



*U* S I N G

*W* O R D P E R F E C T<sup>®</sup>

FOR THE MACINTOSH<sup>™</sup>

Daniel J.  
Rosenbaum

# ***Using WordPerfect<sup>®</sup> for the Macintosh<sup>®</sup>***

***Daniel J. Rosenbaum***

Osborne McGraw-Hill  
Berkeley, California

Osborne McGraw-Hill  
2600 Tenth Street  
Berkeley, California 94710  
U.S.A.

For information on translations and book distributors outside of the U.S.A., write to Osborne McGraw-Hill at the above address.

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1234567890 DODO 898

ISBN 0-07-881353-0

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# ***Using WordPerfect<sup>®</sup> for the Macintosh<sup>®</sup>***

To Jane, whom I occasionally got to see during the preparation of this book—but only when the snow was bad and the computer was off. Pray for a Chinook and a power failure.

And to William S. Stevens, who ten years ago flabbergasted me by hiring me for the Albany bureau of United Press International. The city and company still exist, nonetheless.

# Acknowledgments

Though only one name appears on the cover of this book, the actual cast of characters is far longer.

Steve Michel, technical editor extraordinaire, tried to make sure that everything in this book worked and did his best to keep the author from embarrassing himself in print—two very neat tricks. His suggestions were always timely, cordial, and on the mark. More could not have been asked.

The crew at WordPerfect Corporation were extremely helpful, even during the early days when they were rightly less than thrilled about letting software out of Utah. Special thanks go to Jeff Acer-son, Alan Ashton (as always), Roger Bell, Dan Nelson, and Ed Watts.

Appreciative words also go toward the management and staff of the 47st. Computer Consumer Education Center: Gina Scardino, Larry Norflus, Chuck Ackerman, Rochelle Liebowitz, Esther Kranz, and Lauren Finkelstein.

A crew of patient editors mysteriously continued to assign me work while this book was being prepared, despite firm deadlines that too often turned elastic. On the honor roll are Louise Kohl of *MacUser*, Eric Bender and William Rodarmor of *PC World*, and Susan Gubernat, Jim Felici, and Christine Whyte of *Publish!* The staff of *Macintosh Today* deserves a particularly deep bow: Maggie Cannon, Cliff Barney, Dan Farber (perhaps the most thanked man in Macintosh book forewords), Juli Cortino, Rory O'Connor, and Denise Caruso. Thanks to you all.

Martha Steffen, Apple's Publishing Evangelist, provided much assistance, helping me navigate through Apple.

Katie Hafner did me the tremendous favor of marrying John Markoff, who became the first person to show me how much fun Macs can be.

Robert J. Ferb and John Menzel provided valuable advice and consent that allowed this project to get started.

The New York Choral Society insisted that I get out of the house at least once a week for rehearsals and far more than that for performances.

Jane Hunter, of course, is getting used to all this.

And, even though the style book says not to, I must thank my Wizards of Os: editors Nancy Carlston, Lindy Clinton, and Lyn Cordell. They provided guidance but not direction, and remained calm despite disappearing chapters and an apparently unprecedented but much-needed mid-book vacation. They made the writing of this book a real joy.

—D.J.R.

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# **1** *Introducing WordPerfect*

Powerful word processing choices for the Macintosh have been slow to appear. Some blame the easy and cheap availability of MacWrite; others the difficulty of writing a graphic interface for an application that is textual by definition. Still others point to the persistent notion that the Mac “isn’t a business machine”—a prejudice that is only now fading.

Whatever the reason, Mac users have lacked a high-quality and high-powered word cruncher for far too long. Now, however, the Mac SE, the Mac II, and WordPerfect for the Macintosh have all arrived. Life gets steadily better.

