



## Simplicity itself?

**Tim Phillips looks at the pros and cons of Windows vs DOS word processing with special reference to Wordpad. There are lots of lovely macros and a clicking good hint, too.**

One of the interesting features of the response to Windows 95 is a growing murmur that our beloved software applications aren't very easy to use after all.

Could this be true? Could it be the case that all the usability testing, all the interface design and all the common user access standards which we have invested our future in have led to more complex products rather than simpler ones.

I've now decided that actually, DOS word processors aren't a waste of time and simple Windows word processors are even more welcome. Whether or not WordPad falls into that category, you'll have to read on to find out.

Here's a quick refresher on the simplicity debate:

### 1. A few other people take a pop at Microsoft

Oracle CEO, Larry Ellison, called Windows 95 "ridiculous". He wants to sell a "network computer" which will suck its operating system and applications from a server, using the internet. This will become the *de facto* "home computer" because the PC using Windows 95 is too complicated. Now, if this computer, which has no local storage, is going to suck a word processor into memory, it's unlikely it



*WordPad — I'm only half pleased with the lack of functionality here. Any offers for enhancements and hacks gratefully accepted*

will be anything as complicated as Word for Windows, is it...?

Ellison is a bit of a "head-the-ball" sometimes, but Oracle is the second largest software company in the world, so he must be doing something right. He has the public backing of Scott McNealy, CEO of workstation vendor Sun, who sees Windows 95 as "a giant hairball", and claims that no one at Sun uses a word processor. "Word processors aren't personal productivity tools, they are personal activity generators", he said while counselling businesses not to buy any new applications; they're already too complicated.

### 2. A robust defence of DOS

John Hines contacts me via email to make fun of windows users.

"This is being prepared in Autosig, the

DOS freeware comms package, my word processing is done in PC-Write... Why introduce needless delays on working systems? When idiots need drawings of words, Sir... A keyboard-based system has the advantage that it is not necessary to take the hands off to find a mouse and point at some obscure symbol, different in each system, for anyone who's learnt to read."

I cut the most abusive bits, but Mr Hines asserts that: "I can be editing a letter on the Amstrad before my 40MHz 386 has got rid of the hourglass symbol. And then? I cannot type at much better than 30wpm, but the Amstrad can keep up with this."

PC Write is the word processor of choice here: "This has all the features I need for business letters. It will do copy, move, search and replace. It will support macros and I have some for various letterheads. It will include the occasional picture; the amount of wysiwyg is limited and slow, but I think I need pictures only once or twice per thousand letters.

The number of fonts is limited to the number that my printers will do, but so what? ...the cost of my word processing is only just over £5 a year. What would I get for an additional cost of several hundred pounds, apart from looking like just another prat?"

I don't like being called a prat, but there is substance here. If word processing is

**Fig 1 Joe Tozer's macro**

```
Sub MAIN
  x = Asc(Selection$())
  toggle = FALSE

  If (x >= Asc("A") And x <= Asc("Z")) Then
    x = x + 32
    toggle = TRUE

  ElseIf (x >= Asc("a") And x <= Asc("z")) Then
    x = x - 32
    toggle = TRUE
  EndIf

  If toggle = TRUE Then
    EditClear
    Insert Chr$(x)
  EndIf

End Sub
(E.P.J.Tozer, 11th September 1995)
```

not central to your life, you may be just giving yourself a problem by learning a package like Word or WordPerfect.

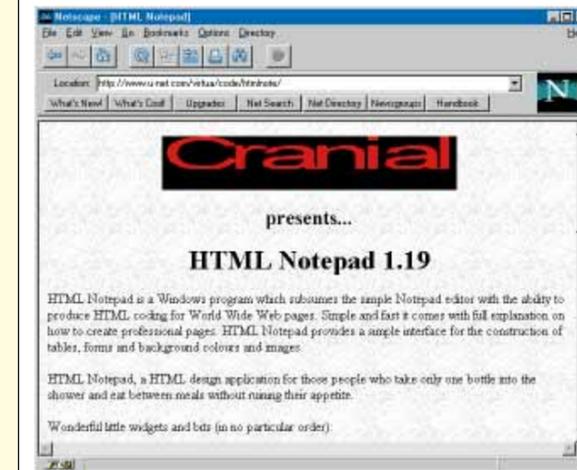
### 3. WordPad: the case for the prosecution

So you want to save money, but too late: you already have Windows 95. What you need is a good free word processor included.

Well, WordPad included with Windows 95, is free at least. Windows 95 users will be disappointed to find that WordPad isn't an improvement on Write. At least it doesn't give us a new file format: instead it uses Write, Rich Text and Word for Windows file formats.

