REVIEWS

WordStar for Windows departs from its past

Program is fully Windows-compliant and features desktop publishing capabilities

BY JOHN LOMBARDI
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Bearing the name of what once was an industry standard, WordStar for Windows bears little resemblance to its predecessors, WordStar and WordStar 2000. This new product, based in part on NBI Inc.'s Legacy, offers a fully Windows-compliant, frame-based word processing system. Clever, elegant, but sometimes slow, WordStar for Windows competes at the bottom end of the high-powered Windows word processing packages.

This review is based on criteria from our last professional word processor product comparison (January 7, page 69).

FEATURES:

To organize text in a document, WordStar uses a page layout analogy similar to desktop publishing. Complex documents (with color, graphics, and wraparound text) are constructed with WordStar's multiple frames, links, and story lines.

Frames serve as WordStar's fundamental organizing tool — all data or objects entered into documents are placed within frames. Each page of a document is made up of a page frame (with a typical word processor layout), and additional text, graphics, or table frames can be added to the page.

Two or more frames can be linked so that a body of text (or story line) automatically flows from one frame to the next. Linked frames can be separated by intervening material — text or graphics for example — or even separated by a number of pages. This is analogous to newspaper-style production, in which articles (story lines) flow from the first page to subsequent pages, with lots of other story lines in between.

To give documents a professionally produced look, WordStar provides a variety of object-oriented graphics tools, including lines, arcs, rectangles, circles, and graphics-based text. Each of the tools is represented by an icon on the left border of the WordStar window. Graphic objects can be colored and filled, and you have control over line thickness and object transparency. Bit-mapped graphics can be imported from a number of popular drawing packages.

Bundled with WordStar is Bitstream's Facelift for improved screen and printer fonts and Correct Grammar from the Writing Tools Group, a subsidiary of WordStar International Inc. (Correct Grammar can be installed as a WordStar menu item or as a separate application, making it usable with other Windows programs.)

PERFORMANCE:

Basic editing: WordStar has all the editing features expected of a full-feature program. It can handle multiple columns with column balancing, and it supports variable justification by paragraphs. You can search and replace formatting and style tags. Tabs include all the typical varieties with standard leader options. There are tabbed columns and tables. However, you cannot cut and paste rectangular blocks of text, nor can you have more than one document on screen at any one time.

We rate basic editing as good.

Proofing tools: WordStar's 119,000-word spelling checker has most of the typical features you would expect, but, unlike Lotus' Ami Pro, WordStar does not automatically check your corrections. It also will not let you quit and restart the utility without running through the entire checking process again. The speller has an option that lets you see the error in context, but it did not seem to work. When this option was selected, the correction window covered up the highlighted word and surrounding text. WordStar does not automatically replace all occurrences of a misspelled word. However, once a word has been corrected, the replacement word will appear first in the speller's list of suggestions. WordStar lets you create an unlimited number of user dictionaries.
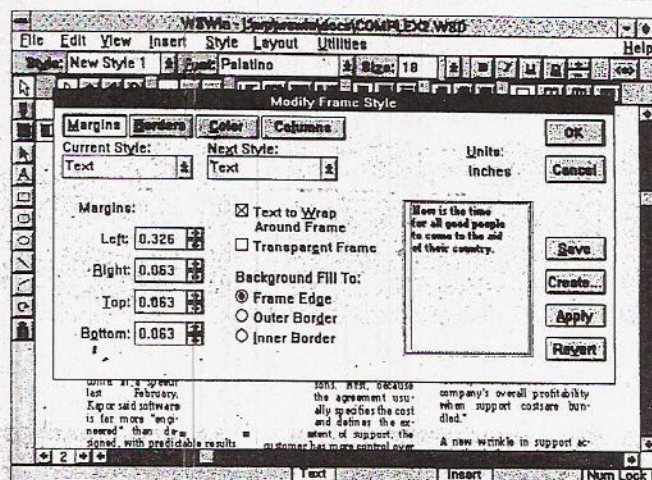
The fine 80,000-word thesaurus includes parts of speech and definitions, as well as synonyms, near synonyms, and antonyms. The combination of WordStar's proofing tools with the bundled utility, Correct Grammar, earns WordStar a very good score.

