaced fonts, the absence of inch measurements for margins, the nonautomatic line spacing for different size fonts, the unavailability of columns

*Since our last product comparison of office/professional word processors on January 23, 1989, Page 47, we have reviewed updated versions of Wordstar Professional and Microsoft Word. Here we list all office/professional word processors reviewed in and since our comparison, with the latest scores available for each.*

### Other Executive Word Processors

Other executive word processors available include (not an exhaustive list):

**Better Working Word Processor.** Spinner Software, One Randall Square, Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 494-1200.

**Doc Easy Word II.** Doc Software Corp., 17950 Preston Road, Suite 800, Dallas, TX 75252; (800) 992-7779.

**Displaywrite Assistant.** IBM Corp., Old Orchard Road, Armonk, NY 10504; (800) 447-4700 for dealer information.

**PC Type Plus.** Buttonware Inc., P.O. Box 96058, Bellevue, WA 98009; (800) JBUTTON.

**Texture.** Art Arbor Software, 345 S. Delaney, San Arbor, MI 48104; (313) 768-5088.

**Volkswriter Deluxe Plus.** Volkswriter Inc., 411 Pacific St., Suite 315, Monterey, CA 93940; (408) 373-4738.

**Writer's New World Writer.** Simon & Schuster Software, 15 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10023; (212) 373-8234.

**Word Beach.** Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. Inc., Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867; (617) 944-3700.

**Zedit.** Telecom Library Inc., 12 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10010; (800) 999-0345, (212) 691-8215 in NY.

or footnotes, and the absence of a graphic print preview reduce the utility of this product. In compensation, the grammar corrector surely provides a major ease-of-use addition, since it eliminates much

review and re-review of entered text prior to production of the finished copy. We rate ease of use very good with the Correct Grammar.

Volkswriter 4 includes all the standard

### REPORT CARD

### INFO WORLD

#### Office/Professional Word Processors

|                               | InfoWorld | Your weighting | Displaywrite 4 | Lotus Manuscript | Microsoft Word | Mathmate Advantage II | Nota Bene    | Office Writer | PC Write     |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Version                       |           |                | 1.0            | 2.0              | 5.0            | 1.0                   | 3.0          | 6.0           | 3.02         |
| <b>Performance</b>            |           |                |                |                  |                |                       |              |               |              |
| Basic editing                 | (50)      | ( )            | Poor           | Very Good        | Excellent      | Good                  | Very Good    | Good          | Very Good    |
| Formatting                    | (25)      | ( )            | Poor           | Good             | Very Good      | Poor                  | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Satisfactory |
| Fonts                         | (20)      | ( )            | Satisfactory   | Satisfactory     | Good           | Satisfactory          | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Satisfactory |
| Style sheets                  | (20)      | ( )            | N/A            | Good             | Very Good      | Satisfactory          | Good         | N/A           | Poor         |
| Spelling checking & thesaurus | (50)      | ( )            | Poor           | Good             | Good           | Very Good             | Satisfactory | Very Good     | Poor         |
| Mail merging                  | (25)      | ( )            | Good           | Good             | Good           | Good                  | Good         | Very Good     | Good         |
| Outlining                     | (20)      | ( )            | Good           | Excellent        | Very Good      | Satisfactory          | Good         | Satisfactory  | Poor         |
| TOC & indexing                | (20)      | ( )            | N/A            | Good             | Good           | Poor                  | Good         | Good          | Good         |
| Footnotes                     | (20)      | ( )            | Good           | Good             | Good           | Satisfactory          | Good         | Good          | Good         |
| Macros                        | (25)      | ( )            | Good           | Good             | Very Good      | Good                  | Very Good    | Very Good     | Very Good    |
| Graphics                      | (30)      | ( )            | N/A            | Very Good        | Very Good      | Poor                  | Poor         | Poor          | N/A          |
| Printer support               | (30)      | ( )            | Poor           | Very Good        | Very Good      | Good                  | Very Good    | Very Good     | Very Good    |
| Compatibility                 | (40)      | ( )            | Satisfactory   | Very Good        | Satisfactory   | Excellent             | Good         | Very Good     | Satisfactory |
| Speed                         | (50)      | ( )            | Satisfactory   | Good             | Very Good      | Poor                  | Excellent    | Good          | Good         |
| Documentation                 | (100)     | ( )            | Good           | Excellent        | Excellent      | Very Good             | Very Good    | Satisfactory  | Very Good    |
| Ease of learning              | (100)     | ( )            | Good           | Satisfactory     | Very Good      | Good                  | Satisfactory | Very Good     | Good         |
| Ease of use                   | (200)     | ( )            | Satisfactory   | Very Good        | Excellent      | Very Good             | Very Good    | Good          | Good         |
| Error handling                | (75)      | ( )            | Good           | Good             | Very Good      | Very Good             | Satisfactory | Good          | Good         |
| <b>Support</b>                |           |                |                |                  |                |                       |              |               |              |
| Support policies              | (25)      | ( )            | Poor           | Very Good        | Very Good      | Good                  | Very Good    | Good          | Very Good    |
| Technical support             | (25)      | ( )            | Unacceptable   | Very Good        | Very Good      | Good                  | Good         | Very Good     | Very Good    |
| Value                         | (50)      | ( )            | Poor           | Very Good        | Excellent      | Satisfactory          | Very Good    | Good          | Excellent    |
| <b>Final scores</b>           |           |                | <b>4.4</b>     | <b>7.1</b>       | <b>8.2</b>     | <b>6.3</b>            | <b>6.5</b>   | <b>6.1</b>    | <b>6.1</b>   |

