

PC
TODAY

pctoday.com

Your Windows Authority



Take Charge & Troubleshoot

- PC Performance
- Email Problems
- Microsoft Office
- Windows Media Player
- Problems With Files
- Networking Issues

Head-To-Head
Word 2003 vs
WordPerfect 12

Q & A

for Windows



October 2004 Vol. 2 Iss. 10
\$7.99 U.S. \$9.99 Canada



Microsoft Word 2003 vs. Corel WordPerfect 12

Two Heavyweight Word Processors Go Head-To-Head



Microsoft Office Standard Edition 2003
\$399; \$239 for upgrade
30-day free trial
Microsoft
(800) 426-9400 (425) 706-7329
www.microsoft.com

Corel WordPerfect Office 12
\$299.99; \$149.99 for upgrade
30-day free trial
Corel
(800) 772-6735
www.corel.com



If you are looking into getting a new office suite, you're aware that Microsoft and Corel have recently unleashed their newest office products: Microsoft Office 2003 and Corel WordPerfect Office 12. To help you make your decision on which suite will best meet your needs, we put the two packages to the test and looked at some of the best features in their main components.

In order to be as thorough as possible, we have broken our head-to-head review into two parts: Part 1 will focus on the word processing programs. In Part 2, which runs in next month's *PC Today*, we'll look at each program's spreadsheets (Excel 2003 and Quattro Pro) and the presentation programs (PowerPoint 2003 and Presentations 12).

Let's Talk Money

Although the focus of this article is on the word processors, we must discuss the cost factor in terms of the price

for each suite. Because we will be looking at the three main components (word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation programs) in our two-part office suite review, we will use the price of Microsoft Office Standard Edition 2003 for our comparison. (Microsoft Office 2003 is available in multiple versions; however,

there is only one *real* WordPerfect Office.) Corel WordPerfect Office 12 carries a retail price of \$299.99 (\$149.99 for the upgrade), while Microsoft Office Standard Edition 2003 will cost you \$399 (\$239 for the upgrade).

At first glance, this price comparison seems to indicate that WordPerfect Office is the better deal. However, you have to take into account the fact that the Microsoft Office also includes Outlook, whereas the WordPerfect suite doesn't include an email or PIM (personal information manager) program. As such, if you were to add the cost of the standalone version of Outlook 2003, which is \$109.99, to the cost of the WordPerfect suite, you have a more level playing field if you are comparing prices.

On the other hand, because we are focusing on the word processors, we'd be remiss if we didn't point out that Microsoft Word 2003 is available as a standalone package for a cost of \$229

(\$109 for the upgrade). WordPerfect 12 is only available as a part of the office suite.

If you're sitting on the fence and really aren't sure which suite will work best for you, you'll be glad to know that you can sample each one before making a monetary commitment. Microsoft offers a full-featured, fully functional 30-day trial of the Office Professional Edition 2003. Although the trial software is free, you must order it on a CD, which requires a \$7.95 fee for shipping. For its evaluation version, Corel offers a slimmed down 30-day trial of WordPerfect Office 12. The free trial is available as a 152MB download that only includes the main components of the suite, but those components are fully functional.

Now that we have addressed the preliminaries, let's take a look at the word processors.

Microsoft Word 2003

If you have been using Microsoft Word for a while, at first glance the 2003 version doesn't really appear that much different from its predecessor. The interface is a bit more refined, but nothing immediately jumps out as new and exciting. However, once you delve into the document creation process, you'll encounter some new and improved features. There aren't as many new word processing features in Word 2003 as you might expect from a major upgrade. But you have to take into account that Microsoft's main design goal for Office 2003, as a whole, was the integration of collaboration, usability, and information management features aimed at using the suite in a corporate enterprise environment.

Features to look for. Even so, Word 2003 is packed with features that let you create impressive documents. To get started, you'll find that Word comes with an ample selection of fonts and easy-to-use formatting options, as well as a host of templates and document-creation wizards. Many more are available for download from the Microsoft Office Online Web site (www.office.microsoft.com/home/default.aspx). Although a lot of these templates and



wizards are carryovers from previous editions, Microsoft has enhanced many of them.

