



Microsoft rules and nuggets catch on

What does the future hold for word processing? Tim Phillips shares his visions with you. Plus, he sets off on a TrueType Easter egg hunt.

The first vision: Microsoft continues to rule the known universe.

In favour of this, there's the recently reported figure, from Romtec, which follows the sales of hardware and software. It tells us that Word for Windows has an 80 percent share of the word processor market. That compares with the year before, when the figure was a comparatively puny 64 percent. The rest of the Windows space is divided between Ami Pro (or Word Pro) at 11 percent, WordPerfect at eight per cent, and others at a glorious one percent, combined.

I believe these Romtec figures. Unless the market changes, Microsoft will continue to dominate for economic reasons. Imagine you were producing ProcessorWrite in the late eighties: one of the packages which had a ten percent market share; your development cycle was six months; you could upgrade every two years; you had one version to support; you made 70 percent of the copy price as profit.

Now you want to develop PW95. You can hope for a one percent market share — equivalent in units to the old ten percent. The development cycle is 18 months, because these days word processors are complicated by things like OLE, online spell-checkers and autocorrect. Your distribution costs are the same but software sells for a third of the price it used to, which wipes out your profit margin. You have to upgrade once a year. Nobody writes about your product, except one nutter in *PCW* who sticks in a 200-word where-are-they-now boxout in his *Hands On* column.

As you can see, selling word-

processing software is not the game to be in right now, unless your name is Bill Gates. If you're looking for a new version of your word processor, and you are not using product from the "Big Three", don't hold your breath.

The second vision

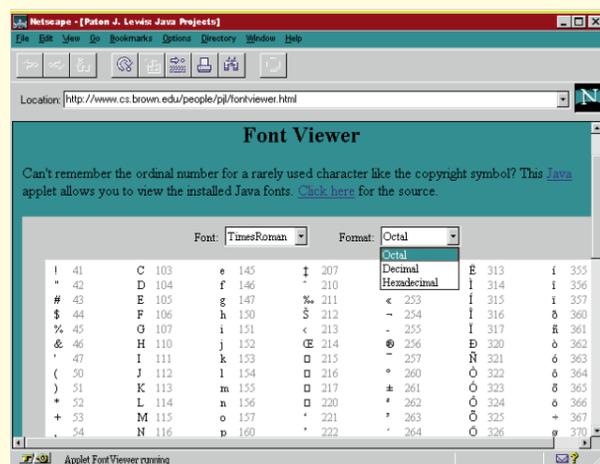
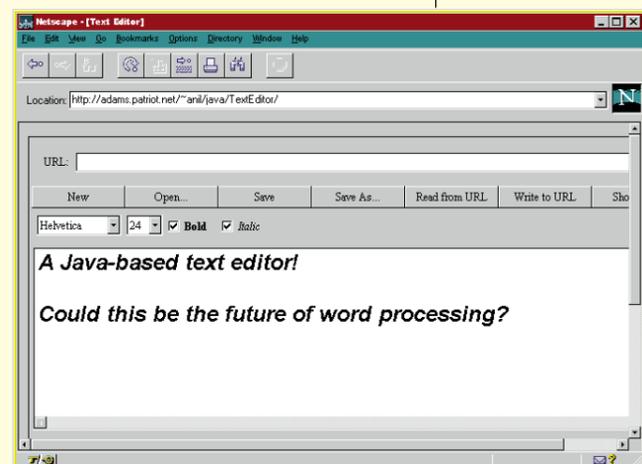
The network computer takes off and people start supplying Java word processors: little nuggety applications that you download from the server each time you want to use them, instead of storing them on a hard disk. Will they catch on?

If you are considering whether to buy a PC or wait for a network computer for your home, I wouldn't hold your breath. Buy a PC, and make sure it has Microsoft Office on it. Neither Lotus nor Corel-WordPerfect are selling any copies of their office suites bundled with a new computer.

In the longer term, the case for a network computer running its own applications from the Internet seems

Left A Java-based text editor that you can find in the list of utilities at www.gamelan.com. Rough and ready, but it works

Right More obscure: a Java-based application that will tell you the hex, decimal or octal code of any character in any font. Good for those handy copyright symbols on a web page...



unanswerable. They probably won't be word processors as we know them, though: instead, there will be central resources; a spell-checker or a graphics engine, for instance. There will also be custom-designed applications to let you make a form letter or a hypertext document, or whatever. These will all be stored in a huge library. The era of the one-size-fits-all word processor is surely nearing its end.

