

Product Information

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A long-standing argument against the Macintosh platform has always been that there is not enough software for it. And one of the long-standing answers for this argument has been another question, "How many word processors do you need?"

If you live in my world, the answer to that question is always, "You can never have too many." But for most users, one is enough. And here's your one.

Mariner Write, newly updated to version 2.05, is a lightweight, full-feature alternative to the bloatware mainstay of Macintosh word processing, Microsoft Word. There are millions of Mac users out there who either cannot afford Word 98's resource requirements, or would rather use something else, but cannot find a word processor that boasts the features Word has. MW is here to change all of that.

Mariner Write 2 is simple enough for any beginning Mac user to utilize, yet has enough features to satisfy the power user on any but the most complex tasks, like a dissertation, doctoral thesis, or lengthy book.

## Racing Schooner vs. the Titanic

One of the biggest complaints about Word is its tremendous size and drain on system resources. The Word 98 application itself takes up 5+ megabytes. This is not to mention the various other items in the Microsoft Word folder itself, which quickly runs the total to above 20 megabytes.

The sleek Mariner Write, on the other hand, takes up only 1.2 megabytes of hard drive space. The entire folder in which the application resides consumes only 2.2 megabytes, less than half of what Microsoft Word takes up just by itself. MW is perfect for those with small hard drives. And, unlike Word 98, it can be used on non-PowerPC Macs. As long as you have at least a 68020 processor, and System 7.0 or later, you can use Mariner Write. Best of all, MW runs native on PowerPC machines. It launches so fast on my G3/266, that the splash screen is a blur.

I chose this end of the above paragraph to try Mariner Write's Count command. There was absolutely no delay from the time I selected the Document button in the Count dialog box to the results display. This little baby is fast.

The interface is simple and uncluttered. As you can see in the above graphic, the main toolbar offers easy access to commonly used functions. As with any good Mac program, there are accompanying keyboard shortcuts. Should you desire, you can view fonts from either the Font menu in the main menu bar, or from the popup menu present just beneath the ruler in each document.

Showing what a classy operation it is, Mariner Software allows users the option of viewing fonts as they actually appear by merely making a selection in the Preferences dialog. This

option is turned off by default.

While I didn't utilize this feature while typing my review, you can insert graphics as either inline images or floating objects with a text wrap. I have utilized this feature in other documents, however, and it works great. You can use either a PICT, EPS, GIF, or JPEG as your graphic.

Like another favorite word processor of mine, Scorpio, you can change the color of both the text and the background. And as long as your printer can handle color, that's exactly how your document will print out, as well.

## No Word Processor Is An Island

While it does not have built-in translators of its own, Mariner Write makes extensive use of DataViz's MacLink Plus to open and save documents in virtually any format, from Word 98 to WordPerfect 3 to ClarisWorks 4. MacLink has come with most versions of your system software since 7.5. If you want the latest and greatest set of translators, however, you'll need to upgrade to version 10. Check out <http://www.dataviz.com> for more info.

I made use of this feature while preparing this review. Though I typed up in my review in Mariner Write, I needed to get it to our wonderful editors in AppleWorks (formerly ClarisWorks) format. A simple Save As brought up the dialog box which allowed me to choose the AppleWorks word processing document option. Opening the document in AppleWorks 5, I found that there were no changes whatsoever to my formatting and text color changes.

o what about more high-end features? Both footnotes and endnotes are easily implemented in MW. Headers and footers are supported as well. Mariner Write includes both a spell

checker and thesaurus, though third-party universal checkers generally offer a greater vocabulary. I found Mariner Write's built-in checker to be very fast, though I still prefer SpellTools for all of my applications.

Mariner Write 2 is fully AppleScriptable, and includes six scripts right out of the box. A space on the Mariner Software Web site <<http://www.marinersoft.com>> promises more in the future. MW features a great Find/Replace tool that is, you guessed it, very fast. Anyone else see a pattern emerging here? Mariner Write, being the classy Mac app it is, is drag-and-drop savvy, not only within itself, but across other applications as well.

## Pulling Into Port

Mariner Write is a carefully crafted, sleek yet powerful workhorse. It has a developer that truly cares about its product and about its customers. I don't know what the current situation is, but I recall back when I was using version 1.4 of MW. I called the 800 number, inquiring about upgrades, and actually spoke to the guy who runs the company! Sometimes, being small pays off in dividends bigger than profit dollars.

If Apple weren't already including AppleWorks on every iMac, Mariner Write should be the word processor they ship. While you won't knock out your doctoral thesis on MW, those letters to Grandma and the next great book report couldn't find a better creation tool.

Free demos of both Mariner Write and its \$20 Mariner Write Lite sibling are available from the Mariner Software site. I encourage you to check out this great Mac-only word processor, and let the Word behemoth slide beneath the waves.

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