Word Processing

An introduction

by
Peter Flewitt

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Author's note

Throughout the course of this book it is necessary at times to refer to the executive or dictator, and the typing staff by personal pronouns. Whilst I freely accept that typists, supervisors, and executives may be of either sex, it would have made for extremely tedious reading to allow for either eventuality in every case. As a matter of convenience and for greater clarity, I have adopted the convention of referring to authors, executives and originators of text generally as 'he', and typists, word processor operators and supervisory staff as 'she'. I hope that this will prove acceptable to even my most militant readers.

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Foreword

If you are a computer buff, or a senior O & M consultant weighing up the pros and cons of shared-logic versus mainframe systems, don't bother reading any further — this book is not for you. It is simply an attempt to reduce the complex mystique of word processing in its widest sense to simple everyday terms which can be understood by teachers, by students, and in fact by anybody who needs to know about the basic principles of word processing without delving deeply into the complexities of microelectronics.

The reader will be a person who needs to relate the new computer-based technology to the structure and procedures of the commercial office, a person who needs to see the concept of word processing not as an end in itself, but as a means of communicating between human beings.

The introduction of word processors in increasing numbers, and the likely acceleration of this trend as prices fall, is bringing about a re-appraisal of the training needs of young people about to enter business life. Teachers of office skills in particular are looking very closely at their methods and syllabuses to see whether or not they measure up to the demands of the new technology. Many of the basic skills will remain (if not for ever at least for some time to come) essential to the office worker. Knowledge of the English language will be as important as it ever was, spelling and punctuation even more so.

The advisability of teaching shorthand to all and sundry will need to be considered carefully in the light of local requirements. The skills of fast, accurate typing and audio-typing will be paramount. Additional skills may become necessary as new kinds of job emerge.

To those who will be involved at first hand in the changes which are taking place, and to those who will prepare others to take a place in the new-technology based offices, this book will, it is hoped, be a useful introduction.

To help you in the early stages

Here is a short list of possibly unfamiliar terms which you may come across in the introductory sections. A brief explanation is given here, all are fully explained within the text, and a fuller glossary of a hundred or so such terms is printed at the end of the book.

Building-blocks	Standard paragraphs used to construct letters, contracts, etc by keying-in coded numbers for each paragraph.
Command sequence	The order in which keys have to be pressed to instruct the machine to carry out certain tasks.
Daisy-wheel	The commonest form of word processing printer, so called because the printing element looks like a daisy.
Digital code	The reducing of all numbers, letters, symbols and instructions to a series of 1s and 0s.
Fully-blocked	A style of typewriting where everything begins at the left-hand margin.
Image copier	A machine which can produce a copy directly from electrical signals generated by a word processor or similar device.
Ink-jet	A printer which operates by spraying ink on to the paper in the form of the letters.
Keyboarding	Typewriting.
Line-printer	A printer which prints the whole line at once, not character by character.
Phototypesetter	A composing machine which produces camera-ready copy for printing by photographic methods.
Prestel	An information service provided by the Post Office whereby information from a central computer can be received via telephone lines on a television screen.
VDU	Visual (or Video) Display Unit — the television screen upon which the work appears as it is typed.
Work disk	The disk upon which work is recorded for future use after it has been typed on the screen.