If you want evidence, take your web browser (Netscape 2 or greater, or Internet Explorer 3) to www.gamelan.com,

and browse through the 2,500-plus applets already there. There's

one that writes your job application letter for you by comparing your CV with the job description. There's a rather good graphics applet. And there's a dictionary — you write the word, it returns the meaning. What there isn't, is a copy of Word for Windows. This is what word processing will be like in five years' time (I hope).

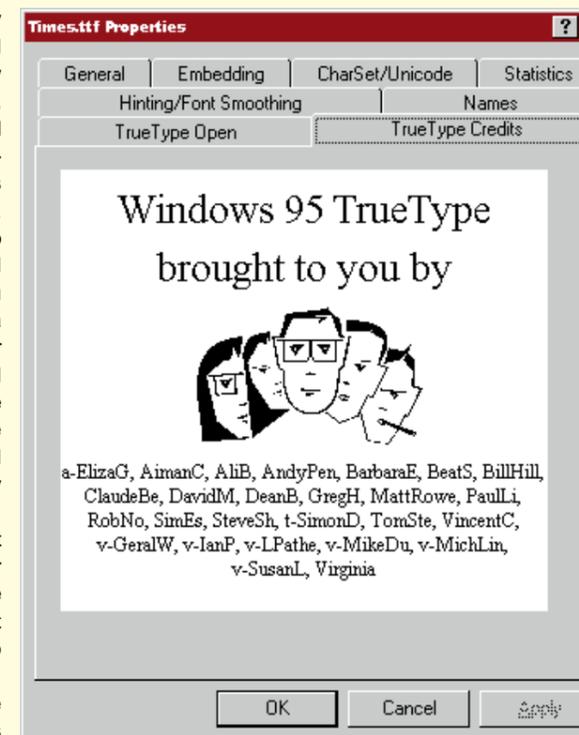
Eggs over easy

You really can't get enough of TrueType, can you? I've been deluged by people wanting emailed copies of property.zip, the interesting little applet that tells you more about your TrueType fonts under Windows 95.

If you haven't got yours yet, mail me again and I will make sure it gets to you this time. If you have got the file, either from me or from Microsoft's web site, then there's an Easter egg in it (see screenshot, above): first, install the TrueType Font Properties extension. Restart Windows so that it loads (ignore these if you have already installed the applet). Go to the Start menu, select control panel, fonts. Right-click on Times New Roman and select Properties. There's an extra tab called "TrueType Credits", with a pretty little cartoon.

While we're on the subject, here's another Easter egg which is designed for Word 6. I don't have Word 6.0, so any report of what it actually does would be appreciated...

1. Open a new document.



The TrueType font properties Easter egg

2. Select Record Macro under the Tools menu.
3. Create a macro named SPIFF and click on the OK box.
4. From the Tools menu again, select Stop Recorder, then Macro and click on SPIFF.
5. Select Edit and delete the Sub Main and End sublines.
6. Under the File menu, select Close and click on Yes.
7. Go to the Help menu, select About and click on the Word logo.

Questions and queries

Just to keep you happy if you're not a Microsoft user, I've been saving up my Word Pro and Ami Pro queries for an occasion like this. So I'm afraid if you have a Word or WordPerfect problem, it isn't answered this month.

● Hanging around

James Rivers mailed me from Nottingham to ask whether his Word Pro installation had messed up his hard drive. Having compressed his hard disk using Stacker, he had just enough room to install Ami Pro. It didn't work: the install routine hung when he ran out of disk space. He deleted some files and tried again, but now he has a stray directory of files called Lotustmp.000. Was his installation okay? Was there a fault with the install routine?

