

Words, words, Words

Whatever else you do with your PC, be it designing buildings, financial modelling or just playing games, you'll almost certainly be processing words as well. With prices ranging by a factor of ten, the choice can be confusing, and the real question is 'What do I need?'

All the Windows products reviewed here will give you the basic human rights of word processing. Wysiwyg (what you see is what you get) editing will make sure that the printer output matches that on screen. A spell-checker catches those typos that (despite Wysiwyg) stay shyly unobtrusive on screen, but glare on the printed page. Styles let you combine formatting attributes – font, size, alignment, spacing and so on – into a single named 'style' such as 'Heading' or 'Indented', which saves time and helps achieve consistent-looking documents. Finally, you may want to include other things besides plain text in a document – illustrations, charts and tables, for example.

Beyond that it's the extras: page-layout features, such as newspaper-style columns or text 'wrapped' around pictures; document organisation utilities, such as indexing or tables of contents; macros for automating processes; customisability for creating your own environment; and the whole raft of 'smart' features, such as automatic corrections.

Word processors are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Features such as grammar checking, automatic page layout, and 'smart' auto-correction allow you to process your words as perfectly and painlessly as possible. Tim Knott evaluates eight of the latest Windows packages



Products Microsoft Word 7

By far the best seller, Word for Windows has always achieved a fine balance between powerful features and ease of use. For those working on long documents, such as instruction manuals, there is an arsenal of management features, such as footnotes, index and table-of-contents generators, and the facility to split up a 'master' document into sections. This way members of a team can work on individual chapters, while maintaining page numbering and indexing in the whole book. You can work on a document as an 'outline' – hiding or showing nested levels of headings, sub-headings and text, and insert cross-references to other parts of a document.

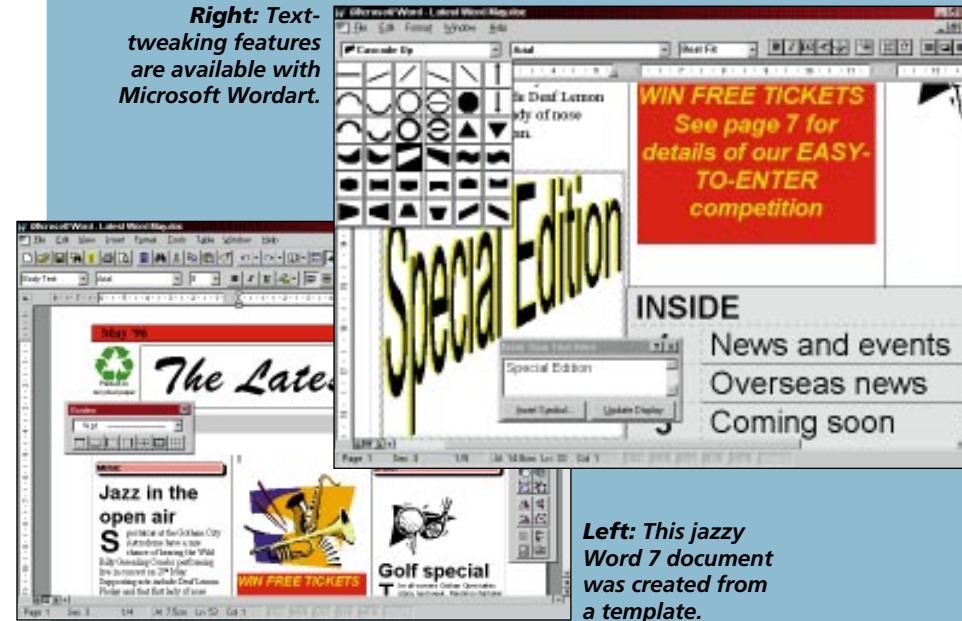
In terms of page layout, Word is extremely versatile – you can have multiple columns, tables, and wrap text around graphics or other

'framed' objects. There are OLE 'servers' – miniature applications that can be summoned from Word (or other applications) to create charts, mathematical equations or fancy logos. There's a range of drawing tools, not just for lines and shapes, but also for arrowed 'call-outs' and text boxes. Unlike most word processors, you don't need to create a graphic frame for drawing objects, but can use them straight on the page, like a pencil.

