

# Corel WordPerfect Office FUNCTION MONSTER

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**Although the last two versions of the word processing program WordPerfect were converted to Linux by SDC, Corel has undertaken to convert the latest edition itself. For the first time, not only the word processing program but the entire office package is available.**

The standard English version of Office 2000 consists of WordPerfect 9, the spreadsheet program Quattro Pro 9, the presentation program Presentations 9 and the calendar manager CorelCentral 9. The „Deluxe“ version which has also appeared on the market includes the database Paradox 9. As a bonus, users will also find a large number of fonts and images (clip-art and professional photos), Netscape Communicator and the Acrobat Reader on the CD.

Corel no longer relies on an external company to carry out the conversion work. Instead it uses the free Windows emulator WINE which it helps sponsor. This saves time and makes conversion easier for users used to Windows thanks to the identical interface. However, there are disadvantages. The minimum system requirements (Pentium 166, 32 MByte main memory) really should be seen as an absolute minimum. The emulation does put the brakes on this already slow office package. Several of the graphical elements didn't work perfectly either. For example, some of the menus were still displayed on the screen even after they had been closed.

## Resource-hungry and demanding ...

The requirements of the Linux system should also be considered with caution. When an attempt was made to install this package under the somewhat older SuSE Linux 6.1, which, according to Corel, should satisfy the requirements for a system with Linux 2.2.x, Glibc 2.0 or 2.1 and X Windows, the installation program stopped and displayed an error message. The manual installation procedure did not work on this system either.

In contrast, on a Red Hat system, the installation

assistant worked perfectly and immediately revealed its weaknesses: even the manual installation procedure doesn't allow users to install parts of the package. The only choices are between a complete installation, where the entire 430 MByte are installed, and a minimal installation, where the setup program installs just WordPerfect and Quattro Pro taking approximately 150 MB. The next annoyance lies in the fully automatic directory selection: the entire office package is always installed in the directories `/usr/lib/corel` and `/usr/bin`, without giving the user the opportunity to intervene manually.

## ... but very user-friendly

Once you have overcome the obstacles thrown up by the installation procedure, a user-friendly environment emerges: integration into KDE works exceptionally well, the documentation and online help is extensive and well structured and the font manager included with the package helps users to add and remove fonts easily later on. The True Type format is supported, allowing Windows users to retain their existing fonts. WordPerfect 9 is able to embed fonts directly into documents so that these can be edited on computers which do not have the fonts used in the document. There is no standard desktop as there is for StarOffice, but the assistant – called “PerfectExpert” – provides users with a helping hand while they work if they wish so.

## Import-Export

In contrast to earlier versions, WordPerfect and Presentations have been provided with an export facility in the widely used, cross-platform PDF format 1.2 and the number of import/export filters

(including several exotic types) has been increased again. Unfortunately, they don't work perfectly. WordPerfect opened simple Word 97 documents relatively well. When it attempted to open a more complex document created using Word 97 it crashed and refused another attempt to open it, displaying the error message "Unknown file format".

Importing a PowerPoint presentation into Presentations worked better. After a long computing time only the font size was displayed incorrectly. We were also pleased that the file formats of the Corel programs remained unchanged. Therefore, it is possible to swap between the individual WordPerfect versions up to and including version 6.1. Editing and generating HTML pages produces worse than poor results. On the other hand, the package understands the new XML format for the first time. The powerful script language PerfectScript, with which users can add their own components to the package, has been retained and extended.

