

Word Processing programs and their uses

An application that provides extensive tools for creating all kinds of text based programs. They are not limited to working with text and enable you to add images to documents and to design your own documents.

Can enhance your documents in other ways, can embed sounds, video clips and animation into them. You can link other documents e.g. link a chart from a spreadsheet program.

The word processor's interface

The main editing window displays a document and several tools.

- **Document area** (or **document window**), which is where you view the document.
- **Menu bar** displaying titles of commands.
- One or more **toolbars** provide tools that resemble buttons representing frequently used commands.
- A **ruler** shows the positioning of text, tabs, margins, indents and other elements on the page.
- Horizontal and vertical **scroll bars** let you scroll through a document too large to fit in the document area.
- Along the bottom of the window is the **status bar** that includes information related to your position in the document, the page count and the status of the keyboard keys.

Entering and editing text

- **Entering text** - create a document by typing on the keyboard. In a new document the program inserts a blinking insertion point (a cursor) in the top left corner of the document window. As you type the cursor moves showing you where the next character will be placed.
- **Word wrap** - When your text reaches the right hand side of the screen the insertion point moves automatically to the next line. The only time you need to press enter is at the end of a paragraph.
- **Editing** - Word processors allow you to change text without retying the whole page, you retype only the text that needs to be changed.

Methods for erasing and retyping text quickly:

- **Backspace and delete keys** - Backspace moves the cursor one character to the left erasing each character as it goes. The delete key deletes each character to the right of the cursor.
- **Overtyping** - Word processors allow you to work in **overtyping (overwrite) mode**, the new text you type writes over existing text. Otherwise you work in **insertion mode**, text is inserted wherever the cursor is located without overwriting the existing text.
- **AutoCorrect** - Feature that automatically corrects common spelling mistakes.
- **Undo and Redo** - If you make a change to a document and then change your mind you can use the undo command to return it to its original state. The redo command reverses the previous undo command.

Major advantage of word processors is the ability to work with blocks of text.

Block - contiguous group of characters, words, lines, sentences or paragraphs in the document that you mark for editing.

Select text to edit using:

- Mouse – drag to select
- Keyboard – shift and the arrow keys
- Both – Ctrl while clicking.

Selected text changes colour – becoming **highlighted** – to indicate that it is selected.

To **deselect** a block of text click the mouse anywhere on the document.

Formatting text

The process of formatting a document includes

- Controlling the appearance of text
- Layout of text on a page
- Use of pictures and other graphical elements.

Most formatting features fall into one of three categories,

- Character formats
- Paragraph formats
- Document formats

Character Formats

Fonts

Refers to the characteristics of the letters, symbols and punctuation marks in your document.

There are 2 general categories:

- **Monospace**
Every character takes up exactly the same amount of horizontal space, e.g. Courier. Useful to line up columns of type.
- **Proportional**
Most fonts are proportional. Each character is as wide as it needs to be, the letter M needs more horizontal space than the letter I, e.g. Times.

2 additional broad categories

- **Serif**
Have curls or extra decorative lines at the ends of the strokes making up characters.
- **Sans serif**
No curls or additional lines.

Type Size

Fonts are measured in **points**. One point is 1/72 of an inch → 72 points = 1 inch.

Common font size used in business documents is 12-point type.

Characters are measured from the top of the tallest letters (such as T and P) to the bottom of the letters that descend below the line (such as g and p).

Type styles

The most common styles used are

- **Bold**
- *Italic*
- Underlining

Less commonly used are

- ~~Strikethrough~~
- Superscript^{superscript}
- Subscript_{subscript}
- SMALL CAPS

Paragraph Formats

Word processing software creates a new paragraph every time you hit the enter key. Paragraph formatting includes settings applied only to one or more entire paragraphs.

Line and paragraph spacing

- **Line spacing**
Setting controlling the amount of space between each line of text in a paragraph.
- **Paragraph spacing**
Refers to the amount of space between each paragraph. By default, set to be the same as line spacing.

