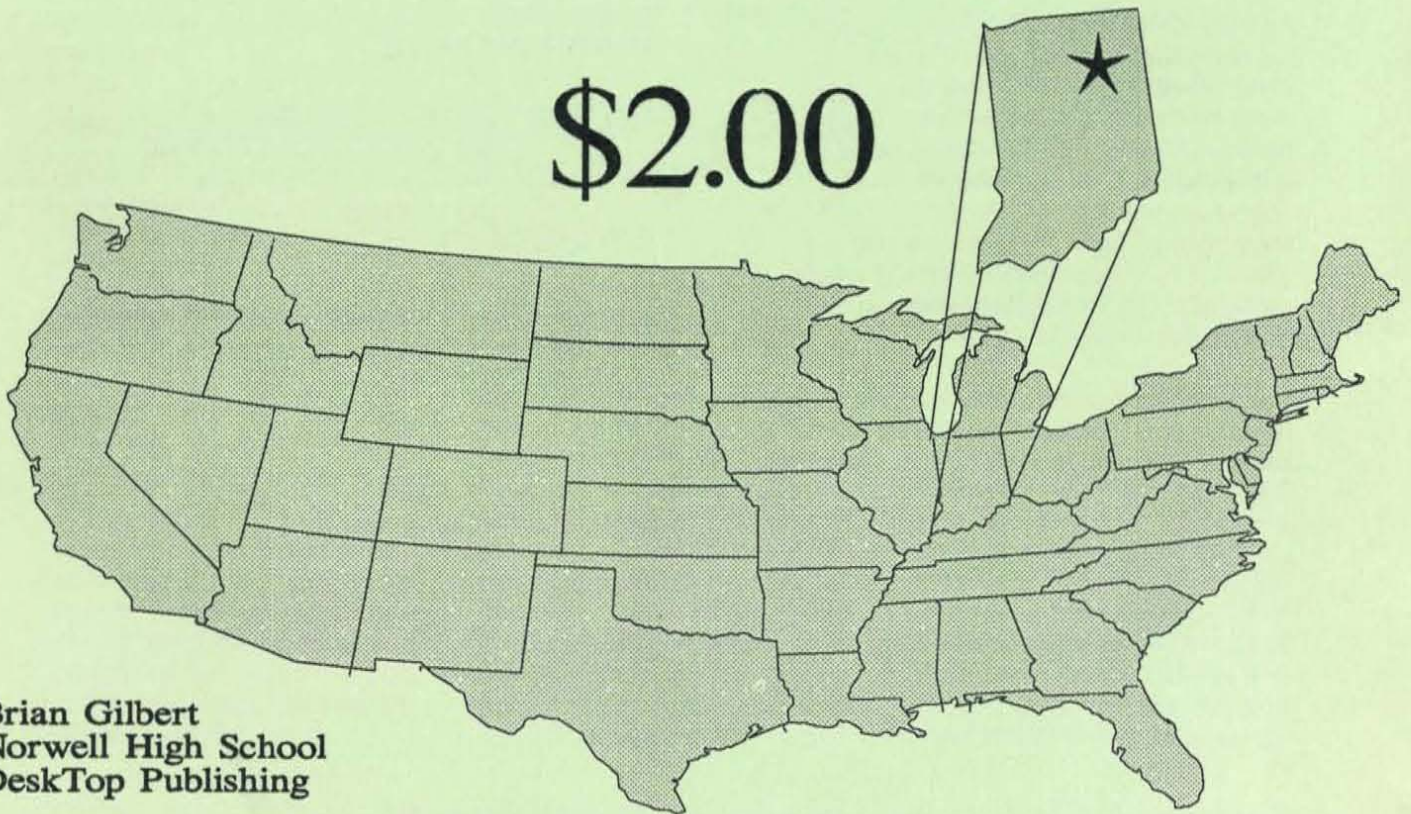


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Due to time constraints, only machine readable copy can be accepted, via diskette or uploaded to TMC BBS at 432-6351.

Meetings are always held on the THIRD TUESDAY of each month. The meeting room opens at 6:00 pm. The program will start at 7:00 pm.

Disk sales will be held between 6:30 pm and 7:00 pm, and again after the program for the evening, which will start at 7:00 pm.

If you are not a member, you will be able to join the club before or after the evening's program. Just ask anyone to point out the table where the PCUG Treasurer is located. We meet at Hilger's Farm Restaurant, located on U.S. 30 West, about 5 miles west of the I-69 interchange. Guests are welcome. You **MUST** be a member to buy club software. If you join at the meeting, you will be given a temporary pass to buy club software.

Only weather will cancel a meeting. In the event of VERY bad weather, call to be sure the meeting has not been cancelled. In the event of cancellation, we will notify WOWO.

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Some Thoughts on Technology

by Philippe Kahn, President and CEO, Borland International

As the information explosion progresses and computer technologies become more complex, User Groups will play an increasingly important role in communicating the benefits on these technologies. User Groups will also help bring about new technologies.

Leading edge software technology is the result of constant change and interaction -- interactive communication between the user and software developers. The more flexible and supportive the line of communication, the more we all benefit from the fruition of this technology. End users who are knowledgeable and vocal will serve to increase the overall standards in an industry that can only stand to gain from an informed and supportive user community.

Objects for the People

At Borland, and at other leading software companies, object-oriented technology is the new cornerstone of software product development. Using object-oriented programming techniques, software developers can be even more effective in implementing ideas and suggestions made by end users.

Unlike traditional programming techniques, object-oriented programming permits the characterization of functions, data or instructions as "objects" which facilitates the design and implementation of software.

There are three aspects to Borland's object-oriented approach: object-oriented methodologies, object-oriented tools for programmers, and object-oriented user interfaces for end users.

Object-Oriented Methodologies

Borland uses standard object-oriented programming techniques. These include the use of class libraries, which are clusters of objects and embedded objects, which combine instructions and data to be acted upon. The use of object-oriented programming techniques results in software that is reusable, reliable, extendable and more easily and efficiently developed.