With version 6 of Word, Microsoft pioneered 'Intellisense' – a range of 'as you type' automated aids, now adopted by the competition. These included 'smart' left and right-handed quote marks, automatic capitals at the start of sentences, and correction of two initial capital letters for those prone to heavy-handedness on the Shift key. The cleverest touch, however, was 'Autocorrect' – if you habitually mistype a word ('manger' for 'manager' for instance), you can add this to

Microsoft Word 7

Right: Text-tweaking features are available with Microsoft Wordart.



Left: This jazzy Word 7 document was created from a template.

the list to be corrected automatically. You can also use this to expand abbreviations – have your initials, say, replaced by your full name.

This version adds a range of symbols to Autocorrect: type '1/4', or '(c)' for instance and this will be changed to the proper typeset fraction or copyright symbol. There's also an exclusion list, so you can stop it 'correcting' things such as 'PCs' or 'MPs'. Version 7 will now perform word form replacement – if you want to replace 'bike' with 'cycle' it can also find/replace 'biking/cycling' at the same time. Another new aid is 'check as you go' spelling correction: suspect words are underlined as soon as they are typed, and a right click prompts a list of suggested replacements. Automatic formatting has also been added in this version – type three dashes and you'll get a full-width border; start a line with an asterisk and you'll get a bulleted list. As with all Intellisense features, you can undo the last 'Auto' action, or turn the feature off completely.

Users can customise the interface radically – creating their own button bars, menus and keyboard shortcuts, and record or program macros to automate tasks or add their own features. New to version 7 is an 'Address Book' button which offers a quick way of inserting addresses from either the Windows 95 Exchange e-mail and fax manager, or the Schedule+ personal organiser.

Despite the profusion of features, Word remains easy to use, with 'Tooltips' that pop up to describe each button, 'Tipwizards' that provide a running commentary of suggestions as you work,

'Answerwizards' that let you type in 'How do I?' requests in plain English, and 'Show me' buttons that offer step-by-step guidance. Every dialog box has a 'What's this?' button to give a short explanation of all its parts and options. Finally, there is a range of template Wizards to guide you through creating new documents, ranging from faxes to newsletters.

One word of warning – if you're using Word 7.0 under the original version of Windows 95, or Word 6.0a or 6.0b under Windows 3.1, there is a security risk in that parts of deleted files can find their way into Word files. The data isn't printed out, nor is it visible from Word itself, but can be seen with a text editor (such as Windows Notepad). The cure is to get the Windows 95 Service pack or, for version 6.0, the 'c' release from Microsoft.

A top-of-the-range best seller that skilfully combines power, ease of use and customisability.

£250 (incl VAT)
Microsoft: 0345 002000

Microsoft Word 7

Features	1	2	3	4	5
Performance	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money	1	2	3	4	5

Wordperfect 7.0

At the time of writing, the sale from Novell had yet to be completed. Despite this, the Corel Corporation was able to provide us with a beta CD of the complete Windows 95 Office 7 suite, which should be on sale by the time you read this. It's hard to say how much

disk space the final product will consume, but the entire beta Office came to a staggering 300Mb, with the word processor and shared files – such as the spell-checker – taking about a third of this.

The interface has changed little since version 6.1. You have three levels of toolbar: the button bar by default contains the usual Save, Open, Undo and similar commands; the Power bar has formatting controls; and, for certain tasks, an additional Feature bar appears. The first two can be customised, and you can switch between sets but, unlike Word, you can't have multiple sets open at once.

Wordperfect offers 'Smart' features that match Microsoft's and, like Word, it will find and replace word forms. This also extends to the thesaurus so, for example, you can replace 'racing' directly with 'speeding' (with Word you have to go to 'speed' and add the 'ing' manually).

A new touch is the 'hot spot' button that offers a shortcut to formatting. A button appears either beside the current paragraph or at the top left corner of a graphic. Click on this, and you can align a paragraph, add bullets, change the style, and so on, with a parallel range of options for graphics. It seems a little redundant, as you can go to the right-button menu or the toolbars to the same end. It can also be rather elusive – you have to make your mouse movements carefully, or you 'lose' the button if you stray outside the paragraph or graphic. There's a new tool to insert Hypertext links – either from text or a button – that will jump to another place in the text, to another document, or activate a macro. Having created links, you can save the document in HTML format for use on the World Wide Web.