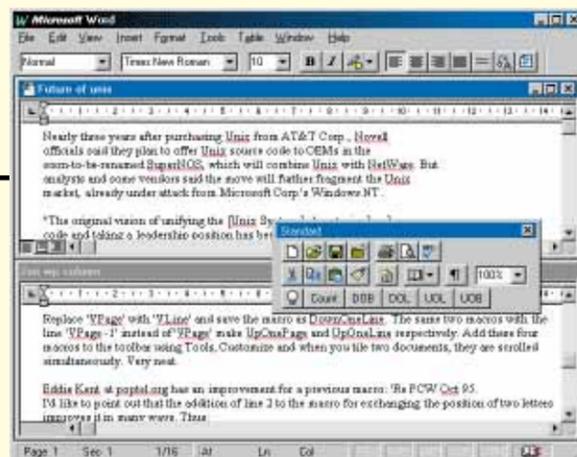
It's great to be able to edit and create

**Fig 2**



*Bart Smit's scrolling macros. I've called the four buttons DOL, UOL, DOB, UOB and clicking them scrolls the two documents simultaneously*

The source for the excellent html editor for Notepad. Now let's have one for WordPad, eh?



Word documents, but all the functionality that Microsoft could have put in, yet hasn't, is a real disappointment. A simple html editor and an outliner for a start. There's no macro language as might be expected, but a simple device to create help files would have helped. You can't zoom in and out, although you can print preview. You can also send your memos through electronic mail.

There's nothing intrinsically wrong with WordPad, it's just that Microsoft has made certain that it won't stop anyone buying Word.

#### 4. Someone agrees with me about html, (almost)

I was moved recently to comment that all the sophisticated wysiwyg, html, editing add-ons you get for major word processors just add complexity to a language that is a lot easier than any macro to write. I offered the suggestion that budding html writers should just edit in Write.

"Actually the best editor is not Write but, of course, the ever-present and cuddly Notepad. That was our thoughts when we came up with html Notepad which has all the lovely squidgy bits of Notepad and also does some of that silly html coding.

Have a look at <http://www.uenet.com/virtua/code/htmlnote> you are after version 1.19 for Windows 3.1. A Windows 95 version will be developed as soon as we buy some more memory," says Adam of [virtua@cranial.demon.co.uk](mailto:virtua@cranial.demon.co.uk).

I looked and I was impressed. It's the html editor I was looking for, so have a go yourself.

#### Tim's macro club

You might have noticed that I am extremely deficient in my mailings to macro club members. I blame the upgrade to Windows 95, but then so is everybody else so I don't expect you to believe me for one minute.

Anyway, by the time I read this my macro club email administration will have been sorted. It's encouraging that despite the lack of proper feedback from myself,

you continue to send in your macros. It's this spirit that made the country great.

● An example of this pioneer spirit is Joe Tozer, who has put another nail in the coffin of the risible Archimedes (see Fig 1):

"I've just moved over to the PC and Word from the Archimedes and Impression Publisher. I was missing the amazingly handy swap case function, CTRL+S, so have written an ALT+S macro version for Word. It swaps the case of the character to the right of the cursor. Sounds simple but it's much handier than UPPER CASE or lower case or Title Case. Macro swaps the case of the character to the right of the cursor. Use [ALT] + [s] to execute."

● Good one. Now Bart Smit of the republic of Compuserve has solved the scrolling simultaneous Windows problem in Word for Windows: "This is the solution for John Lea's problem, I've written the macros in Word 6.0 but my Hacker's guide to WW2 says they'll work in Word 2.0.

John will have to upgrade to get the custom toolbar, but in the meantime, key combinations will do the trick."

You need four macros called DownOneBlock, UpOneBlock, DownOnePage and UpOnePage (also see Fig 2).

This is DownOnePage:

```
Sub MAIN
ThisWindow = Window()
For i = 1 To CountWindows()
    WindowList i
    VPage
Next i
WindowList ThisWindow
End Sub
```

Replace "VPage" with "VLine" and save the macro as DownOneLine. The same two macros with the line "VPage -1" instead of "VPage" make UpOnePage and UpOneLine respectively.

Add these four macros to the toolbar using Tools, Customise and when you tile two documents, they are scrolled simultaneously. Very neat.