Of course Word 2003 provides you with a built-in spelling and grammar checker. But when you go to access the thesaurus, you'll discover that Microsoft integrated it into a new feature called the Research pane. The Research pane appears in Word's Task Pane, which is a sidebar-like panel that appears on the right side of the document. In addition to the thesaurus, the Research pane provides access to a variety of online reference material. For example, you can access the Encarta Dictionary and Encyclopedia, HighBeam Research's eLibrary, and even MSN Search, just to name a few. Plus, you can customize the Research pane and add your favorite research services.

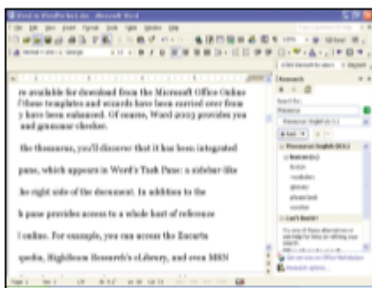
One of the most prominent new features in Word 2003 is the Reading Layout view, which is designed to make reading documents on-screen easier on your eyes. If you choose to use this feature, Word hides all of the toolbars except for the Reading Layout and Reviewing toolbars and configures the interface to appear like an open book with pages facing each other. To complete the illusion, Word enhances the text by using Microsoft ClearType, a typographical technology designed to improve font display resolution such that words on the screen look almost as sharp and clear as those printed on paper.

Another new item to look for in Word 2003 is the Protect Documents feature. This feature is a subset of the larger IRM (Information Rights Management) policy enforcement technology built into Office 2003 and designed to protect documents and email messages from unauthorized access and use. (The full IRM package is only available in the Professional and Enterprise editions of Office 2003 and relies on a server running Windows Rights Management Services.)

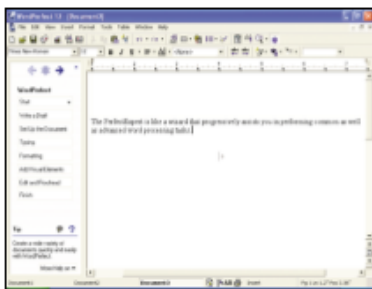
Using the Protect Document feature, you can restrict the formatting and editing capabilities of documents that you share, or collaborate on, with others. For example, you can lock a document, essentially making it a read-only document; you can restrict editing and allow others

viewing the document to only enter comments; or you can lock the Track Changes option, which would allow viewers to make changes but not disable the Track Changes option. The Protect Document feature also lets you create forms allowing users to only fill in specified fields.

On the advanced feature front, Word 2003 has the ability to save XML (Extensible Markup Language) documents using the Word XML schema. The advantage here is that you can create documents in Word as you normally would without worrying about XML details.



The new Research pane in Microsoft Word 2003 provides access to the thesaurus, as well as a host of other reference materials.



The PerfectExpert will guide you, step-by-step, through all of the document creation features that WordPerfect has to offer.

Then, when you save the file as XML, the word processing program uses the Word XML schema, called WordML, to automatically apply the appropriate XML tags to the document. Documents you create using the WordML schema are compatible with standard XML such that any software package that can parse XML can read and process the data in an XML document created with WordML.

When mentioning XML support, it's important to point out that the version of Word 2003 that comes with Microsoft

Office Standard Edition 2003 doesn't provide all the XML features in the version that is available with Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003 or the stand-alone Microsoft Word 2003 package.

Corel WordPerfect 12

The folks at Corel, buoyed by Vector Capital's recent acquisition of the company, have spent a great deal of time and money redesigning their business productivity suite and shifting the emphasis away from a proprietary product toward one that offers greater Microsoft Office compatibility. As such, if you are currently using Microsoft Word, you'll feel right at home if you decide to make the switch to WordPerfect 12.

You choose. As soon as you launch WordPerfect 12, the new Workspace Manager greets you, prompting you to choose a user interface configuration. You can choose among WordPerfect Mode, Microsoft Word Mode, WordPerfect Classic Mode, and WordPerfect Legal Mode. Each mode reconfigures the look and feel of the main workspace components, such as toolbars, menus, and shortcut keys, to emulate your interface selection. Although the Microsoft Word Mode is aimed at Microsoft converts, the standard, Legal, and Classic modes are all designed to make it easy for die-hard WordPerfect enthusiasts to make the transition to this new version. Of course, the WordPerfect Legal Mode contains special features that cater to the document creation needs of a law practice, while the WordPerfect Classic Mode takes you all the way back to the simplistic version 5.1: white text on a blue screen interface complete with all of the old-style keyboard shortcuts.