Yes and no. The stray directory was a

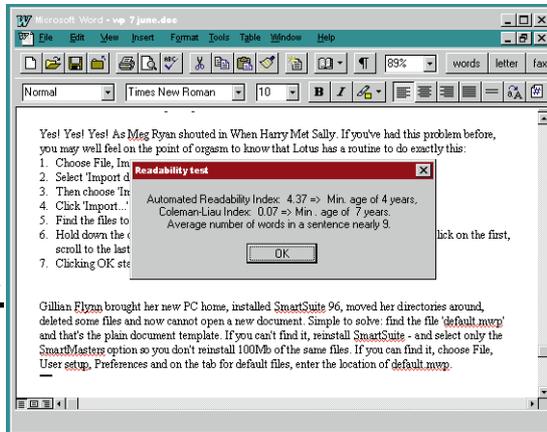
Mind your grammar

● Petr "PePa" Pavel from the Czech Republic not only wins the "Nickname of the Month" award, but also advances the debate on grammar checking. His Word 6.0 macro checks a document and gives figures for the Automated Readability Index and Coleman-Liau Index, plus the average number of words in a sentence (see Fig 2).

```
Sub MAIN
ViewNormal          ' not necessary but it raises speed
Dim dlg As FileSummaryInfo
FileSummaryInfo .Update
GetCurValues dlg
StartOfDocument
NumSent = 1 - Val(dlg.NumParas)
While SentRight() = - 1
    NumSent = NumSent + 1
Wend
NW = Val(dlg.NumWords)          ' number of words
WS = NW / NumSent              ' average number of words in a sentence
D = WS - Int(WS)               ' decimal part of it
W$ = " nearly"
If D > 0.5 Then
    W$ = " over"                ' is bigger then 0.5
EndIf
If D = 0 Then
    W$ = ""                     ' is integer
EndIf
WSD$ = Str$(Int(WS))
ARI = 4.71 * Val(dlg.NumChars) / NW + 0.5 * NW / NumSent - 21.43
ARI$ = Str$(Int(100 * ARI + 0.5) / 100)
AGE$ = Str$(Int(ARI + 0.5))
CL = 5.89 * Val(dlg.NumChars) / NW - 0.3 * NumSent * 100 / NW - 15.8
CL$ = Str$(Int(CL + 0.5) / 100)
AGECL$ = Str$(Int(CL + 0.5))
MsgBox "Automated Readability Index: " + ARI$ + " => Min. age of " +
AGE$ + " years," + Chr$(10) + " Coleman-Liau Index: " + CL$ + " => Min . age of
" + AGECL$ + " years." + Chr$(10)
+ " Average number of words
in a
sentence" + W$ + WSD$ + ".",
"Readability test"
End Sub
```

It gives a neat dialogue for the minimum reading age for any piece of text. You have to be at least seven years old to read this, according to Petr's macro.

The Czech Republic's contribution to this month's page: the eastern Europeans are providing my little club with some memorable macros



leftover from the first install routine, which uses a temporary directory to which to copy the compressed files before decompressing them. When the routine hung, this directory was left. Delete it with no risk whatsoever. There's not a fault with the install either: when a compressed disk claims to have a certain amount of space on it, that's an estimation based on how well it can compress files when it stores them. Program files do not compress well, so you may find install

routines being over-optimistic. A final tip: word processors need much memory and less processing power. When your hard disk is full, there's no space for a swap file. Your word processor will run very slowly. ● An open and shut case David Boyle, in Southampton, wants to import hundreds of Word documents into his shiny new Word Pro. Can he do it without opening each one? Yes! Yes! Yes! As Meg Ryan shouted in When Harry Met

Sally. If you've had this problem before, you may well feel on the point of orgasm to know that Lotus has a routine to do exactly this:

1. Choose File, Import.
2. Select "Import data from another application".
3. Then choose "Import and convert into Word Pro documents".
4. Click "Import..."
5. Find the files to be imported using the dialogue box.
6. Hold down the control key while clicking on all the files you want to convert. Or click on the first, scroll to the last, hold down shift and click on it — that selects all files.
7. Clicking OK starts the batch process.

● Get Smart Gillian Flynn brought her new PC home, installed SmartSuite 96, moved her directories around, deleted some files, and now cannot open a new document.

It's simple to solve: find the file "default.mwp" and that's the plain document template. If you can't find it, reinstall SmartSuite and select only the SmartMasters option so you don't reinstall 100Mb of the same files. If you can find it, choose File, User setup, Preferences, and on the tab for default files, enter the location of default.mwp.

● At your command Finally, there are some of you that don't even use Windows! I know about this because you write to me about how the concept of a GUI is a terrible plot foisted on us by Microsoft, Apple and the other spawn of the devil. I have two pieces of advice:

1. Wear a hat lined with aluminium foil, or Bill Gates will beam his thoughts into your brain.
2. If you want to find the text contents of binary (non-text) files, then from the command prompt,

use SCAN. The syntax is
 SCAN < [filename] | MORE
 To produce a printed list of all the commands in the file, type
 SCAN < [filename] > PRN
 Try it with Command.com.

PCW Contacts

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