Mail merge: WordStar uses standard techniques for merging data from a database into form letters. Variables are inserted into a master document to mark the placement of names, addresses, or other information. A plus is WordStar's support from most types of database field delimiters. However, the program has no conditionals of any kind, so you cannot select specific records from an external list. The program also does not skip bad records but stops processing and displays an error message. We rate mail merge poor.

Layout: WordStar's frames gives it superior layout capabilities. The combination of frames, links, and styles lets you create an amazing variety of documents. You can save a particular combination of layout and styles as a template for use with subsequent documents.

Bit-mapped graphics can be imported into a WordStar graphics frame as single objects. While an entire image (or object) can be scaled or moved, individual elements of the bit-mapped picture cannot be modified or edited within WordStar.

Imported vector graphics can be resized, rotated, and edited. The program is

WordStar for Windows' desktop publishing-like features include linked frames for text, data, and graphics, making it ideal for newsletters and brochures.

capable of supporting 16.7 million colors for fills, lines and text through three color models.

Frames can be condensed or expanded to any size, up to a full page. If the contents of a frame exceeds the frame size, it can spill over into other linked frames. They can float with a block of text or you can fix them to a specific location on the page. You can stack frames, make them opaque or transparent, or you can fill them with background shading or color. When a frame is inserted over background text, WordStar automatically flows the text around the frame. The application also supports line weights and rounded corners for frame margins and borders.

WordStar supports editing in multiple views, which you can scale to fit the screen, specify as a percent of the normal size, or add Greek type below any specified type size. You can also have facing pages displayed. We rate layout excellent.

Style sheets: WordStar's style sheets offer typical features for Windows-based word processors. It includes information about document layout, fonts, rulers, and graphics. Styles can be saved, modified, combined, and deleted. You can save styles by example (i.e., select style attributes while entering text and then save the attributes in one step) or save a collection of styles (header, body text, table, etc.) with a template. We rate style sheets very good.

Font/printer support: WordStar has typical printer support capabilities for Windows-based word processors. However, you can get better looking screen and printer fonts (especially larger fonts) by using the bundled Facelift for Windows application. Unfortunately, Facelift will only install on the C: drive; so if you do

not have enough space on that partition, you have to make room for it — a disadvantage. We also found a bug in the PostScript driver for WordStar, but there is a fix available from WordStar International. We rate font/printer support very good.

Reference tools: WordStar's impressive reference tools include footnotes or endnotes, an indexing facility, and a table of contents feature. The footnoting capabilities, however, do not permit both endnotes and footnotes in the same document or page. The program supports cross-references in both text and indexing. WordStar stores the index and table of contents as separate files on disk, which you must then import into your main document for printing and formatting — an unnecessary step.

You can make up to 15 custom lists (giving you a way to work around WordStar's missing table of authority facility), although each entry is limited to 150 bytes (including formatting tags).

Outlining includes only numbering options without the capability to collapse or expand headings. You also cannot number lines, as is required for some legal documents. WordStar lacks a sorting routine. Overall WordStar's reference tools earn a good score.

Import/export: WordStar for Windows has an adequate number of import and export formats for text, graphics, and tables. While the program handles Ami Pro (Versions 1.0 through 2.0), Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, and WordStar (Versions 3.2 through 6.0), and WordStar 2000, it lacks a Word for Windows import filter.

The program will import a number of graphics file formats, including MacPaint, Micrografx, MS Paint, and PC Paintbrush. But it does not handle Lotus

INSIDE REVIEWS

1-2-3 PIC format graphics. The program supports DDE links to data tables and imports tables from Lotus and Excel in two steps: first the structure of the table, then the data. It can maintain two-way links with DOS application files, such as Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheets.

WordStar's tables are visually effective but provide no math functions or other facilities for manipulating data. We rate import/export good.

Networking: WordStar provides file locking, but when a document is open on one workstation, WordStar does not open

the file as "read-only" on a second PC — you only get an error message. We also found a bug with the template menu. When you start a new file, WordStar lists available templates. If we selected a network drive, we got an error message that the directory could not be found. Networking capabilities rate poor.