When you choose Microsoft Word Mode, the PerfectExpert feature opens. PerfectExpert appears as a sidebar panel to the left of your workspace. (In all other modes, you must manually activate PerfectExpert from the Help menu.) Acting like a task-oriented wizard, the PerfectExpert will progressively assist you in performing common and advanced word processing tasks with a menu-like display that instantly activates options or opens the appropriate



dialog boxes. As you work through a task, PerfectExpert's Back, Forward, and Home buttons let you easily navigate all the available options and steps.

Another feature designed to ease the transition from Word to WordPerfect, as well as make it very easy to share documents with Word users, is the Microsoft Word Compatibility toolbar. From this handy little toolbar you can easily save WordPerfect documents in Word format, convert Word documents to WordPerfect format, and launch the WordPerfect Compatibility With Microsoft Word Help system where you can find detailed information on the all compatibility features.

When you switch documents from Word to WordPerfect, the conversion process is very smooth and almost perfect. Of course, basic documents often make it through the conversion process better than those documents that are heavily formatted. You can avoid any conversion troubles by referring to the conversion reference in the compatibility Help system mentioned previously. That way you'll know ahead of time what anomalies to look for when converting documents.

Once you begin creating documents in WordPerfect, you'll, of course, find all of the standard word processing features that you need to create documents. For example, you'll find a generous offering of fonts, formatting options, and templates, as well as a built-in spell checker, dictionary, and thesaurus.

However, you'll also encounter a whole slew of features designed to assist you in creating more sophisticated documents. For example, WordPerfect lets you publish your documents to PDF (Portable Document Format), HTML, and XML. Doing so is as easy as selecting the appropriate Publish To command from either the File menu or the Microsoft Word Compatibility toolbar.

When publishing to PDF, WordPerfect Office 12 saves the file in Adobe Acrobat version 5.0 format, which under most circumstances is sufficient. Publishing to HTML is also a very straightforward operation.

In addition to publishing documents to XML, WordPerfect can also create

and edit standard XML documents. When working with XML, WordPerfect automatically shifts into XML editor mode, which is a two-panel display that

gives you a structured view of your document on the left and page view on the right. For more detailed work, you can access the XML Project Designer, a

Step Into The Ring

In the main part of our review, we look at each word processing program's new features. Here, we take off the kid gloves and dive into a more confrontational comparison of the main features of each program.

Features	Corel WordPerfect 12
Dictionary	The Oxford University Press dictionary is preinstalled in WordPerfect, so it is readily available all the time and it provides good definitions. However, not all words are available and you're prompted to purchase the Oxford Concise Dictionary at a cost of about \$20.
File conversion (batches)	The WordPerfect Office Conversion Utility provides an interface that lets you convert a variety of document formats to WordPerfect.
File export (standard formats)	Using the commands on the Microsoft Word Compatibility toolbar to save documents in HTML, XML (Extensible Markup Language), PDF (Portable Document Format), and Word formats is very easy.
File import (standard formats)	Can easily import HTML and Word documents from the File Open dialog box.
Font preview	Access the Font drop-down menu and a pop-up window displays a font sample. If your cursor is positioned on text in a document, that text becomes the font sample and it temporarily switches to the highlighted font.
Formatting controls (Advanced)	The Reveal Codes window appears at the bottom of the workspace and displays the text enclosed in the actual formatting tags.
Formatting features	Formatting features are easily accessible from the Font and Format toolbars, as well as the Format menu. Creating and editing styles is a straightforward operation from the Styles dialog box.
Grammar checker	By default the Grammar-As-You-Go feature is disabled. Perform a manual grammar check operation by selecting the Grammatik command on the Tools menu.
Help system	The Help menu provides access to a traditional Help dialog box, the PerfectExpert, the CoreTUTOR, and Word Help. You also have access to the Corel Web site. The Help dialog box contains a tab for easily searching the Corel Knowledge Base.
Multiple document handling	Each document appears as a button in the application bar at the bottom of the workspace.
Printed documentation	The regular-sized, 308-page user guide provides installation information and contains task-oriented sections for each application. Each section has a separate index.
Spell checker	The Spell As You Go feature is enabled by default and immediately underlines misspelled words. Perform a manual spell check by clicking a button on the toolbar or by pressing CTRL-F1.
Templates	Selecting the New From Project command launches the PerfectExpert dialog box, which provides access to hundreds of templates. The additional OfficeReady browser provides you with thumbnail views of all the available templates, as well as access to the WordPerfect Templates page on the Corel Web site.
XML creation	Saving WordPerfect documents in XML format is easy with the Publish To XML command. When you need to work more closely with the actual XML tags, WordPerfect shifts into XML editor mode and provides access to its XML Project Designer.



separate application that works in conjunction with the word processor and lets you create layouts and templates by assigning formatting to XML elements.

