

WORD PROCESSING: MORE THAN TYPING

Write. Edit. Format. Organize. Publish.

Modern word processors turn your ideas into professional documents.

EVOLUTION OF WORD PROCESSING



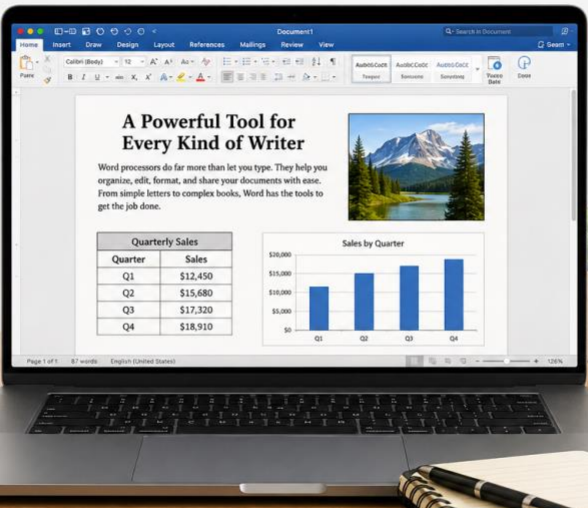
Typewriters
Great for writing, but mistakes meant starting over.



Early Word Processors
Electronic typing with simple editing and correction.



Today
Powerful publishing tools that save time and make you look professional.



AMAZING THINGS WORD CAN DO

- Automatic Table of Contents**
Built from heading styles and updated with one click.
- Alphabetical Index**
Create indexes for books, manuals, and reports.
- Citations & Bibliographies**
Use MLA, APA, and Chicago styles with ease.
- Page Numbering Control**
Number different sections in different ways.
- Cross-References**
Link to headings, figures, tables, and page numbers.
- Track Changes**
See edits, comments, and suggestions from others.
- Mail Merge**
Create letters, labels, envelopes, and emails.



CURT'S QUICK TIP
Don't try to learn every feature. Learn the ones that solve **YOUR** problems. Let Word do more of the work so you can focus on your ideas.

YOUR IDEAS. WORD'S POWER.
The perfect combination.

POPULAR WORD PROCESSORS

- Microsoft Word (Windows & Mac)
- Apple Pages (Mac)
- Google Docs (Web)
- LibreOffice Writer (Windows & Mac)

Word Processing: More Than Typing

How the Humble Word Processor Became the Most Useful Program on Your Computer

By Curtis Jerry Smothers

From Electronic Typewriters to Digital Publishing

If you learned to type on a manual or electric typewriter, today's word processors can seem almost magical. The earliest word processors were little more than electronic typewriters with small display screens. They allowed users to correct mistakes before printing, a revolutionary improvement over bottles of correction fluid and retyping entire pages because of one misplaced sentence.

Today's word processors have evolved into complete publishing systems. They don't simply help you type documents—they help you organize, edit, illustrate, review, print, publish, and share them with the world.

Whether you're writing a business letter, a school report, a novel, or your memoirs, a modern word processor has tools that make the job faster, easier, and more professional.

What Is a Word Processor?

A **word processor** is a software application designed to create, edit, format, save, and print documents. Unlike a simple text editor, a word processor lets you control the appearance of your document by changing fonts, margins, spacing, page layouts, graphics, tables, and much more.

Think of it this way. A typewriter simply recorded words on paper. A word processor lets you design the entire page.

If you've ever changed a font, inserted a picture, or corrected a spelling mistake without retyping the page, you've already experienced the advantages of word processing.

More Than Just Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word is the world's best-known word processor, but it certainly isn't the only one. Mac users receive **Apple Pages** free with their computers. **Google Docs** offers an excellent online alternative for collaborative writing, while **LibreOffice Writer** provides a powerful free option for both Windows and Mac users.

Each program has its strengths, and all of them share many of the same basic concepts. If you can use one comfortably, learning another is usually a straightforward process.

Throughout this series, however, I'll use **Microsoft Word for Mac** for my examples because it's the program I use every day. Windows users shouldn't worry. Although the appearance of the screen differs somewhat, the concepts and most commands are remarkably similar.

Why Word Has Become the Standard

Microsoft Word didn't become the world's most popular word processor simply because it was first. It earned that position by continually adding features that save time and reduce frustration.

Most users know how to type, edit, copy, and paste text. Fewer realize that Word can automatically create a table of contents, build an alphabetical index, manage research citations, generate bibliographies, number pages in different sections, create cross-references, produce mailing labels, and even help multiple people edit the same document without losing track of changes.

These aren't gimmicks. They're practical tools that can save hours of work on large documents.

Features You May Never Have Discovered

Many Word users never venture beyond the Home tab of the Ribbon. That's understandable because it contains the commands needed for everyday writing. Hidden elsewhere, however, are features that transform Word from a typing program into a professional publishing tool.

For example, Word can:

- Automatically build and update a Table of Contents.
- Create an alphabetical index for books and manuals.
- Insert footnotes and endnotes.
- Manage MLA, APA, and Chicago citations and bibliographies.
- Add captions to illustrations and tables.
- Cross-reference chapters, figures, and page numbers.
- Format different sections of a document with different page numbering.
- Track revisions made by multiple editors.
- Save reusable templates for frequently used documents.

Many of these features sound complicated, but you'll discover they're surprisingly easy once someone explains the underlying concepts.

Word Processing in Everyday Life

Word processors aren't just for professional writers. Students use them to prepare research papers. Teachers create lesson plans and exams. Businesses prepare proposals, reports, and contracts. Churches print newsletters. Clubs produce meeting minutes. Families create newsletters, invitations, recipes, and holiday letters.

If your work involves words, chances are a word processor can help you do it better.

Curt's Quick Tip

Don't try to learn every feature in Microsoft Word.

Learn the features that solve **your** problems.

If you write letters, master formatting and templates.

If you're a student, learn citations and bibliographies.

If you're writing a book, learn styles, section breaks, tables of contents, indexes, and cross-references.

The goal isn't to become a Word expert. The goal is to let Word do more of the work for you.

What Lies Ahead

In the articles that follow, we'll move beyond ordinary typing and editing to explore some of Word's most useful—but often overlooked—capabilities. You'll learn how to create automatic tables of contents, build alphabetical indexes, manage citations and bibliographies, use styles to

organize large documents, control page numbering with section breaks, and create professional-looking documents that practically maintain themselves.

Once you discover these features, you'll wonder how you ever managed without them.

More Than a Typing Program

For millions of people, Microsoft Word is simply a place to type letters and reports. In reality, it's one of the most powerful productivity tools ever created for personal computers.

The difference between a beginning user and an experienced one isn't typing speed. It's knowing how to let the software handle the repetitive work. That's the philosophy behind this series. Rather than teaching you how to type, I'll show you how to make Word work for you