Wordperfect has always been hot on graphics capabilities. This version comes with direct scanner support for importing photographs into a document, a range of image controls to adjust the brightness and contrast of an image, and Textart – a type-tweaking and logo generator similar to Microsoft's Word-Art. The high point is Wordperfect Draw, which has features such as shaded fills only usually found in a stand-alone drawing package. Unlike Word, you can't use the tools 'free-range', but instead you draw in an OLE frame within the document. The menus and toolbars change to suit – as soon as you click outside the frame, you're back in normal word-processing mode. Page layout features match the graphics capabilities, with up to 24 columns, manual kerning of pairs of letters, and automatic text 'wrap' around shaped objects.

Another new feature is the address book, which works in con-

Wordperfect 7

Right: The Wordperfect Expert gives you a clean screen for setting up a document.



Left: Excellent graphic and layout controls in Wordperfect 7.



junction with the templates – either using the Windows 95 built-in Exchange personal address book, or Wordperfect's own brand.

Where Microsoft has 'Wizards' to create new documents, Wordperfect has the more down-to-earth 'Experts' which work in a different way. Choose the Newsletter Expert and, instead of being guided through a question-and-answer session with thumbnails of the results, you instantly get a full-screen view of the document, with all the toolbars and menus hidden. A single dialog box offers a range of options, such as number of columns, headline style, fonts, borders and so on. As you choose, the changes happen instantly, and you can change your mind as often as you like before pressing the 'Done' button which restores the normal interface.

Other help comes from multimedia demos, 'Guide me through it' interactive tutorials (formerly known as 'Coaches'), and an 'Ask the Expert' feature where, like Word, you can pose questions in plain English. Despite being a fully paid-up Windows 95 application, Wordperfect still insists on bringing along its own baggage, with its own printer and keyboard drivers (the beta version would only type in US layout), and the rather redundant 'Reveal codes' window which shows all the formatting codes in the text that are usually hidden from the user.

Wordperfect 7 is as big and powerful as ever, but there are no radical breakthroughs, particularly in ease of use. We await the final version.

- Price to be announced*
- Corel: 0800 973189

Casting a spell

You might be wondering what all the fuss is about and be quite happy using Windows 3.1 Write, or Windows 95 Wordpad for your textual needs. Both offer Wysiwyg word processing, but lack those two other essentials – styles and spell-checkers.

With Write, it's possible to implement formatting styles with the Windows Recorder accessory. You can record the keystrokes (hint – don't use the mouse) necessary to format, say, 16-point Arial bold centred, and save the macro with a suitable name, such as 'Heading'. With care and a little ingenuity you can record a range of formatting commands ready for instant playback. For a spell-checker, you're going to have to pay. Spellwrite adds spell-checks to any Windows 3.1 application, and a button bar to Write, and costs £19.99 from Futuresoft (01207 544030).

Wordpad users aren't quite so lucky – the Recorder isn't included in Windows 95 but, by the time you read this, a new version of Spellwrite should be available for Windows 95, which adds button-bar spell-checks to Wordpad as well as to Windows fax and e-mail.

Wordperfect 7

Features	1	2	3	4	5
Performance	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money	n/a*				

Windows word processors: performance tests

	Load self	Load long doc	Load short doc	Search/replace long	Search/replace short	Save long	Save short	Spell long	Spell short
Word	11.2	1.5	1.2	5.9	1.6	8.5	4.2	3.5	1.5
Wordperfect	27.7	6.9	2.3	8.8	2.2	5.6	1.8	8.0	7.0
Wordpro	48.1	14.1	4.5	7.9	2.2	58.9	7.5	44.6	23.0
Wordstar	20.5	48.8	9.6	44.4	3.9	1.4	1.1	229.5	26.0
Fine Words	12.5	*	2.1		2.0		1.1		11.7
WordExpress	10.8	4.5	3.9	8.3	2.8	3.9	1.1	179.0	21.3
Universal Word	9.8	**	25.0		28.0		2.3		25.0
Accent Pro	10.8	96.0	14.2	8.9	2.1	22.4	4.6	**	58.0

NOTES: *Unable to import file – insufficient memory error.

**Timed out after 15 minutes.

PERFORMANCE: We tested each application with two text files – one of 80Kb, the size of a 20-page report, and one book-length 600Kb. We timed how long it took to import the files, perform a search and replace, save in native format, and perform a spell-check once all unknown words had been added to the dictionary. All times are in seconds.

