

AT A GLANCE

Name

Microsoft Word 1.1/2.0

Type

Word-processing program

Manufacturer

Microsoft Corp.
10700 Northup Way
Bellevue, WA 98004
(206) 828-8080

Price

\$375 without mouse; \$475 with mouse

Format

Without mouse, two 5¼-inch floppy disks;
mouse-driven system requires a third
5¼-inch floppy "mouse" disk and a mouse
card

Language

C (user-configurable for typesetter interface
but cannot be customized)

Computer

IBM Personal Computer (as reviewed)

Documentation

400-page loose-leaf manual, 120-page
mouse installation guide, graphics mouse
guide, mouse operations guide, reference
folder, and key labels

Audience

Basic to sophisticated users; mouse-driven
program appeals especially to users who
want speedier operation and less typewriter
orientation

MicroPro representatives say they are "working on" a toll-free telephone number for end-user support. Updates of WordStar and the add-on packages are available for fees varying from \$25 to \$85, depending on the program. WordStar is not copy-protected, enabling users to make backup copies for their own use.

Users of the MicroPro family will find they can merge not only information from other "Star" packages into WordStar, but also that this pioneering word-processing package can often handle the integration of other vendors' programs into its system. WordStar handily deals with the creation and manipulation of columnar text and figures.

Sophisticated .DOT commands enable the user to utilize microjustification, conditional page breaks, headers and footers, top and bottom margins, page numbers, margin offsets, line height and paper length, bidirectional printing commands, and a variety of other advanced formatting options.

File merging, support of a host of printers, an on-disk tutorial, column manipulation, and decimal tabbing are additional features appreciated by confirmed WordStar users. Although WordStar has been added to, subtracted from, and revamped as much as its own cut-and-paste feature, the latest version is a clean package that performs superbly.

Among the improvements of version 3.32 over 3.0 are more clearly written documentation (the new pictures are a big help), user-definable function keys (and they aren't too difficult to program), simpler installation, support for multicolor on color monitors, redesigned menus, and faster screen updating. The best of these features is the improved manual, although there are still voids and complexities that could have been eliminated by almost any beginning WordStar user. As with every package, there are problems and limitations.

WORDSTAR'S LIABILITIES

A sure way to be marked and deleted is to badmouth the American flag, Mom, apple pie, or the sacred cow of word processing, WordStar. The program has its liabilities, and they are as peculiarly confusing as MicroPro's continuing utilization of non-mnemonic commands.

The six-lesson tutorial, though quite time-consuming, is helpful in learning this heavy-duty program. But the documentation is difficult and puzzling to get through. I especially have difficulty trying to find the index.

With most of the other word-processing programs I use, there is an S command for the Search function. Not so with WordStar. It uses a command called Find. Even though WordStar practically invented word processing and set the defaults for many programs, I still find this difference irritating.

When I am totally immersed in the writing process, I find it almost impossible to return to WordStar's opening menu. The way WordStar is set up, most of its commands work off the opening menu; when I have a problem accessing it, I have a problem producing my document. In fact, getting back and forth between WordStar's menus is a real pain. There are several ways to get back and forth, including the CTRL-K commands, but they are awkward and frustrating.

Still, WordStar is a clean, satisfying, in-depth program. Writers, office workers with serious word-processing needs, and people who spend a lot of time preparing nonstandard reports, papers, articles, etc., will probably consider WordStar the respectable giant of word processing. And in spite of the huge amount of competing programs, MicroPro still has a winner.

MICROSOFT WORD— VERSIONS 1.1 AND 2.0 (WITH AND WITHOUT MOUSE)

It sure will help when Microsoft gets a toll-free telephone number for Word users and writes some half-way decent documentation. New users of the clever little mouse especially will benefit from these improvements.

There's almost a consensus in informed circles that mice are the wave of the future. I'm not sure I'm happy about this trend. If you're accustomed to keyboards, operating the mouse takes some adjustment.

In my case, Microsoft Word's 122-page so-called "installation and operation manual" is a complete farce. A fine tutorial is really needed. In the newest version, the addition of a small folder about using the mouse doesn't help a

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great deal. Clearer prose would help new users to get into the program with less than a lifetime of frustration.

Generally speaking, Word (with or without the mouse) is clever, put together well, and performs some extraordinary feats. Its highly touted windows are well worth the high touting. It's command structure is relatively easy to learn, and Word can fully utilize all the special characters (listed in its extensive help menu), hexadecimal codes, and up to 64 different type fonts.

