

A word processor optimized for preparing journal articles and student papers

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A new Windows-based word processor for preparing journal articles and student papers is described. In addition to standard features found in word processors, the present word processor provides specific help in preparing manuscripts. Clicking on "Reference Help (APA Form)" in the "File" menu provides a detailed help system for entering the references in a journal article. Clicking on "Examples and Explanations of APA Form" provides a help system with examples of the various sections of a review article, journal article that has one experiment, or journal article that has two or more experiments. The word processor can automatically place the manuscript page header and page number at the top of each page using the form required by APA and Psychonomic Society journals. The "APA Form" submenu of the "Help" menu provides detailed information about how the word processor is optimized for preparing articles and papers.

A new word processor has been developed to provide assistance in writing journal articles in APA form. Students and researchers do not have to spend much time learning about the word processor because it uses commands (Cut, Paste, etc.) that are found in virtually all Windows-based word processors. Menu items for receiving help with APA form are integrated with the menu items for editing a manuscript.

A number of systems have been developed for providing assistance in writing journal articles. Some of these systems (e.g., Manuscript Manager/APA Style User Guide, 1988) required users to learn the commands for a new word processor in order to take advantage of a word processor that was optimized for writing journal articles. Most word processing programs that were optimized for writing journal articles were developed before Windows became popular. Many unique commands had to be learned to master these word processors. Other systems such as Journal Reference Assistance (Wolach, 1992) used commands that were similar to commands used by a popular word processor. However, students and professionals who used another word processor had to learn new commands.

More recent manuscript preparation systems such as APA-Style Helper 2.0 (1999) attempt to provide a help system that can be used in conjunction with a variety of Windows-based word processors. These systems often have compatibility problems with specific word processors. In addition, switching from the help system to the

word processor is often cumbersome. Systems that provide macros for use with a specific word processor provide help for only some aspects of manuscript preparation.

Most of the systems for manuscript assistance interfere with the thought processes involved in manuscript preparation. Consider how Manuscript Manager/APA Style User Guide (1998) and APA-Style Helper 2.0 (1999) provide help in preparing a reference list. These programs prompt the user with questions about the last name and initials for each author, title of the manuscript, name of journal, and so forth. These questions are far removed from the form in which a reference appears in the reference list. The way in which information is entered makes it difficult to adventitiously learn the APA form (American Psychological Association, 1994) for a reference.

The Reference Help system in the word processor described below requires a user to go through a series of menu items to generate an example of a reference similar to the reference that has to be entered. The user can further modify the example by clicking on a series of command buttons that alter the number of authors, edition of a book, and so forth, in the example. Then the user has to enter the reference that corresponds to the example that was generated. The last step, entering the reference, facilitates learning APA form while a reference list is being entered.

Program Operation

Figure 1 shows the menu bar for the word processor, the "File" menu, and the "Print" submenu of the "File" menu.

Figure 1 shows that the core commands for the word processor ("New," "Open," "Save," and "Save As") are also found in virtually all Windows-based word processors.

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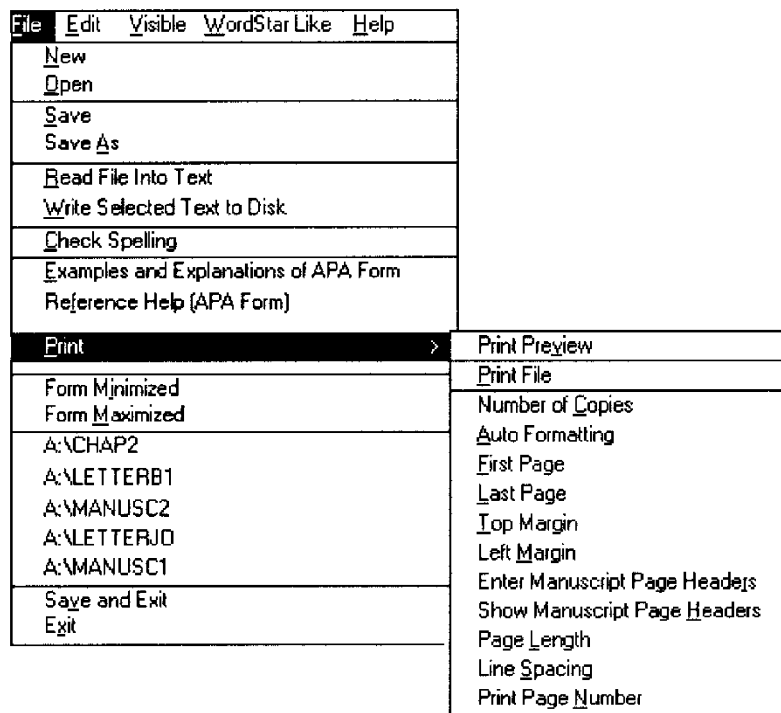


Figure 1. Menu bar for word processor, File submenu, and Print submenu of File menu.