Lotus Wordpro 4.0

As part of Lotus SmartSuite, this came with French, German, Italian and Spanish versions on the same CD. Ten more languages – including Australian English – are available as spell-checker options. It's available in both Windows 3.1 and 95 versions – we looked at the latter.

Lotus has placed a great emphasis on teamwork for this release. Team members can add their own colour-coded annotations or attach 'Rich Comment Notes' which don't print out in the final document. There's support for e-mail, direct Internet connection, and Lotus Notes networking.

For creating long documents, a useful feature is the tabbed section dividers. These work exactly like their

cardboard counterparts – they are ranged across the top of the document and clicking on one takes you straight to the appropriate section. You can re-order sections by drag-

ging on the tabs, and insert 'objects' from other applications into a document with their own titled tabs.

Another versatile feature is the way in which you can view your document. As well as the normal single-page view, you can see thumbnails of all your pages and drag them around to re-order them. Although the pages are tiny, the text is still editable, and you can combine views having, say, a full page in one window with thumbnails below.

As well as being able to format text from right-mouse button shortcuts, you also get the 'Infobox'. It's a similar idea to that seen in DTP or drawing packages – a dialog box that stays open as you work, rather than needing to be opened and closed every time you want to make a change. With the text Infobox, for example, you have a series of tabs to switch between font formatting, alignment, borders, bullets, style tags and so on. Changes happen in real time so you don't have to click on an 'OK' or 'Apply' button – you can just experiment.

There's a good table feature with a selection of spreadsheet-style formulae for totalling or averaging rows and columns, and competent chart and equation features. An impressive range of drawing and image-editing tools includes text-shaping features for creating logos and fancy headlines.

In other respects it lags behind the competition – there are 'Smart' quotes, and correction of common mistakes, and 'TWO' initial capitals (to counter heavy-handed use of the Shift key), but it won't capitalise the start of sentences or search-and-replace word forms. You can elect to check spelling as you go – suspect words are highlighted, but this is relatively awkward compared to the right-click-and-replace approach seen in Word and Wordperfect, as you have to move to and from the spelling command box.

Another issue is performance. It was slow to start and slow to load or save documents. Spelling checks could be tedious, too: both Word and Wordperfect 'remember' ▶

Integrated packages

Instead of buying a dedicated Windows word processor, it's also worth looking at integrated packages. These will give you, typically, a word processor, spreadsheet and database – possibly with other components – at an all-in price and with a consistent interface.

We reviewed eight of these in the May issue of *What PC?*. The best were: Claris Works, which excelled in page-layout capabilities and overall integration; Microsoft Works, best for absolute beginners; and Perfectworks which, although harder work, offered the most features.

Claris Works: £151.58 (including VAT). Claris: 0181 756 0101

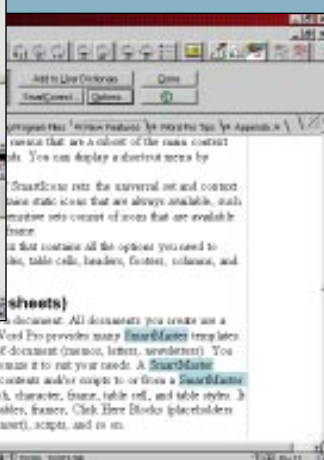
Microsoft Works: £79.99 (including VAT). Microsoft: 0345 002000

Perfectworks: £79.00 (including VAT). Novell: 0800 177277

Lotus Wordpro 4.0



Left: Wordpro in multiple views, with the Infobox at hand for instant formatting.



Right: Wordpro – spell-check as you go, and tab between sections.

The Dos option

Contrary to popular belief, it is not compulsory to use Windows at all, and there are still Dos-based word processors around. Though these packages, in the main, do not have the graphical luxuries of their Windows counterparts, they will generally run on much more modest hardware.

Microsoft Word 6 for Dos is a character-based application that still manages to retain much of the feel of its Windows counterpart, despite far more limited graphic and macro capabilities. It will run on any PC with 512Kb of memory.

Over in the Wordperfect camp there's a choice of environment – if your hardware is capable of handling it, version 6 possesses a graphical user interface (GUI) that is almost as button-laden as the Windows version – though this is at the expense of performance. The 'classic'

version of Wordperfect, 5.2, is still available, still very widely used, and runs on any PC.

