

Included in Powerpoint's exceptional text charting capabilities are a built-in spelling checker and a text editor.

capabilities excellent.

Editing capabilities. Powerpoint offers minimal drawing tools. You can add lines, circles and ellipses, rectangles and rounded rectangles, and you can move, copy, resize, recolor, and pattern-fill them easily. But there are no polylines, arcs, Bezier curves, or arrows (except as typed in in Dingbat fonts). Nor can you flip, reverse, or rotate the objects you select.

On the other hand, Powerpoint offers impressive color and patterning tools. It offers numerous shaded and dithered patterns that you can use as textured backgrounds — adding style to your slides.

Powerpoint makes it easy to choose an attractive color scheme for your presentation. Genographics has formulated 5,000 preset, color-balanced palettes that allow foreground, background, and six accent colors. If you're adventurous, you can use the color-mixing dialog boxes to fashion your own palettes, using either on-screen color swatches or numeric hue, saturation, and luminance values. You can make color schemes apply to single slides or to all slides.

Powerpoint's meager drawing tools offset the terrific color and patterning capabilities. We rate its editing capabilities good.

Presentation tools: Unlike most presentation packages, Powerpoint lets you preview, rehearse, and reorganize your entire presentation on-screen — all with point-and-click simplicity.

Powerpoint's screen-show features are rudimentary. It allows only manual or timed automatic serial presentation. There are no transition effects such as wipes or fades, and there's no Hypertext-like show scripting as provided, for example, in the new Harvard Graphics, Version 2.3.

We rate Powerpoint's presentation capabilities very good.

Output: When you have finished constructing your presentation, a communications program included with Powerpoint will send the file over your modem to one of Genographics' centers for quick slide or photo processing. This is definitely the preferred route, especially since Powerpoint does not offer direct film camera support (one may be in development for Matrix film cameras). Powerpoint also supports all Windows 3.0 output devices and can be used to create transparencies for overhead displays. We sent several sample images to Genographics and the resulting slides were

sharp and accurate. The slides matched our on-screen images in color and object placement.

We rate output very good.

File import/export capabilities: Powerpoint's data and graphics file import capabilities are not as extensive as those of other presentation packages, such as Word Perfect Corp.'s Draw Perfect, but they are adequate. For numerical charts, Powerpoint imports ASCII text files or spreadsheet files from Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Multiplan, Lotus 1-2-3 2.X and 3.0, Symphony, and Syk. You can paste PIC, CGM, TIFF scanner, EPS, HPGl, and PCX file formats, along with a variety of Windows graphics formats. You can also paste text directly from a word processor or outline onto slides as text or bullet charts. (The program directly imports Microsoft Word RTF outline files.)

Unlike most charting packages, handling non-native formats is a one-way street — you cannot modify imported graphics or text and then save it as a separate file. However, you can paste the image directly to another application using the Windows clipboard.

Although the file format used by Powerpoint for Windows isn't the same as Powerpoint for the Mac, Microsoft includes an offer for a free conversion utility to translate your presentation files from one platform to the other.

We rate Powerpoint's file import/export capability good.

DOCUMENTATION:

Powerpoint's main document is a 400-page hardbound users' guide. This guide is superbly organized, amply illustrated, and comprehensive. The book begins with an 80-page tutorial that covers nearly all the package's capabilities. Succeeding sections show you how to make slides, use the Graph program to produce charts, and manage multiple-slide presentations. The guide concludes with a complete reference section and index. A separate reference card summarizes the key Powerpoint commands.

About the only feature missing is an on-line tutorial. We rate Powerpoint's documentation very good.

EASE OF LEARNING:

You can install Powerpoint if Windows is running in its standard or enhanced modes; trying to install the package in real mode results in an error message. Although installation requires a good bit of

floppy disk swapping, we installed the package without a hitch in 20 to 25 minutes. The option to install the fonts takes 10 to 20 minutes.

If you're familiar with Windows, you'll take to Powerpoint almost immediately. It is obvious how much thought went into making Powerpoint's operation as intuitive as possible.

Powerpoint also has a comprehensive, indexed on-screen help facility. You may rarely need the manual. In fact, the on-screen help screens are actually Powerpoint presentations that you can co-opt to make your own. We rate ease of learning very good.