Indents and Alignment

- **Margins**
White borders around the edge of a page where no text is typed. Top, bottom, left and right margins can be all different.
- **Indents**
Determine how close each line of a paragraph comes to the margins.
- **Alignment**
Refers to the orientation of the lines of a paragraph with respect to the margins. There are 4 options:
 1. Left
 2. Right
 3. Centre
 4. Justified

Tabs and Tab stops

Keyboards Tab key moves the insertion point forward until it reaches a **tab stop** (or just **tab**) inserting a fixed amount of space in the line. A tab stop is a position defined at every fourth or fifth character, or every 0.5-inch.

Usually at least 4 different types of tab stops that can be used:

1. Left aligned
2. Right aligned
3. Centred
4. Decimal aligned

Borders, shading and shadows

- **Border or Rule**
Line drawn on one or more sides of a paragraph.
- **Shading**
Pattern or colour that is displayed as background to the text in a paragraph
- **Shadow**

Drop shadow is a shadow around a bordered paragraph creating the illusion that the paragraph is floating above the page.

Document Formats

Page size and orientation

Can set up a document for custom size paper. Normal documents are set to fit 8.5- by 11-inch paper. By default documents use **portrait orientation** (page is longer than wider) but can also switch to **landscape orientation** (sideways on the page).

Headers and footers

Lines of text that run along the top and bottom of each page.

Columns and sections

Columns are effective formats for certain types of documents such as newsletters. **Sections** allow you to divide the document and use different formats in each section.

Special Features

Language Tools

- Spell checkers
Can enable a spell checker to catch spelling mistakes as you type or use it to review an entire document. A spell checker matches each word in a document against a built in dictionary containing standard spellings. If the utility comes across a word that has no match in the dictionary it lets you know. A good spell checker will provide options for replacing or ignoring the word or adding it to the spelling dictionary
- Grammar checkers
Works like spell checkers except that they inspect the document for grammatical mistakes. It compares each sentence to a set of standard rules, notifies you of problems it finds and provides grammatically correct options.
- Thesaurus
An electronic thesaurus is just like a printed one – a source of alternative words. Select the word, launch the thesaurus, it will then display a definition of the word and a list of alternatives.

Tables

Features allow you to create tables in a few steps. Size of the table is limited by amount of page space that can be devoted to it.

Mail Merge

Process of combining a form letter with the contents of a database. Makes it easy to send the same letter to a list of different people with the correct name and address on each letter.

Adding graphics and sound

Easy to add graphic images to documents. After the graphic has been imported you can move, size, crop and add borders to it. Sound can be embedded in much the same way as graphics. An icon appears in the document and clicking the icon plays the sound file.

Templates

Predesigned documents that are blank except for preset margins, fonts, paragraph formats, headings, rules, graphics, headers or footers.

Desktop Publishing Software

Popular DTP software packages include

- Adobe PageMaker
- QuarkXPress
- Adobe FrameMaker

Enables one person to perform all the required tasks

- Design
- Layout
- Typesetting
- Placement of graphics

Sampling of the advanced document design features found in DTP software

- **Type controls**
Enables the user to control **Kerning** (spacing between individual letters) and **tracking** (general setting for character spacing for entire blocks of text). Also provides nearly infinite control of **leading**, typesetting term for line spacing.
- **Graphics controls**
Gives the user direct control over the exact placement of graphics on a page, wrapping of text around the graphic and use of borders and shading with graphics.
- **Page layout and Document controls**
Offers sophisticated controls for formatting documents and co-ordinating multiple documents in a publication. A common page layout control is called **master pages** – special pages that are set aside for defining elements common to all pages.
- **Prepress controls**
Most unique characteristic of DTP software. Capability to prepare documents for printing press. Enables the user to specify colours according to printing industry standards so that the printer can understand precisely what colours to use. Also prepares **colour separations** for documents printed in colour – separate pages created for each of the four colours that are combined to give the illusion of full colour on the printed page.

Converting documents into WWW pages

To create a web page you need to format the page with special codes that explain how the page will appear and behave in a web browser. The special codes are part of a page description language called HTML (Hypertext markup language).

Word processors can convert standard text documents into HTML format for you. Many new programs also provide HTML template which function just like templates described earlier.