Locoscript made history with the Amstrad PCW computer, which emerged in the Eighties as an all-in-one word processing solution including printer. Since then, the PC version has added mouse support, black-and-white graphics and scalable fonts. It will run on any PC from floppy disk, though a hard disk and a 286 are recommended for the graphic options.

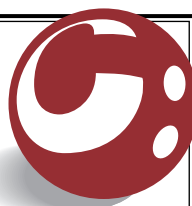
Word 6 for Dos: approximately £200

(including VAT). Microsoft: 0345 002000

Wordperfect 5.2 or 6: approximately £200

(including VAT). Corel: 0800 973189

Locoscript Professional 2+: £70.44 (including VAT). Locomotive: 01306 740606



checking a document, so if you make minor alterations only the new text is checked; Wordpro, however, re-checks the entire document. Using graphics was also a very long-winded business, with lengthy waits while the display updated.

Help is abundant, with a series of animated demos, an 'Ask the Expert' feature similar to Word and Wordperfect, and a series of 'Smartmasters'. Though not quite as hand-holding as Wordperfect's 'Experts' or Word's 'Wizards', these are ready-made document templates with 'Click Here' blocks – do so, and you replace the dummy text with your own in the same formatting style.

Smart and stylish with a low price, Wordpro offers better teamwork but doesn't quite match the 'Smart' features and performance of the other big guns.

○ £99

○ Lotus Development: 01784 455445

Lotus Wordpro 4.0

Performance	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	4	5
Features	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money	1	2	3	4	5

Wordstar for Windows 2.0

Wordstar is more like a desktop-publishing application than a conventional word processor, in that everything is frame-based.

If you start a document from scratch or from one of the letter templates, this is transparent to the user as you get a single full-size text frame on each page, but if you want to add graphics, use newspaper-style columns, tables or OLE objects, then you do so by adding new frames. As with a DTP application, you switch between layout view where you manipulate the frames themselves, and edit view where you deal with their contents.

Its DTP-like approach makes it especially good for producing newsletters or magazines. You can link frames so that a story can be continued on a separate page, and count the words in a story, frame or document. Whenever you create or select a graphic frame, a floating box of drawing tools appears.

Despite the low price, it's well featured, with a macro language, a grammar checker, and a database feature for mail-merging. There's a good range of clip-art that you can use by dragging and dropping from the supplied templates and, though you don't get a type-tweaking tool, you can rotate text to any angle. There aren't any 'smart' features like Microsoft's Autocorrect, though there is a macro supplied for produc-

Wordstar for Windows 2.0

Right: Wordstar has frames, similar to a desktop publishing package.



ing left and right-handed quotation marks automatically. As with the major applications, you get indexing and tables of contents.

One slight drawback is file size – depending on the template used this can be 30-40Kb for a one-page letter, but this is a per-document overhead and is far less noticeable on larger files.

Versatile, cheap and powerful, but starting to look old-fashioned beside the big-league competition.

○ £49.99 (including VAT)

○ Softkey: 0181 789 2000

Wordstar for Windows 2.0

Performance	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	4	5
Features	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money	1	2	3	4	5

Toplevel Fine Words

Word processing doesn't come much simpler than this. Presented on just two floppy disks and running on any Windows-capable PC, this

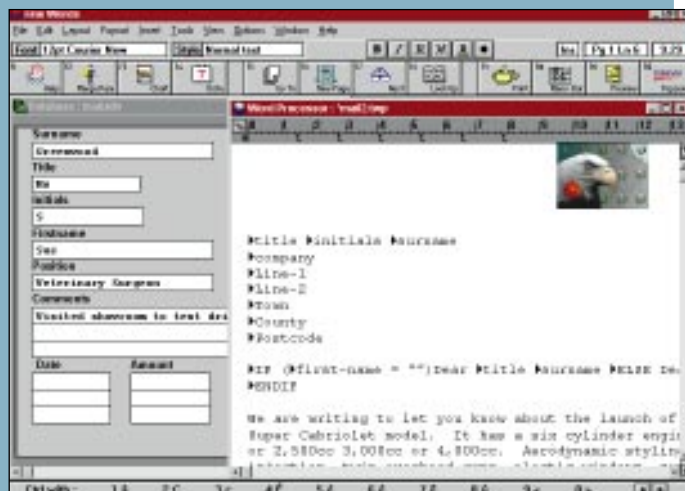
British product has little in the way of graphic frills but, despite the small footprint and limited layout capabilities, you actually get three applications in one – a word processor, a charting tool and a database.