Word's formatting and style-sheet capabilities are complete and more than satisfactory, though I found them hard to use fully while operating with the mouse. The biggest problem I have with Word is its many built-in redundancies, including having to use two disks to get into and out of the program; the multiple commands; confusing labels (Alpha, Gallery, Transfer, Division, etc.); and the use of the right, left, and both-together mouse buttons. Word's system disk contains copy-protected material and thus cannot be cloned. The program disk can be copied.

Instead of working to make the program more flexible in the context of current word-processing programs, Word's developers seem to be trying to completely reinvent word processing. At this time, I care not to start over from scratch. Those users who are just discovering the wonders of word processing may feel differently about Word.

Major enhancements in this revision include a built-in merge for customized form letters, built-in support for the Hercules graphics card, a mouse utility program that provides mouse support for several external programs, optional compatible spelling checkers, and the support of other computers and printers.

Now, without shuffling disks, Word's users can produce form letters; merge data from other Word documents, ASCII (American National Standard Code for Information Interchange) files, or from the keyboard; use direct output from other programs, such as dBASE II; and use English-like instructions with no restrictions on the contents or lengths of text fields to be inserted.

The utility program (called Mouse Menus) that comes with the new version of Word furnishes support for Multiplan, Lotus 1-2-3, WordStar, and VisiCalc.

Word's developers say users may create menus to use with other programs.

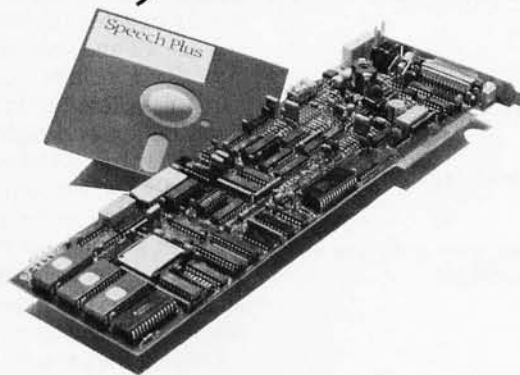
Two spelling checkers are now available (at additional cost) to Word users. Microsoft's package can run on more computers and is compatible with more printers than before. According to the manufacturer, with this current revision, Word has the capability to support vir-

tually every dot-matrix and daisy-wheel printer without requiring a special program. Only a printer-descriptor file (described in the manual) is required.

MICROSOFT WORD'S CAPABILITIES

Power and flexibility mark Word as a
(continued)

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AT A GLANCE

Name

pfs:Write 1.1

Type

Word-processing program

Manufacturer

Software Publishing Corp.
1901 Landings Dr.
Mountain View, CA 94043
(415) 962-8910

Price

\$140

Format

One 5¼-inch floppy program disk, one
5¼-inch floppy "sampler" disk

Language

Pascal and assembly

Computer

IBM Personal Computer (as reviewed)

Documentation

70-page manual, on-disk "sampler" tutorial

Audience

Basic word-processing users and those who
want form-letter capabilities

multifaceted program that's worth checking out. But there are hundreds of new things to learn if you choose this package for your own, especially if you opt for the mouse.

For those of you who aren't familiar with this little gadget, the Microsoft mouse is a hand-held device with buttons used either separately or in tandem to carry out commands. The underside of the mouse has a rolling ball that positions the mouse's cursor on the screen. By utilizing short directional moves and pressing one or both mouse buttons, the user points to and carries out Word's commands and functions. Essentially, the left button chooses the option you desire; the right button executes the command and puts you into the following level of command. Pushing them both simultaneously negates the previous order.

Some of the features programmed into Word include compatibility with hard disks; an "undo" facility with a scrap buffer; and highlighting of characters, words, sentences, and paragraphs for use with various modes (such as Move, Copy, Insert, and Delete). This program lets the user make the most of standard and advanced formatting with an ease up to this time unknown in the word-processing game.

Entering the program requires first inserting the Word system disk; then, when Word prompts it, the program disk. Backing out of the program requires the same hassle in reverse.

One thing Microsoft did right: it made the mouse very easy to install. You position and secure the printed circuit board that comes with the mouse into an expansion slot. Then simply attach the mouse's plug to the I/O (input/output) port and you're in business.

After you get into the program, things start to happen fast. A screen with a double border appears. One is a selector rectangle, the other is the movable mouse cursor. A visible ruler outlines the top of the screen; Word's menu, command, status, message, and information lines take up the bottom four lines. The working portion of the screen (19 lines) is a bit short, but the space seems adequate for my needs.

With the mouse-driven version, complete words prompt the user to choose Alpha (for entering or editing text copy), Delete, Format, Gallery (an alternative

command/style process), Help, Insert, Jump (go to), Library (set aside for future features), and Options (sets measurements, turns on and off the alarm and overtyping modes).

The Print command sets the parameters for hard copy. Transfer is used for loading and saving documents from a data disk. Undo and Window round out the first level of commands. And that's just the primer.

