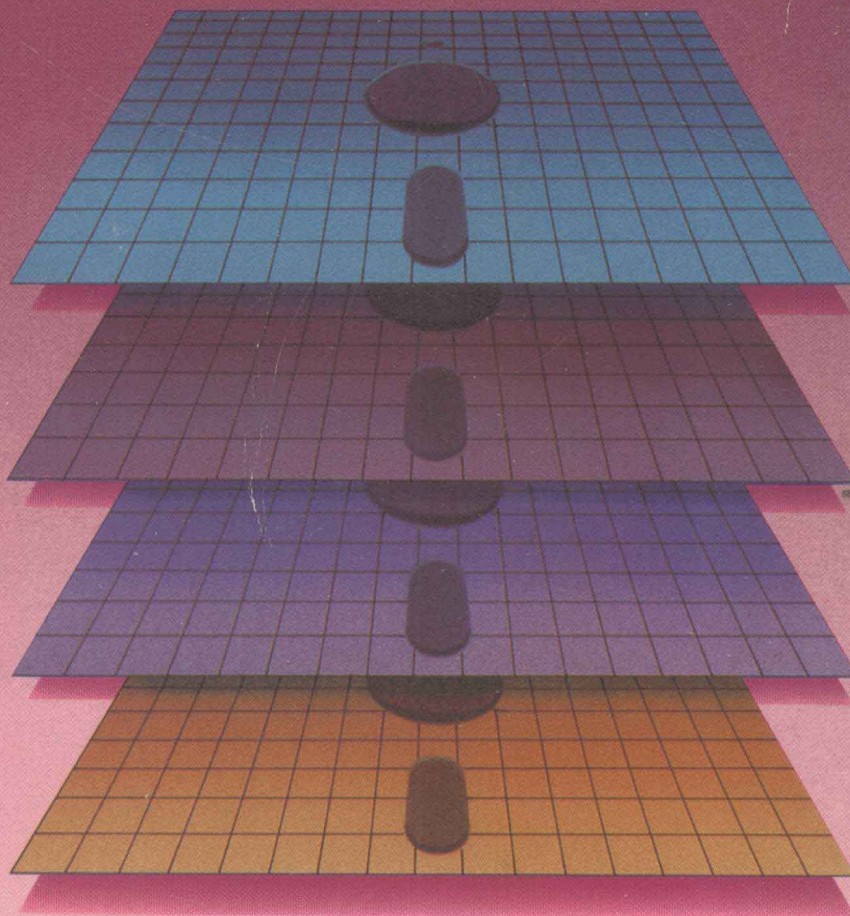# FOUR SOFTWARE TOOLS
ALTERNATE EDITION

TIM DUFFY

IBM PC DOS • WordStar
VP-Planner • dBase III

FOUR
SOFTWARE
TOOLS

DOS for IBM PC and MS DOS
Word Processing Using WordStar
Spreadsheets Using VP-Planner
Data Base Management Using dBASE III

Tim Duffy
Associate Professor of Accounting in Data Processing
Illinois State University

VP-Planner charts adapted from Arthur Andersen & Co. materials.

FOUR

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To Wendy

PREFACE

Institutions of higher education are increasingly under pressure to develop and implement courses in their curricula that deal with the microcomputer. Accredited colleges of business are under pressure from AACSB to integrate the microcomputer into just about every aspect of their curriculum. Colleges of education are being pressured to prepare teachers to teach high school and elementary classes dealing with the microcomputer. Community colleges are being pressured to develop courses that prepare students to use the microcomputer effectively in a business environment.

The three applications of word processing, data base management, and spreadsheets immediately suggest themselves as the primary applications in developing a curriculum to teach students how to apply the computer as a tool to solve school-related, private, or business-related problems. In addition to understanding how these three application packages work, a user must have a working knowledge of the disk operating system provided by a manufacturer.

A major problem in developing and teaching microcomputer applications classes is finding an appropriate text. There are few texts currently on the market that deal with DOS, word processing, spreadsheets, and data base management. In the past, if all of these software packages were to be covered, either students had to buy four books at substantial expense, or teachers had to prepare and supply an inordinate number of handouts on the use of the software packages. This text solves this problem by presenting all four elements in one book.

Objective of Textbook

The objective of this text is to teach students to solve realistic problems using the most readily available "off the shelf" general applications software. It is not necessary to go into detail about each package, since the primary goal of most applications courses is to get students to the point where they feel comfortable using the computer to solve problems. Therefore, a general introduction and familiarization with the more commonly used aspects of each general applications package is the most desirable approach.

The general applications software packages covered in this textbook are WordStar 3.3 (word processing), VP-Planner (spreadsheets), and dBASE III (data base management). An introduction to microcomputers as well as extensive coverage of the IBM Personal Computer Disk Operating System (PC-DOS) are included.