## ***Why WordPerfect?***

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WordPerfect is one of the most complete and powerful word processors available for the Macintosh. Among its great strengths is portability to other systems. There are versions of WordPerfect on IBM PCs and networked PCs, Digital Equipment Corporation’s VAXes, Commodore Amigas, Data General computers, the Apple II series, and even on IBM 370 mainframes. Furthermore, a file created on

any one of these systems can be used on any other; a WordPerfect document from a VAX can be used on an Amiga, and a file written on a Macintosh can be edited on an IBM PC.

Another reason WordPerfect deserves its popularity is the support the company gives users. Among major PC software companies, only WordPerfect supplies toll free support for all its products for as long as you need it. If you're stuck, you can dial 800-321-5906 from 9 A.M. to 8 P.M. EST Monday through Friday, and from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. on Saturday. You'll get courteous, helpful, and complete advice from one of the 300 people on the support staff. If they can't help you themselves, the support people will take your phone number, ask around, and call you back. In some cases, they'll even send you a technical memo by mail. (The company's phone bill for the toll-free support alone is something like \$160,000 a month.)

## ***A Brief Corporate History***

WordPerfect's genesis was outlined by company vice president Pete Peterson in a series of postings on CompuServe during the summer of 1987. This account of the company's history is based on information drawn from that account.

WordPerfect Corporation was started by two professors from Brigham Young University: Alan Ashton and Bruce Bastian. Ashton was a computer science professor; Bastian was director of the BYU marching band while working toward a master's degree in the music department.

Ashton began work on a computerized word processor one summer in the mid 1970s, before personal computers were invented. His motivation was the desire to format text on-screen as it was entered, without visible formatting codes. To today's personal computer users that might seem pretty small potatoes. But minicomputers and mainframe computers treated the entry and formatting of text as two distinct steps, which were often performed with different programs.

While Ashton was writing the word processor in his spare time, Bastian was writing a program that would produce step-by-step diagrams of the BYU marching band's half-time maneuvers and display them from any position in the stadium. The program was to have earned him his degree, but before it was finished the university hired someone with a Ph.D. to lead the band and fired Bastian. Ashton, an amateur trumpet player, suggested Bastian bring his project over to the computer science department. Bastian agreed, and Ashton became his advisor.

When Bastian received his degree in 1978, he went into business with Ashton to help develop the word processor.

Ashton and Bastian heard about a company that had a contract to provide a word processor for Orem, Utah—slightly north of Provo, the home of BYU. They offered to help, Ashton working for free and Orem providing free computer time on its Data General C/300. As part of the deal, Ashton and Bastian retained rights to any program they produced. That turned out to be a smart move.

The program was delivered in 1979; by March 1980 it was ready for commercial sale on Data General's AOS operating system. They called it SSI\*WP—the WP stood only for “word processing,” and the SSI for “Satellite Software International.”

At this point Pete Peterson came along, working part-time for \$5 an hour. (Monthly sales of SSI\*WP were about \$12,000 at the time.) Peterson noted that the company was operating without a business permit, without filing tax forms, without adequate financial records. Since he'd noticed the problem, Peterson was put to work getting the corporate house in order.

During 1981 and 1982, the program was translated to run on three other Data General operating systems, and sales reached \$80,000 a month. Then the company decided to write a version for a new machine called the IBM PC.

Peterson takes credit for the name WordPerfect. He says he exercised executive privilege to put the name on the short list of three under consideration, even though no one else liked it. When the other two choices failed a trademark search, the company found itself with a name that no one really cared for. Peterson says the

name was so unpopular that he never received the \$100 reward promised for dreaming it up.

The first version, version 2.2, shipped the day after Thanksgiving in 1982. Within a few months, the company needed a new manual and new programming to control printers. In 1983, the company sold \$3.5 million worth of software, up from \$1 million the previous year. Ashton, Bastian, and Peterson were (and still are) the only stockholders.

