



The CWord

Tim Nott looks at a free **WordPad** clone with a lot to offer.

I must admit that this column is usually devoted to MS Word as it's huge, complex and has the largest market share. It's not surprising then that the majority of your feedback is Word-related. So, for a change, let's take a look at something small and simple.

The WordPad applet that ships with Windows is fine for creating letters and simple documents. It also has the distinct advantage that you don't get some smart-arse cartoon character popping up to say 'It looks like you're writing a letter'. However, it's very short on bells and whistles — it has no styles, templates, macros, drawing tools, tables or auto-anything and its treatment of graphics is basic. The most obvious lack, though, is that of a spelling checker.

Cetus CWordPad is a WordPad clone which has a spelling checker [Fig 1] and thesaurus. It's free from the Cetus web site and there are also free spelling dictionaries for many other languages. Unfortunately it only seems possible to have one installed at a time, so you can't switch languages.

Although WordPad has no templates as such, there's a simple way around this if you want to set up, say, a letterhead to use repeatedly.

➤ **Create** your letterhead the way you want, then save it.

➤ **Close** WordPad then open the folder where you saved the letterhead, using Windows Explorer.

➤ **Right-click** on the file and select Properties. At the bottom of the Properties page you'll see some check boxes for Attributes so tick the one marked 'Read-only', then click OK.

When you re-open the file in WordPad (or CWordPad) you can type below the letterhead as normal but when

you go to save the file it will insist you use a new name. Hence each letter can be saved as a different file but the letterhead itself can never be overwritten unless you first remove the Read-only attribute.

As for placing graphics into WordPad, there are two approaches. First, you can Insert Object then select the Create from File option button and make sure the Display as Icon box is cleared. Browse to the graphic file you want, select,

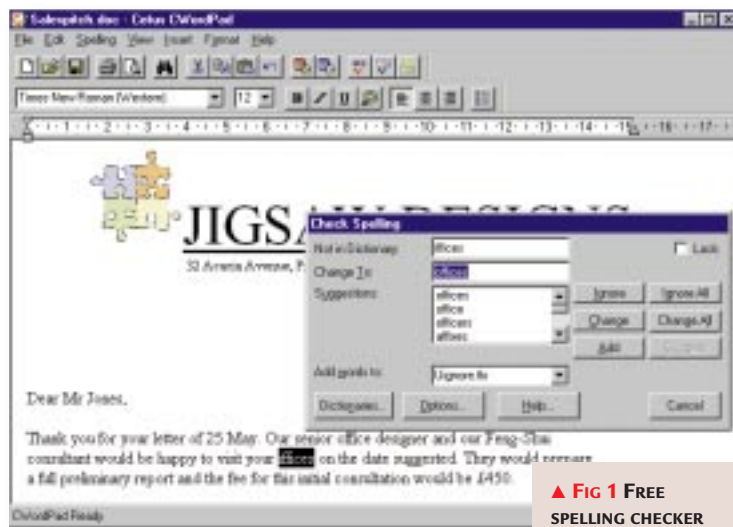
then insert it. You should then see the image appear in

the document with a 'bounding box' around it which has handles to resize the image [Fig 2]. If you want to edit the picture, double-clicking on it will launch the application which 'owns' that file type with the image loaded.

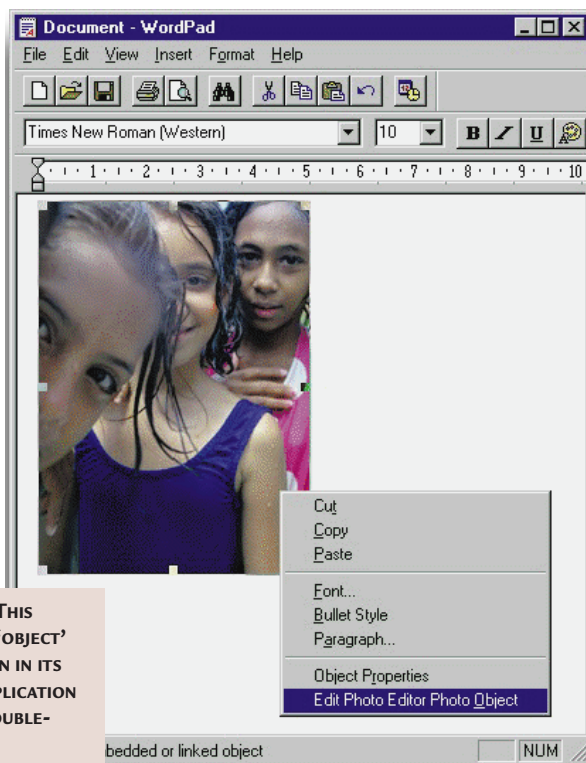
Make your changes, then from the File menu of the graphics program, choose 'Exit and return to...' whatever is the name of your document. The changes you made will be updated.