Object-oriented methodologies have enabled Borland to create, maintain and evolve its core technologies. These core technologies, which can be characterized as standard reusable software components, are essentially a collection of objects that allow the company to employ common approaches to similar problems.

For example, one problem we heard of from User Groups and others was the need to upgrade hardware in order to run new, more functional versions of software. Subsequently, we developed VROOMM (Virtual Runtime Object-Oriented Memory Manager), a core technology which enables greater functionality to be added to products without the cor-

responding increase in memory requirements.

Objects for Programmers

Object-oriented development tools are used by Borland programmers and sold by the company to outside developers. As one of the first software developers to provide object-oriented tools for Windows, we have the opportunity to create even more usable software for end users worldwide.

Objects for End Users

I believe the benefits of object-oriented architecture should be available to end users as well as programmers, and Borland's unique background of developing applications products and programming tools can help us do just that. Using object-oriented architectures, users can manipulate components, or groups of objects, and create completely customized applications rather than having to rely solely upon already developed stand-alone applications such as databases and spreadsheets. Borland's ObjectVision is one of the first object-oriented end user programming tools for the Windows environment.

Objects also allow a consistent way for the user to interact with applications. For example, Borland has developed an object-oriented user conceptual model that is powerful yet intuitive. This reduces the number of steps and knowledge required of an end user, which in turn, makes ap-

plications products more intuitive and usable. This approach is becoming increasingly important as applications become more complex.

Software for the Future

Software is designed to accommodate the acquisition, manipulation and delivery of information. The challenge is to improve this process. This is done through the design of better user interfaces, more usable product features and optimization of hardware.

We are all familiar with the level of frustration experienced when using a product that we don't understand, that is not intuitive or clearly documented. When we attempt to use a product to perform a task for which it was not intended, the level of frustration increases.

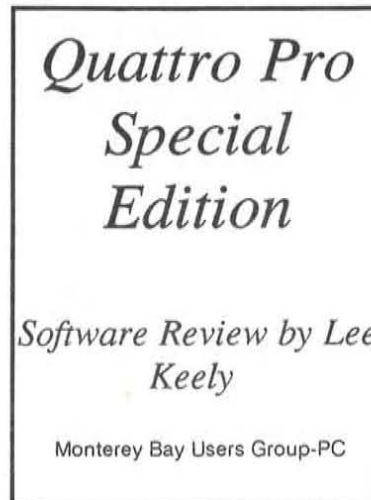
User groups evolved out of users' needs to resolve these frustrations, and to provide additional knowledge and support to keep pace with emerging technologies. This need continues today as products become even more complex and as operating environments change.

User groups have developed a voice in the marketplace and their suggestions are being implemented. Through education they assist users in making informed decisions about the technology they purchase and contribute to the industry by transitioning users to new software platforms.

Software developers, manufacturers, user groups and all others involved in furthering technology are responsible for making the industry as effective as possible. If we each do our part, the in-

dustry will prosper, we will all be on the leading edge of technology, and we all will reap its rewards.

Philippe Kahn is chairman, president and chief executive officer of Borland International.



Quattro Pro Special Edition (QPROSE) is smaller, quicker and cheaper than Quattro Pro Version 3.01 (QPRO3). It may be all you need to do your spreadsheet work. In general, QPROSE is a reissued package of version 2.0, but there are some differences.

I directly compared all features of the two programs by displaying both on the screen at the same time using DesqView. I also used large macros developed in QPRO3 to test QPROSE. My goal was to compare QPROSE with QPRO3 to determine the advantages and disadvantages of each.

First let's look at the advantages of QPROSE.

With each program in character based mode, QPROSE loads into your computer in less than half the time of QPRO3. Macros

are completed faster in QPROSE. QPRO3 WYSIWYG takes about 3 times as long to load as QPROSE. Also, with my large macros, QPRO3 in WYSIWYG required about 2 to 3 times as long as QPROSE to execute. QPROSE occupies about 3.0MB of hard disk space while QPRO3 occupies 3.8MB.

QPROSE retains all of the multi-page consolidation technology, spreadsheet publishing, built-in draw package, and Lotus 1-2-3 compatibility (although not the 1-2-3 menus). Its electronic slide show feature and automatic font-building add graphic presentation capabilities yet to be found in any other PC spreadsheet.

QPROSE comes with a totally revised instruction manual which is simpler and friendlier, than QPRO3 manuals. I believe this manual would be easier for someone new to spreadsheets and classroom students. It is not as complete as the QPRO3 manuals and not as convenient a reference manual.

Now, let's look at what you are missing in QPROSE that might be required in your work. Comparing the pull down menus reveals the following:

/File Utilities DOS: QPROSE exits to DOS and requires "EXIT" back into QPROSE while QPRO3 retains control and a mere Escape key returns to the Quattro Worksheet.

/Edit are all the same

/Style: you can reset block (column) width but not block (column) height. Fewer Fonts are available, but there are many.

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/Graph: all first level are the same
/Graph Overall: does not have "drop Shadow"

/Graph Name Display: there is no Auto Save Feature. Graph buttons to switch graphs still work, but the auto save feature is missing)

/Graph Name Slide provides slide show capability but no sound or transition effects.

/Print: No multiple Copies
No Print to Fit

/Options Hardware: shows Memory/EMS for start, but not remaining available or the ability to reserve EMS. Also there is no Mouse button assignment feature in this menu.

/Options Display: No WYSIWYG or scaling. Many of the same

display options are available, but whichever you select is not shown on the menu.

/Options Start-up MenuTree: only Q1 and Quattro options (no Lotus 1-2-3)

In summary, QPROSE does not include the alternate menus for 1-2-3 and is not networkable. QPROSE does not include WYSIWYG display; graphics printing support of Print-to-Fit, Percent Scaling, Banner output, HPLaserJet III's scaleable fonts; nor sound effects or transitions for slide shows. Documentation is a single manual (compared to the full product's 3 manual set), designed more for beginning users.

However, QPROSE is less expensive, smaller and faster than QPRO3. QPROSE should be the

choice for slower and older computers. If the added features in QPRO3 are not required for your work, the faster QPROSE should be selected.

