

## Word Perfect Presentations 2.0 for DOS

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Presentations is the successor to, and a vastly improved, DrawPerfect, from Word Perfect Corp. The list price of the package is \$495 U.S. This package is a DOS based presentation graphics package with many of the features that scientific presentations will require. Use of the package requires a 80286 processor with at least 490 kB of RAM for running the program and 14 MB of hard disk for a complete installation. EGA and higher resolution screens are supported. Word Perfect recommends a 80386 processor with VGA or higher resolution screens. For this review, a 486DX/33 based microcomputer was used with a 800 × 600 resolution monitor in VGA emulation mode. Laser printed output was spooled to a HP Laserjet Series II over a Novell Network. Color slides were also produced by using a Polaroid Palette Plus slide maker on standard slide film from an 80286 based computer at EGA resolution (limited by the slide maker). Presentations supports over 900 different output devices including printers, plotters, and film recorders and a number of different input devices; only a mouse was used here. This reviewer would not recommend running the program without a mouse. The testing ran Presentations from Windows 3.1 in a DOS window using a PIF file shipped with the package. A Windows version of Presentations is expected to ship during 1993.

A complete installation of the Presentations package includes approximately 60 of more than 1000 clip art items directly related to chemistry and chemical compounds, including both equipment and structural formulas. Unfortunately, in the 4/93 and earlier releases of the clip art there are a number of incorrect or poorly drawn items. This package could be used as a structure drawing tool, although with much difficulty, relative to programs specifically designed for that function. This reviewer would recommend that a separate structure drawing program be used which could then output the WPG files that Presentations prefers, for example, ChemWindows, from Softshell International. A complete installation also includes Adobe Type 1, Bitstream Speedo, and Intellifont fonts in 37 type faces. Font sizes from 1-point to unlimited size are supported.

Running the program results in a window appearing for a single presentation graphic. Along the left edge of the screen are a series of icons for different tools and objects. At the lower left corner are the choices for the color palette, line widths, and patterns. Along the top of the screen are a variety of pull-down menus and a "button bar" allowing the user to customize some commonly performed operations. It is simple to superimpose your figures onto a grid and to have rulers displayed for orienting yourself on the page. There is a second mode of operation for the production of a slide show (a series of slides or graphics) which adds icons for examining, preparing, and editing an entire presentation. The slide show options also allow for predefined templates for a presentation to be used, including predefined backgrounds and slide types.

Presentations has several features which make it easy to use relative to several others, although this should not be taken to mean that the learning curve is negligible. First, it is very

convenient to prepare word and title charts in the slide show mode using the excellent predefined choices. Little more than typing is required. The text for such graphics can be imported directly from Word Perfect's outliner or typed in directly. There is a spell-check option available for the graphics. Second, a wide variety (16) of different templates are available for each of the 10 different predefined types of charts: bullet (text), organization, table of data, pie, bar (both horizontal and vertical), line, area, surface, scatter, and high-low. The one predefined type that does not appear is a chart with error bars, although these can be created separately. Third, the program makes super- and subscripted text available without having to separately place items as one of the possible text attributes. This feature is sufficient to make this package superior to several others for scientific users. Last, the package also supports the complete Word Perfect character set, including Greek and mathematical symbols.

On the negative side, printing to the laserjet seemed to be excessively slow. This problem may be due to the particular, but not uncommon, printer hardware arrangement described above. Printing is also aggravating because the program does not spool the output to the hard disk but rather keeps control of the computer throughout the entire printing process, making for a nice coffee break with an extended print run. The gradient fill feature did not produce smoothly varying colors on our display, or in printed output where shades of gray appeared, or in slides where stripes of slightly changing colors are observed. Graphic file importing is both a strength and a weakness. Presentations is capable of importing many different types of graphics files; we tested TIFF, PCX, PIC, and WPG. However, the process is somewhat lengthy and cumbersome. This process also results in poorer slides because of the greater range of options possible for drawing preparation in Presentations compared to spreadsheet packages, in particular. For spreadsheet data, the best results are obtained when the data are imported and the titles regenerated, rather than directly importing the PIC file, because individual titles can not be modified, and the background will remain the same as the original PIC file.

One of the significant tests is how easily one can put together a presentation relative to other packages. Despite being lower on the learning curve with Presentations, we found that we could work as fast with Presentations, and that the additional capabilities of Presentations allowed us to prepare more graphically pleasing presentations than with older packages. For example, several older packages do not allow gradient fills or the wide range of graphical file importation type that this package does. In addition, it is no longer necessary for a slide production facility to have a duplicating stand available for the making of slides for data presentation. We are looking forward to using Presentations in the future for all our preparation of meeting presentations, especially after the quality of the clip art is improved.