The word processor itself is refreshingly simple, with a formatting ribbon, an optional set of buttons that correspond to the function keys, and a 'one-line help' panel that doubles as a tool for inserting accented characters. You can include pictures – though you can't have text alongside them – but there are no columns, frames, drawing tools or OLE support. You do get a thesaurus and word-counter as well as a spell-checker, and the charting module produces pie, line, bar, scatter and combination graphs which can be imported into the word processor.

Where things start to get more interesting is with the database. You can have up to 200 'fields' – items such as names and addresses that appear in each record in your database – and up to four-billion records, ►

Toplevel Fine Words

Right: Clever mail-merging from Toplevel.



given enough hard disk space. There are filtering and sampling features that can be used in conjunction with the word processor to create highly-sophisticated mail-merges. **Simple business word processing with simple hardware requirements, but with clever mail-merging and database capabilities.**

- £39 (including VAT)
- Toplevel: 01453 7543955

Toplevel Fine Words				
Performance	1	2	3	5
Features	1	2	3	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	5
Value for money	1	2	3	5

WordExpress 1.1
Unique in this group test, WordExpress is shareware: you can try it out first, either by downloading it via a modem or by paying a small sum for a disk-based version. If you like it, you pay for the registered version and get printed manuals, technical support and other benefits.

The full version comes on just three disks. The first time you run the program, you're asked for details such as your name and address. WordExpress uses this information to customise its templates: you may need to go back and fine-tune the user information because it's laid out for US addresses, but it's an excellent idea as you can start a letter with your own company or personal letterhead already inserted. It comes with a UK English spell-checker and thesaurus as standard, but seven additional proofing languages are available. Though there's little in the way of organisational features, such as outlining or indexing, it's strong on page design. As with Wordstar you have two modes – 'text' and 'object', and you can switch between them from the button bar or with the right mouse button. In 'object' mode you

Universal Word 6.2

Right: Flags of all nations for the multilingual typist.



can create text frames and tables, insert pictures, or draw simple shapes straight on to the page. Both framed and unframed text can be set in columns, and you can wrap text around pictures and other objects. There's a good range of import/export filters for other word processors, but no OLE, so you can't insert 'objects' from other applications. A further drawback is the document size: our long test document increased by 50 percent in WordExpress format but, unlike Wordstar, this was far less noticeable on smaller files. **Excellent implementation of 'small is beautiful' that you can try before you buy.**

- £34.07; international version: £64.62 (three languages); additional languages: £17.62 (all include VAT)
- The Thompson Partnership: 01889 564601

WordExpress 1.1				
Features	1	2	3	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	5
Performance	1	2	3	5
Value for money	1	2	3	5

International Universal Word 6.2

The most expensive package reviewed here, the Universal Word is designed for the international market and comes with 87 fonts, ranging from Arabic to Urdu. Menus and help files are only available in English, and our copy came with just a US English spell-checker and thesaurus, though other proofing languages are available as extras. Although the interface looks similar to the Windows norm, things work rather differently. Select a language from the drop-down list and three things happen. Firstly, the keyboard layout changes, so if you switch to French, for example, the top row of letters will produce 'azerty' rather than 'qwerty'. Secondly, the available fonts in the adjoining drop-down list will change: switch to Arabic, and you'll see a choice ranging from 'Al Arz' to 'Thuluth', and anything you type, apart from numerals, will be laid out right-to-left. Finally, the text you type will be marked for proofing in the selected language, though you need to have the relevant dictionaries installed. Page layout is sparsely featured. You can't have newspaper-style columns, spreadsheet-style tables or charts, and there are no drawing tools. You do, however, get a built-in set of image-processing tools for tweaking imported pictures. **A specialist application for documents in Western, Middle Eastern and near-Asian languages.**

- £468.82 (including VAT); extra spelling/thesaurus: £29 each
- Prestige Network: 01344 303800

Universal Word 6.2				
Features	1	2	3	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	5
Performance	1	2	3	5
Value for money	1	2	3	5