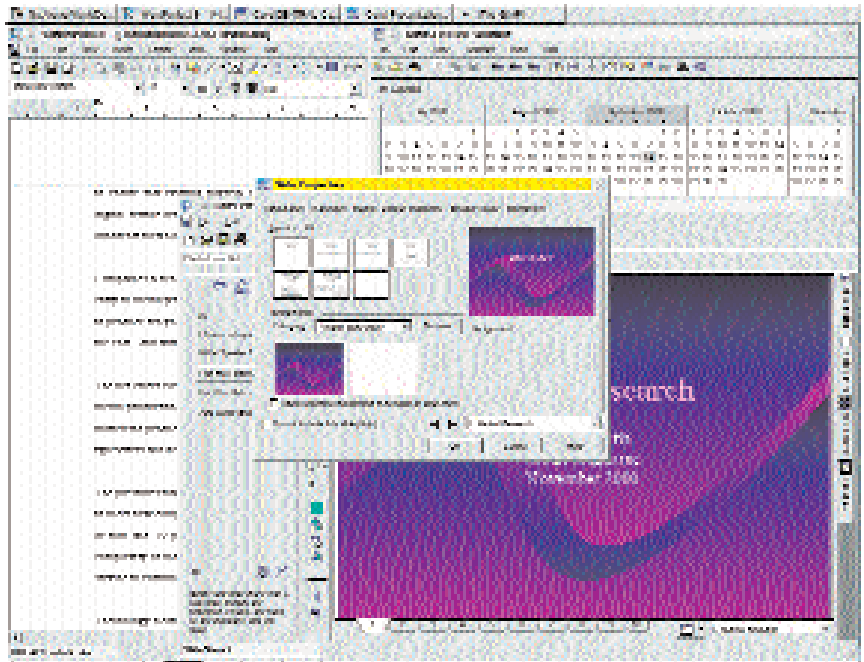
## New features in WordPerfect

Experts on the previous version WordPerfect 8 have little adjustment to do. Only a few details in the word processing program have been improved. The wide range of functions that is typical of WordPerfect, such as the automatic creation of directories and glossaries, good version management and the extensive customised form letter functions, remain.

The new real-time preview works in all the office components and it is a useful feature. It shows formatting changes (such as new font selections) directly using the data in the document before they are committed. The new autoscroll function makes navigation in large documents easier. The print functions have also been extended. As well as printing a poster, you can now print up to 64 pages on one sheet.

The graphical formula editor new to the Windows version isn't available under Linux. Instead the user must be content with the more flexible but also more complicated command-driven counterpart. Although WordPerfect displays formulas created with the graphical formula editor under Windows graphically, as is the case with all other Windows OLE objects by the way, it blocks any attempt to make changes.

The layout functions of the word processing program are still among the best offered by any of the competitors. They include the equally loved and hated shadow cursor, which can now be switched on and off easily using the right mouse button. It is still somewhat awkward to use, and the header and footer lines aren't yet as flexible to manage as those in comparable products. Surprisingly, the functions used to edit graphics have been moved to the presentation module.



## Quattro Pro, Presentations and the rest

Quattro Pro has everything you would expect from a professional spreadsheet program. As well as handling the Euro, it offers a wealth of chart layouts and an even wider range of functions. This version of the program is the first to be able to process an incredible 1,000,000 lines in one spreadsheet (in contrast, Microsoft Excel manages about a third). One document may consist of 18,000 spreadsheets, would you believe it!

Presentations 9 is primarily a presentation program, and one that has no need to hide behind the competition. At the same time it serves as an image processing program for bitmap and vector graphics. Although the manipulation functions on offer go beyond those of StarOffice, they are no substitute for professional image processing. It remains unclear why several of these functions, such as filters and effects for bitmap graphics, have been hidden in the menus. Like all good presentation programs, Presentations also contains what is known as a runtime player, by which means a presentation can be replayed by someone who doesn't possess a copy of Presentations itself.

CorelCentral is a simple calendar with a just as simple address book and integrated memo management. The range of functions is adequate for use at home, but doesn't match up to more established rivals. Although appointments can be edited as web pages the program still lacks an email notification facility under StarOffice.

Corel's office package is worth recommending to users who either need the relevant functions or can't acquire a taste for StarOffice's integrated solution. Other users who pay more attention to the price and can live with a somewhat smaller range of functions will certainly stay with StarOffice. ■

Everything you need, from document creation to slick presentations.