The only new commands are related to time-saving features for preparing a manuscript. Files can be saved as text or rich text files. They can be edited in almost any Windows-based word processor. For example, a rich text file created with the present word processor can later be edited with either Microsoft Word or WordPerfect. Rich text format preserves special characters, underlining, and so on. Text files do not preserve special characters. When a text file is saved, it takes much less disk space than does a rich text file. A journal article should be saved as a rich text file to ensure that underlining is preserved.

The “Read File into Text” command allows the user to enter a file name for a file that is to be placed in the text at the position of the cursor. The “Write Selected Text to Disk” command allows the user to write a selected block of text to a file with a name supplied by the user. The two preceding commands allow the user to bypass the cumbersome clipboard used by Windows programs. Of course, the user can use the clipboard as it is used in other Windows-based word processors.

When “Check Spelling” is selected, a shareware spelling checker is started. It can check the words in any file created by the word processor. If the user likes the spelling checker, directions for supporting the author of the spelling checker are included on the last screen of the spelling checker and in the manual for the word processor. Of course, the user is free to delete files for the spelling checker.

If “Examples and Explanations of APA Form” is clicked, a menu bar with options for “One Experiment Paper,”

“Paper with More than One Experiment,” and “Review Paper” appears on the screen. The user chooses one of these options and is presented with a submenu that includes all sections of the manuscript type selected. When the user selects one of these sections (e.g., Abstract), the appropriate section from a fictitious manuscript appears on the screen. Each section of the fictitious manuscript also has a help system that explains what goes into the section.

When “Reference Help (APA Form)” is clicked, a system for providing examples of references in APA form appears at the bottom of the screen. Figure 2 shows the kinds of references that can be selected. The example in the figure shows the user has selected examples of “Journals or Monographs,” followed by “Article.”

The bottom of Figure 2 shows the example of a reference that appears on the screen; note the buttons that can be clicked to modify the reference. The references are fictitious because they can be modified to change the number of authors, “Issue Pagination” versus “No Issue Number,” and so forth.

If the user chooses the “Print” submenu of the File menu (Figure 1), printer options appear on the screen. For example, the user enters a manuscript page header after clicking the “Enter Manuscript Page Headers” submenu of the “Print” submenu of the “File” menu. Then the user requests page numbers by entering “Yes” for the “Print Page Number” submenu of the “Print” submenu. The word processor automatically places the manuscript page header and a page number in APA form at the top of each page of the manuscript.