Use your own weightings to calculate your score

#### GUIDE TO REPORT CARD SCORES

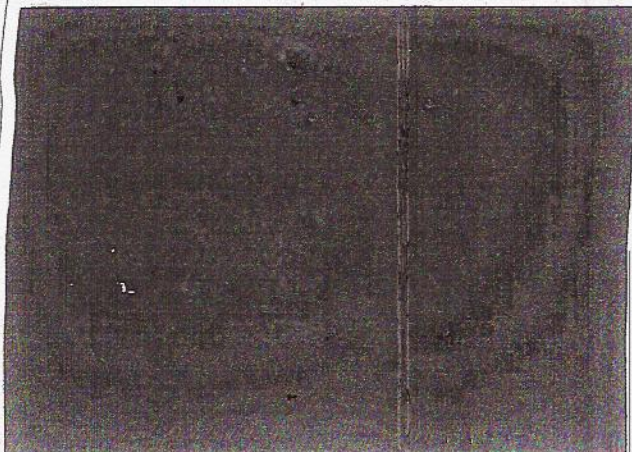
InfoWorld reviews only finished, production versions of products, never beta test versions. Products receive ratings ranging from unacceptable to excellent in various categories. Scores are derived by multiplying the weighting (in parentheses) of each criterion by its rating, where:

**Excellent** = 1.0 — Outstanding in all areas.  
**Very Good** = 0.75 — Meets all essential criteria and offers significant advantages.  
**Good** = 0.625 — Meets essential criteria and includes some special features.  
**Satisfactory** = 0.5 — Meets essential criteria.

**Poor** = 0.25 — Falls short in essential areas.  
**Unacceptable or N/A** = 0.0 — Fails to meet minimum standards or lacks this feature.

Scores are summed, divided by 100, and rounded down to one decimal place to yield the final score out of a maximum possible score of 10 (plus bonus). Products rated within 0.2 points of one another differ little. Weightings represent average relative importance to InfoWorld readers involved in purchasing and using that product category. You can customize the report card to your company's needs by using your own weightings to calculate the final score.





