

# Universal Word

## for Windows

As announced in *Language International* 6.4 (1994), Prestige Network announced the eagerly awaited Windows version of Universal Word earlier this year. We have since had the opportunity to evaluate this product at our editorial office, and are pleased to present this review of the Universal Word for Windows (WUW), version 6.1. Well, if Microsoft Word for Windows can go from version 2.0 to 6.0, this word processor can come straight in at version 6.1!

by  
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Like the DOS version reviewed in *Language International* 4.3 (1992), Universal Word for Windows is a multilingual word processor, supporting a large number of languages including right to left languages such as Arabic and Hebrew. It has the features expected of a modern word processor: table of contents, headers and footnotes, ligatures, styles, formatting, alignment, justifications (also with Kashida justification for Arabic fonts), leading, tracking, multi-level super- and subscript, timed backups, tabs and indentations, mail merge (in 50 languages) with database files and statistics (including word count), up to 10 levels of 'undo' and many more features.

It is based on the Multiple Document Interface (MDI) standard and uses similar commands to other

Windows applications, so it should be easy to use for those familiar with Windows. It has the familiar toolbars at the top, rulers around each document and a status line at the bottom.

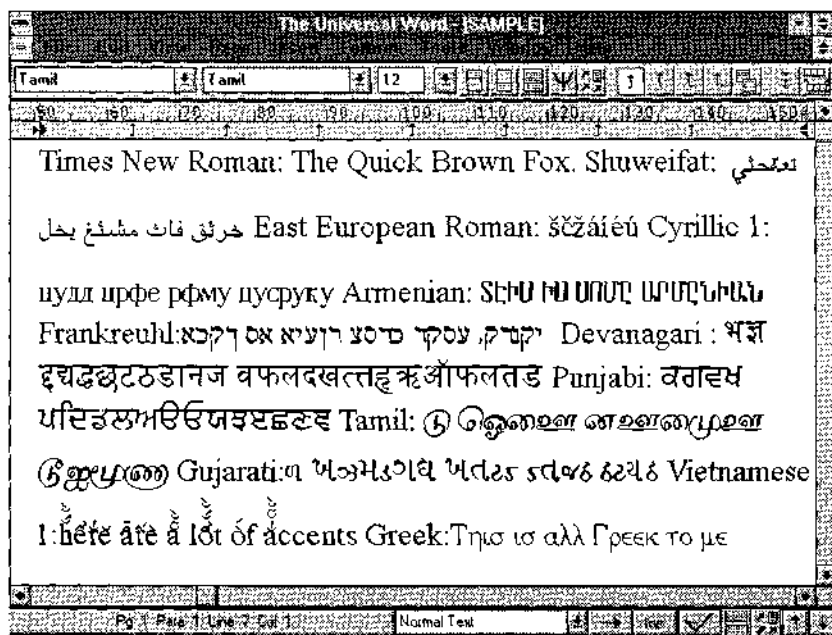
For this review, I shall concentrate on the multilingual capabilities. The illustration on this page was created by pressing Print Screen, then pasting the result into a graphics package. It shows the fonts supplied with the version of WUW for review (N.B. most of the text strings are not real words!). The cursor is in a Tamil section and this is indicated on the ribbon bar. There is a variable zoom, so I have zoomed in 200% to increase legibility for the magazine.

When text is entered, it is done so with a language associated. So every character and word has an associated language. This information is displayed above the documents amongst the icons. If the cursor is placed in the text, the language, font and font size of this text are displayed.

The languages can be mixed, with the same line containing different languages and even a combination of left to right and right to left sections. The language selection is done using a combo box. The sorting of the font list does not seem to follow any rules, and Prestige Network have recognised the confusion this may cause. Instead of sorting the font list according to their current 'product structure', it will be made alphabetical. In our version, we were offered: (American) English at the top, Arabic, West European languages, UK English, Welsh, Slavic languages, Hebrew, Indian languages, Vietnamese, then Greek. When the list is showing, repeatedly pressing the first letter of the required language will cycle through the languages the names of which begin with that letter.

When a language is selected, the font automatically changes to the default for that language, and the font options are those with suitable character sets for the language. There are a large number of fonts supplied with WUW. Windows allows extra fonts from third parties to be installed, available to any Windows program. To make these fonts available in WUW, they are first associated with the appropriate languages and will then appear in the fonts' list when a language is chosen.

When a language is selected the keyboard also automatically changes. The keyboards can be edited



and more than one keyboard per language is possible. So it is possible to choose between a transliterated and an authentic keyboard for different languages. The keyboards can be displayed on the screen, and text can be entered by clicking on the displayed keyboard with the mouse pointer.

The review version had the following languages and fonts: Albanian, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Latin, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Swiss, Tagalog, UK English, Welsh: *Arial, Times New Roman, Courier New, Wingdings, Symbol*. Arabic, Farsi, Urdu: *Shuweifaf*. Bohemian, Croatian, Esperanto, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Rumanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Wendish: *East European Roman and Helvetica*. Bulgarian, Macedonian, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian, White Russian: *Cyrillic 1 & 2*. Armenian: *Armenian*. Hebrew: *Frankrehl*. Hindi, Marathi, Nepali: *Devanagari*. Punjabi: *Punjabi*. Tamil: *Tamil*. Gujarati: *Gijerati*. Vietnamese: *Vietnamese 1 & 2*. Greek: *Greek*.

