

WORD PROCESSING.

Word processing is the art of text manipulation. It involves creating & producing professional looking documents such as letters, memos, reports, etc.

Definition of a Word Processor.

❖ A **Word Processor** is a computer program that enables a person to create, save, retrieve, edit, format, and print text based documents.

Initially, the term **Word processor** was used to refer a computer system with a special piece of software used for the production of documents.

Purpose of Word Processing.

A Word processor is a tool that can be used to prepare & produce documents. It can be used in:

- (i). Writing Letters (i.e., Business & general mail).
- (ii). Writing Memos.
- (iii). Writing Books.
- (iv). Writing Articles, Research letters such as Reports/thesis and Term papers.
- (v). Writing Essays and Projects.
- (vi). Writing Curriculum vitae and Resumes.
- (vii). Writing weekly Newsletters on sports, entertainment, etc.
- (viii). Writing Lease agreements and other legal documents.

Common Features (Characteristics) of a Word processor.

A Word processor performs the same function as a typewriter, but offers very many useful features / facilities, which can be used to make your work more efficient and attractive.

A Word processor can be used to produce quality-finished documents of high standards compared to a typewriter.

The following are some of the facilities provided by all Word processors:

- ❖ They allow the user to create a file, save it, and retrieve (recover/open) it when required for reuse, printing, editing or formatting.
- ❖ Has **Text- editing features**, such as: -
 - (i). *Copy & Paste*, which allows a marked block of text to be moved to another part of the document.
 - (ii). *Find*, which allows the user to search for words or phrases within the document.
 - (iii). *Search & Replace*, which allows replacement of every occurrence of a certain combination of characters with another set of characters.
 - (iv). *Undo*, which allows actions that have been performed to be reversed, such that if some text was accidentally deleted, then the action can be undone.
- ❖ Contains **Text and Page formatting features** such as: -
 - (i). Justification of text, which could be *Left, Right, Centre, or Full*.
 - (ii). Indents and use of Tabs for text alignment.
 - (iii). Page Numbering.
 - (iv). Insert of page Headers and Footers.
- ❖ Has different Fonts (lettering/typescripts), Character sizes & Styles such as **Bold, Italic, Underline**, etc.
- ❖ Enables *Printing of documents*: single or multiple copies, full or part of a document.
- ❖ Enables creation of *Tables*, which can be used to perform certain calculations & sorting on a given text.
- ❖ Has an inbuilt dictionary.

- ❖ Contains *Tools* such as Spelling and grammar checkers, Bookmarks & **Thesaurus** (which provides alternative words – synonyms).
- ❖ Typing errors can be corrected and the text modified before printing the final version.
- ❖ Enables the use of document **templates**, which can be used to quickly create the most frequently used documents once the format has been set.
- ❖ Allows *Mail merging*, which makes it possible to combine several letters.
This is very useful when similar letters has to be sent to several people. The names and addresses of each person can be merged with one single standard document and printed out.
- ❖ Enables creation of Newspaper layouts, which can be used for manipulation of Column text.
- ❖ Has the ability to add graphics within documents.
- ❖ Allows creation of Footnotes and Endnotes.
- ❖ Provides file protection using Passwords.
- ❖ Contain Macros, which can be used to automate the most frequent & repetitive tasks.
- ❖ Have the ability to create and import tables, text and graphics from other programs.
- ❖ All Word processors have similar document windows with the following features:
 - (a). They are designed to look like a piece of paper with a few electronic improvements.
 - (b). The screen is blank before typing of text.
 - (c). There is a **Cursor**, which blinks at the position where you can begin entering text.
 - (d). There is a **Status bar** that provides the user with information about current status such as saving operation, the name of the file in use, the current page, and column cursor position.
 - (e). **Word wrap**: A facility/feature that automatically moves a word or cursor to the beginning of the next line if there is insufficient room at the end of the current line.
 - (f). **Scrolling**: This is the vertical movement of text document on the screen, either using the *Up or Down arrow keys, Page Up or Page Down keys*, or using the Mouse in Windows based word processors.
 - (g). **Help**: Contains instructions, tips, pointers, explanations and guidance on how to use an application.
 - (h). **Editing modes**: Word processors have two editing modes; **Insert mode** and **Type over mode**.

In **Insert mode**, every character typed between words, lines or characters is placed at the cursor position. This pushes all the text in front of the cursor away without deleting it.

In **Type over mode**, every character typed deletes what was there before and replaces it with new text at the cursor position.

Common examples of Word processors: -

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| * Microsoft Word. | * WordStar. |
| * Corel WordPerfect. | * Wang writer. |
| * Lotus WordPro. | * WordWrite. |

Advantages of Word processors.

Word processors have almost replaced typewriters and other writing tools as the means of creating documents. This is because; a word processor has a number of advantages that include:

- (i). A document can be stored in the computer for future reference in computer files. The files do not occupy physical space like the one on paper; hence, this creates a paperless document processing environment.
- (ii). Typing using a word processor is easier & more efficient because some actions are automated.

Examples;

- Word wrap feature automatically takes the cursor to the beginning of the next line once you reach the end of the current line.
- Automatic insertion of a new page after reaching the end of the current page.
- (iii). Most word processors have special editing tools such as *Spelling* and *grammar checkers* that help the user to easily correct grammar and spelling mistakes. *Thesaurus* helps to find a word with similar meanings.
- (iv). Most word processors have *Insert* and *Type over* modes. Therefore, one can easily insert or replace a word or a phrase without affecting the structure and neatness of the document.
- (v). Word processors have superior document *formatting* features such as underlining, boldfacing, italicization, applying different colours, etc.
Formatting refers to the art of making the document more attractive and appealing to the eye.
- (vi). A Word processor enables one to produce many copies of a document through printing; whereas, a typewriter may require retying of the entire document when we want many copies.
- (vii). Word processor has *Cut*, *Copy* and *Paste* commands that enable the user to incorporate other text without having to retype it.
- (viii). Provides secrecy in writing documents through Passwords.
- (ix). Allow simple arithmetic operations such as additions, multiplications, etc.
- (x). Allows Mail merging (combining of several documents).

Disadvantages of Word processors.

- (i). They are Expensive.
- (ii). The use of Word processors creates unemployment.
- (iii). The use of the Word processors is limited only to those areas with power supply.
- (iv). There is need of a literate person to operate it.

Factors to consider when choosing a Word processor.

The choice of a word processor depend on:

1. The type of operating system.
E.g., most microcomputers are currently running on Windows based operating systems. This means that you should consider acquiring a Word processor based on graphical user interface.
2. Its user-friendliness (ease to use).
3. Its formatting and editing features. They should be good and in variety.

Review Questions 1.1

1. (a). What is Word processing?
(b). Give THREE examples of Word processors used at present.
2. State the purpose of word processing.
3. Identify any FOUR advantages and TWO disadvantages of using a Word processor to prepare documents compared to manual Typewriter.
4. (a). What is document formatting?
(b). List TWO editing features and THREE formatting features of a good Word processor.
5. Explain the difference between *Type over* and *Insert mode* in word processing.
6. What is word wrap?

Review Questions 1.2

1. (a). What is a Word Processor?
(b). Name two common Word processors used in the market today.
(c). Name any THREE advantages of a Word processor.
2. Briefly describe FIVE features of Word processors.
3. What constraints do early Word processors have?

Review Questions 1.3

1. Name any THREE characteristics of a Word processor.