Word Perfect Executive, a basic word processor, complements Word Perfect.

protection against data loss. Common errors are trapped easily without any lost data. A single-level undelete handles simple line, word, and character deletes. An automatic save is possible, and the

program prompts before actions that would lose text.

In general, we would rate error handling good; however, one special case deserves mention: When using Volks-

writer on floppy-based systems, it is possible to scramble data files if you remove the floppy disk that the system uses to handle overflow files when memory is full. While the manual warns you about this possibility, it does not prevent its occurrence. We rate error handling satisfactory.

Volkswriter includes a 30-day money-back guarantee and unlimited phone support. Corporate support is available. We rate Volkswriter 4's support policies good.

Technical support of this product is rated very good with quick responses to calls and full information from informed technicians.

As a word processor compared with the likes of Ami, Beyond Word Writer, or Professional Write, Volkswriter 4 represents a satisfactory value at \$199. Its features list and performance put it below average for the group. However, with the addition of the grammar checker, we rate its value good.

Executive provides a subset of Word Perfect word processing features. Also included are limited versions of a variety of programs from the Word Perfect Library. In addition to word processing, Executive includes a minicard file called notebook, a small spreadsheet, a regular calculator, an appointment book, and a phone dialer — all encased in a neat menu shell.

The idea is good, providing busy executives with simple versions of more powerful programs. Thus you can draft a memo or a short report, do some off-the-cuff calculations, keep a calendar, manage a phone list, and track small lists, all in formats and with files that exchange with the bigger, more powerful versions that others in the organization might have. This last item, however, is the crucial point: Without the full-featured versions of these programs available as backup, the modules in Word Perfect Executive serve only as the most limited applications. As a stand-alone product, Word Perfect Executive is obsolete in features and capabilities.

The Calculator and Calendar parts of the Library shell work easily and effectively. The spreadsheet, based on Word Perfect's Mathplan, is a competent tool with many functions. It has 256 columns by 8,192 rows, a good complement of

## Word Perfect Executive

### VERSION 1.0

From the company that produces the market leader in heavy-duty office/professional word processing, Word Perfect