After completing this textbook, students will have the skills/tools necessary to solve numerous problems using WordStar 3.3, VP-Planner, and dBASE III.

Applications Software

Three packages have emerged as de facto standards in each of the general applications software areas discussed above. WordStar, developed by MicroPro, is the package by which most other word processing packages are measured. dBASE III, developed by Ashton-Tate, is typically used as the data base management standard.

Lotus 1-2-3 is, without doubt, the standard against which all other spreadsheet packages are measured. Many packages have not only imitated

1-2-3, but substantially improved on this approach to spreadsheet development. VP-Planner, distributed by Paperback Software, is one of the spreadsheet packages that, according to numerous reviewers, offers an excellent alternative to 1-2-3. Not only does VP-Planner totally emulate 1-2-3, but it improves on the original product in many small ways; the most important of which is the ability to access and manipulate any dBASE II or dBASE III data base file.

One of the real problems that faces educators today is how to acquire inexpensive, well-written software that truly represents programs that students will be expected to use in the business world. Each of the above companies has entered into an agreement with Wadsworth Publishing Company to solve this problem of acquiring quality software by making available through Wadsworth educational versions of each of these software packages for use in the classroom. Information about how you can receive the applications software can be obtained by contacting your local Wadsworth representative or by writing or calling Elizabeth Scott, Sales Services Manager, or Frank Ruggirello at Wadsworth Publishing Company, Ten Davis Drive, Belmont, California 94002, telephone: 415-595-2350. The software is available for IBM Personal Computers and IBM compatible computers (MS-DOS).

Note that Appendix A contains specific instructions to students about characteristics of the software that might differ from the full-blown packages. For example, the dBASE III prompt is ⋅ (DEMO) instead of only the period.

Hardware Rationale

The introduction of the IBM Personal Computer revolutionized the world of third-party applications software for microcomputers. The IBM PC was capable of addressing much more memory—and was therefore capable of running programs that could more properly address many larger problems—than were any previous computer systems. This is especially true in the area of spreadsheets: many existing packages were rewritten to take advantage of the additional memory available on the IBM. The IBM so revolutionized the microcomputer world that it has emerged as the standard by which other computers are judged.

Hardware Requirements

An IBM PC or IBM compatible computer, with two disk drives and 256K of RAM memory, is required. You will also need a color monitor or monochrome graphics board to properly display the VP-Planner graphics on the screen. The printer (with graphics capabilities, if it is to be used to print VP-Planner graphs) is also required for printing documents, reports, graphs, or worksheets.

Structure of Text

This textbook works best in a "hands-on" environment; that is, the step-by-step exercises in the text make most sense when an individual is sitting at a computer, or has easy access to one, so that an immediate response to some action can be generated. (A symbol like the one in the left margin highlights all hands-on material.)

Each of the above packages in covered is some detail, but the text assumes that each software package has already been configured for use. If a package has not been configured to a specific machine, please refer to the documentation for that package.

The software packages can be covered in any order. You are encouraged to cover at least the first two chapters, however, before going on to one of the specific packages.

Sample Files and Learning Aids

A number of sample diskette files—which include sample worksheets, text files, and data base files—have been provided for use with text lessons and exercises. At the end of each chapter, exercises are offered to provide quick feedback to students on their progress. In addition to the written exercises, hands-on computer exercises are included in most chapters to provide students with feedback through various challenging applications of material covered in each chapter.

At the end of the text, appendixes present command summaries of WordStar and dBASE III as well as a graphic depiction of the various menus used in VP-Planner. An extensive glossary of computer terms used in the text appears at the back of the book, as do keyboard templates for each of the four software tools.

Teaching Aids

An Instructor's Manual is provided free to each adopter of the text. The Instructor's Manual contains a lecture outline as well as transparency masters for each chapter. A disk containing all of the finished worksheets at the end of each spreadsheet chapter is also included. As an extra bonus, this disk also contains a VP-Planner GRADBOOK template that adoptors can use for tracking their grades. The GRADBOOK template is completely macro driven and makes the tedious process of tracking grades much easier.

The computerized text generator Micro-Pac is also available to each adopter of *Four Software Tools*. Micro-Pac makes the process of generating a test easy. It includes true/false, multiple-choice, fill-in, and short-answer test questions. Contact your Wadsworth representative for a copy, or call Helga Newman at 415-595-2350.

Optional Casebook

An optional casebook for *Four Software Tools* is also available from Wadsworth Publishing Company. The casebook presents advanced topics for selected software and is designed to give students valuable problem-solving experience via realistic case applications that emphasize hands-on use of the microcomputer through task-oriented exercises. The casebook includes:

28 challenging cases that go into far greater depth than the usual introductory textbook applications

A broad range of material from finance, budgeting, agriculture, accounting, and many other areas selected for their professional value

Background material/discussion for each of the advanced cases

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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