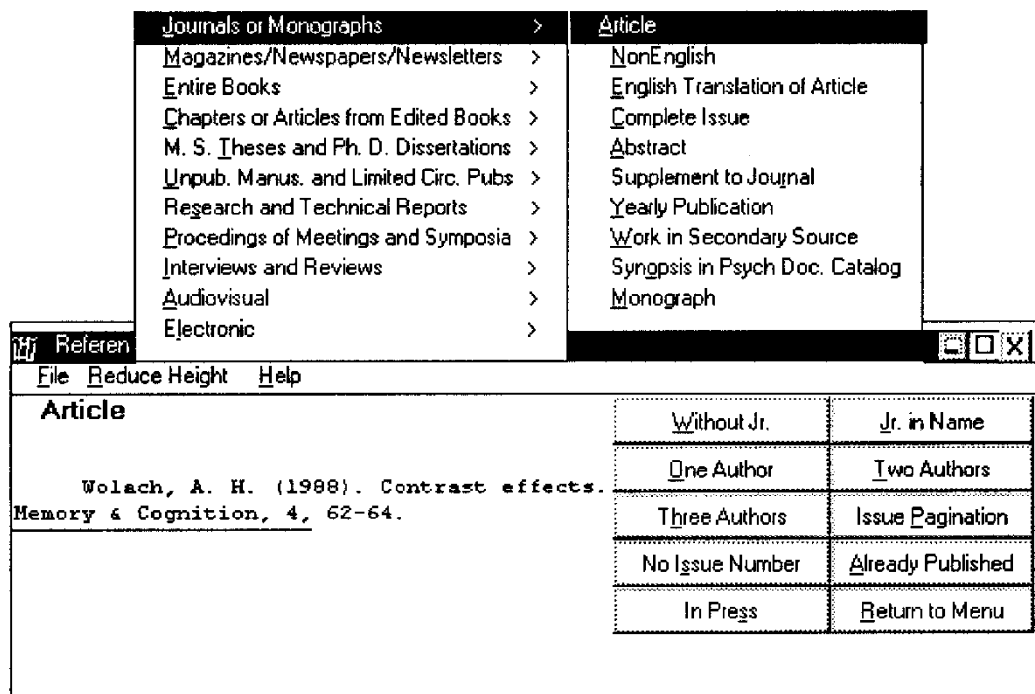


Figure 2. Menu bar for Reference Help (APA Form), submenus for choosing kind of reference, and example of a reference.

A user is presented with a series of options for printing the manuscript. The first option ("Print Preview") shows the manuscript on the monitor screen with each page exactly as it will appear when it is printed. The "Print File" option sends the manuscript to the printer.

The "Enter Manuscript Page Headers" option of the "Print" submenu allows the user to enter the manuscript page header that appears at the top of each page of a journal article. When "Show Manuscript Page Headers" is set to "Yes," the manuscript page header is printed on each page. When "Print Page Number" is set to "Yes," a page number appears after the manuscript page header on each page. "Enter Manuscript Page Headers," "Show Manuscript Page Headers," and "Print Page Number" are used to automatically print a manuscript page header and page number at the top right of each page of a manuscript for a journal article. "Line Spacing" is set to "2" for a journal article because journal articles are double spaced.

When "Auto Formatting" is on, the user can enter commands in the text to ensure that the manuscript is printed correctly. One of these commands ensures that a page does not end with a heading for the next section of the paper. Another command allows the user to insert page breaks at the end of pages that must start on a new page. For example, this command can be used to start the reference list on a new page. The commands that are placed in the text do not show on the screen when "Print Preview" is selected.

The word processor places the last five manuscripts that have been edited above the "Save and Exit" command. The

user can click on the file name for one of the manuscripts to bring the manuscript into the word processor.

The "Insert Character" command button makes it easy to place characters for symbols (e.g., Σ) in the manuscript. The "Cut for Another Program" and "Copy for Another Program" commands are like the "Cut" and "Copy" commands, except that rich text characters are stripped from the text.

The three commands for finding and finding and replacing text work much like comparable commands in other word processors. The last six commands on the "Edit" submenu ("View Directories and Files," "Rename File," "Delete File," "Make a Folder," "Remove a Folder," "Copy File") allow the user to manipulate files and folders without leaving the word processor.

The commands on the Visible submenu, with two exceptions, are obvious or identical to comparable commands in other Windows-based word processors.

Many users of the present word processor will ignore the "WordStar Like" menu item. The word processor supports key sequences that were available in WordStar. For example, holding the <Ctrl> key down and pressing the "G" key erases the character that is at the position of the cursor. Touch typists should find the WordStar-Like commands convenient additions to the word processor. Of course, a user can ignore the WordStar-like commands. The "WordStar Like" menu items are explained in the manual for the word processor and in the "Help" menu of the word processor.

The “Help” menu has a help index system that contains all the menu, submenu, and other such items in the word processor. A detailed help screen appears when a user clicks on a help item. In addition, the help system allows the user to search for help by entering a topic in a search system text box. The “Help” submenu includes help with “APA Form” and help in using the word processor.

Availability and Equipment Requirements

If two formatted 3.5-in. high-density disks are included with the request, the program is available free of charge. Alternatively, \$2.00 may be enclosed with the request to cover cost of the disks. The word processing program was written in Visual Basic Version 6 and runs on IBM-compatible computers that have Windows 95, 98, Me, NT, or 2000 as an operating system. A standard Windows installation program is part of the two disks. That is, the user enters “A:\Setup” for the “Run” option from the “Start” menu. Then the user follows the installation prompts that appear on the screen. A file (ManulWol.RTF) contains a manual for the word processor. This file is on

the second of the two installation disks. The word processor, or any word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word) that can handle rich text files, can be used to make a printed copy of the manual (approximately 25 pages) from this file. If \$5.00 is enclosed with the request, a printed copy of the manual will be supplied. The program requires 16 MB of RAM and approximately 2 MB of hard drive space. If files for the spelling checker are deleted, the program requires approximately 1 MB of hard drive space.

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