## REPORT CARD

**INFO  
WORLD**

### Office/Professional Word Processors

|                                  |       |     | Samna<br>Word IV | Sprint       | Total<br>Word | Word<br>Perfect | Wordstar<br>Professional | Wordstar<br>2000 Plus | Xywrite<br>III Plus |
|----------------------------------|-------|-----|------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Version                          |       |     | 2.0              | 1.0          | 1.2           | 5.0             | 5.5                      | 3.0                   | 3.54                |
| Performance                      |       |     |                  |              |               |                 |                          |                       |                     |
| Basic editing                    | (50)  | ( ) | Very Good        | Very Good    | Very Good     | Very Good       | Very Good                | Very Good             | Very Good           |
| Formatting                       | (25)  | ( ) | Good             | Satisfactory | Poor          | Very Good       | Very Good                | Very Good             | Satisfactory        |
| Fonts                            | (20)  | ( ) | Satisfactory     | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Good            | Very Good                | Good                  | Satisfactory        |
| Style sheets                     | (20)  | ( ) | Satisfactory     | Good         | Satisfactory  | Good            | Good                     | Good                  | Good                |
| Spelling checking<br>& thesaurus | (50)  | ( ) | Very Good        | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Good            | Excellent                | Excellent             | Satisfactory        |
| Mail merging                     | (25)  | ( ) | Very Good        | Good         | Good          | Good            | Good                     | Very Good             | Good                |
| Outlining                        | (20)  | ( ) | Satisfactory     | Poor         | N/A           | Good            | Good                     | Good                  | Satisfactory        |
| TOC & indexing                   | (20)  | ( ) | Satisfactory     | Very Good    | Satisfactory  | Very Good       | Good                     | Good                  | Good                |
| Footnotes                        | (20)  | ( ) | Good             | Good         | Good          | Good            | Very Good                | Satisfactory          | Good                |
| Macros                           | (25)  | ( ) | Satisfactory     | Excellent    | Satisfactory  | Very Good       | Very Good                | Satisfactory          | Very Good           |
| Graphics                         | (30)  | ( ) | Good             | Poor         | Poor          | Very Good       | Very Good                | Excellent             | Poor                |
| Printer support                  | (30)  | ( ) | Good             | Very Good    | Very Good     | Excellent       | Very Good                | Very Good             | Very Good           |
| Compatibility                    | (40)  | ( ) | Very Good        | Excellent    | Poor          | Excellent       | Very Good                | Excellent             | Satisfactory        |
| Speed                            | (50)  | ( ) | Poor             | Good         | Good          | Very Good       | Good                     | Good                  | Excellent           |
| Documentation                    | (100) | ( ) | Good             | Very Good    | Very Good     | Very Good       | Very Good                | Excellent             | Very Good           |
| Ease of learning                 | (100) | ( ) | Satisfactory     | Very Good    | Excellent     | Very Good       | Good                     | Good                  | Satisfactory        |
| Ease of use                      | (200) | ( ) | Satisfactory     | Good         | Very Good     | Excellent       | Good                     | Very Good             | Very Good           |
| Error handling                   | (75)  | ( ) | Very Good        | Very Good    | Satisfactory  | Excellent       | Very Good                | Good                  | Satisfactory        |
| Support                          |       |     |                  |              |               |                 |                          |                       |                     |
| Support policies                 | (25)  | ( ) | Poor             | Good         | Very Good     | Excellent       | Very Good                | Excellent             | Good                |
| Technical support                | (25)  | ( ) | Very Good        | Very Good    | Good          | Very Good       | Unacceptable             | Very Good             | Very Good           |
| Value                            | (50)  | ( ) | Good             | Excellent    | Good          | Excellent       | Very Good                | Excellent             | Very Good           |
| Final scores                     |       |     | 5.7              | 6.8          | 6.3           | 8.3             | 6.8                      | 7.7                   | 6.5                 |

Use your own weightings  
to calculate your score

### GUIDE TO REPORT CARD SCORES

InfoWorld reviews only finished, production versions of products, never beta test versions. Products receive ratings ranging from unacceptable to excellent in various categories. Scores are derived by multiplying the weighting (in parentheses) of each criterion by its rating, where:

Excellent = 1.0 — Outstanding in all areas.  
Very Good = 0.75 — Meets all essential criteria and offers significant advantages.  
Good = 0.625 — Meets essential criteria and includes some special features.  
Satisfactory = 0.5 — Meets essential criteria.

Poor = 0.25 — Falls short in essential areas.  
Unacceptable or N/A = 0.0 — Fails to meet minimum standards or lacks this feature.

Scores are summed, divided by 100, and rounded down to one decimal place to yield the final score out of a maximum possible score of 10 (plus bonus). Products rated within 0.2 points of one another differ little. Weightings represent average relative importance to InfoWorld readers involved in purchasing and using that product category. You can customize the report card to your company's needs by using your own weightings to calculate the final score.



functions, and can export spreadsheets to the word processing module, although it will not maintain a dynamic link to a spreadsheet that brings the most recent version into the word processing document at print time.

As a word processing tool, Executive is fundamentally less powerful than its competitors. While it has most standard editing commands and prints acceptably, its printer drivers are primitive at best and take only limited advantage of printers such as the HP Laserjet. Basic correspondence tools include cut, copy, and paste; search and replace that maintains capitalization; easy-to-define tabs; a status line that displays the page number, and the

**"As a word processing tool, Executive is fundamentally less powerful than its competitors."**

like. We rate basic editing satisfactory.

The spelling checker has a relatively small dictionary of 50,000 words. The speller suggests alternatives and catches doubled words. We rate spelling checking satisfactory.