With Find (and Find and Replace) the language is taken into account. When the Find language is chosen the appropriate font and keyboard are used to enter the data. This is where most word processors go wrong when using foreign fonts: any font can be displayed in the document but not in dialogue boxes, making the entry of foreign characters difficult (relying on ANSI (or ASCII) values) or impossible.

Not so here. The language of the replaced text can be different from that of the searched text. There are also many other options available for searching, e.g. ignoring accents, fonts, styles or not. If no text is entered, the object of the search can be a font or style.

The default interface settings are American with "Color" and inches. Where it says "English" concerning the dictionary, thesaurus and keyboard, US English is meant. UK English settings can be obtained via "UK English".

The program offers "Spell Checker and Thesaurus for 17 different European languages as option". The thesaurus is peculiarly American, giving "duck soup" as a synonym for "pie", "bum" as a synonym for "loaf" and "brothel" as the first meaning of "stew". Spell checking is performed for one language at a time, whereby other language sections are ignored.

When settings are changed, the US settings show through, e.g. for A4 a page height of "297.0389" mm is given. This is close to splitting the atom with precision. While setting up the page size, the user will also notice a blank area with the title "Sample"; this remains blank, since this feature has not yet been incorporated. Tab stops increment by 1/8" which, with mm as the units, becomes increments of 3.175 mm.

Text can be changed to different colours. In addition, images of a wide range of formats (includ-

ing compressed images, which we were not able to test) can be inserted into the document and resized if necessary. A dialogue box pops up suggesting "Resize Image" "425"x"305". The units could be anything, but we found out that they are in fact pixels. Images flow with the text. Once inserted they can be hidden for quick text editing since the redrawing of a large image can take some time.

When typing, the document often goes blank as WUW reformats the text. If it is a complex mixture of fonts and typefaces, this can take some time and is a bit frustrating. (We tested the program on a 486 PC.)

On importing a file WUW tries to recognise the format automatically. If it cannot detect the format, it gives the message "Please select the File Format to Convert this File To[sic.]" (should it be From?) and displays a list of file formats. There is no mention of code pages for DOS text, so it is a mystery how it differentiates these for importing. One test we performed was with the readme.wri file supplied with the very simple Windows word processor Write. I had erased the latter from my machine, so the file could not be read. But since WUW is capable of "Supporting over 100 major file formats in DOS and Windows", I tried to open the file in WUW. This resulted in the message "Conversion from intermediate file format failed!". I also tried to import a Word Perfect 5.1 file with Russian text. The English looked OK, but the Russian was converted to a series of dashed lines.

The Export facility on our review version was not incorporated although it is there in the documentation. Prestige Network explained that they were not providing any export file format facilities at present due to the full DDE (dynamic data exchange) support of the product, which allows you to cut and paste between windows applications. However, we experienced some difficulty in this area, with Eastern European fonts being slightly corrupted when pasted and Hebrew being reversed.

### The user manual

Most people don't read user manuals. Although this one is very easy to read, it repeats everything very simply and so becomes verbose and difficult to get through. However, the appendices are very helpful in providing tables of the icons, shortcuts, function keys and keyboard layouts.

"Visual Icons to ease operation. Over 100 provided." This is given as one of the user-friendly features. Since the language of icons is very idiosyncratic wherever they are found, and they are different in every program, this is a lot of icons to remember. There is no text prompt on the screen to jog the memory, but the icons can be found in on-line help for command short cuts.

All the icons presented are in three rows at the top of the screen. Clicking on the last icon in each row changes the other icons. Clicking on the second to last icon hides or reveals the next row. Oddly enough, if some text is selected and the row with the font data is revealed a warning appears asking "Are you sure you want to change the text language?" Note that in the illustration provided here, two of these rows have been hidden.

Among the icons, there is one which switches the case of highlighted text. This works for English,

but for French it leaves the accents on capitals, and it is not sophisticated enough to add accents when switching from upper to lower case. With non-Roman fonts it works even less well — it is intended only for Latin based languages.

There are some non-standard functions, like the insert key putting in a space and the title not maximising/restoring the application's window size when double-clicking. But there are an icon, a hot key and a menu option to switch between Insert/Overtype modes, and the double-clicking does work on a document window.

The printing uses Windows, so whatever printer is working with Windows will work with this word processor also. All the fonts look very nice when printed with a PostScript printer. Comprehensive help is provided on-line. This works like other Windows programs. When using the menus, a helpful description appears at the bottom of the screen.

### **Conclusion**

In spite of the points raised here, which should be eliminated in later versions, Universal Word for Windows is a sophisticated word processor with many useful functions for multilingual word processing. As it works under any windows environment, you do not need to have the localised Windows to run the program.

The Computer used in the review was 25MHz speed, 8MBytes memory, spu type 80386.

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