Speed: Overall, WordStar for Windows was slower than competing Windows products. WordStar took four times longer to search simple files than Ami Pro (12 seconds vs. 3 seconds). It was significantly slower in printing and saving

files. Speed earns a satisfactory score.

Macros: WordStar has no real macro capability. There are no programmable macro commands, nor are there keystroke capture facilities. The program has alternative command-keystroke modes to match WordStar, Versions 3.3 to 6.0, and WordStar 2000 conventions. We give this category a not applicable score.
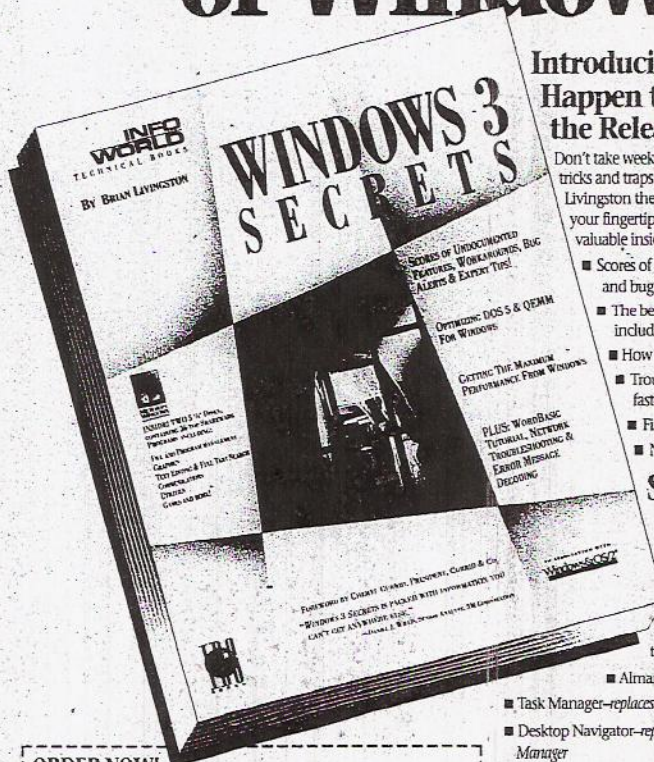
DOCUMENTATION:

WordStar's elegantly produced manuals include helpful examples, lots of useful information, and a quick-reference card.

However, the reference manual's incomplete index lacks a listing for mail merge. If you want to learn about mail merge, you have to consult both the reference and the *Using WordStar* manuals. It comes with an on-line interactive tutorial and includes fine on-line help. We rate documentation very good.

EASE OF LEARNING:

For simple documents, beginners will find the program relatively easy to learn. However, to create more complicated work, new users may find WordStar's many options, icons, and menus more effort to learn than competing products. Experienced word processor users may take some time to adjust to WordStar's

REPORT CARD   **INFO WORLD**

OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL WORD PROCESSOR

WordStar for Windows

VERSION 1.0

Criterion	(Weighting)	Score
Performance		
Basic editing	(80)	Good
Proofing tools	(80)	Very Good
Mail merge	(50)	Poor
Layout	(50)	Excellent
Style sheets	(50)	Very Good
Font/printing	(50)	Very Good
Reference tools	(50)	Good
Import/export	(50)	Good
Networking	(50)	Poor
Speed	(50)	Satisfactory
Macros	(30)	NA
Documentation	(75)	Very Good
Ease of learning	(75)	Good
Ease of use	(130)	Good
Error handling	(40)	Satisfactory
Support		
Support policies	(20)	Satisfactory
Technical support	(20)	Satisfactory
Value	(50)	Good
Final score		**6.0**