Mail merging works with the program's card-file system or with data files

prepared in Word Perfect merge format. Long variables are reformatted at print time when included in the base document. We rate mail merging satisfactory.

Font support includes boldfacing and underlining, but no italics or other fonts are selectable. You can't change pitch in the document. We rate fonts poor.

There is no graphics support.

ASCII and Word Perfect files are supported as well as Lotus 1-2-3 imports. While the product is intended and well-suited for a Word Perfect-oriented office, the inability to exchange standard formatted word processing documents is a limitation. We rate compatibility poor.

Word Perfect Executive operated about as quickly as Volkswriter 4 — not lightning fast but acceptable. We rate speed satisfactory.

Word Perfect Executive's organization of the reference manual puts commands and functions for all modules into an alphabetized list. Thus, you often find yourself reading about formatting cells in the spreadsheet when you wanted to read about formatting text in the word processor. Although this makes the integration of the product clear, it makes the documentation unclear. Explanations for commands are minimal at best, and the index is less than good. On-line help is fair, with mostly command summaries and none of the elaborate descriptions that characterize the parent products from Word Perfect. Documentation is slick and elegantly presented, but while the explanations are useful, because of the noted limitations we cannot rate the Word Perfect documentation higher than satisfactory.

The Word Perfect Executive word processing module is easy to learn, although some of the other units such as the calendar, notebook, or spreadsheet take much longer than the hour needed to get up to speed on word processing. We rate ease of learning for this product very good.

## FLEXSCAN 9070S, PC Hi-Res That Looks Like a Million.

The FLEXSCAN 9070 Multiple Scan monitor is of course, compatible with other multi-scans, but includes improvements that will give you the professional edge which is the mark of a good investment.

You can extend your multi-scan range from 20kHz to 50kHz in practical terms. This means that, at the 48-50 kHz range, you can make use of PC CAD/CAE capabilities at a resolution of up to 1024 dots x 768 lines. The FLEXSCAN 9070 takes advantage of non-interlace high resolution signal as high as 1024 x 768 to provide you with a flicker free display at much brightness. You can also use the 9070 with IBM PS/2 or VGA compatible boards at a high resolution mode like 800 x 600 and 1024 x 768 (non-interlace).

The FLEXSCAN 9070 provides a 16-inch screen, large enough for CAD/CAE and 3-D projections, yet small enough to fit comfortably into your home work space.



1024 dots x 768 lines Graphics (Non-interlace) AutoCAD

Also, for your convenience, all controls and switches, including the alternate video input, are located within easy reach on the front panel. The FLEXSCAN 9070 is compatible with a wide range of IBM, Apple, and other products, allow you to use all of today's popular programs—at a resolution that looks like a million.

### FLEXSCAN MODEL 9070S

- IBM VGA/PS 2, 8514 A, PSC, EGA compatible and CAD/CAE use
- Apple, Mac II and SuperMac Spectrum compatible
- Max 1280 dots x 800 lines high resolution
- 1024 dots x 768 lines display or non-interlace signal delivers flicker-free, high-res graphics
- 20kHz to 50kHz horizontal scan automatic adjustment, 50kHz to 50kHz vertical scan automatic adjustment
- 16-inch 331mm dot pitch and 1600x developed AF Extended Field Gun to obtain both brightness and sharp focus
- Front mounted controls including the input signal select switch between 2 video inputs
- Selecting white or amber displays covered application in shades of gray or amber
- Tilt-Swivel stand standard

Specifications are subject to change without notice.

# NANAO

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23510 TELLO AVE, SUITE 5 TORRANCE, CA 90505  
PHONE (213) 325-5202 FAX (213) 530-1679

### PRODUCT SUMMARY

#### Word Perfect Executive

VERSION 1.0

Company: Word Perfect Corp., 1555 N. Technology Way, Orem, UT 84057, (801) 225-5000.

List Price: \$249

Requires: IBM PC or compatible; PC/MS-DOS 2.0 or later; 512K of RAM; two floppy drives.