I believe that Borland will have a winner QPROSE. When I compare QPRO3 enhanced features with my requirements, I find that the only feature I would miss in switching from QPRO3 back to QPROSE would be the "Print to Fit".

If you are not a QPRO user, or you are involved in teaching spreadsheets, QPROSE may be ideal for you. At a list price on only \$69.95 compared to the QPRO3 List price of \$495 or a shift from a competitive spreadsheet of \$129.95, QPROSE is a great deal. Be aware, that Borland is still offering QPRO3 at \$99.95 under certain conditions.

Paradox SE

*Software review by Jeff Hansman **

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As a long time fan and user of Borland's outstanding database management system (DBMS) Paradox, I thought that a scaled-down version of the program sounded like a great idea. After all, the full-blown version of Paradox 3.5 packs a lot of power, probably more than the average user really needs. Consequently, when I installed Paradox SE on my computer, I expected to find an old friend with a few bells and whistles removed. As it turns out, I was only half right.

My first surprise came when I opened the box and found not the excellent documentation normally provided by Borland, but a book by Sybex, a publisher of fine computer related material. What surprised me more than the inclusion of a Sybex book was its title, "The ABCs of Paradox." Not Paradox 3.5, the current version, but Paradox, as in "not the current version." This raised my antennae high enough to take a look at the files I had installed, and lo and behold what did I find? Nothing less (or more) than the files for Paradox 3.0! "Ah ha" I cried, congratulating myself on what I imagined to be a nifty bit of detective work. I began to mumble insults directed at Borland under my breath, sure I had uncovered some sinister plot to deceive an unsuspecting public while reaping vast fortunes. Finally, I paused, sat back and took stock of what Borland has really done.

What the buyer of Paradox SE (for Special Edition) gets is not a mini Paradox 3.5, but a version of the previous edition (3.0) without network support, the Personal Programmer (an application generator) or the Data Entry Toolkit (a development aid for fancy data entry routines). Is this bad? Some kind of ripoff? Hardly. The truth is, most end users who require a relational system would probably not need or use these excluded tools. I actually like the idea of having the "essential" Paradox without being charged for all the other modules. With Paradox SE, you can still manipulate your data as you would with version 3.5, query by example (the strong suit of Paradox), create forms and reports, and even write and execute PAL code. You just have to do it with version 3.0, which is still a nimble product. The difference between the two versions lies mainly in the latter's ability to use memory more efficiently, and this usually comes into play with large databases.

So, does it make sense to buy this version of Paradox? I think so, unless your needs take you into the realm of sophisticated application development or running on a network. What I do wish is that Borland had been a little more up front by letting prospective buyers know exactly what they're getting. As it is, the unsuspecting have every reason to believe the box contains "Paradox 3.5 Jr." Yet, even though this is not the case, what

the buyer does get is well worth the street price (\$75-\$80) and will probably be all the DBMS they will ever need.

ObjectVision 2.0 A First Look

Review by Roger Glass

Madison PC User's Group

If an idea has merit, it will succeed despite some initial limitations. That was much the case with ObjectVision, version 1. People liked the idea of electronic forms tied to databases, but version 1 lacked enough "oomph" to fully exploit the underlying premise.

A lot of organizations need an application framework to access normally incompatible data formats, or to build new data from old. It's also nice to have the ability to enter data onto a screen just as if one were filling out a paper form, and then print the form in graphic mode when finished, with the company logo and other goodies. Or they may wish for one regional office to build an electronic form and to be able to share that form with the other regional offices.

Despite the prophets of the "paperless office" droning on endlessly, it seems like we all end up with MORE paper rather than less, as office automation continues. Products such as ObjectVision should start to reverse that trend.

There are other form-based database engines on the market. Dataease is one of them. Useful as the metaphor is, DOS form-based applications such as Dataease can get boring pretty quickly. Especially if the electronic form is only remotely similar to the paper form in use. True, you can link Dataease to a mail-merge with WordPerfect, for instance, but it takes some doing. And chances are it won't look remotely like your company invoice or insurance form, for example.

Linking graphics-based Windows forms to databases without programming has great appeal. When you include the Paradox and Btrieve engines, the ability to create new files in native format, and the ability to forge links between such file formats as Paradox, dBase, Btrieve, and ASCII, plus some Dynamic Data Exchange and Object Linking and Embedding (OLE) thrown in for spice, you are getting pretty close to the state of the art.

Features

This is the first roll-out by Borland of the Property Inspector, a wonderful idea (you'll see this soon in Quattro Pro and Paradox for Windows, folks). While in design mode, you select an object by clicking on it, then you press the right mouse button. Everything that you can legally do to that object pops up in a window. You then select what you want to do from the resulting menu. The items you have selected to modify will then be marked as "checked" when you inspect the object at a later date.

A button bar has been added to give access to the design tools within Object-Vision. You can

flip back and forth between design and execution mode easily, to help you build and debug your design.

There are two types of logic trees supported, value and event. Value trees might be used to control form display, or to set up variable calculations. Event trees are the standard Windows interface-type activities that control the interaction between the user and the application, such as when a button gets clicked.

The really innovative stuff involves the creation of Data Links. This is where you link forms and fields to the application tables, determine the look-up/update/insert/delete capabilities of these links, set up "locator" (search) fields, use data filters, and create virtual fields (calculated or derived fields).

I've used the Paradox, dBase, and ASCII links, and have been impressed with the way one is prompted through the process of creating these links. If you let it, ObjectVision will even create a slew of click buttons for you on the way out of linking your form to the data. These little "clickers" will perform the paging, scrolling, insert, and update functions that make life a little easier when navigating through a large database.

Although links are usually easy to set up, a pre-existing knowledge of databases comes in quite handy. I had to bone up on Paradox primary and secondary keys to build my first application. The idea was easy, but the terminology was a bit different.

One of the truly slick features of the tables is that you can control the field displays through fonts. If you want to roll in a large field

into a table view, one that would not normally fit into the space you have available, you can pick and choose fonts until you are able to read the desired information. You also have the option of making the field a "scrolling" field, and then being able to navigate your way through the field.

