



Pocket power

Tim Phillips is pleasantly surprised by Psion's diminutive new Siena. And, to make your life easier, he shows how to set up styles for your documents.

I know from the previous occasion when I covered the topic, that many of you are enthusiastic Psion organiser users. Indeed, the devotion of Psion's considerable user-base to the product verges on the fanatical.

Those of you who have remained untouched by the pocket computer revolution might be encouraged to become involved now that the successors to the Psion 3a have been announced. In many ways the products are a disappointment, but if your need is mostly for a word processor, then Psion to its credit has not messed with a winning formula.

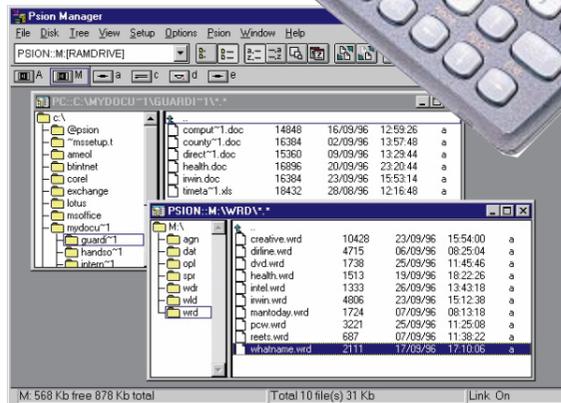
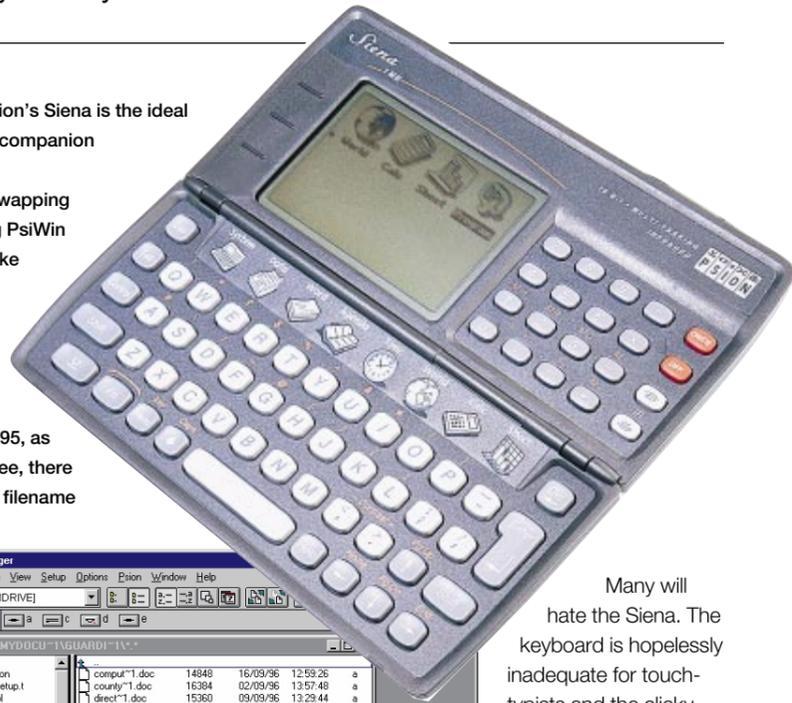
The Psion 3a is to be superseded by two models: the 3c (whatever became of the 3b is anyone's guess) and the Siena. The Psion 3c retains the sub-sub-notebook form factor and weight of the 3a, but adds new functionality and some cosmetic improvements. The Siena has the same applications as the 3a but in a much smaller case. At only 150mm x 73mm, it is smaller than a mobile phone and easily carried in a top pocket, unlike the 3a/c (whatever Psion says).

When I road-tested the Siena, my only question was: could I type with it? The credentials of the Psion as a diary or organiser are impeccable, but its ability to replace a notebook for word processor users is more dubious.

For several reasons, I believe the £200 Siena is worth considering if you regularly need to produce short word processor documents on the road. It is extremely light at 180g, so you can slip it into your luggage rather than having to carry an extra bag. The word processor is simple but surprisingly full-featured. For example,

(Right) Psion's Siena is the ideal travelling companion

(Below) Swapping files using PsiWin is rather like using LapLink. It's easy, but under Windows 95, as you can see, there is no long filename support



Many will hate the Siena. The keyboard is hopelessly inadequate for touch-typists and the clicky key action has a tendency to repeat key presses, making the production of finished documents difficult. The tiny screen is hard on those with bad eyesight.

However, I can live with all this. I'm just

thankful to have an alternative to humping a notebook around every time I have a 1,000-word document to produce. Was this article written on the Siena? Yes, much of it was, and in a hotel room miles from my PC.

there's a basic outline, find and replace, paragraph styles and a zoom function to make the best of the computer's tiny screen. The word processor can punt its files direct to Word for Windows 6.0, Word for Windows 2.0, Ami Pro or WordPerfect PC software and a custom serial cable. It will also export in text format. The keyboard is not perfect, but usable: I can type at about 80 percent of full speed using two fingers.