With version 3.0, distributors came calling and sales took off, doubling to better than \$500,000 a month. Version 4.0, introduced in 1985, sold more than \$20 million worth of software, and garnered Infoworld's highest-ever rating for a word processor. It helped that the company ran its first professional-looking ad campaign to support version 4.0. In 1986, with version 4.1, WordPerfect sold more than \$50 million worth of product and clinched 30 percent of the word processing market. At about this time, the company beefed up its neglected Data General product line and started moving WordPerfect onto the other machines mentioned earlier.

Now what, it is fair to ask, does any of this have to do with the product itself? In fact, WordPerfect's history affects the product quite a bit. The company is run, essentially, by people who started as amateurs and learned by trial and error. The word processor is the product of what those people think the world needs, and their opinions have been confirmed by rapidly increasing sales and the response of customers through one of the industry's most complete support organizations.

The extent to which the company listens to users is somewhat disconcerting. PC version 4.2 was almost entirely a response to a list of enhancements requested by the California Department of Justice. Pete Peterson is a regular participant on CompuServe's WordPerfect Support Group SIG, and he regularly asks for user opinion about enhancements the company is considering. He usually gets a response, and sometimes its vehemence is surprising.

In sum, WordPerfect is not a corporate product; it is very much a product of three people intent on creating a great tool that will run on as many computers as commercially viable. Something like one million people use WordPerfect on the IBM PC and compatibles. Now, Macintosh users can enjoy WordPerfect, too.

## ***WordPerfect and the Mac Standard***

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As noted earlier, WordPerfect was originally designed for Data General minicomputers and was ported to the IBM PC and many other machines. Since different computers have different user interfaces—even different keyboards—WordPerfect has needed to be something of a chameleon. The greatest change to date, though, has been the change to the graphic-based Mac interface—an immense step for a character-based word processor.

### ***From Function Keys to Menus***

The PC version of WordPerfect makes extensive use of function keys. The vast majority of Macs, however, have no function keys. That fact alone required a significant change in the look and feel of the program.

All the functions in Mac WordPerfect have been moved to menus or screen buttons. Rather than the 40 function keys used in the PC version, Mac WordPerfect uses 7 menus plus the ever present Apple menu and 18 submenus.

Like many other Mac programs, WordPerfect makes extensive use of COMMAND-key combinations. All 26 letter keys and the numbers 1 through 9 have COMMAND-key commands attached to them, and most have COMMAND-SHIFT key combinations, too. Of course, you don't need to use them; if you prefer to use the mouse that option is always open to you.

If you don't like the menu line, ruler, document title, and right scroll bar taking up precious room on the screen, there's a way to turn them off so you can enjoy WordPerfect's legendary "clean screen." Putting the mouse pointer at the top of the screen, though, causes the menus to reappear.

WordPerfect also gives you considerable keyboard control of the cursor. The numeric keypad exactly mimics the behavior of the PC's keypad: The 4, 6, 8, and 2 keys move the cursor left, right, up, and down; 9 and 3 move it up and down a full page; 7 works like



the HOME key; and + and - scroll up and down one screen. The 0 key toggles between the Insert and Typeover modes, and the decimal point key deletes the character to the right of the cursor. COMMAND-LEFT or COMMAND-RIGHT ARROW moves the cursor one word in the given direction; SHIFT combined with an arrow key highlights text from the cursor in the direction pressed, just as though you'd clicked the mouse and dragged to mark text.

If that seems like a lot of important material, don't worry; all this is covered in much greater depth and detail later in the book.

## ***A Final Word***

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This chapter has provided a brief look at WordPerfect's history and how the Mac version of the software was developed. If you don't understand something or if you're afraid WordPerfect will be hopelessly complicated, don't be too concerned. One of the nicest things about WordPerfect is that you don't have to know everything about the program to use it effectively. In fact, as you'll see, you can start working with WordPerfect and creating documents in a surprisingly short time.

Just go to your computer, take out your WordPerfect disks, and follow along. And don't be afraid to experiment on your own and make mistakes. If you're like most people, you learn best when you make a mistake. Remember to take it at your own pace, and have fun.