Database browsing is built into the environment via the scroll bar. Within ten minutes of installing the package, I was able to link, display, and scroll a table with either "instant" buttons or with a scroll bar.

Graphics can be brought in as Windows bitmaps, Windows metafiles, or Object-Vision graphics files through the Windows Clipboard. Drop shadows, line drawing, and a few special effects are built into the package to help pretty-up the result. You can build your own colors, if you like.

Rulers and grids are supplied to help you adjust the form for optimal printing. The default print font is system, but you can customize the fields for both print and display output, as well as preview the printed results.

Field types supported are: General, Character, Alphanumeric, Picture, and Scrolling. Numeric fields can be fixed, percent, financial, date/time, or currency, and picture "masks" are supported. Selection methods include selection lists, check boxes, radio buttons, true/false, and combo boxes. In other words, the basic Windows stuff.

You can build help text behind any field simply by using the property inspector, and then typing in the text. Messages

can be invoked through decision trees. Although the full context of Windows message types are not supported, you can prompt for the user additional information.

A number of spreadsheet-style "@" functions are provided with this latest release. An insurance agent's wish list would be hard-pressed to come up with any missing functions. (Oops! Set myself up there....) The resulting end applications can be amazingly small. I designed an application that browses two databases and uses three forms. It took 1.7K of storage!

Dynamic Link Libraries (DLLs) can be "registered" to the ObjectVision modules, which should allow for future extensions and add-on services.

One thing I dearly love in a package are examples to follow. Somehow, even the best manual doesn't seem to put me into the front lines of development.

Twenty other sample applications are provided on the sample diskette included with the package.

Support

On-line help is quite extensive. Almost everything can be built from prompts, to avoid typing errors. The Help Engine allows you to step through related topics in a straightforward, windows-like manner, and to add your own personal touch to any help topic.

A Borland tech support hot-line, TechFax, and a Download BBS are available to registered owners. In addition, Borland monitors CompuServe, BIX, and Genie on a regular basis.

There are two textbooks included. "ObjectVision: Getting Started" is a warp-speed overview. The "Reference Guide" gives you the nuts and bolts of the process -- one of those A to Z jobbies.

As is usually the case with Borland's product support group, they are supporting the creation of ObjectVision Special Interest Groups (OVSIGs?). Borland has also written a nice companion book, "ObjectVision Tips & Techniques," which has a more advanced description of many of the features available.

Security

Table security can be assigned through passwords. Any field can be protected. Dummy, or hidden, fields are also supported. In addition, decision trees can be hidden in the runtime version of the application.

The Paradox engine allows you to configure record lock levels, as well as specify where the configuration file will be kept. SHARE.EXE must be loaded along with the application, as well as PARADOX.NET.

Caveats

ASCII files must be comma-delimited if you are linking to a file created outside of ObjectVision. I would have preferred the option of fixed-sized field import as an option.

In order to see large decision-trees, you have to copy the tree to the clipboard and examine the results in the clipboard. This seems awkward to me.

My first application searched a couple of databases that had around 1100 records in each

one, and was very simple. The response time was excellent. When linking to large databases, careful design would probably be needed to keep the application humming along.

There's not much of a computer language to work with, but that is consistent with the philosophy of the product. Future releases will undoubtedly expand the capabilities of the event trees, as well as provide more "@" functions.

Overall Impressions

My general impression is that this product will become a serious development tool, if it hasn't already. ObjectVision is a bit dense on the surface and requires some digging to get below the surface. You will see some really sophisticated designs coming out of this platform, often designed by the pros.

One area that might separate ObjectVision from the rest of the Windows market is the ability to develop quick prototype applications. I can't imagine an environment that could do it any slicker than this one. With the value trees provided, one can practically design on the fly.

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Reflections on the Personal Computer

by Peter Norton

At the beginning of each year, Time Magazine recognizes the most significant force of the past year. Much to the dismay of some readers, Time Magazine's Man of the Year for 1982 was not a person. Rather, it was a machine: The computer.

Time (January 3, 1983) characterized 1982 as "the year of the computer." It concluded that the greatest influence for good or evil was not "a single individual, but a process, and a widespread recognition by a whole society that this process is changing the course of all other processes."

It was 1982 when the IBM Personal Computer began making its way into offices, schools and homes around the country. There were predictions then of the many benefits we were to enjoy as a result of the computerization of our lives. Millions of us would be able to generate, evaluate, and leverage a large amount of data. We would appreciate immense gains in productivity.

There were fears as well. Some argued that if limited to only certain professionals, the computer might create an elite group of intellectuals. Others feared that by automating the work place with computers, we might dehumanize our lives and put ourselves out of work.

In hindsight, we see that the first ten years of the personal computer were a remarkable period of tremendous change in our lives. We also see how well that

designation of "man of the year" has held up.

Fulfilling the Promise, But Not the Fears

Introduced in the late summer of 1981, the IBM Personal Computer catalyzed the growth of the microcomputer industry. It ushered in what we call the "information age" and over time, enabled users to get their work done more quickly and in a more democratic fashion in what has become a global village.

The free flow of information that PCs enabled ensures that department managers and employees have data that is critical to their jobs and their success. PCs leveled the playing field for small and large businesses. By putting online information services and spreadsheets at the fingertips of small businesses, PCs gave equal power to small and large operations, fueling entrepreneurial enterprises.

The personal computer encouraged the development of new models of business organization by moving computing power and information from centralized MIS departments, which controlled who received what information and when, to networks of workgroups throughout a corporation.

Those promised productivity gains have been realized, although we've had to change the scorecard along the way to recognize it. An outgrowth of the

Industrial Revolution, traditional productivity metrics measured how many goods were manufactured. But as early as 1983, more than half of all employed Americans earned their living not by producing goods, but by exchanging various kinds of information. Hindsight shows us that the personal computer was perfectly positioned to help these "knowledge workers" exchange information.

As a result, we've seen huge gains. The PC has enabled us to automate project planning and financial analysis, to keep better records and to deliver better customer service. We can keep the production costs and schedules of printed materials on target. Over the growing number of computer networks, we can communicate more easily with customers, vendors, fellow employees and friends around the world. These gains cannot be measured by how many widgets we move off the shipping dock at the end of each month or whether we've progressed to a four-day work week.