Putting on the style

After last month's piece on indexing, I'm sure you all raced off and indexed all your long documents, just for fun. If you showed them to a friend, that friend probably said:

"Pah! What a waste of time! What you need is a table of contents."

Hint: a table of contents, or TOC, is considerably simpler — provided you don't format on the fly. Use styles instead. For example: you write a long document with five chapters, each with three subheads. You can't be bothered to set up a style for a chapter head or a subhead so you just generate your table of contents you have to find each heading and each subhead, mark it individually, then generate the table.

Boring, isn't it? Be practical: break the habit of a lifetime and set up some style tags for your document. This takes two minutes. I'll use Word as an example, but it's just as easy under WordPerfect and Word Pro.

1. Select Format, Style, New. Change the font and size and indentation. Give it a name that's easy to remember — don't call it "Style 1" when "Tim's headline style" is available. Check the box "Add to template" if you plan to use the style again.

2. While you're messing around with the template, clear out all the confusing styles. If you never use them, get rid of them. In Font, style, click Organiser, which lets you add and remove styles from the template.

3. Use the styles for all headings and subheadings. Make a solemn vow that you will never change formatting unless you use a style to do it.

4. When you've finished the document, choose Insert, Index and Tables, and click the Table of Contents tab. In the Format dialogue box, check that you will be building the TOC "From Template". Click Options, which throws up a dialogue box that allows you to match your heading styles to heading levels in the TOC. The TOC inserts at the cursor insertion point. It's so quick that you can use it to build tables for documents that are only a few pages long. It's worth it.

Hints and tips

That bit at the bottom of the File menu which shows you the last few documents you were working on is jolly useful. Shame that the Open File dialogue doesn't sort files the same way — by date. Well, it can. In Word, click on the top right button in the Open dialogue, which is called Commands and Settings. This drops a menu, from which you pick Sorting and get four choices of how to sort your files: Name, Size, Type and Last modified. Click Last modified, then check Descending, and the last-modified files in the directory are at the top of the list.

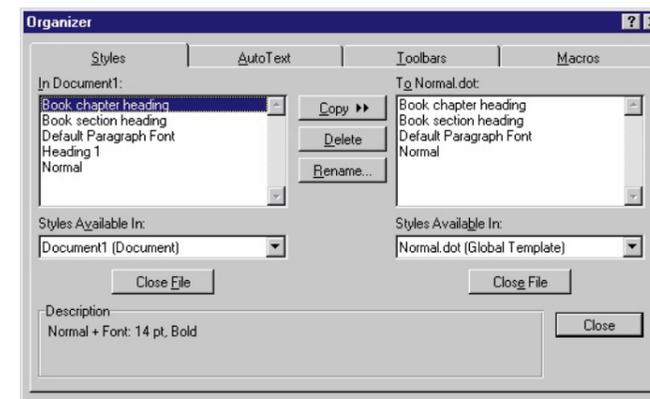
Even better is the excellent WordPerfect QuickFinder option. This will index all the articles in your selected directories. You pick the directory and decide whether you want every article indexed, at what level and how often.

Go to the Open dialogue box and select the QuickFinder tab. It's not the same thing at all, but it is only recently that I bothered to put the time in to set it up. For simple text retrieval, it's excellent.

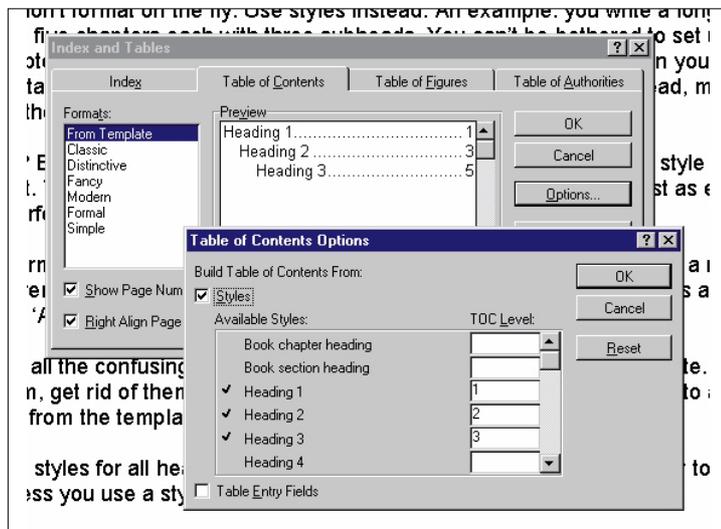
If indexing documents over a full hard disk or even over a network is of particular interest to you, you should keep your eyes peeled for the debut of Digital's AltaVista software. This is based on the search engine that Digital built to search the entire web by keyword.

Now Digital is building business and personal versions of the software for networks and standalone PCs. The software searches for all types of files, in word processor format as well as text. There are downloadable free versions on www.altavista.digital.com.

