

RESEARCH IN

# WORD PROCESSING

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WRITING IN A WORLD OF WORD PROCESSING,  
HYPERTEXT, CD-ROM, AND COMPUTERIZED  
TYPESETTING: A BIBLIOGRAPHIC REPORT  
ON THE RISE OF COMPUTER-ORIENTED  
DOCUMENT ENGINEERING (CODE)

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**WRITING IN A WORLD OF WORD PROCESSING,  
HYPERTEXT, CD-ROM, AND COMPUTERIZED  
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DOCUMENT ENGINEERING (CODE)**

**Bradford A. Morgan**

Quill pens, pencils, typewriters, computers—the act of writing has always paralleled available technology. Composition itself, the thinking part, continues to be bolstered by sophisticated outline programs, thesauri, access to research archives, and other idea-forming tools. As writing rises to meet the technological occasion, writers can now think more seriously about the impact of their ideas on the reader: how typographic qualities affect the reception of ideas, how fonts reinforce mood, how layout influences access and attitude, how pictures work with text to give birth to ideas. As publishing continues to be decentralized, and as software further addresses patterns and structure in a document, those who teach writing are finding a logical extension of the familiar emphasis on writing-as-process which has dominated theories of rhetoric and composition in recent decades.

Emerging optical-storage reservoirs mean that pictures and sound in a manuscript no longer need to be merely suggested in the forthcoming mixed-media world, and the windowing effect of hypertext retrieval is already calling for a redefinition of the way knowledge is manipulated and expressed. In short, preparing a manuscript in the information age means fully integrating the writing process with hardware and software tools, and authors seem to welcome the challenge of exploring new publishing roles, acquiring practical database and programming skills, and applying fresh approaches to expression.

What's new for the mass of writers is the historical uniqueness of being in control of the larger medium of communication. For the first time, a wide range of publishing hardware and software is within reach of the average author, expanding both the range and process of writing. Previously, the typewriter-bound author was unable to oversee fully the communication process all the way to the reader. Once the manuscript went to the publisher, the visual language of the document—the fonts, pictures, layout, and other "idea packaging" aspects that mean so much to the reader—was largely decided by publishing houses. Until desktop publishing, only a few writers could even recognize the names of type families and other typographic conventions.

With new versions of software and hardware arriving in the marketplace almost daily, computer-oriented writers are being increasingly immersed in the technological underpinnings of their enterprise. The workstations of writers will continue to demonstrate a plurality of configurations, depending upon customized applications in an options-rich but ever-changing professional world. Like the industrial engineer, the writer practicing computer-oriented document engineering (CODE) will both configure and operate technical systems to shepherd a manuscript from research-based composition, through editing and further design, to publication and possible dissemination via networks or other media.

As advanced text-based applications and programming merge, many writers have found it necessary to know more about how computers process words on various levels, including how memory and textual representation harness the magnetic and optical properties of nature at the digital and language levels. Research software, using database systems and information utilities, now includes both text and images, allowing for the development of quickly assembled information into useful or prototypical knowledge.

Overall, the CODE-aware professional writer monitors the evolution of content and form in the design of a manuscript or document, selecting fonts, graphic elements, pictures, and the shape of the visible language to be received by the reader. In this sense, the construction of a document determines methods that efficiently and cogently elicit the desired response from the reader, maneuvering the placement of database and typographic elements, and the efficient set-up of the system being employed. Finally, the CODE-knowledgeable writer emphasizes production in terms of page layout and total document publication.

The following annual bibliography is intended to provide a representative sampling of recently published writing on the multiple ways in which words can be processed. Those researching the subject should also consult my all-different, 42-page 1987 compilation (*RWPN*, Vol. 5, No. 5), entitled "From Word Processing to Desktop Publishing and CD ROM: A Five-Year Bibliographic Perspective on the Impact of Computers on Writers and Research."

