The fears that some high-tech prophets raised in 1982 today make for humorous reading. The intellectual ruling class that some predicted might arise did not materialize. Instead, PCs have had a democratizing effect; they have put information and tools into the hands of a public larger and more widespread than ever anticipated. Publishing, for example, is no longer the domain of specialists with ex-

pensive, custom systems. Anyone can do it.

Far from having a dehumanizing effect, the personal computer has encouraged more interaction between people on a wider scale. We have not been replaced by computers; they have become an integrated part of our lives.

Looking Ahead

As the IBM Personal Computer catalyzed the microcomputer industry in 1982, I see new software as the catalyst for 1992 and beyond. In 1991, customers invested nearly twice as much in PC technology as in mainframe technology. But the sobering fact is that of the \$55 billion in new machines in the U.S., about 62% will replace or enhance older models. There's an important message in those numbers.

In the second decade of the personal computer, we need to reach both existing and new users. We need software that makes using a personal computer, or whatever form an individual's computer will take, akin to driving a car. Fortunately, we are past the "crank-start" era of PCs. The Macintosh interface and Windows offer the equivalent of automatic transmission. Next, we need the equivalent of air conditioning and cruise control.

The software that will bring personal computers to new users will make a computer more usable: Easier to learn, easier to use, and easier to get more work done without inflicting major time or financial burdens. It will balance the latest powerful technology -- hot new features -- with a turn-the-key-in-the-ignition approach. As we install personal

computers across networks and into every part of an organization, this software must ensure that the user's information is secure through virus protection, security and data recovery facilities. If sharing information is what we do, that information must be secure.

One major challenge for the second decade of the personal computer is to ensure that those people who were dismayed in 1982 by Time's selection of the computer as "Man of the Year," are no longer disturbed. In fact, our challenge is to ensure that those people are reading Time on their personal computer.

Peter Norton, founder of Peter Norton Computing, is one of the early software pioneers of the computer industry.



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RightWriter 5.0 for Windows

by Ash Nallawalla

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RightWriter(R) for Windows(TM) (RWW) began shipping on 18 November 1991. This is the newest release of the RightWriter grammar and style checker that proofreads documents for errors in grammar, style, word usage, and punctuation. It is primarily suited to business and technical writing. RightWriter is also available in Mac, Network, DOS, UNIX, and Tandy DeskMate versions that can be expected to do most things this version does, although I have not examined them.

What Is RightWriter?

RWW and similar programs simply examine text using preprogrammed rules, so you cannot eliminate a human editor by using such programs. They cannot appreciate literary license and phrases unique to an industry. Sometimes they will flag correct phrases as errors; so the human operator can choose to ignore them. RWW tries to point out "bad" writing style; for example, an overuse of passive voice is dangerous in a manual if it is not clear who is supposed to perform a given act.

RWW comes with a tutorial program that helps you learn the basics of document analysis. It is presented as a scenario of using RWW to process a document: the tutorial text contains deliberate errors that are picked up and commented on in another window. A 100-page (approx) book serves as a User's

Manual; it appears to be a complete, task-based rewrite of the earlier, disorganized efforts before Que Software purchased the original company. It also serves as a teacher of basic grammar and style. A free copy of the historic book *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White is also supplied.

RWW provides a critical summary for every document it analyses. The summary covers the following topics:

- * Indexes (Readability, Descriptive, Strength and Jargon)
- * Sentence Structure Recommendations
- * Document Statistics

How It Works

You choose the file that you want to process. RWW can be called from within Microsoft(R) Word for Windows and Ami Professional as a menu selection. It can also be run from Windows 3.x as a free-standing program. It can identify many popular word processor formats but if you have an obscure format then you have to convert it first to ASCII. RWW then processes the text in one of three ways:

- * Interactively, where you can choose to accept or ignore the advice given, just as you would with some spelling checkers.

- * It can create a marked-up copy of your text. This means the text is interspersed with RWW comments and a summary at the end.

- * It can give you just the summary information.

New Features

Users of RW would be interested to hear of the following new enhancements:

- * A new interactive editing option that includes automatic rechecking of edited text, bookmarks to mark a location, undo the last change made, and the ability to check blocks of text instead of the entire document

- * Nine predefined writing styles and an unlimited number of user-defined styles

- * 1,000 additional rules (more than 6,500 rules now available)

- * Support for Windows word processors including Ami Pro, Microsoft Windows Writer, Word for Windows, WordPerfect for Windows, and RTF format Check text for grammar and style from any Windows product (desktop publishing, spreadsheet, presentation graphics) through the clipboard

- * Context-sensitive Windows help with three levels of assistance

- * View only the summary analysis for an overall critique of

a document's readability, strength, use of descriptive words, jargon, and sentence structure

* Display the parser tree and show the parts of speech for a sentence

User Comments

I have used RW at work since version 1.0. We have a multisite, multiauthor situation, and we endeavor to write at the education level of our target audience. The writers use the software not only to check their writing style and grammar but also to check three major indexes--Readability, Strength, and Descriptive. We track such metrics as part of a wider quality commitment. The remaining paragraphs are part of my findings.

British or American?

At work we used to write in British English for some product lines but now all manuals are in American English. I am trying to find out from the suppliers if a British English version is available: this can be very important to you. This concerns not only British spelling but mainly British rules of grammar, which differ markedly. That might concern Canadian users.

House Style Issues

We have found that the corporate style gets in the way of some RWW measurements. Lists cause the main problem: we do not use punctuation marks unless there is a complete sentence. The result is that a bulleted list consisting of phrases can appear to be a very long sentence. The Australian military writing style in this situation would have placed a semicolon

at the end of each list element and a full stop after the final element. Not much of an improvement, as far as RWW is concerned. So we comment out such items to get a more realistic reading. Program code segments are also commented out.

A limitation of RWW in my work situation is that I can neither customize the inbuilt rules nor add my own. I cannot modify the help screens either.

