

allow for more casual, formal, or scientific tone. Also, in the past WordPerfect's thesaurus offered more/better suggestions than Word's.

WordPerfect 6.0a Adding QuickCorrect (AutoCorrect) with 50 standard entries.

Word 6.0 AutoCorrect was a big differentiating factor until 6.0a. WordPerfect is playing up the large number of standard entries they ship with. There's still something to be said about having been the first and always being one step ahead.

Word '95 Background spell checking with an animated progress marker.

Lacking in usability but powerful thanks to its SQL drivers and new ODBC support (w/6.0a).

Data Import

Powerful but not very well implemented.

- Since they ship with Q+E drivers, WordPerfect can talk to multi-tier (SQL) databases right out of the box (Oracle, SQL Server, Sybase etc.). While a powerful feature in principle, the user has to know how to use SQL in order to construct a query (i.e. this is a great feature for only a very small portion of the user base).
- File-based database support includes FoxPro, dBase, and Paradox; note the conspicuous absence of Access (will be available through 6.0a).
- WordPerfect's Data Import dialog box allows you to choose whether the data should be imported into a table, tab delineated text or into a merge data file.
- As for spreadsheets, WordPerfect supports Lotus, Excel, Quattro Pro, and PlanPerfect, file formats but, until 6.0a, hadn't supported the latest version of any of the big three.

WordPerfect 6.0a ODBC support equals support for Access and Excel 5.0. This move alone greatly enhances WordPerfect's single-tier database support.

Word 6.0 Word 6.0 supports the same Lotus file formats as WordPerfect. Word for Windows 6.0, however, will be the only word processor to fully support Excel 5.0 file format until 6.0a is released. Furthermore, if the user has Excel 5.0, then they also have Microsoft Query, a powerful database query tool that far exceeds anything offered in WordPerfect. Basically it puts the same ease of an Access (which Word has also supported from the beginning) front end onto any database query being done, including SQL searches. While this tool currently only ships with Excel 5.0, Word can still get to SQL data through Access.

Word also allows the user to preview merged data before doing an actual merge (a big potential time saver). Overall, out of the box, WordPerfect can talk to more databases than Word can. However, Word is potentially far more powerful and easy to use.

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Word '95 Easy Chicago and workgroup environment integration will affect this and much more. Background spell checking with an animated progress marker.

WordPerfect for Windows 6.0 Weaknesses

- Lack of design/Poor performance
- Cumbersome UI/Mediocre ease of use and learning
- No auto anything
- Conversion and cross-platform
- Suite story
- Technology follower

Verges on having too much and thus suffers a significant performance hit.

Lack of design/Poor performance

Two things are clear about WordPerfect for Windows 6.0: 1) it has almost everything 2) it is poorly designed. Virtually every feature, variable, or arcane measurement known to be at some point associated with any word processing related task can be found somewhere in the depths of this product. But it would appear as if no one sat down and thought through whether or not the features would be truly useful/practical or if the implementation was reasonable for most users.

- The program tends to send the user into totally unnecessary dialogs or through extra layers of interface before letting the user complete a task. For example, to cut/copy a selection in a table, the program gives the user a dialog box verifying "cut/copy selection" before it will do the task.
- Formatting or reformatting is not intelligently applied.
- Users have to know SQL to use the SQL drivers shipped with the product.

Needless to say, the result of having so much with so little design is a bulky, slow, buggy product that, without 6.0a, is riddled with GP fault problems (for even simple tasks such as printing). If WordPerfect buckled down and streamlined/enhanced the design of their WordPerfect for Windows 6.0 product, it could be amazing.

The tragedy in all the frustration with WordPerfect 6.0's initial release is that it so seldom resulted in people looking/switching to Word 6.0. There are countless letters and postings of irate customers that say they will simply go back to earlier versions of WordPerfect until they have their act together.

WordPerfect 6.0a WP has attempted to fix problems with the product's speed, reliability, printing, font conversion, print and video drivers, DDEML.DLL incompatibility issues and more. It is seven disks!

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Word 6.0 Word, in contrast, has been praised industry-wide for its extremely sharp designed. The design goal of making daily

tasks faster and easier is immediately apparent, and the small, intelligent enhancements found throughout the product make working with it relatively easy. Word needs to improve how it markets itself to the portion of the word processing public that our product's strengths most dramatically impact (GU's).

In giving the user everything, the UI can also overwhelm.

Cumbersome UI/Mediocre ease of use and learning

The WordPerfect for Windows 6.0 UI, while totally customizable, is very complex. As was previously mentioned, there are numerous bars and buttons—all of differing sizes—that can take up a lot of precious screen real estate. Although WordPerfect does deflect some of this confusion with button explanations in the title bar, this also makes for a busy screen.

- Coaches help, but there are only 12.
- Tasks are nestled in multiple drop-down menus and dialog boxes. Some tasks are easy to accomplish (and give a broader range of possibilities than Word offers) once the user has found the functionality, but finding it is often the hardest part.

WordPerfect 6.0a QuickStart start-up tutorial/Coach is an attempt to improve this as are the Ami Pro and WordPerfect Lite templates.

Word 6.0 Does a lot to simplify the user interface with tabbed dialog boxes, live preview windows, and a much cleaner execution of tasks. For someone already familiar with WordPerfect, getting up to speed and the often excessive multiple menus may not be as tough to deal with as it would be for a novice user. For beginners or people wishing to focus on a task rather than figuring out how to do it, Word is ideal. Again, this positions Word 6.0 very nicely to help expand the word processing market, something we currently don't do as well as WordPerfect (see WordPerfect Market Overview for details).

6.0a will bring auto-features to WordPerfect.