EASE OF USE:

Once installed, you run Powerpoint as a regular Windows application. It can coexist and be multitasked with other Windows applications — an especially useful feature, given that you can use Windows' clipboard to paste onto your slides any text or graphics from another program (e.g., text from Microsoft Word for Windows, or a data table from Excel).

You flip from slide to slide by clicking and dragging a slide-change button. Although it's a separate module, switching into Powerpoint's numeric charting function is seamless.

To reorder your slides, you just click on each and move it to the correct position. Any speaker's notes or handout sheets you've created are automatically reordered as part of the process.

We liked the fact that Powerpoint stored all slide and note screens in one file per presentation; this obviates the one-file-per-screen bookkeeping headache you're stuck with in most charting packages.

One serious limitation with Powerpoint is that you cannot create slides in both landscape and portrait orientations within the same presentation.

Despite Powerpoint's complexity, it's a fairly easy program to use. Once you're up to speed, you'll be able to knock out presentations faster than with any other

program.

We rate ease of use very good.

ERROR HANDLING:

Powerpoint's error trapping is smooth and comprehensive. If you do make a mistake, Powerpoint pops up a dialog box with a short corrective prompt and a beep. You can then pick up where you left off. We rate Powerpoint's error handling very good.

SUPPORT:

Support policies: Microsoft offers unlimited free technical support (not toll free). Support hours are weekdays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pacific time. Upgrades are available at reduced prices. There's also BBS, CompuServe, and extended support plans. Support policies rate very good.

Technical support: We phoned Microsoft customer support with several questions about Powerpoint. The support staff was courteous and knowledgeable.

Microsoft also operates an active Applications Forum on CompuServe. We looked through Powerpoint-related questions on this forum, and it appeared that the questions were answered competently within a day or two. Powerpoint's technical support rates very good.

VALUE:

Other packages (e.g., Cricket Presents and Macintosh products Persuasion and More) have offered desktop presentation capabilities, but Powerpoint sets a new standard for making and orchestrating quick, easy, and professional presentations. Look elsewhere if you need sophisticated technical charting, but for most uses it's superb. At \$495, Powerpoint isn't cheap, but given the time you're likely to save, it's worth every cent. We rate its value very good. □

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Wordstar 2000 Is Finally a Strong, Competent Product

Version 3.5 performs well as an editing tool, although it still lacks many graphics functions.

BY JOHN LOEBARDA, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Wordstar 2000 has always struggled under the handicap of not being the classic Wordstar, while at the same time offering a complex, powerful, but sometimes clumsy product. Over the years, Wordstar 2000 has improved; yet at the same time as Wordstar 2000 was improving its features, speed and gracefulness, other competitors took over the lead. Word Perfect and Microsoft Word, primarily, have come to dominate the word processing market once controlled by Wordstar.

Today, Wordstar 2000 Plus, Release 3.5 is a strong, competent performer among high-end professional programs. While the program lacks some specialized features — particularly in the graphics area — Wordstar 2000 has clearly come of age.

FEATURES:

Wordstar 2000 has all the basic requirements of a professional package. It is strong in basic editing, mail merge tasks,

and standard business formatting and layout chores. It contains a special address file manager that facilitates mailing list applications and form letters, a telecommunications package integrated into the word processing environment, and a graphics screen capture and editing program.

Wordstar 2000 is weaker than the leading programs in sophisticated layout tasks, especially with proportionally spaced fonts, frames, graphics, and table import, but it nonetheless remains a strong program.

PERFORMANCE:

Wordstar 2000 performs well as an editing tool. It has most of the required tools, although its tab stops will only perform regular and decimal tabs, not centered or right-justified tabs. Decimal tabs can take any character for the decimal marker but you have to go into an elaborate customization program to change the decimal character. Wordstar hyphenates automatically or manually, but its hyphenation formula can mishy-

REPORT CARD INFO WORLD

Wordstar 2000 Plus

VERSION 3.5

Criterion	(Weighting)	Score
Performance		
Basic editing	(60)	Good
Spelling checker/ thesaurus	(60)	Very Good
Mail merge	(20)	Very Good
Layout	(60)	Good
Graphics	(50)	Satisfactory
Outlining	(20)	N/A
TOC and indexing	(20)	Very Good
Style sheets	(20)	Satisfactory
Font support	(60)	Satisfactory
Footnoting	(25)	Very Good
Macros	(25)	Satisfactory
Printer support	(60)	Very Good
Compatibility	(60)	Excellent
Speed	(50)	Satisfactory
Documentation		
	(75)	Excellent
Ease of learning		
	(75)	Good
Ease of use		
	(130)	Good
Error handling		
	(40)	Satisfactory
Support		
Support policies	(20)	Very Good
Technical support	(20)	Satisfactory
Value		
	(50)	Good
Final score		6.5

PRODUCT SUMMARY

Company: Wordstar International Inc.,
201 Alameda del Prado, Novato, CA
94949; (415) 382-8000, (415) 382-
0606, (800) 227-5609.