I am writing this over the Christmas break, so I cannot comment on usage in the work environment. I have not seen the latest version of Grammatik for Windows but hope to review it shortly. We are about to upgrade to Microsoft Word for Windows 2.0, which has an inbuilt grammar checker, so that will also have to be evaluated. RWW now accepts user-defined styles (not rules), although it does pick the "which/that" rule correctly!

The Torture Tests

I processed an early version of this document and here is the summary as reported by RWW:

< *SUMMARY * >

RightWriter analyzed the document RIGHTWIN.TXT using the style file GENERAL.RWT: This style file is for general business writing. The document was produced by Standard Text (ASCII).

READABILITY INDEX: 9.42

4th 6th 8th 10th 12th 14th
|***|***|***|***|***|***|
SIMPLE | ---- GOOD COMPLEX

Readers need a 9th grade level of education.

STRENGTH INDEX: 0.32

0.0 0.5 1.0
|****|****|****|
WEAK STRONG

You can make the writing more direct by using: - the active voice - shorter sentences - less wordy phrases - fewer cliches - fewer weak phrases

DESCRIPTIVE INDEX: 0.44

0.0 0.5 1.0
|****|****|****|****|*
TERSE | NORMAL | WORDY

JARGON INDEX: 0.00

SENTENCE STRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS:

14. No Recommendations.

< ** END OF SUMMARY ** >

The above summary is not the most detailed one you can ask for. If you need to know the number of words, syllables, etc, RWW will give them. You should not expect such programs to find every error known to a human expert. I ran the following text through RW (its comments are also included):

"Remember to never split an infinitive. The passive voice should < * Could the split infinitive "to never split" be confusing or hard to understand? * > never be used. Do not put statements in the negative form. Verbs < * "be used" is passive voice. Consider rephrasing the sentence to say who or what is doing the action. * > has to agree with their subjects. Proofread carefully to see if you words out or made speling errors. If you reread your work, you can find on rereading a great deal of repetition can be

avoided by < * If your writing has not clearly justified and explained this term, saying "great" will not convince your reader that it is true. Readers may even become wary of unjustified use, which may weaken your entire message. * > < * Is there a less wordy way to say this than "a great deal of?" * > < * "be avoided" is passive voice. Consider rephrasing the sentence to say who or what is doing the action. * > rereading and editing. A writer must not shift your point of view. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction. (Remember, too, a < * Should the sentence start with a conjunction? Some writers consider starting a sentence with "And" to be poor writing style. * > < * Is this contraction appropriate for this document? Avoid using contractions in formal writing. * > preposition is a terrible word to end a sentence with.) Don't overuse exclamation marks!! Place pronouns as close as possible, < * Is this contraction appropriate for this document? Avoid using contractions in formal writing. * > < * RightWriter does not recognize "!!" as correct punctuation. Please review it. * > especially in long sentences, as of 10 or more words, to their antecedents. Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided. If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a < * "be avoided" is passive voice. Consider rephrasing the sentence to say who or what is doing the action. * > linking verb is. Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixing metaphors. Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky. Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing. Always pick on the correct idiom. The adverb always follows the verb. The word which should be used is the one < * Is this cor-

rect? Consider replacing "word which" with "word that." * > < * "be used" is passive voice. Consider rephrasing the sentence to say who or what is doing the action. * > which the thesaurus recommends. A dictionary is inanimate but lets you choose the second definition. Microsoft's WinWord is a example of < * Is it appropriate to have capitalized letters within this word? Check that this capitalization is not a typographical error. * > < * Should this be "an" instead of "a?" Replace with "an." * > the trend for mixing case in product names for programmes. Last but not < * If your writing has not clearly justified and explained this term, saying "trend" will not convince your reader that it is true. Readers may even become wary of unjustified use, which may weaken your entire message. * > least, avoid cliches like the plague; seek viable alternatives.

You will see that RWW skipped many opportunities. Some of its suggestions were amusing. It did not complain that inanimate objects were possessive or had human-like powers. It does not have a spelling checker, so it didn't complain about "programme" in this context. That does not concern me unduly, because spelling checkers seem to come with many programs these days, and become disk hogs. However, if you have writers who tend to forget to spell-check, then this omission might concern you.

RW 4.0 and earlier versions used to have a "Words to Review" list that served as a rudimentary spelling test because it would list every word it considered to be questionable. That feature appears to have been dropped in RWW.

Conclusion

RWW certainly serves as an unbiased tool for calculating indexes within the limitations mentioned earlier, and we will continue to use such a program for that purpose. The grammar checker will certainly help a person with an open mind, with a good command over American English and its differences from British English. I say that because many people are convinced that their English is flawless.

Supplier

The review copy was kindly supplied by Que Software, 11711 N. College Ave., Suite 140, Carmel, IN 46032, USA. Phone (317) 573-2500; Fax (317) 573-2655. List price is US\$ 99.95. Toll-free support is available for registered US customers. Copyright 1992 by Madison PC User's Group, P.O. Box 2598, Madison, WI 53701. All rights reserved. This file was originally published in the January 1992 Bits & PC's, a publication of the Madison PC User's Group, and may be reprinted only by not-for-profit organizations. Please give proper credit to the author and Bits & PC's.

PC-Write A New Generation

*Review by Gary W.
Wodka*

Those folks at Quicksort have done it again. The same people who introduced a universe of

hackers (1983), PC Lite (all year or new me word pr Write Sta

This light word pi doors to The add (PCW-SL ing lineu and geel of PC-Wi tures of I new feat other tw

For most first wo used. W who pr from a where. T evolved Write is g it's interf gest dra super frie F-keys keystrok

PCW-SL that wer PC-Writ Features which w over the mouse s have to r tions a thesau synonymr with a vocabulr tive help without tomizer persona combin: tures.

Quicksoft's Customizer function you can select screen shades, assign macros and set up an automatic save feature based on YOUR schedule. There are over 200 defaults that can be set and changing the defaults is a snap. When using the Customizer, a "Helps & Tips" box appears on the right side of the screen which describes the options available for each feature. You can customize the Editing features, Screen Display, Keyboard Options, Print Options and File Options.