The free software is an alpha version (which means it's very unfinished) so I can't review it in depth here. It's easy to set up but crashes my system every time. More reports from users, please.

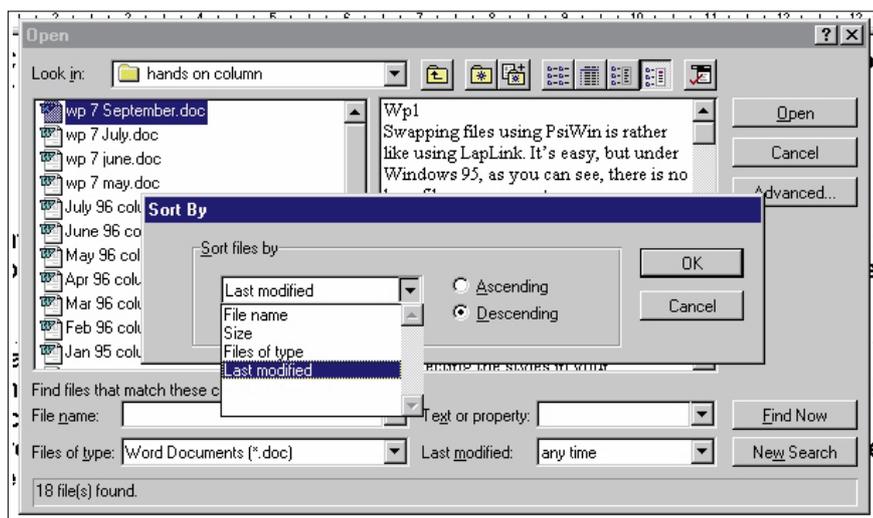


Swapping styles between your document and the template: delete any styles you don't use



(Left)
Connecting the styles in your documents to levels of the TOC headings using the check boxes

(Below)
Changing the order in which your "Open" dialogue box displays files to "last, first"



Problems and solutions

■ Karen Glue, from Market Harborough, has discovered that FindFast keeps reporting that she has "corrupt" documents, even though she is not using FindFast at the time. How can she fix it?

The answer is that it is not a word processor problem, but a hard disk one. FindFast indexes documents in the background, and if it finds that one of your documents has become corrupted, it will report it. There are two solutions: disable FindFast or, more usefully, delete or repair the documents.

■ Derek Bevan of Newbridge uses Windows NT and Office 7.0, but when he tries to access his printer "properties", he gets a general protection fault.

It's a recognised bug, according to Microsoft, but only in Word 7.0. The current version is 7.0a, so they should be able to send you a fix. The problem comes when the name of the printer has the word "on" in it or if it ends with a round bracket — really,

I am not making this up! The quick and easy answer is, of course, to rename your printer.

■ Tony Kettle, from Grimsby, wants to convert his macros from his PC at work to run under Mac WordPerfect 3.5 at home. Yes, you've no doubt guessed it: the two macro languages are completely incompatible.

According to Corel, the only solution is to learn the Mac language and retype. This isn't exactly surprising, although it's annoying in view of our supposedly internetted, platform-independent world. It would probably be easier to convert the macros to a WinWord format.

At least the appearance of a Macintosh WordPerfect user gives me a chance to parade my only Mac tip. If you're using an application and you know you will need your word processor in a few minutes' time, you don't want to launch it in foreground with its startup macros running and a new document loading. This can take anything up to several centuries on a Mac, so instead

write an AppleScript with the line:

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launch application "WordPerfect"
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as its only line and save it as a double-clickable applet. Click on this applet, and WordPerfect, or your other word processor, will launch in the background without a new document or startup macros, so you can keep working in the interim.

Tim's macro club

James Poyser is our Man of the Month, having sorted out our autosaving dilemma. If you remember, the problem was how to save files automatically into different directories depending on when they were typed. His rather elegant VB solution uses three macros: MonthSaver, which prompts the user for a filename; MonthSaverSetting which allows you to set up the options in the macro; and the essential CreateDir, to make the appropriate directories. Unfortunately these are all VB programs so I can't list them here, but I will send them on by email if requested.

Incidentally, I hope I've satisfied all the requests for Properties.zip now. There were hundreds, so if I have missed anyone out, email me again.

■ The last word on macros for booklet printing. If you're sick of typing macros to print your A5 booklet, a story we have been diligently following for about six months now, then you could always take the easy option and use WordPerfect 6.1 instead, as Barry Pratt has pointed out.

"It works perfectly every time. There must be thousands of copies of WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows lying about, abandoned by the lemmings to follow the boy Gates," says Mr Pratt. (Actually, if all of WordPerfect worked as well as the booklet printing, then there would be far fewer abandoned copies.) To demonstrate, he even sent me a copy of his A5 booklet, *The Principle of Oneness — An Original Statement That Truly Unifies The Universe*, about which the best thing I can say is that it's well printed.

If you want to change the world with your booklet: in WordPerfect select Print, Options, Booklet Printing, OK. And that's it.

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