Make Your Move

As you can see, when it comes to word processing power, Word 2003 and

WordPerfect 12 have a lot to offer and can easily handle most common and advanced tasks. Of course, you'll need to balance your needs against each program's feature set along with the cost of the office suite. And speaking of the suites, keep in mind that we'll continue with our head-to-head comparison

of Microsoft Office 2003 and Corel WordPerfect Office 12 next month with a look at the spreadsheets (Excel 2003 and Quattro Pro) and the presentation programs (PowerPoint 2003 and Presentations 12). **PC**

by Greg Shultz

Microsoft Word 2003

The Encarta Dictionary is available in the Research pane and provides excellent definitions. However, in order to use it, you must have an Internet connection.

The Batch Conversion Wizard walks you through converting a variety of document formats to Word.

Using the Save As command to save documents in HTML, XML, and WordPerfect formats is easy.

Can easily import HTML and WordPerfect documents from the File Open dialog box.

Access the Font drop-down menu and each font name displays in that font.

The Reveal Formatting task pane provides a list of the formatting options you can apply to the selected text.

An ample set of formatting features is available from the Formatting toolbar and on the Format menu. Creating and editing styles is an easy task in the Styles And Formatting pane.

By default the Check Grammar As You Type feature is enabled. Word performs a manual grammar check at the same time as a manual spell check.

The Help menu provides access to Word Help, the Office Assistant, and WordPerfect Help. You also have access to the comprehensive Microsoft Office Online Web site and Office Update.

Each document appears as a separate button on the Windows Taskbar.

The small, paperback-sized, 42-page getting started guide provides installation information and brief overviews of new features.

By default, the Check Spelling As You Type feature is enabled and immediately underlines misspelled words. You can perform a manual spell check by clicking a button on the toolbar or by pressing F7.

Selecting the New command opens the New Document pane where you can access literally hundreds of document templates, both locally and on the Microsoft Office Online Template page.

Saving Word documents in XML format is a snap due to the automatic application of the WordML schema. However, if you need to delve into the actual XML tags, you're out of luck.

The Verdict

The Encarta Dictionary's definitions are much more detailed than those in the Oxford dictionary version. Also the fact that WordPerfect prompts you to purchase a different dictionary is a bit of a letdown.

Although the Conversion Wizard and the Conversion Utility approach the task from different interface perspectives, they both perform the task commendably. So this one's a tie.

Having a separate toolbar that is easy to use and access, as well as having the ability to save documents in PDF format, puts WordPerfect over the top.

Both programs can easily import HTML as well as each other's documents.

When it comes to experimenting with fonts, WordPerfect's font preview method comes out way ahead of Word's method.

When it comes to changing formatting options, Word's Reveal Formatting feature is quicker. When it comes to unraveling botched formatting, WordPerfect's tag display is easier. This one's a tie.

Both programs offer such similar features when it comes to formatting and styles, that this is easily a tie.

The grammar checking tools in both programs are very similar in operation and usability. However, WordPerfect's Grammatik offers more thorough explanations.

Both Help systems are excellent and provide tons of assistance, locally and via the Web. This one's a tie.

WordPerfect's application bar provides a more sensible solution to managing multiple open documents.

Although Word's lack of a manual is more than made up for with the amount of content on the Microsoft Office Online Web site, having a printed manual is still a big plus. WordPerfect wins this one.

Both on-the-fly spell checkers perform similarly. A manual spell check in Word opens a dialog box with only suggested corrections. A manual spell check in WordPerfect opens a tabbed panel that not only offers suggested corrections but also provides quick access to Grammatik, the thesaurus, and the dictionary.

Although both programs go about providing access to their templates in slightly different ways, the type, quality, and number of available templates is essentially the same.

If all you need to do is generate basic XML, then either program will do the job. However, if you want more sophisticated XML tools, then WordPerfect is your match.