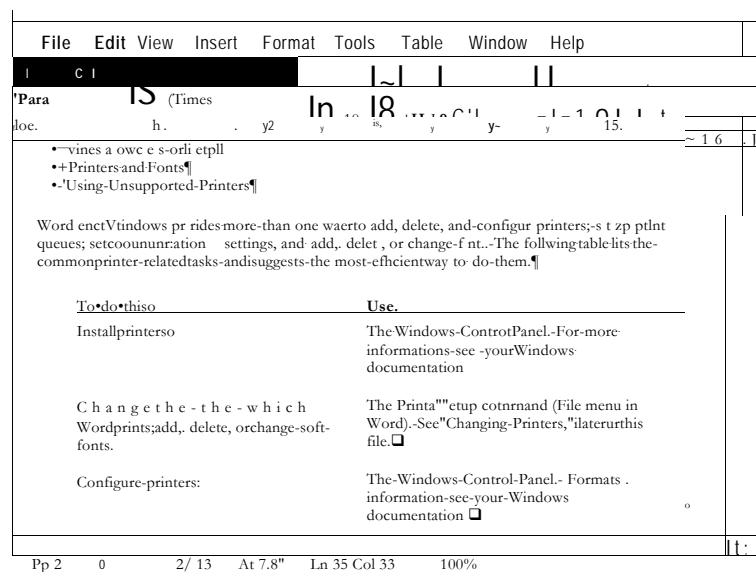


WP or DTP? That is the question

When people look to PCs to produce printed pages, they are often justifiably confused over the difference between word processing and desktop publishing. This isn't helped by the software publishers themselves, who are determined to add to the feature lists of each type of program and plunder unashamedly from their siblings.

It's as much a question of emphasis as one of feature lists. The word processor's primary purpose is to help get a lot of words down on paper with the minimum fuss. You won't have to stretch a text frame on the page before you can start typing into a word processor. Open a new document and you can type without distractions.

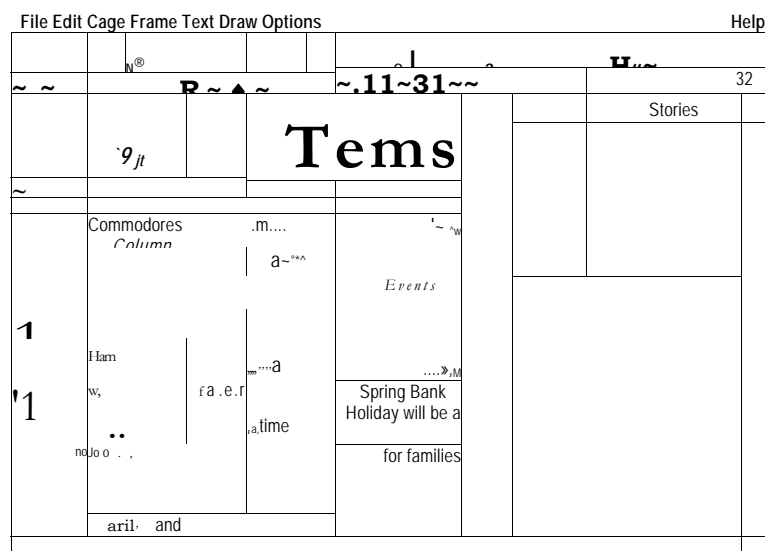


Layout in word processors is a secondary consideration

Although today's word processors often bristle with text formatting and layout features, these are kept at a secondary level. You can quite safely type in all your text and then consider how it looks. You'll be able to see what you type in a clear, default font and you can proof read and spell check before you ever think about the text's final appearance.

In a DTP program, although you can usually type text directly onto the page, you normally have to set up a page layout first and define where the text frames are to fall. All DTP systems can take text from the keyboard, but this is often a secondary consideration. Desktop publishing is primarily concerned with layout and the integration of text and graphics,

Keyed text sometimes has to be added and edited within a separate editor. If you type directly onto the page, you may have to add each new page manually and activate a frame before you can continue typing. All this detracts from simply typing text, but that's not what DTP is about.



The main function of desktop publishing is to lay out text and graphics

When it comes to adding graphics to a page, the DTP program will nearly always be the easier tool to use. Its use of frames to define individual objects: pictures, lines or blocks of text, makes it that much easier to move and copy them. Picking up and dragging with the mouse becomes second nature very quickly and is a natural process. Pick up the drawing, move it to another part of the page and drop it again. Apart from the fact that you need no glue to paste it down, this is the same set of actions you would use at a drawing board.

With most word processors, however, graphics are sized by the software and positioned by typing co-ordinates into a dialogue box. It's rare to be able to drag a graphic from one place to another and expect it to stay there. Often, the only positions you can choose for a graphic in a word processor are at the left margin, at the right margin or centred between them. The same is true of ruling lines, which can be freely placed on a DTP screen and often placed only at set points in a word processor, to mark headers, footers or the gaps between paragraphs.

The choice of word processor or desktop publisher is in the end a personal one. In this book, I've written all my text in a word processor, while Geoffrey has typed his all directly into pages in the desktop publishing program, *FrameMaker*. I come from a journalistic background, where I'm more used to typing first and worrying about the appearance afterwards. Much of Geoffrey's work has been in art and design and he's more comfortable adding text straight into desktop publishing pages.

My pages still have to be flowed through *FrameMaker*, as it's there that the styles have been created which define the design of this book. Illustrations are added in *FrameMaker*, too. There's little point in adding them to the text files, as they won't show up in the word processor I use and only slow down the writing process. I place markers in the text to remind me where the illustrations go and add them in *FrameMaker* later.

There's another reason for the twin approaches to our different chapters; the way we've allocated work within the book. The design chapters, which contain a lot of illustrative material, are mostly Geoffrey's. The more text-rich ones in the main have fallen to Simon. We therefore use the tools we feel most happy with and which can make us the most productive. If you have the resources, think about adding both a word processor and a desktop publisher to your PC. Both have their places and can be worked together to great effect.

Drawing programs and DTP

Words are only half the story in any but the most simple page. Add a picture and you make the page more visually interesting and more likely to be read: This is all very well, but few people who design pages are fully-trained artists.