PRODUCT SUMMARY

Company: WordStar International Inc., 201 Alameda del Prado, Novato, CA 94949; (800) 227-5609, (415) 382-8000.
List Price: $495.
Requires: Intel 286, with 2 megabytes of RAM; MS-DOS 3.1 or higher; Windows 3.0; hard disk.
Pros: Powerful frame-based system; excellent for documents with mixed text, graphics, table elements, and story lines that span various pages or elements; superior layout and styles; comes with Correct Grammar and Bitstream FaceLift.
Cons: Lacks macros, sorting, line numbering, equation generator, conditional mail merge, math, and collapsible outlining; only edits one document at a time.
Summary: A powerful word processor, WordStar for Windows works best for newsletters and other documents with complex formatting, and mixed elements. Compared to the market leaders, WordStar for Windows rates below AmiPro 2.0 and Word for Windows.

frame orientation. Fortunately, the on-line help and the documentation provide useful assistance. We rate ease of learning good.

EASE OF USE:

Once you understand the meaning of all the icons on the tool bar and the different kinds of frames and linking possible, WordStar is easy to use. It offers many ways of accomplishing tasks. The tool bars and icons let you point and drag for most functions as soon as you memorize what each icon means. Command short-cut keys help speed a variety of options, and you can customize the appearance of the screen. For example, toolbox icons and status bars can be displayed or hidden. However, WordStar does not let you customize either the toolbox or status bars.

The absence of a macro facility clearly reduces the ease of use of this product. We rate ease of use good.

ERROR HANDLING:

WordStar uses standard Windows conventions for most major error handling. We received a variety of UAE and Word-Star program termination messages, although we couldn't recreate the situations that produced them. The program has a simple single-step undo, but it only works if you don't move the cursor or insertion point. There is an automatic backup of the original document and timed backup.

> ### WordStar's reference tools include footnotes, indexing, and a table of contents feature.

We rate error handling satisfactory.

SUPPORT:

Support Policies: WordStar International provides support for the life of the product. Technical support is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Pacific time. On Wednesdays, technical support closes a half-hour earlier. Additional support is available through a CompuServe forum and a WordStar users group. We rate support policies satisfactory.

Technical support: Technical support, available on a regular phone line, proved reasonably effective. Our questions were, for the most part, answered promptly and correctly. We rate technical support satisfactory.

VALUE:

At $495, WordStar for Windows is the same price as nearly every other high-end word processor on the market. WordStar buyers can upgrade from most competitive brands for $129.

WordStar lacks some of the sophisticated features found in other programs, but what it has generally works well. WordStar's strongest feature is its layout capabilities, which are superior to Word for Windows. We rate WordStar for Windows a good value.

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

QuickC is a one-stop development tool

Windows integrated environment spares tedious module switching

BY DOUGLAS FORER
AND NICHOLAS PETRELEY
TEST DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

Microsoft QuickC for Windows is the first Windows-hosted integrated development environment based on the C language — in particular, Microsoft's QuickC.

With the introduction of QuickC for Windows, Microsoft has provided a unique, midrange Windows applications development product that falls somewhere between Microsoft Visual Basic (see review, August 19, page 59) and the Microsoft C 6.0/Windows Software Development Kit combination (see reviews, September 3, 1990, page 71; April 8, 1991, page 58). Microsoft QuickC is an excellent jumping off point for anyone who has been waiting to take the plunge into Windows programming.

The Windows integrated development environment (IDE) enables all programmers to experience the benefits of working within a graphical environment while developing applications for that environment.

Those benefits quickly become apparent to anyone who has bounced back and forth between Windows and DOS while struggling to develop a simple Windows interface.

FEATURES:

There's no question that Visual Basic influenced the development of QuickC for Windows. Like Visual Basic, the QuickC system eliminates the need to deal with most of Windows' complexity. Both products put all of your tools for developing Windows applications into one integrated graphical development environment and allow you to use drawing tools instead of code to construct the user interface.

But unlike Visual Basic, these capabilities are provided within the context of a traditional programming environment — one that offers all the benefits of a C language, including maximum portability, power, and control.

The graphical tools included in the QuickC for Windows environment help set it apart from other IDEs

QuickCase:W is an interactive prototyping tool for developing the graphical user interface (GUI) to your Windows application. This powerful utility lets you easily design the whole user interface right on the screen. QuickCase:W then automatically generates the source code for the user interface, eliminating the most time-consuming and tedious part of developing a Windows-based program.

