technology & law
Don't Protest Too Loudly the Death of WordPerfect

Most of us cut our word processing teeth on the WordPerfect^{TM} software program. It was one of the first software companies that actually listened to the legal customer and incorporated specific legal features and enhancements into its software product. As a result it quickly captured more than 90 percent of the legal market. However, over the last several years it has seen its market share significantly challenged by the emergence of Microsoft Word^{TM}. The American Bar Association's Small Firm Survey reports that 58 percent of respondents use WordPerfect vs. 32 percent using Word. The ABA's Large Firm survey found 60 percent of the large firms using WordPerfect and 40 percent favoring Word.

This downward trend is reversing with the emergence of the Corel WordPerfect^{TM} Suite 8, Legal Edition. The Legal Edition Suite is aimed at providing a comprehensive business solution to the legal user, including voice recognition, document assembly, practice management and a host of other productivity tools.

Suite 8 includes five core applications plus a host of integrated essentials tailored for the legal professional. The five core applications are: WordPerfect, word processing program; Quattro Pro, spreadsheet program; Paradox, relational database; Presentations, presentation program similar to PowerPoint; and CoreCentral, which keeps track of people and events and comes integrated with Netscape Communicator. A host of extras have been added, including NexLaw, which supplements WordPerfect 8 menus and toolbars with legal-specific capabilities by making it easy to create, manage and print legal documents. The system also includes a pleading expert, CiteLink, which integrates tightly with WordPerfect to automatically generate a Table of Authorities and hyperlinks to the full-text of a citation on the Web; Black's law dictionary, with access to 14,000-plus legal terms and abbreviations; Internet tools enabling users to publish tables, forms and reports to the Web; and 10,000 clip art images, 1,000-plus fonts and 200 photos.

The primary WordPerfect program has many advanced features, including HotKeys that "play back" macros or other repetitive tasks within a word processor, spreadsheet or other application, and revisions that show where text or graphics have been added, deleted or moved. The recipients of your legal documents can critique, change or add to the document and you can view those alterations. Other advanced features include automatic formatting templates, mail merge, envelope addressing, grammar correction, automating the table of contents and an authorities creator.

Integration of software products such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets and graphics into suites saves significant application and training time, which translates into lower costs. For example, once information is entered into a database program or personal information manager the information shouldn't have to be re-entered for use in other computer applications. The data in the databases should be easily accessed and shared by a word-processing document, a spreadsheet or charting software. Training on integrated software has been faster because of the similarity in command structures such as menus, icons, keystrokes and toolbars. Also, purchasing a suite is cheaper than purchasing separate components, you can get software support from one company and installation is easier and integrated.

The word processor is obviously an important tool in our profession. When it is combined with other software applications and advanced word-processing tools it becomes increasingly valuable.

Of special and significant importance are the integrated legal-specific software programs that come with the Suite. These include HotDocs, Amicus Attorney and the Dragon NaturallySpeaking voice-recognition program.

HotDocs is the leading document assembly program that allows users to create memos, form letters, invoices, pleadings and other documents by responding to questions asked by HotDocs templates. Document assembly is a system designed to assemble documents automatically. If you prepare wills and trusts, corporate papers, litigation pleadings, retainer agreements, letters or any area of law, you will benefit by setting up a document assembly system for your specific area. By automating document assembly, users can reduce the need and wait for support staff to type and proofread documents.

Amicus Attorney is considered the leading practice management program on the market. It includes a calendar, address book and a host of other features and integrates with other practice management software programs. It is extremely well organized and easy to use.

 Consistently rated the No. 1 speech-recognition product, Dragon NaturallySpeaking voice recognition comes with WordPerfect. It provides for true continuous speech—up to 160 words per minute—without pausing between words. The words appear on your screen as you talk, and it has a built-in active vocabulary of 30,000 words and a total vocabulary of more than 30,000 words. With Vocabulary Builder users can add unique words, terms and names automatically.

Also, Corel has implemented an innovative licensing program recognizing the needs of the office, home and laptop user.

The Corel Legal edition continues to reap awards for its integration productivity tools, as reflected in 1998 Product of the Year Reader's Choice Award from *Lawyers Weekly USA*; Favorite Office Suite 1998, 4th Annual Reader's Choice Awards, *Law Office Computing*, September, 1998; and the 1998 Best New Product from *Law Technology Product News.*

The minimum system requirements for the suite include a PC 486/66 processor, Windows 95/NT, 8 MB RAM (16 MB RAM recommended, 50 MB hard-drive space, 120 typical, and a CD-ROM drive. If using Dragon NaturallySpeaking then a Pentium 133 (166 recommended), 48 MB RAM (64 MB RAM for NT 4.0), 110 MB hard-drive space, and a 6-bit sound card is needed.

Now, once again we are seeing the reemergence of WordPerfect for the same reason as before—listening to the legal customer.

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