List price: \$495.

Requires: IBM PC, PS/2, or compatible;
512K of RAM minimum but 640K for full
functionality; any display but graphics
preview requires CGA, EGA, VGA, Hercu-
les; hard disk strongly recommended;
uses EMS memory automatically; DOS
2.0 or later. Will run under Windows.

Pros: Powerful mail merge and mail list
capability; strong editing; superior docu-
mentation and strong compatibility and
printer support; program includes
"telemerge" for integrated communica-
tions, Inset for graphics screen cap-
tures; excellent page preview.

Cons: Less powerful than competitors;
user interface less effective because dif-
ferent modules use different command
structures; no tables feature; graphics
less effective than in competitive pro-
grams.

Summary: Wordstar 2000 Plus, Release
3.5 has all the basic features required
for office and professional word process-
ing. If you have relatively standard
needs, use mail lists and mail merge,
and have little need for word publishing
capabilities or significant graphics, this
program will provide good service. It is
not, however, state of the art and lags
behind such market leaders as Word for
Windows, Ami Professional, Word Per-
fect, or Microsoft Word.

phenate foreign words and proper names.
The Search tools are quite capable; you
can edit in up to three windows, although
if you have multiple windows into the
same document, edits made in one
window won't be reflected in the others.
We rate basic editing good.

Wordstar 2000 has a strong spelling
checker and thesaurus, which supports
user dictionaries and maintains capital-
ization. The thesaurus provides both
definitions and parts of speech. The spell-
ing checker and thesaurus are very good.

Mail merge operates as a separate
program from within Wordstar 2000 and
has a wide range of capabilities. It can
handle form letter templates, merge dif-

ferent files, use conditionals, handle date
stamping, and format a finished letter. It
includes a special provision for 3-up
mailing labels and includes a dedicated
flat-file mail list database manager. It
imports comma-delimited files, but no
other formats. Mail merge is relatively
sensitive to correct formatting of data files
and will misassign data if the number of
fields in the data file record do not match
specifications in the master document.
Nonetheless, we rate its mail merge
capabilities very good.

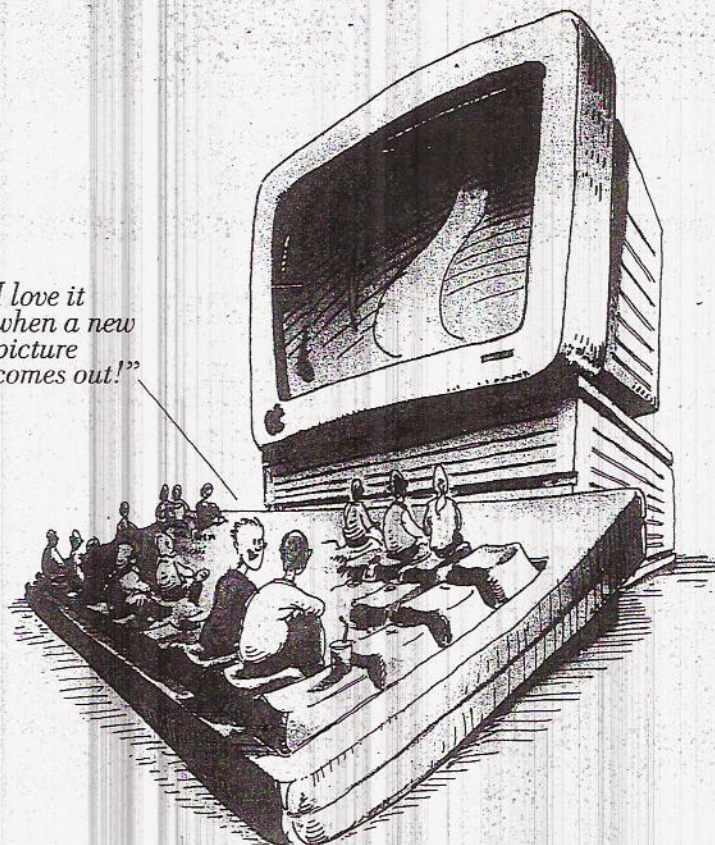
Layout tools speed the preparation of
all but the most complex text. Wordstar
2000, Release 3.5 will handle multiple
font changes and permit both single and

