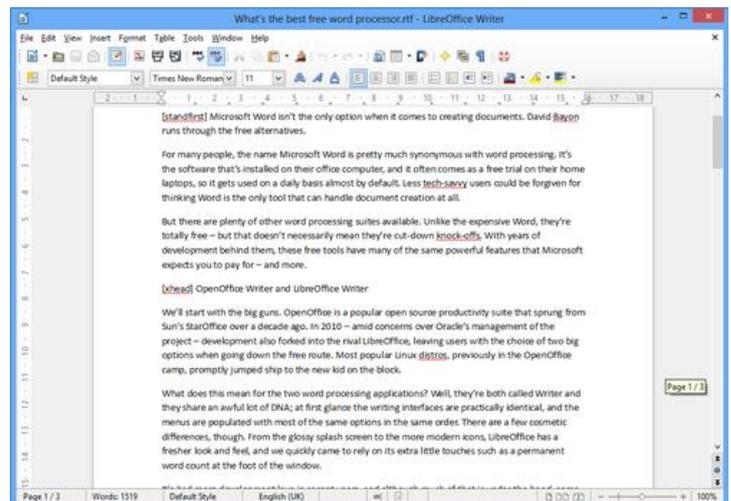## 1.5 The Word Processor

What is a Word-Processor?

A **word processor**, or word processing program, does exactly what the name implies. It processes words. It also processes paragraphs, pages, and entire chapters. Some examples of word processing programs include Microsoft Word, WordPerfect (Windows only), AppleWorks (Mac only), and OpenOffice.org.

The first word processors were basically computerized typewriters, which did little more than place characters on a screen, which could then be printed by a printer. Modern word processing programs, however, include features to customize the style of the text, change the page formatting, and may be able to add headers, footers, and page numbers to each page. Some may also include a "Word Count" option, which counts the words and characters within a document.

The term "**text editor**" can also be used to refer to a word processing program. However, it is more commonly used to describe basic word processing programs with limited features.

Features of Word Processors

- *Wordwrap*: automatic arrangement of text in lines of specified length without the necessity of touching the return key.
- *Discretionary Hyphenation*: option of inserting a hyphen to break a word that ends a line: the hyphen does not print if later editing moves the word to the middle of a line.
- *Justification*: automatic alignment of text to both the left and right margins.
- *Adjustment*: realignment of text to new margin and tab settings.
- *Alignment*: positioning text or numbers to specified margin and tab settings.
- *Decimal Alignment*: positioning columns of numbers with the decimal points vertically aligned.
- *Indents*: the setting of temporary margins within a document differing from the primary margins used.
- *Centring* text on a line.
- *Underline and bold*:
- *Insertion*: the entry of new text within previously typed material without erasing the existing material.
- *Overstriking*: the substitution of new text for old by typing over the old text.
- *Deletion*: erasure of text from the screen, or of whole documents from the disk.
- *Find and Replace*: moving directly to specified words or parts of words within a document and replacing them with different words or word portions.

- *Copying or Cutting*: the duplication or moving of blocks of text within a document.
- *Boilerplate*: the separate storage and retrieval of blocks of text from which standard documents can be built.
- *Pagination*: automatic division of a document into pages of specified numbers of lines.
- *Page Numbering*: automatic sequential numbering of pages.
- *Headers and Footers*: option of creating standard blocks of text that will automatically appear at the top or bottom of each page in a document.
- *Footnotes* (and *headers*): automatic sequential numbering of footnotes and positioning of the footnotes at the bottom of their appropriate pages during pagination.
- *Table of Contents and Index Generators*: the contents and the index can be created automatically. If information is added or deleted the table of contents and the index are corrected automatically.
- *Mail merge*: automatic combining of a form letter with a mailing list to generate multiple copies of the letter with the different addresses and other variable information filled in.
- *Automatic spelling checker and corrector*. Program that compares words in the text against an on-line dictionary, flagging items not found in the dictionary and offering alternative spellings and a means of correcting the errors.
- *Multi-column documents*
- *Tables*
- *Frames*
- *Embedding graphic objects*

Advantages of Word Processors

There are so many advantages of word processors over the old typewriters. Can you mention three?