The reference manual takes the same form as the tutorial, using one-half of the page to explain the concepts, and the other half to demonstrate the technique, using either charts of keystrokes or screen shots to illustrate the point. Covering all the features mentioned above in great detail makes it possible even for beginners to adapt the program to their individual needs, and get up and running FAST! And that's what makes a good program great.

I guess if I had to choose one word to describe PC-Write Standard Level, it would be "adaptability." It lets YOU define the features you want and how you want to use them, and those you decide not to use disappear from both the menus and the keyboard. You can add more features at any time. It lets YOU define the pull-down menu structure to suit your individual needs. It lets YOU redefine the meaning of any individual key, or completely change the feel of the keyboard. It puts YOU in the drivers seat. It will even work on a single-disk laptop computer. A full installation takes only 978K. And of those files, the largest (302K) is the thesaurus.

But there are some things missing that I'd like to see. What about a powerful mail-merge feature (a basic form letter/label merge IS provided)? How about a feature that allows column support? Automatic Table of Contents? Widow and orphan control? Automatic indexing? And what about graphics?? I like pictures! If it sounds like I'm picky, I'm really not. These are features that many "mid-range" word processors provide. And of course, there's no Windows support... yet! I'm sure that will be along shortly. After all, now that they've got three DOS versions, maybe they could be the first kid on the block with three Windows versions!

PC-Write Standard Level's Registered User Package, which contains program diskettes, Reference Manual, Getting Started Manual and one year of free technical support, retails for \$129. A shareware evaluation diskette set is available for \$19. This is the same pricing structure used on PC-Write 3.0. You wouldn't be disappointed with either package. Personally, I like the convenience of the mouse support and pull-down menus.

The Windows Box

by Rod McKenzie

Madison PC User's Group

Every new year should start with some resolutions. The Windows user is no exception. These are the well-intended promises we make to ourselves. Most of them

go against the grain of human nature. They're supposed to be good for us. But if we kept them, would our lives be infinitely more orderly, more productive, and less frustrating? Personally, I doubt it, but the anxious moments might be spread out a little more. You know, less intensity, less frequency.

The struggle begins when one understands that computers respond very well to good housekeeping. Orderliness is not everyone's inborn trait, so after a while I realized my computer had known my traits all along. Here's my list of New Year's resolutions.

1. I promise to back up my hard disk on a regular basis. (This may turn out to be a case of "first made, first broken," but at least I'll give it a try.)

2. I promise to clean up my hard drive on a regular basis, deleting unneeded files and moving old document files to diskettes.

3. Assuming I remember to keep the first two, I promise to defragment my hard disk.

4. I will keep my desk and bookshelves better organized, so I can find the manuals for the software that I'm using. (On-screen help is not usually the last word about the subject.)

5. I will not load up my hard disk with too many wallpaper files, screen savers, and soft font files that I hardly ever use. (There is a limit to these things, right?)

6. I will take the time and read the Windows Resource Kit from Microsoft. In fact, I already read through the update materials that Microsoft sent and here are

a few of the good pointers that the manual has to offer.

Capital Punishment

I often hear the complaint that Windows demands too much hardware, and that big capital investments stand between the user and the next level of performance. For some users this is true. As Microsoft introduces Windows NT and IBM introduces OS/2 version 2, it will be more true than ever. Those users who thought that their equipment was fast enough, or that they had enough RAM, will find that they really want more. Every source I have found says that the difference in 286 performance versus 386 performance will be even greater when the "ultimate" operating system is finally delivered.

What's the solution? Spend the upgrade dollars carefully and don't get crucified on a cross of hardware mistakes. Look carefully at the software applications that you want to run and see which parts of the hardware are being worked the hardest. If there are a lot of DOS applications that you expect to keep running for a long time to come, even with future upgrades, then there is probably more to be said for getting a faster processor than owning a great deal of RAM. Then, when running Windows, the trade-off is seeing more hard drive activity as the swapfile is busy reading and writing to disk.

More hard drive speed is nice, but capacity of the drive is important, too. If you're migrating to more Windows applications, the drive will fill up fast. Replace five DOS applications with the equivalent Windows applications and the hard drive will be more full. Consider a disk com-

pressing utility such as Stacker, which has both a software and a hardware product to improve disk capacity.

One of the forgotten upgrades that can markedly improve Windows apparent speed and the responsiveness on screen is the video card itself. There's a lot of data being sent to the video adapter, and finally to the monitor, for you to see. Upgrading only the memory or the drives may not deliver all of the speed that was expected. Spend a few of those capital dollars on a faster video card and keep the upgrading in balance.

For awhile it may be true that more Windows may as well read more dollars, but in the end, getting the best performance out of Windows means spending the money wisely, and that you can do. Happy New Year!

The PC is not a Typewriter

Book review by Mike Janda

Madison PC User's Group

And I thought everyone used their computer as a typewriter! Just type "copy con prn" and press return, type in the text (just like a typewriter, except you can use the backspace key instead of white-out), press Ctrl-Z when done, and your letter comes out on the printer. What? Don't I use a word processor? Well, I admit to occasionally calling up WordPerfect to generate five-line memos.

So why does that memo (or letter, formal presentation materials, etc.) have to look like it was done on a typewriter? Wouldn't it look better if it appeared to be done by a professional printer? With today's laser printers, desktop publishing packages, and even word processors, you can create professional-looking documents easily and quickly. That is, if you know what a professional-looking document looks like. (I can tell you that it is not just selecting a font other than Courier!)

The PC is not a typewriter, by Robin Williams, is "a style manual for creating professional-level type on your PC." Its 90 pages cover the basics in 19 short chapters, four (or nine, depending on how you count) appendices, and a list of guidelines. The book is not a detailed how-to on typesetting, graphic arts, or page layout. There are many other books that do that -- some good, some not so good, and some that require a Ph.D. to read. What this book does is tell you, in plain English, exactly what makes a document look "professional."

It starts out with discussions of what makes the text look better: using one space between sentences; "real" quotation marks and how to use them with punctuation; using apostrophes properly; how and where to use regular, "en" and "em" dashes; and using special characters, subscripts and superscripts, accent marks, underlining (never!), and all capital letters.