multiple columns on the same page.
However, it is not capable of balancing
columns. It has widow and orphan
control and is capable of both landscape
and portrait-mode laser printing. The
only formulas Wordstar 2000 can pro-
duce are superscripts and subscripts.
Tabbed columns are the only tables it is
capable of editing.

A superior page preview, identical to
the one included in Wordstar 5.5 and 6.0,
shows many different views of a docu-
ment, including multipage and zoom
views. Layout is rated good.

Wordstar 2000 uses Inset, a memory-
resident screen-capture and graphics-
editing program for all graphics func-

"I love it
when a new
picture
comes out!"



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tions. Because this program captures screen images, its resolution is limited to the resolution of the screen. The editing, cropping, rotation, and gray-scale capabilities of Inset are extensive but the program's incapability to use common graphics formats such as PCX and the Lotus 1-2-3 PIC format is a serious limitation. Graphics images can be inserted with a tag and appear in the screen preview. Text flows around these images or the image can be superimposed on text. With its file compatibility limitation we can award only a satisfactory rating to Wordstar 2000's graphics.

Wordstar International does not include PC Outline in this version of Wordstar 2000. Therefore, it receives an outlining rating of N/A.

Tables of contents, lists of figures, and

Speed tests for Wordstar 2000 3.5 show reasonable performance.

indexes can be constructed for Wordstar 2000 documents. The resulting lists include cross-references, which can be formatted in any way supported by Wordstar 2000 and allow a variety of indexing options. However, the standard table of contents will not accept proportionally spaced text (when you format you must use a plain, nonproportional format); indexes and other lists exist as separate documents. Wordstar 2000 does not support exclusion or inclusion concordances, which allow you to either include or exclude words in your index. We rate this function very good.

Basic style sheets store ruler lines and font information along with common text elements and multiple column information. Styles cannot be acquired by example. Style sheets earn a satisfactory score.

Font support includes the capability to

change fonts, handle Hewlett-Packard downloadable fonts, manage Postscript fonts, and select such elements as bold, underline, superscript, and subscript. The support for fonts does not include kerning or variable word spacing, although many font features can be customized by modifying printer definition files. While margins are expressed in inches, page length is still shown in lines which leads to some difficulty in establishing proper page size with proportionally spaced fonts. We rate font support satisfactory.

The footnote and endnote capabilities automatically handle notes by updating numbers and gathering notes at the end of the bottom of the page. Formatting in notes can be changed. However, footnotes can't be used with text formatted in columns. The document can have either footnotes or endnotes, but not both. We rate footnoting very good.

Wordstar 2000 has a limited keystroke macro facility; there is no macro recorder, for example, and you cannot use variables or other programming constructs. Macros earn a score of satisfactory.

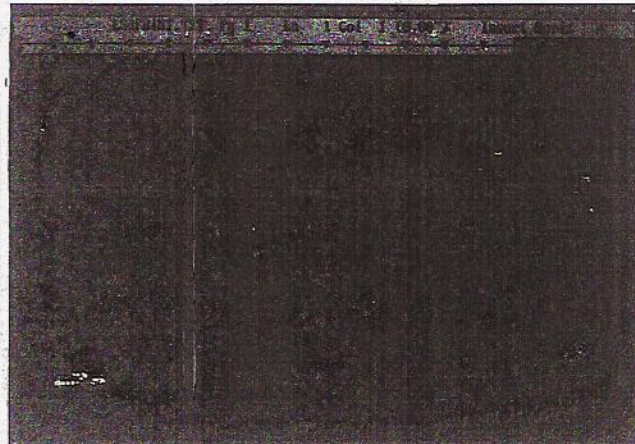
While soft font downloading for HP printers is less easy than in Word for Windows, it is nonetheless effective and well explained. Wordstar 2000 supports a wide range of dot-matrix and daisy-wheel printers, along with most laser printers and fonts. Printer definition files can be edited to take advantage of special printer characteristics. Printer support for all major printers rates very good.