The Image and Dialog Editors will be familiar to anyone who has used the Microsoft Windows Software Development Kit (SDK) to create resources. The Image Editor is a simple paint program from the SDK that is used to create icons, bit maps, and cursors.

The Dialog Editor, on the other hand, is similar to the one found in Visual Basic. It is a reasonably powerful tool for creating dialog boxes. It offers several improvements over the one in Microsoft's SDK, including a properties bar that lets you quickly edit the properties of dialog box controls. The properties bar can then be used to add labels to push buttons, reposition them within the dialog box, and change their size. Another significant improvement is the readability of the script file generated by the new Dialog Editor.

QuickC for Windows can also be used to transfer nongraphical applications to the Windows environment. The easiest method, which requires no knowledge of Windows programming, is simply to re-link an existing C program to the Quick-Win library. This will convert most well-behaved C programs, particularly those that don't rely on machine-specific functions (such as writing directly to screen memory).

The second approach is to convert existing functions into a Dynamic Link Library (DLL) and call the DLL from inside your new program interface, which is created using the tools in QuickC for Windows.

The QuickC programming editor enables you to edit as many as 16 source files at one time. While the editor maintains simplicity, it offers some gem-like qualities that are not available in other environments. It has a syntax highlighting feature that displays different language elements, such as keywords, comments, and strings, in different colors to make them easier to find and check. You can also customize the colors that indicate source code, current line, breakpoints, comments, and other program elements. Another helpful feature is the

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REPORT CARD   INFO WORLD

MICROSOFT WINDOWS
DEVELOPMENT LANGUAGE
**Quick C
for Windows**
VERSION 1.0

Criterion	(Weighting)	Score
Performance		
Programming environment	(150)	Excellent
Language extensions	(150)	Excellent
Debugging	(150)	Very Good
Documentation	(75)	Very Good
Ease of use	(125)	Very Good
Error handling	(100)	Very Good
Support		
Support policies	(50)	Good
Technical support	(50)	Very Good
Value	(100)	Excellent
Final score		**8.4**

PRODUCT SUMMARY

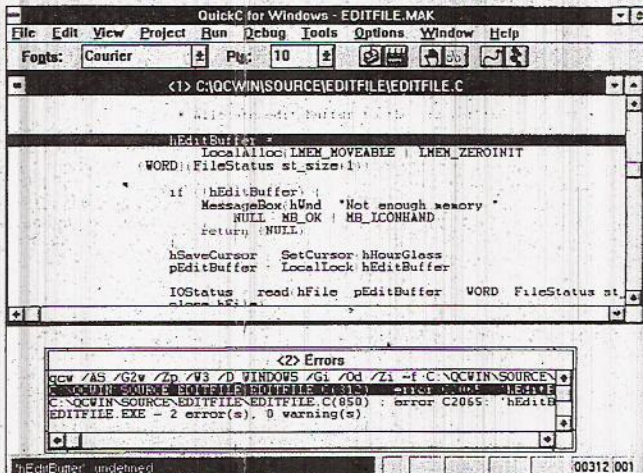**Company:** Microsoft Corp., 1 Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052-6399.
List Price: $199; upgrades at $89.95 for registered owners of C 5.0 or later, QuickC 1.0 or later.
Requires: Intel 286 or compatible (386 recommended); minimum 2 megabytes of memory (4 megabytes recommended); DOS 3.1 or later; Windows 3.0 standard or enhanced mode; 6 megabytes of free hard disk space.
Pros: Windows-hosted integrated graphical development environment based on C; toolkit for creating resources, pulling together visual elements of interface, and generating code for application GUI; two methods of migrating text-based DOS applications to Windows.
Cons: Inherits some Windows overhead performance hits; lacks QuickC language reference manual; no direct support for developing application that will underlie the interface.
Summary: QuickC for Windows puts fun into developing the GUI for Windows applications; based on QuickC compiler, it offers the power, performance, and extensibility of C; seamless movement between integrated development tools.

Quick C's integrated debugger highlights both the error in the code and the error message in similar colors, making correction a snap.