Windows word processors compared

Product	Word 7.0	Wordperfect 7	Lotus Wordpro 4	Wordstar 2.0	Toplevel Fine Words 1.7	WordExpress 1.1	Universal Word 6.2	Accent Professional 2.0
System requirements for full installation (processor/memory/disk)	386/4Mb/36Mb	To be confirmed	386/8Mb/42Mb	286/4Mb/16Mb	286/2Mb/5Mb	286/4Mb/4.5Mb	286/2Mb/22Mb	386/4Mb/50Mb
Platform (min)	Windows 95	Windows 95	Windows 3.1 and 95	Windows 3.1	Windows 3.1	Windows 3.1	Windows 3.1	Windows 3.1
Auto-correction and 'smart' features	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
Macros	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Outliner	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Drawing tools	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	○
Charts	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
Columns	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	●
Drag-and-drop editing	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	○
OLE support	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Grammar checker	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
On-line tuition	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○

NOTES: ● = Yes ○ = No

Accent Professional 2.0

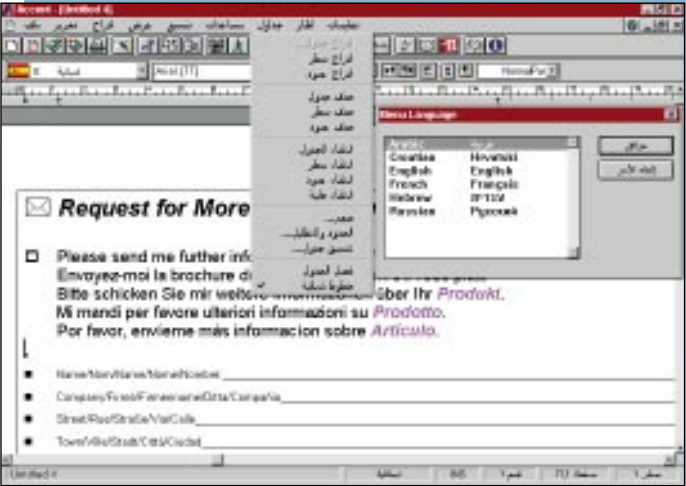
Another contender in the polyglot stakes, Accent Professional comes with 160 fonts representing Western, Arabic, Hebrew, Cyrillic, Greek and other character sets. There are 30 typing languages, seventeen spell-checkers, menus in nineteen languages and help files in eleven. Other versions are available offering fewer languages at a lower price. Like the Universal Word, the key to its functionality is the country list at the left of the toolbar. This sets the keyboard layout and proofing language, but the fonts work slightly differently – one single list is grouped into national character sets and the list jumps to the relevant group, with a handy pop-up sample of the selected font. As with the Universal Word, you can change the keyboard mappings, but the extra help files and menu languages make it easier for non-English speakers to use. Document organisation facilities are sparse – there's no contents or

index generators, but there is a word counter and eleven flavours of thesaurus if you're stuck for that bon mot. Layout features are better than the Universal Word, with columns and tables, but again there are no drawing tools and no OLE support. With all the fonts and language options installed, Accent will take up 50Mb of hard disk space, and there's a generous collection of bundled extras, including copies of Winfax Lite and Lotus Organizer, as well as a Berlitz mini-translation dictionary. **Specialist word processing in 30 Western and Middle-Eastern languages – better value than its main rival.**

- £279 (including VAT); other versions from £69
- Accent Software: 01923 208435

Accent Professional 2.0				
Performance	1	2	3	5
Features	1	2	3	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	5
Value for money	1	2	3	5

Accent Professional 2.0



Left: Multilingual Accent offers Arabic among its 19 different menu languages.



For the really ambitious wordsmith who wants powerful features, such as macros and advanced page layout, with the comfort of 'smart' assistance, the choice comes down to the big three from Wordperfect, Lotus and Microsoft. Though Microsoft Word 7 isn't the best in every category – Wordperfect offers better graphics, Wordpro better document management – it scoops our Best Buy award by virtue of being the best all-rounder, maintaining a careful balance of power and usability.



If you're looking for a budget package, and can do without the enhancements designed for Windows 95, then you really are spoiled for choice. Despite its lack of recent development, Wordstar offers the most in terms of features per pound. WordExpress is also recommended, especially as you can try it out (nearly) free. If you're corresponding in foreign languages, then Accent has a range of good-value word processors that will do the job. Finally, if you just want to create simple business letters with ambitious mailing lists, then Fine Words offers excellent value for money.