The book then describes paragraph and page layout improvements through the use of kerning (spacing between individual letters), tabs and indents, the avoidance of widows and or-

phans, the best uses of hyphenation and line breaks, the proper use of leading (line spacing), text justification, and using hanging punctuation. It concludes with a couple of chapters on fonts, ways to combine different typefaces on a page, the usage of bold and italics, and lots of other goodies.

The appendices cover the basics of inserting special characters into documents with a few of the popular programs (WordPerfect, MS-Word, PageMaker and Ventura Publisher). Although this material is located in the program's manual, try to find it when you want it! Finally, the last section is a checklist of 41 do's and don'ts. If you follow every one of them, you will have a very professional-looking document.

The PC is not a typewriter is based on the award-winning book from Ms. Williams, *The Mac is not a typewriter*. Since only the final output is important here, it didn't take much to change Mac references to PC and tap another huge market. The rules are the same everywhere. Now, if only I can follow them.

The PC is not a typewriter, by Robin Williams, is priced at \$9.95 and available from bookstores everywhere.

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January Meeting Announcement

This month our illustrious library SIG will be the presenters. They will be showcasing some of the new windows programs that have been added to the club's library. There are lots of games in this group, as well as useful programs. If you use windows, you might want to stop by and see what we can do for you in the way of great software at a reasonable price.

Next month, Borland will be back at long last. They have been very busy this past year, and have a lot to show for it. In particular, they will be showcasing their latest product, Object Vision, a windows product that has to be seen to be believed!

And if you are pressed for time, don't forget the restaurant down stairs. They have some of the best food in town at very reasonable prices. Stop by and give them a try, you will be glad.

WealthStarter 2.0

Review by David Jensen

Madison PC User's Group

WealthStarter 2.0 with Charles Givens is a personal financial planning tool for a person with straightforward financial arrangements and the willingness to spend the time to set up a budget and keep with it. There are no shocking recommendations or magic ways to find wealth. Recommendations for savings and investments are middle-of-the-road. Despite that, the license tells us that the advice given in the program is not really advice, or, at least, Reality Technologies, Ltd. is not responsible for the advice given. Certainly the advice was nearly unexceptional, although the belief in a little precious metal isn't exactly conservative mainstream investing.

The program supports seven steps for financial planning: determine your net worth, itemize your income, itemize your expenses, create a safety net goal, create a debt payoff goal, plan to retire in comfort, and achieve your goals. To accomplish these goals, the user can begin by using a demonstration file for "the Wilsons." This file, along with the manual's tutorial, covers most of the steps involved in the process recommended by Charles Givens.

The first step in the process is to find out where you are: what are

your assets and liabilities. Along with this is the need to identify where you would like to be. WealthStarter believes that it is very important to identify the goals you have. Bless its little bytes, it asks the user to list all of the user's dreams, not just financial ones.

The heart of the program is a step-by-step budget development plan. It was excellent at allowing me to put together a well-detailed budget. At each level, it provided a level of detail that didn't allow me to overlook the small items that seem to be so much a part of life that they could be overlooked when developing a budget. It allowed me to add my own details in the budget for any particular expenses I have that could not be anticipated by them. An important feature of budget development is planning to pay off debts and add to savings for a safety net and specific goals. By making this a part of the budget, WealthStarter keeps the user from putting savings last. By identifying savings with a particular goal, WealthStarter helps users want to put that money toward the goal, not just some amorphous savings.

I like the detail of the budgeting process, the extensive help, not only for the use of the program, but more importantly, the help in developing a budget. The program tries to target realistic goals, offers tips if a budget item being put together varies from the norm (even if only 0.09 percent higher than the norm), and has a clear explanation for the reasons that it recommends certain choices in investments. It seems to have the Quaker Oats ("It's the right thing to do") approach to budgeting and savings. The promise is the one

you identify for the future if you behave today. The Puritans would have been proud.

As long as you continue to use the package, it provides follow up and reminds you if you are behind your goal. If there is a problem, it offers suggestions on how to catch up to that goal.

One nice feature of WealthStarter is the ability to import files from Quicken so you know what you have been spending. This helps simplify the development of a budget. The import first requires an export from Quicken, so it is not seamless, but it works and saves a fair amount of time.

This program appears to have been developed by Reality Technologies in conjunction with the Givens Organization. I don't feel convinced that the people who wrote the program had a clue what they were writing about. Certainly, with all of the disclaimers, it is clear that Reality's lawyers didn't trust what was being written.

"Please note: All recommendations in the WealthStarter Budget Tips are only general suggestions and not specific recommendations. See a financial advisor for advice for your specific situation." This disclaimer printed at the end of three pages of money management tips kind of sums up why I didn't like the lawyers' approach. This is an excellent general purpose budgeting program and it has good general investing recommendations, but it starts to fall short when used as anything beyond that. Still, they shouldn't have been afraid of the advice they give. It is fair, generally accepted advice.

It may be that Givens and Reality worked on this together. If so, I would say that Givens did a better job. The installation was simple, although I was surprised at how much space the program took. Part of that was due to graphics mode, including a picture of Charles J. Givens at the beginning of each session. That is just part of the cost of modern products.

I didn't like the way the interface worked. The only way to go up a level in operations was to use the ESC key. While the program seemed to have no problems with my mouse, it did not acknowledge any clicks from the right or center buttons. This meant that I could not back up a level without going back to the keyboard. It beeped and ignored me if I tried to go directly to the menu bar with the mouse without ESCing to it. I tried this program with and without a mouse, and like Windows, the mouse is nearly indispensable. This inflexibility in the program interface proved to be my greatest complaint. The timeline is a graph of the budget projections. It seems to be recalculated and rewritten after every change in screens. Mercifully, there is an option that allows it to be turned off.

If you are serious about developing and maintaining a budget, WealthStarter with Charles J. Givens is an effective, if not painless, tool for budgeting. The planning tools are excellent, the recommendations are fine, and the tie to Quicken can be useful. The most serious complaint I have with the program is the incessant insistence on the ESC key at all times.

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