If this approach doesn't work, there's good old copy and paste. Open the picture in the graphics software of your choice, select the objects or area you want, and copy. Switch to WordPad and choose Edit, Paste Special. You'll

usually see three choices: to paste as a filetype 'object' (which gives the same result as the method above), or as a Picture (metafile), or as a Device Independent Bitmap. Generally, you'll find that Picture gives the best results for vector objects or clipart that has been



▲ **FIG 1 FREE SPELLING CHECKER WITH THIS WORDPAD REPLACEMENT**



► **FIG 2 THIS PICTURE 'OBJECT' WILL OPEN IN ITS HOST APPLICATION WHEN DOUBLE-CLICKED**

Take a look at something small and simple

Questions & answers

Q With regard to the euro symbol the blank space at ASCII 128, to which you referred in a recent column, normally holds a capital C-cedilla. This character is occasionally used by my French-teaching wife so I am reluctant to install the Euro fonts until someone can tell me that the uppercase C-cedilla is still available elsewhere.

NEIL HOWIE

a This sounds as if your wife is holding down Alt and typing 128 on the numeric keypad, which produces an uppercase C-cedilla. However, as a visit to the Windows character map will confirm, the letter is in fact mapped to ANSI 199. For reasons lost in the mists of Windows history you need to precede the value with a zero and you'll find with the new fonts that Alt+0128 gives the euro symbol but Alt+0199 still produces C-cedilla.

Q Any idea how I can reproduce the shorthand symbol for the representation of centuries (i.e. the century number with a large letter 'C' surrounding it)? I have access to Office 97. It will be useful for when I am word processing my GCSE history coursework essays.

CHRIS HOWELLS

a You can do this by fiddling around with font sizes and spacing. Try this: type C (in Times New Roman) and format it to 20pt size. Type (say) 19 and format that to 12pt, superscript (Format, Font). Now select just the C again and go to Format, Font, Character Spacing. Set Spacing to Condensed by 10pt. Bingo!

The 19 jumps into the C. You may need to fiddle with the sizes and spacing, but that's the general idea. When you've got it right save it as an Autotext entry for re-use.

Q In order to navigate quickly in Explorer between My Documents and Microsoft Office\Templates, I have created a shortcut in each to the other. The shortcut in Templates however, appears as a tab in the File, New dialog. If I open this tab — and I have now learnt not to — the computer becomes unusable while it generates hundreds of icons: several for each document. Can I prevent the Shortcut appearing as a dialogue tab?

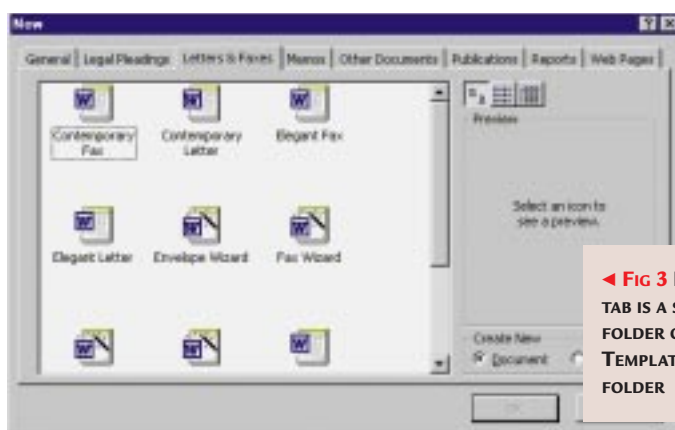
JOHN HUBERT

a It's a feature, John. Each subfolder, or shortcut to a folder, in the Templates folder [Fig 3] is displayed as a separate tabbed page and this will lead to the behaviour you describe. Try another method of shortcutting to My Documents — you could have an icon on the Desktop, or on the Quicklaunch bar if you have IE4, or use the My Documents icon which should appear at the top level of Explorer.

Q I have just obtained Lotus Word Pro 97. How can I set up a macro of my own which will automatically show my address and the date at the head of a blank page each time I want to write a letter? This was something that could quite easily be set up in WordPerfect 5.1.

RICHARD EVANS

a In a word, Richard, SmartMasters. These are automated document templates which will do what you describe and much more. The online help tells you how to create new SmartMasters or modify the existing ones.



◀ Fig 3 EACH TAB IS A SUB-FOLDER OF THE TEMPLATES FOLDER

created with a drawing application (especially if you want to resize them in the document), whilst Device Independent Bitmap is better for photographic images.

Having inserted your graphic, the choices of positioning are limited. WordPad always inserts pictures 'in line' with the text — in other words it treats them as a character typed at the keyboard, albeit a large one. You can clear the text either side of the picture by typing a return before and after. You can left-align, centre or right-align the picture using the alignment buttons on the toolbar and you can drag-and-drop it to another position in the text. But you

can't have more than one line of text beside a picture. One little tip; if you find you can't click to get the insertion point to the left or right of a picture, use the arrow keys or the Home and End keys.

■ Word tip of the month

As regular readers will know, I'm not a fan of the Windows 97 File/Open dialogue and I find it useful, for instance, to be able to access all the supplementary files I might need while writing this column. So, I have this bit of VBA code attached to a button on my Word toolbar:

```
Sub Openfolder()  
Dim getatem  
getatem = Shell("explorer.
```

```
exe " & ActiveDocument.Path, &  
vbNormalFocus)
```

```
End Sub
```

(Key: ✓ code string continues)

This opens the folder containing the document on which I am currently working in Windows, rather than in Word, giving instant access to all the files contained in there.

PCW CONTACTS

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