Make the most of Pocket WordStar

KEVIN DONNELLY points the way to quality printing

THOSE of you fairly new to business computing may not know how to adjust Pocket WordStar so as make full use of its printer driver. Unless the printer is properly set up to recognise WordStar codes, some common features such as underlining or italics may not be accessible.

The instructions given here refer specifically to the CPC6128 and the Star SG-10 printer, but the procedures should generally be applicable to any CP/M system and to other printers if the relevant print codes (which can be found in the printer manual) are substituted.

First boot up CP/M Plus, load Disckit3 then remove the CP/M Plus disc. It seems to be a peculiarity of WordStar on the CPC6128 that the program has to be installed using CP/M Plus, but run using CP/M 2.2. If you try to install it using CP/M 2.2, it stops at about the sixth screen with the message "Bdos Err on A: R/O".

The next step is to use Disckit3 to copy both sides of the WordStar disc. The destination disc does not need to be formatted first, because it will automatically be formatted as a system disc while WordStar is being copied on to it. From now on your working WordStar disc will be the backup copy.

When you are back at the CP/M Plus prompt, insert side two of the copied disc, type:

INSTALL

press Return and you will see a copyright message. Press Return again, answer Yes at the next prompt, WS to the one after that, press Return again and then enter:

A:

to the prompt for the drive on which the files will be held during installation.

Press Return at the WSU.COM screen, and again at the WS.COM message. (The idea behind this message is that if you wanted several copies of WordStar to use on different printers or with different features, you could give each of them a different name.)

Continue to press Return at the next few messages and you will arrive at the installation menu. From this select the menu of standard printer types (it may be A or C depending on the version of Install you have). This extends over two screens and from it you should choose the second option.

Select the letter that corresponds to your printer – in my case the Star is Epson-compatible, so I select G. Note that Epson-compatible printers should have their DIP switches set to disable

line feeds as WordStar provides its own.

Once you have entered your chosen option step through the next four screens with Returns, and this will bring you back to the installation menu.

Now it would be possible to stop here, load CP/M 2.2, load your installed version of WordStar, and try out some features such as underline and so on. But it is more than likely that some further custom installation will be necessary to enable full use of the WordStar's print codes.

At the installation menu select the Custom Installation option (B or D), and press Return to pass to the Custom menu. With each of the following options there is a standard procedure: Make your selection from the menu, type C and press Return to make changes, receive confirmation of the changes, then press Return to go back to the menu.

Option C allows you to insert the name of your printer on to the WordStar opening screen. In my case I would type 12 spaces (to centre the name) then "Star SG-10".

Option I, ribbon selection, for which the WordStar code from within a document is Control+PY, is used if your printer has a two colour ribbon. If it hasn't, you can use Control+PY to call some other printer feature.

I use it to toggle expanded print on and off, but whatever you choose you can enter the necessary codes found in your printer manual by selecting this option and typing C to change the codes.

The codes can be entered in Ascii format, either as decimal or as hex with each item of code preceded by a comma. When all the codes have been entered you type a full stop to indicate you have finished. In hex the Star sequence to turn on expanded print is 1B 57 01.

As already stated, Control+PY is a toggle. WordStar expects two occurrences of it, so you will now be asked what code you want to enter at the second occurrence, to cancel the code. Naturally enough, I enter 1B 57 00. This now means that at every first

occurrence of Control+PY in my document, WordStar will turn on expanded print, and at every second occurrence will turn it off.

Option O, the next useful option on the custom menu, allows you to set up four user-defined codes. I set these up as follows:

Control+PQ turns pica (normal) back on after using Control+PW or PE below (the Star code is 1B 42 01)
Control+PW turns on NLQ (1B 42 04)
Control+PE turns on condensed print (1B 42 03)
Control+PR turns subscript or superscript off (1B 54).

Bear in mind that turning on expanded or condensed print will automatically alter the margin settings on most printers. The result is that if you mix normal, expanded and condensed print in one document it may come out ragged on paper, even if it looks all right on the screen. You may have to experiment with inserting spaces to get it to look right on paper.

Option P sets up two codes which allow the carriage to be rolled up or down enabling superscripts and subscripts to be printed. I set them up as follows:

Control+PT turns on superscript (1B 53 00)
Control+PV turns on subscript (1B 53 01).

These are also toggles that WordStar expects to appear in pairs, but unlike Control+PY, only one code entry is allowed for each. It is for this reason that we need the Control+PR mentioned earlier, to turn off super/subscript. However to get correct results on the Star using this method you should use say, Control+PT to turn superscript on, then Control+PT at the end of the relevant text followed by Control+PR to turn it off.

Finally, **Option Q** is used if you want to be able to alter character pitch. I have little need for this feature, so I set up the two relevant codes as follows:

Control+PQ turns on italics (1B 34)
Control+PN turns off italics (1B 35).

Selecting X will return you from the Custom menu to the Installation

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menu. If you have set up the control codes as I have you will now be able to use ten WordStar print codes to access special features of your printer. However you may also want to adjust some of the facilities of WordStar itself. You can do this by selecting the menu of WordStar features (C or E), which presents another Custom menu.

Individual preferences come into play here, and it might be best to familiarise yourself with the program before you make changes, but for the record I make adjustments in the following areas:

Option A (initial help level): The normal value is 3, but I prefer zero because responses are quicker. With 0 and 1, the absence of the help information frees more of the screen for text.

Option G (hyphen help): This is normally on, but I prefer to have words shifted down automatically to the next line when reformatting rather than have the program wait for me to decide.

Option H (omit page numbering): Setting this to ON omits page numbers (it's typical of WordStar to have phrased this the wrong way round!) It is useful if you are going to form one document from pages printed from different files. If necessary, pages can be numbered by inserting .PN at the beginning of the text file, or by using a .HE or .FO command with a hash character.

Option I (top margin): The default is 3 lines, but I prefer it set to 5.

Option J (bottom margin): This defaults to 8 lines, but I prefer 10.

When you have made all the changes you want type X to return to the installation menu, then X again to exit from the installation program. At the next screen type A to save your changes, and this will return you to the CP/M prompt.

Now all that remains is to tidy up the disc. Remove it from the drive and reset the machine by pressing Control, Shift + Esc. Insert and boot up CP/M 2.2 and at the prompt type:

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FILECOPY WS.COM
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press Return, then at the prompt insert side two of your working disc and press Return again. At the next prompt insert side one and press Return. When the transfer is finished insert the CP/M disc and press Return to get back to the prompt.

Having done all this it's still rather annoying to have to load CP/M 2.2 from one disc then take it out and load WordStar from another. The answer is to copy the relevant CP/M files on to your working disc.

You can do this by typing:

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BOOTGEN
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At the Source prompt press Return (because the CP/M disc is itself the source), and at the next set of instructions remove the CP/M disc and insert side one of the working disc. Press Return, type N then re-insert the CP/M disc and press Return again.

Final tidying can be done by deleting the files PRINT.TST and WSU.COM from side one. This will leave over 80k of space for other programs on the same disc. ∎