Pros: Close integration of word processing, spreadsheet, and calendar; easy to learn and use; simple features; compatibility with other Word Perfect programs.

Cons: Missing several key features available in other products; limited printer support.

Summary: A slick, integrated package. Word Perfect Executive is well-suited for offices with Word Perfect standardization and executives who have no need for powerful features available in competitive programs.

### RELATED REVIEWS

Arl, February 13  
Volkswriter 4, April 3  
Beyond Word Writer, May 1  
Product Comparison: Executive Word Processors, September 26, 1988:  
Dac Easy Word II  
Displaywrite Assistant  
Microsoft Windows Write  
PC Type Plus  
PC Write  
Professional Write  
Q&A Write  
Texra  
Volkswriter Deluxe Plus  
Webster's New World Writer II  
Word Perfect Executive



Given its simplicity and the absence of complex functions, the program is also easy to use. Working with the various modules increases the difficulty of use, but the graceful integration of data between them improves it. Overall, we rate ease of use very good.

Word Perfect Executive protects against lost files and handles simple errors easily. We rate error handling satisfactory.

Support policies, virtually the best in this class, include a toll-free support telephone line and an active CompuServe bulletin board use plus an outstanding independent newsletter. Most of the traffic on the bulletin board and in the newsletter, however, concerns the parent products, not the truncated Executive versions. Support is available from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mountain time, and there is a 90-day money-back guarantee. Extended/corporate support is also available. We rate the company's support policies excellent.

Technical support, much less comprehensive than for the parent products, earns a satisfactory score with competent, well-informed technicians.

Within this group, Word Perfect Executive is not an effective competitor as a word processing program alone. At \$249, it costs more and does less, unless you include the value added with the other modules included with the system. We rate Word Perfect Executive a satisfactory value.

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

## Executive Summary

Executive word processors fall into several categories. All the programs are fine for basic memos and correspondence. From there, however, the similarity ends. Some products support mail merging, for instance, while others do not. A few are adept at serving as complements for office/professional word processors. In short, beyond basic needs, you must assess what tasks you want your word processor to perform before you make a qualified buying decision.

Two products, *Ami* and *Microsoft Windows Write*, operate with graphical interfaces, use a mouse extensively, and run within the Microsoft Windows operating environment. Because of the special characteristics of the Windows operating shell, these two products have similar characteristics and do not compare easily with the other executive programs. *Windows Write* is a very basic program, its only fill being its font handling and capability to include graphics.

If you prefer Windows-based products, you may want to give *Ami* a try with its excellent font handling, superior handling of newspaper-style columns, style sheets, spelling checking, and better-than-average graphics inclusion. Also, *Ami* will soon release *Ami Professional*, providing an office/professional partner to the executive version. If you have Windows, you already have *Windows Write*, which may be sufficient for simple word processing. Working both with *Windows Write* and *Ami* can be a successful configuration, since *Windows Write* is speedier for generating a fast memo; *Ami* is better suited for tasks with a little more complexity.

Three executive word processors compete for the championship title of most effective and powerful, with similar features and characteristics. *Professional Write*, *Beyond Word Writer*, and *Q&A Write* all offer strong complements of features, ease of use, and different strengths and weaknesses. While similar in many ways, a choice among these programs will depend greatly on the specific mix of required tasks, with special attention to mail merge, font handling, footnotes, and columns. *Q&A Write* and *Professional Write* are both strong in mail merging, and the latter has a graphics preview feature that

aids in layout. *Beyond Word Writer* can emulate other word processors' command sets, such as *Wordstar's*. Also, its features set is very broad.

For general-purpose word processing needs, *Professional Write* or *Beyond Word Writer* will do the job just fine. As executive word processors go, these two stand at the top. You may also like the column/row math in *Q&A Write* or prefer its complex mail-merge capabilities.