Desktop Publishing (DTP)

When documents and images are printed, they are "published." Before computers became commonplace, the publishing process required large print presses that copied and duplicated pages. In order to print images and words on the same page, the text and graphics would have to printed separately, cut out, placed on a single sheet, taped in place, then copied and printed. Fortunately, computers with graphical user interfaces have enabled **desktop publishing**, which allows this process to be done electronically.
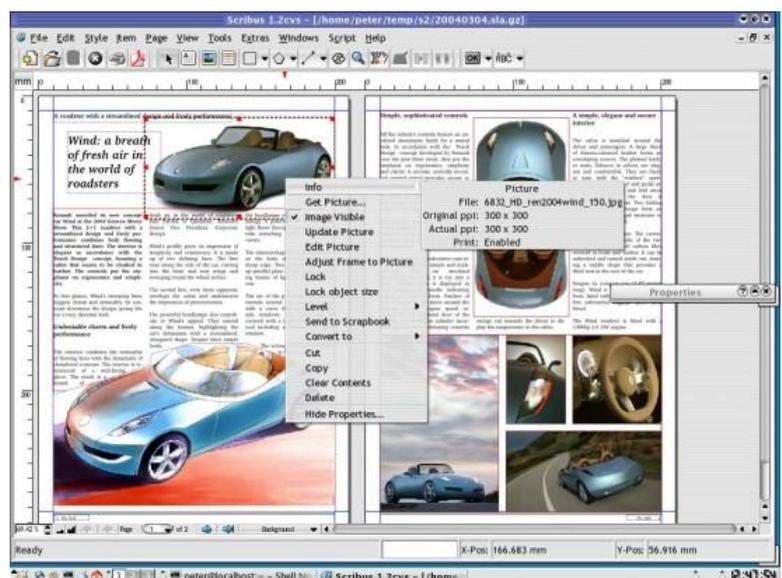
Any time you use a computer to create a printable document, it can be considered desktop publishing. However, the term is most commonly used to refer to professional computer-based publishing. Desktop publishers use programs like Adobe InDesign and QuarkXpress to create page layouts for documents they want to print. These desktop publishing programs can be used to create books, magazines, newspapers, flyers, pamphlets, and many other kinds of printed documents. Publishers may also use programs like Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to create printable images. Even word processing programs like Microsoft Word can be used for basic desktop publishing purposes.

Complete desktop publishing involves the combination of typesetting (choosing fonts and the text layout), graphic design, page layout (how it all fits on the page), and printing the document. However, as mentioned before, desktop publishing can also be as simple as typing and printing a school paper. In order to desktop-publish, all you need is a computer, monitor, printer, and software that can create a printable document. While that might cost more than a pen and paper, it certainly is cheaper than a printing press!

Word Processing vs. Desktop Publishing

Both word processing and desktop publishing are similar in many ways but different in areas that cover the publication of documents.

The similarities between the two are:

- Both tools deal with text that can be formatted.
- Both tools can work with tables and pictures.
- Both tools have many similar features like WordArt, Clip Art, and text styles.

The differences between the two are:

- Word processing involves creation, editing, and printing of text while desktop publishing involves production of documents that combine text with graphics.
- Word processing is difficult to layout and design as compared to desktop publishing. Thus, desktop publishing is used to work on things like newsletters, magazines, adverts, and brochures where layout is important. Word processing documents are common for simple memos, letters, manuscripts, and resumes.
- When creating a desktop publisher, the first page is blank and a text frame must be added to add text. This is unlike the word processing in which text can be directly entered into the blank page.
- With desktop publishing, users can easily manipulate text and graphics and try new ideas. In contrast to this, word processing tools are adding more page layout features. Thus, the line that draws the difference between the two hardly exists now.

Though there are many differences between the two, more word processing applications are coming out with enhanced features that mimic many of the desktop publishing tools on the market today. So, whether you choose to use word processing or desktop publishing software all depends on your document publishing needs and what application you are most comfortable using.

Drawing Software

Every Windows operating system includes a standard paint application but there are others with advanced features.

Some features of drawing software (some include also graphic design tools and/or photo functions):
- pencil
- eraser
- colour palette
- fill
- spray-can
- gradient tools
- layers
- vector images
- skew and resize of images
- customize brushes and colours
- shapes like circles etc.
- photo editing
- 3D effects
- various file formats

Some examples of packages:
- Xara Photo & Graphic Designer
- DrawPlus
- Sketchbook Pro