─────COMPUTER SOFTWARE REVIEWS─────

WordPerfect 9

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Corel has recently released the latest version of its WordPerfect software, WordPerfect 9.0 as part of the WordPerfect Office 2000 package. It comes in three flavors: the standard edition, the voice-powered edition, and the professional edition. The edition reviewed here is the professional edition which includes the word processing package (with the ability to speak rather than type in your document information), a spreadsheet program (Quattro Pro 9), a presentation program (Presentations 9), a personal information management package (CorelCentral 9), desktop and automated web publishing packages (Trellix 2 and NetPerfect), and a small business publishing package (Print Office).

Installation from the two CD-ROM's was simple and straightforward. All one needs is a Windows operating system (although a Linux version of WordPerfect was just released) and 170−330 MB of disk space, depending on what options you choose to install. I chose a custom and minimal installation. For example, this meant I did not install any of the 12000 Clipart images or digital photos included on the CD-ROMS's. I also did not install more than a few, fonts out of over 1000 choices. (Too many install fonts slows the response time of the program.) After checking out and testing the new version of this program and convincing myself that I could remove WordPerfect 8 from my computer, I went ahead and did the uninstall of WordPerfect 8. For whatever reasons it look three additional reboots of my PC to finally have just WordPerfect 9 running. (Compare this to my experience with Microsoft Office 2000. When I tried to do a custom install of the Microsoft 2000 package so I could still keep a copy of Microsoft Office97 on my computer as a backup, I could not do so. Inquiries to Microsoft came back with the comment, "I've never done a custom install. You should just use the defaults." I still have the Microsoft CD-ROM'S sitting in their original jewel cases. Someday I will settle for their default and do it their way.)

Years ago I first began using WordPerfect 4, and I still find WordPerfect 5.1+ (for DOS) a fast and easy program to use that does most of my basic word processing. I have gone from version 4 to 5 to 6 to 7 to 8 and now to 9. To be honest, the last two versions have had useful but rather small improvements (as I have also found with Microsoft Word). There are however some really nice features in WordPerfect 9 (out of what must be 1000+ options which I cannot believe anyone uses even a small percentage of these). First there is the Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition capability. While I did not test this myself, I did visit with someone who has carpal tunnel syndrome and finds it a really great feature. He told me it did not take long to train the software to work, and as long as he spoke slowly, it worked very well.

WordPerfect 9 still retains the reveal codes feature, absent in Microsoft Word. I still find the best feature of WordPerfect 9 is the one feature Corel is not responsible for. I have yet to see or hear of any computer virus for WordPerfect the way one seems to hear about or get from a Microsoft Word document on a regular basis. WordPerfect 9 is compatible for Microsoft Office products, and I have not had trouble reading any Microsoft files sent to me.

WordPerfect 9 includes a feature to save a document in Adobe pdf format with the simple click of a button. The HTML conversion is just as simple and has been improved over the last verison of the software. An XML capability has been added to the software, and I expect this is one very important capability I will be using more of in the near future. This XML capability allows one to create, validate, and save a document in WordPerfect XML, including the DTD for the document. As with SGML, you can edit SGML documents from within WordPerfect 9 and even hide the SGML coding so the document is more readable on the screen.

Practically speaking, when it comes to choosing a word processing package, there are really only two reasons. One is religious (I believe in WordPerfect. Period.) And the other is that the software is the company standard. Unless you are self-employed, you cannot choose the latter one very easily. I have tried to mention a few other reasons, should you not agree with me and believe logic and reason prevail in the word processing software industry.

The price of a new copy of WordPerfect Office 2000 is $399 for the standard edition, $449 for the voice powered edition, and $499 for the professional edition The upgrade prices for WordPerfect Office 2000 is $109 for the standard edition, $159 for the voice powered edition, and $209 for the professional edition.