● Eddie Kent at [poptel.org](http://poptel.org) has an improvement for a previous macro: "Re PCW Oct '95 issue, I'd like to point out that the addition of line 2 to the macro for exchanging the position of two letters

#### Fig 3 Peter Kahrel's macro

```
DISPLAY(Off!)
MakeFileArray( &FileArray )
FOR( t ; 1 ; FileArray[0] )
    FileOpen( FileArray[t] ; WordPerfect_60! )
    DoSomething( )
    ClearDoc
ENDFOR

PROCEDURE MakeFileArray( &FArray )
LOCAL Dlg ; Path ; F ; Count
Path=""
DLGCREATE( Dlg ; "Select files" )
DLGCONTROL( CtrlText! ; Path ; "~Filemask: " ; ; ; 30 )
DLGEND
IF ( Dlg=-1 OR Path="" ) QUIT ENDIF
DLGINPUT( On! )
FileManagerDlg
Type( Path ) EnterKey
F:=?List-2
IF( F<=0 )
DLGCREATE( Dlg )
DLGCONTROL( CtrlLabel! ; ; "Error: no files found" )
DLGEND
QUIT
ELSE
PosLineDown
PosLineDown
FOR( Count ; 1 ; F )
    FArray[Count]:=?Entry
    PosLineDown
ENDFOR
FArray[0]:=F
ExitDlg
ENDIF
DLGINPUT( Off! )
ENDPROC
```

#### A good clicking

Here's more from my favourite correspondent, Shane Devenshire, who this month has been researching his double-clicks. Someone should give him a column (ha-ha).

These are for Word 6.0, although I tested them with Word 7.0 too:

Double click on:	What you get:
Top of the ruler	Page setup dialogue
Bottom of the ruler	Tabs dialogue
Indent markers	Paragraph dialogue
Title bar	Maximises Word (or restores if already maximised)
Any symbol	Symbols dialogue box
Column separators	Columns dialogue
Left side of status bar	GoTo dialogue
Help icon	Search dialogue

There's loads more too. Try double clicking all over the place in Word. It's alive.

Chris Collins contacts me via Compuserve to offer this advice if you want accented characters, following my Wordstar advice on a macro that's included with the package: "The EXTCHAR macro certainly works, but is so slow as to be unusable for anything but occasional use. No good for linguists! Just try typing an accented character several times at normal typing speed and you'll see what I mean.

"WordPerfect 6 for Windows is much quicker. I've set it up so that Control + character gives grave or cedilla, left hand Alt + character gives acute and right hand Alt + character gives circumflex. I haven't beaten it yet.

"Regressing to DOS (I began wordprocessing with programs called Word Master [editor] and Format [formatter] in CPM) a friend wrote me a very useful little accent routine which was set up by a hot key and executed by typing (say) e and g to get è (grave) and e and a to get é (acute). Much less laborious than the Alt + number combinations I've just used to write this."

I feel a macro coming on...

improves it in many ways. Thus:"

```
Sub MAIN
CharLeft 2
CharRight 1, 1
EditCut
CharRight 1
EditPaste
End Sub
```

He's right of course, although "many ways" is probably pushing it a bit on a seven line macro (only kidding, Eddie).

● Proof, if proof were needed, that this country's academic institutions are at least as good as when I was getting a dodgy second from the Victoria University of Manchester, is provided by Lancaster University's Peter Kahrel, who has spotted the fact that Chris McCarthy's search macro is not needed in WordPerfect. (Actually Chris spotted this himself, but Peter beat him to it. I didn't spot it at all).

"The macro that searches text in a directory is not necessary in WordPerfect, since WP has a rather good search facility called QuickFinder. Press F5 (Filelist) then F4 (QuickFinder) and enter the search text. You can specify a directory and limit the file search by date. I think WP Win has a similar feature."

And Peter doubles the number of WordPerfect macros we've run in recent months with this one (see Fig 3): "The procedure MakeFileArray creates an array of

filenames. In the dialogue box you can enter a file mask using the normal DOS wildcards. You can also include a path to create an array of filenames in a different directory than the default one. MakeFileArray's output variable is the array with file names, which you can then process: open the first array element, do something with it, and clear the screen." For this contribution, Peter is this month's champion.

#### Great work

See you on the net, as they say: if you have a contribution, email it to me. I'm still looking for WordPerfect and Ami Pro macro writers.

Now for the great work that you can all do: I want search and replace routines for entire directories of files — and maybe sub-directories. This is prompted by Richard Eskins of Oldham, who wants to make changes to style tags in all his html pages. I want it, too, for the same reason. You can see how sloppy my html is by accessing <http://www.atlas.co.uk/online/>.

#### PCW Contacts

And that's that for this month. Surface or airmail to PCW, otherwise I'm on email at [wong@cix.compulink.co.uk](mailto:wong@cix.compulink.co.uk) and CompuServe 100436,3616