In my benchmark tests, Word, along with WordStar, came out just about average in speed of saving, searching, and scrolling to the end of the document. In loading the document, Word was slightly ahead of the other four.

Word handles all routine chores with ease and dispatch. Some of its more advanced features include glossary options (an abbreviated way to delete or copy repetitive words, strings, or blocks of text) and windows (up to eight horizontal and/or vertical divisions of the screen for cutting and pasting, viewing and editing text, documents, footnotes, and so forth). Word also automatically reformats copy as you are working and displays a rainbow of colors when used with an RGB (red-green-blue) monitor.

You can use the mouse to create and handle windows by pointing to an area in the double border (the window bar) and clicking the button, or point to the lower right-hand corner of the screen and turn the cursor into a four-headed arrow. You can also create and manipulate windows with Word commands when the mouse is not being used.

Besides the standard word-processing functions, ASCII-based Microsoft Word has the capability to handle footnotes, multiple columns, the transfer of WordStar files, horizontal scrolling, and special features such as italics, sub- and superscript characters, small caps, underlining, boldface print, and combinations of these features. Integration with laser printers will be available as this type of printer becomes more commonly obtainable.

In the works, according to Microsoft, is badly needed revised documentation, a toll-free user support number, and an indexing capability.

WORD'S LIABILITIES

I have many friends who like this program a lot. For me, however, this program, especially when operated with

WORD PROCESSING

the mouse, has many more limitations than benefits. I'd like to mention a few.

Generally speaking, this package (even without the mouse) is extremely frustrating to learn and operate efficiently. With the advanced Word features, the user has to go to several different places and utilize more than one command level to get results. In order to operate the program with the mouse, you need some more-than-basic manual skills or a course in remedial pointing. It's very frustrating to miss the mark with the mouse's selector and destroy what has taken a good bit of time and effort to achieve, or to continually run the mouse headlong into the keyboard and risk ruining the keyboard or the mouse module itself.

Memory requirement for the program is 128K bytes and one disk drive, but my experience with Word leads me to believe 192K bytes and two disk drives are almost essential. An item most of us find extremely irritating is Microsoft's policy of copy protection. Yes, the *program* disk can be copied for your own use, but the *system* disk, necessary to boot and quit from the program, cannot be copied.

In order to tap into the mouse system, you have to read between the lines in the mouse non-manual and read the minds of the developers. Every now and again, when you hit a dead end, the only way to move ahead is to insert DOS (disk operating system) and utilize its capabilities. I could not find this situation mentioned in the documentation.

Word often moves text off the screen while it is in its operating mode. This is terrifying to those who need security blankets to keep their equilibrium while producing long or complex documents. Inadvertently wiping out text you intended to be permanent is frightening.

With Word, deleting is a two-stroke process. With many, many packages, deleting is safely accomplished with one stroke and response to a safety-valve question. Saving is even more disconcerting and time-consuming. Not only does Word require three or four steps to save material, but after you have executed these commands, it pauses more than 10 seconds before putting the message on screen that it actually is saving the material. This will be a long and awkward delay for most users.

PFS:WRITE—VERSION 1.1

Pfs:Write continues to plug along as an elementary program for users who don't have enough time to major in word processing or who have basic needs and aren't into the one-upmanship game. This revised program has some major deficiencies, though, including its inability to justify text except line by line, its insecure nature, and its extremely complex deletion mode.

PFS:WRITE'S CAPABILITIES

The benefits of pfs:Write are many. The main advantage is its overall ease of operation. I get the feeling the developers set out to make the package as simple to use as possible. (What a novel approach.) For instance, this program's main menu really is self-explanatory; it offers six choices: Type/Edit, Define Page, Print, Get/Save/Remove, Clear, and Exit. Pfs:Write's Define Page menu lets users make formatting changes other than the default values. With this selector, you can set the margins (top, bottom, right, left), specify page length, put in headers and footers (up to two lines each), and have Write automatically insert the page numbers for you. There are some tradeoffs, however, such as the program's assuming that any number found in a footer is a page number. If you need to have the footer act as a footnote, you're out of luck.

Pfs:Write does a good job of automatically reformatting text when you change parameters through its Define Page feature. You can decide you want your material to be squashed down to a narrow column instead of given the space of a full-width page. With the Print menu you can set print parameters; cause the program to merge other documents, such as VisiCalc (as long as they have been printed to a disk file); and create a text file by printing to a disk. The Print function also enables you to add graphs from pfs:Write's fellow program, pfs:Report, if the material has been saved as a picture file. You can print an entire document, one or many pages, space your material, print envelopes from the addresses in your letters, change the position of your text on the paper, and print the document to almost any printer that you can con-

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