Star Exchange, a companion program included with Release 3.5, imports and exports files from many major products. All Wordstar products from Wordstar 3.31 on, Multimate II and 3.6, Microsoft Word 5.0, as well as DCA/RFT and ASCII files can be brought into or exported from Wordstar 2000. It earns an excellent rating for compatibility.

Speed tests for Wordstar 2000, Release 3.5 show reasonable performance, but it is no speed demon. We rate this product satisfactory in comparison to other products in its class.

DOCUMENTATION:

Wordstar 2000's documentation consists of a large and well-presented reference



Wordstar 2000 has a series of print enhancements for use with laser printers that include italics, underlining, and boldfacing.

manual that includes a nice index and well-written explanations. On-line documentation and help screens are more than adequate and error messages are sufficient.

The on-line tutorial program is superior and a quick-reference card, getting-started manual, and a booklet that describes how to produce a number of common document formats all contribute to Wordstar 2000's excellent documentation rating.

EASE OF LEARNING:

By no means the easiest product to learn, Wordstar 2000, Release 3.5 offers, through its tutorial, full menu mode, and help screens a comprehensible approach to learning. Users will find it possible to produce general office documents within an hour of starting work with Wordstar 2000. We rate Wordstar 2000's ease of learning good.

EASE OF USE:

The program has multiple ways of presenting its commands, through menus or function or Control keys, because the

program permits significant customization and because the integration of the modules is reasonably effective. However, some aspects of the program are clumsy than the competition, particularly the indexing and table of contents. Font control is harder than in some products, notably Word for Windows, and the use of Inset requires learning a different set of commands and functions. We rate ease of use good.

ERROR HANDLING:

Wordstar 2000 warns you when you abandon files with the changes unsaved, permits a variety of save options, prevents any changes to the original file until a save is successfully completed, and automatically keeps a backup file. There is no timed backup. Undo is single level and does not capture single character deletes done with backspace or delete keys. Wordstar's error handling earns a satisfactory score.

SUPPORT:

Wordstar International offers a 30-day money-back guarantee. The company offers support for the life of the release, after which it offers 90-day support. Support hours are 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Wednesdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pacific time. It also offers corporate, fax, and BBS support.

We rate Wordstar's support policies very good.

We found the phone number through the Wordstar forum on Compuserve and made several calls that produced technically competent advice without significant delays.

We rate Wordstar's technical support satisfactory.

VALUE:

Among high-power professional word processing programs, Wordstar falls below the top group — composed of such heavyweights as Word Perfect, Microsoft Word, Word for Windows, and Ami Professional. Although priced in that class (\$495), it is somewhat less powerful and more difficult to use. There is also a Wordstar 2000 LAN product available as well. The server version costs \$595 and the workstation version is \$150. We rate the value of Wordstar 2000 Plus, Release 3.5 good. □

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

BENCHMARKS

Office/Professional Word Processors

	Wordstar 2000 Version 3.5	Microsoft Word Version 5.0	Word Perfect Version 5.1	Wordstar Version 6.0	Ami Professional Version 1.2	Word for Windows Version 1.0
File*						
Load	0:03	0:01	0:02	0:02	0:03	0:02
Save	0:04	0:02	0:01	0:07	0:03	0:01
Import ASCII	0:03	0:02	0:15	0:32 ²	0:03	0:01
Export ASCII	0:57/0:37 ³	0:02	0:08	0:23	0:03	0:04
Import DCA/RFT	0:44	1:01	0:14	0:41	0:07	0:25
Cursor movement						
Top to bottom	0:02	0:01	0:07 ⁴	0:04	0:03/0:04 ⁵	0:02/0:02 ⁵
Manual scroll	0:32	0:31	0:49	1:06	0:26/0:36 ⁵	0:16/0:55 ⁵
Reformat						
Search						
Last word	0:06	0:02	0:07	0:05	0:02	0:01
Global replace	0:13	0:10	0:12	0:20	0:06	0:10
Append file	0:02	0:02	0:01	0:04	0:03	0:02

Times are in minutes:seconds, unless otherwise noted.

*File size is approximately 50K, 17 pages.

²Wordstar combines two timings: opening a file and reformatting text.

³The first time represents print to disk and the second time represents star exchange.

⁴Second timing was significantly faster in Word Perfect (three seconds).

⁵The first time is using the keyboard, the second time is using the mouse.