No auto anything

WordPerfect is feature rich, but lacks the intelligence and automation, save for QuickCorrect and QuickSelect, offered in Word. Such features and enhancements are not only time consuming to develop but require strong product vision and design, one of WordPerfect's greatest product/development weaknesses.

WordPerfect 6.0a Expands WordPerfect's line of "Quick" features to include their version of AutoCorrect (ships with 50 standard entries) & AutoSelect. They join QuickMenus (context-sensitive menus), QuickFormat (format painter), QuickFinder, and QuickList (the later two are part of their file management and indexing system).

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Word 6.0 Word 6.0's IntelliSense features have raised the bar as to what

a word processor can/should do for the user. Features like AutoFormat will remain a competitive advantage over WordPerfect for Windows for some time. The challenge incumbent on Word (being the first and currently only word processor to offer this) is to inform users that features like it exist, can translate to significant productivity boons, and should be demanded of their word processor.

Word '95 and beyond Should only widen this competitive advantage for Word (background spell checking/AutoCorrect & AutoFormat etc.).

Support many platforms, but conversion across platforms and new/old versions is poor

Conversion and cross-platform/Lack of core code

This is both a strength and weakness of WordPerfect's. Before the product's latest release, it made claims to cross-platform compatibility with its DOS and Windows products (in keystroke, macro and file conversion). WordPerfect is also available on UNIX and the Macintosh. They also have worked to make 6.0a run as well on OS/2 as its WordPerfect for OS/2 predecessor. No one else has the same breadth across platforms for word processors. However, while their claim to the best cross-platform story has not changed, the reality of it has dramatically.

- WordPerfect for Windows 6.0 changed file formats from its earlier Windows siblings; it no longer cleanly converts WordPerfect for DOS files. On the infamous printer.tst test documents, Word 6.0 does as good a job and sometimes even a better one converting the DOS files.
- WordPerfect for the Macintosh 3.0 (their first decent Macintosh product) and WordPerfect for Windows 6.0 also have abominable file conversion. The files usually go through at least two conversions (see WordPerfect 3.0 for the Macintosh analysis for details).
- A patch disk containing the WordPerfect for Windows 6.0 file format is supposed to be "ready-soon" and will be shipped to all registered WordPerfect 3.0 users. This is supposed to take care of many of the current Mac/Windows conversion problems.

The bottom line is WordPerfect's platform offerings have file formats that are increasingly divergent. Users looking to them for a cross-platform solution will be bitterly disappointed.

WordPerfect 6.0a They claim to have improved the round-trip compatibility from 6.0 to 5.2 and back to 6.0 as well as some of the font mapping problems.

Word 6.0 The fact that Word 6.0 is core code is a huge competitive advantage. No other competitor can come close to this level of compatibility. It is an advantage that can translate into hard dollars saved in training costs and time. We need to make sure this message is getting out to deflect the claims of cross platform breadth that our competitors have over us.

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Suite story

The Novell merger strengthens their story by bringing Borland and WordPerfect's development teams under one roof.

WordPerfect was late to enter the suite revolution, and this is still reflected in the latest release of its suite offering, Borland Office 2.0. Version 2.0 added a Desktop Application Director that can access just pieces of an application (such as QuickFinder), excellent workgroup communication via OBEX (Borland's publish and subscribe workgroup technology), the ability to mimic either WordPerfect or Quattro Pro's interfaces, and a common install. These were great and impressive additions over the original bundle. Plans were also in the works to add WordPerfect Presentations to the bundle.

- Despite these improvements, critics and fans alike acknowledge that the integration between the applications is only skin deep. The packages still look and act like the excellent but very different stand-alone packages they are.
- But with Novell now joining forces and combining the two teams, the Borland Office could soon be a serious contender in the suite.

Word 6.0 While Borland Office does offer its users some advantages over Microsoft Office (workgroup, leveraging DOS investment), if integration and consistent cross-product functionality continue to rise in importance, WordPerfect and Borland have a lot of development ahead of them to catch up to Microsoft Office. Where Borland Office, even now, stands to be a significant player is in places where there is a sizable DOS installed base.

Always a step behind, OpenDoc will be their first head-turning technology. It is still in its early development stages.

Technology Follower

Technologically, WordPerfect is generally one step behind Microsoft. WordPerfect 6.0 does not yet fully support OLE 2.0 (they hope early '95) and certainly does not have the same level of innovation and automation that Word 6.0 offers.

- **OpenDoc:** In an attempt to finally be part of the first wave of an object technology, WordPerfect joined and began actively developing for OpenDoc. Teaming up with Novell is a big boon to the initiative/technology. Regardless, WordPerfect will still be forced to continue to divide their development resources for object technologies.

Word 6.0 Word is uniquely positioned in that it has and can continue to raise the bar on technologies offered and supported by a word processor, task automation and pure innovation better and faster than any other major player in the industry. If Word continues to push the envelope at a break-neck pace, competitors will always appear one step behind.

Word '95 Will be a great Chicago application. Given that OLE 2.0 is only coming out of the gate in early '95, it is fairly safe to assume WordPerfect will be late on this platform.

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CONCLUSIONS

Word for Windows 6.0 is recognized industry wide for its elegance of design, innovative feature set, automation and integration with its Office siblings. But WordPerfect for Windows 6.0 is also an exceptional product; it is simply built on and for a different scale of project and customer than Word is. Which is a better product is often more a function of where the user sits rather than whether or not either product is more meritorious than the other. Equally good cases could be made for both depending on what a user most values.

WordPerfect 6.0 had some series bugs and performance deficiencies. WordPerfect/Novell won't be able to dance around the massive amount of resources the program demands, but it will be interesting to see whether or not the maintenance release can breath new life into the product's sales.

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