Putting Word Processing to Work

Word processing is extremely versatile, offering you a wide range of capabilities. Here are a few more applications for word processing. You will find many more as you gain experience with this, the most used of all software applications.

Merging Documents With a Database

Word processing software allows you to merge data in a database with the text of a document. The most common use of this capability is the mail-merge application. Winnie Winnowski, the president of the PC User's Group decided to send personalized letters to the club's new members. To do so, Winnie created a form letter file. The form letter contains references to entries in a database file, a separate word processing file containing a table. She then used the merge feature to combine the information in the table with the form letter to generate separate letters for each new member, thus producing the 'personalized letters.'

The mail-merge example is a good illustration of the use of **boilerplate**. Boilerplate is existing text that can be reused and customized for a variety of word processing applications. One nice feature of word processing is that you can accumulate documents on disk storage that eventually will help you meet other word processing needs. You can even buy boilerplate (for example, text for business letters). The legal profession offers some of the best examples of the use of boilerplate. Simple wills, uncontested divorces, individual bankruptcies, real estate transfers, and other straightforward legal documents may be as much as ⅞5 boilerplate. The use of boilerplate is common in all areas of business, education, government, and personal endeavor.

Integrating Charts With Documents

The word processing chart feature lets you generate a variety of charts from spreadsheet-like data in a Microsoft Word 2000datasheet. Figure 2-2shows

**Statistical Sales Summary
by Sales Representative**

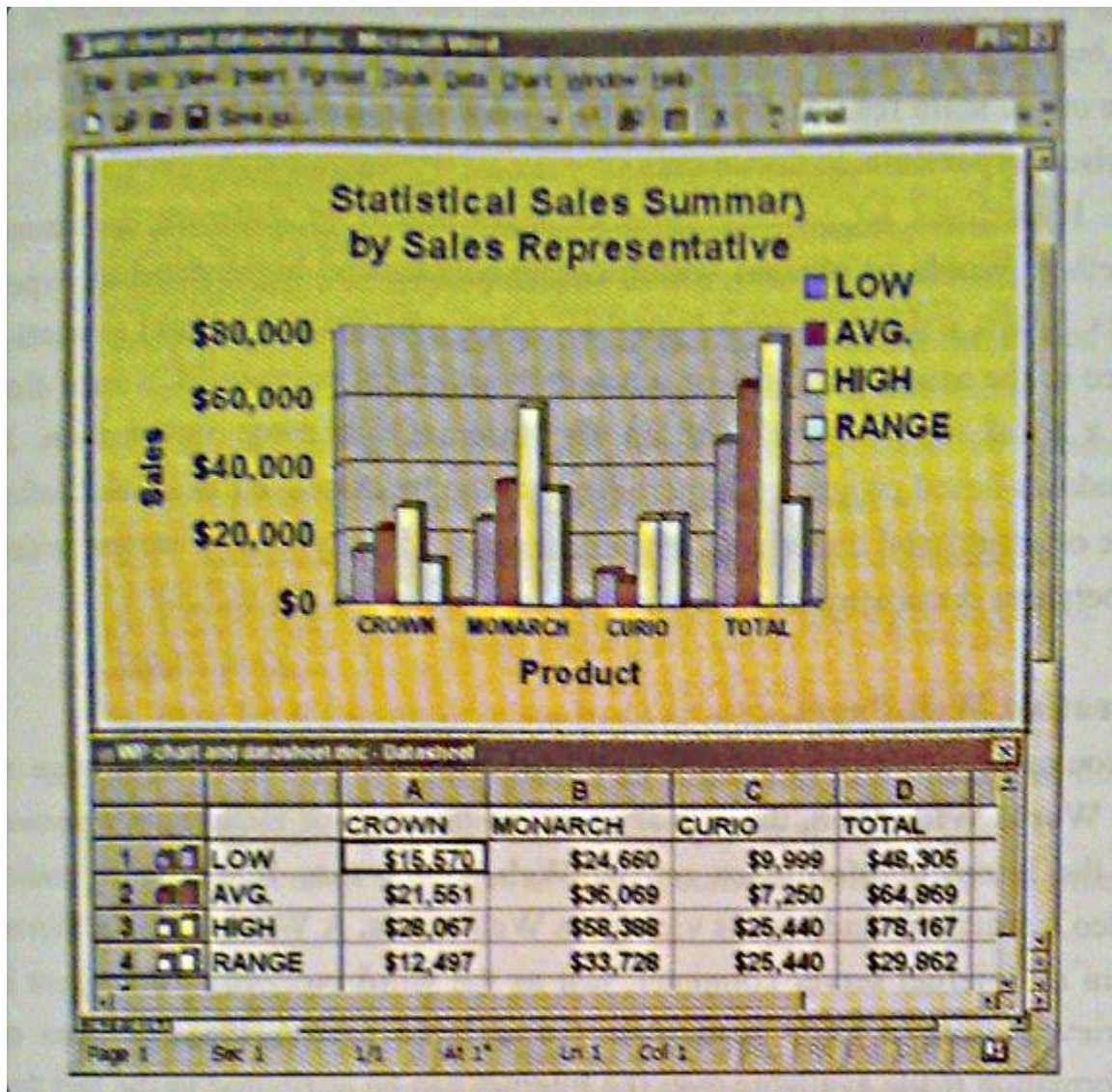|		A	B	C	D
		CROWN	MONARCH	CURIO	TOTAL
1	LOW	$15,570	$24,660	$9,999	$48,305
2	AVG.	$21,551	$36,069	$7,250	$64,969
3	HIGH	$28,067	$58,388	$25,440	$78,167
4	RANGE	$12,497	$33,728	$25,440	$29,862

Fig 2-2 Word Processing Table and Chart, The word processing chart feature makes it easy to generate professional looking charts within documents.

how the information in a 'Statistical Sales Summary' datasheet can be dynamically graphed within a word processing document. The bar graph in Figure 2-2 was created automatically from the data in the datasheet. Once data have been entered into the datasheet, you can change values and observe their effect on the chart.

Embedded Hyperlinks

Not all word processing documents are designed to be printed. For example, many companies are opting to put their reference materials in electronic, rather than printed, documents. Electronic versions of product catalogs, procedures manuals, personnel handbooks, and so on are now common in the business community. They are easier to create, maintain, and distribute, One of the main

reasons for this trend toward online documents is the ability to place **hyperlinks** in documents.

Hyperlinks let you tie parts of a document or different documents together. Words or phrases within documents can be highlighted as hyperlinks. When you encounter a hyperlink entry, you can jump (link) to another place in the same document or to another document on your PC's hard disk, on a local area network, or on the Internet for more information. In Windows-based programs, hyperlinks usually are displayed in a color (often blue or green) and underlined. Hyperlinks make it easy to skip around within or between documents to find what you want.

Creating Web Pages

If you can create a word processing document, you can create a Web page on the World Wide Web, the primary application used for viewing information on the Internet. Information on **the Web**, which may be graphics, audio, video, animation, and text, is viewed in **Web pages**. A Web page is retrieved from an Internet server computer, just as the word processing document is retrieved from a PC's hard disk. To a large extent, the explosion of information made available over the Internet can be attributed to the fact that word processing software lets users save documents in a format compatible with transmission over the Internet's World Wide Web. Now, anyone with word processing skills can contribute to the wealth of information on the Internet. What you see in a word processing document is essentially what you would see when viewing it as a Web page on an Internet browser.

(Larry & Nancy Long: pp. 56-58)