The last executive word processing programs fall off the scale somewhat, but in much different ways. *Word Perfect Executive* is a comprehensive suite of scaled-down *Word Perfect* modules for spreadsheets, word processing, calendaring, calculating, flat-file management, and communications. While nifty in concept, the programs are weak — especially the word processing module, which falls well below par. *Word Perfect Executive* has very little to recommend it unless you have ready access to the real thing with *Word Perfect 5.0* in your office. *Volkswriter 4*, however, has strong word processing and a neat grammar checker but ultimately labors under a clunky design with printing deficiencies that remove it from the mainstream. Unless your grammar is bad enough that you need *Volkswriter 4's* grammar correction capabilities or you have special keyboard substitution needs, *Volkswriter* is not the product of choice.

None of these executive word processors is a clone of the other. While one may be the ideal solution for a small department or a small business, another may work well as a front end for an office/professional word processor or desktop publishing program. If you work in an environment where higher-powered word processing programs are commonplace, you will want to make sure your executive word processing program can export or import files supported by the higher-powered systems.

Over the next year, we expect to see more sophisticated graphics and font management come to these programs, with *Professional Write 2.10's* page preview a harbinger of these things to come.

## REPORT CARD

## INFO WORLD

### Executive Word Processors

|                   |       |     | Ami          | Beyond Word Writer | Windows Write | Professional Write | Q&A Write    | Volkswriter 4 | Word Perfect Executive |
|-------------------|-------|-----|--------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Price             |       |     | \$199        | \$199.95           | \$99/\$195    | \$229              | \$199        | \$199         | \$249                  |
| Performance       |       |     |              |                    |               |                    |              |               |                        |
| Basic editing     | (125) | ( ) | Very Good    | Satisfactory       | Good          | Very Good          | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Satisfactory           |
| Spelling checking | (125) | ( ) | Satisfactory | Very Good          | N/A           | Good               | Good         | Very Good     | Satisfactory           |
| Mail merging      | (50)  | ( ) | N/A          | Poor               | N/A           | Very Good          | Very Good    | Very Good     | Satisfactory           |
| Fonts             | (100) | ( ) | Excellent    | Satisfactory       | Very Good     | Very Good          | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Poor                   |
| Graphics          | (25)  | ( ) | Very Good    | Poor               | Very Good     | Satisfactory       | Satisfactory | N/A           | N/A                    |
| Compatibility     | (75)  | ( ) | Very Good    | Very Good          | Poor          | Very Good          | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Poor                   |
| Speed             | (50)  | ( ) | Poor         | Very Good          | Satisfactory  | Very Good          | Very Good    | Satisfactory  | Satisfactory           |
| Documentation     | (75)  | ( ) | Very Good    | Very Good          | Satisfactory  | Good               | Good         | Good          | Satisfactory           |
| Ease of learning  | (100) | ( ) | Very Good    | Excellent          | Good          | Excellent          | Very Good    | Very Good     | Very Good              |
| Ease of use       | (125) | ( ) | Very Good    | Very Good          | Excellent     | Excellent          | Very Good    | Very Good     | Very Good              |
| Error handling    | (75)  | ( ) | Good         | Very Good          | Good          | Satisfactory       | Satisfactory | Satisfactory  | Satisfactory           |
| Support           |       |     |              |                    |               |                    |              |               |                        |
| Support policies  | (25)  | ( ) | Very Good    | Good               | Good          | Satisfactory       | Good         | Good          | Excellent              |
| Technical support | (25)  | ( ) | Satisfactory | Satisfactory       | Very Good     | Very Good          | Good         | Very Good     | Satisfactory           |
| Value             | (25)  | ( ) | Good         | Very Good          | Very Good     | Very Good          | Very Good    | Good          | Satisfactory           |
| Final scores      |       |     | 6.6          | 6.7                | 5.4           | 7.5                | 6.1          | 6.0           | 5.1                    |

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