



own brand of printers. A few micros, including the Sinclair Spectrum, have no printer interface as such, and so an interface add-on has to be bought.

With a suitable printer available, your next task is to choose the appropriate processing software. A wide range of programs is produced for the more popular makes of computer, while only one or two are available for the less popular machines. The quality varies considerably between different programs. Some are crude and allow only simple editing, such as inserting and deleting text. Others allow whole passages to be moved around within the article, present the text on the screen just as it will appear on paper, or justify the text (adjust the word spacing so that the line length is uniform, like the text you are now reading).

Some word processors can search for a particular word or phrase, so a spelling mistake that has been repeated throughout an article can easily be put right. Programs to check the spelling of every word in a piece of text are sold for certain word processors; and it is possible for other programs, such as a mailing list or a database, to work in conjunction with the word processor. More sophisticated word processing programs are designed to make use of the features of certain printers. Dot matrix printers can often produce several different types of printface (such as italicised, bold or small letters) and so some word processors allow the different types to be mixed in one article. A few word processors can be expanded to use the ability of certain dot matrix printers to produce graphics. This allows many new typefaces to be used, including letters larger than normal and various ornate styles such as copperplate handwriting. Used in moderation these can liven up the printed text considerably.

Daisy wheel printers can use 'proportional spacing' to give more space to wide letters such as 'w' and less to narrow ones like 'i', rather than allowing them all the same space as an ordinary typewriter would do. Some word processors can

use this facility, which makes the text much more readable, and yet still manage to 'justify' both margins. This is ideal for producing community newspapers or club magazines because it gives a professional look without incurring the expense of proper typesetting. The interchangeable print wheels allow various typefaces to be chosen to suit the article. Alternatively, some typesetters will accept word processed copy on floppy disk or even tape. This gives top quality results without the cost of having someone key all the text into a typesetting machine.

Word processing software is sold in various formats including tape, disk, cartridge and ROM chip. More important, however, is the way word processed text is stored — usually on tape or floppy disk. Although cheap, tape is awkward, slow and limits the length of articles to the size that can be held in memory. Disks are better because they are fast, reliable and allow long articles to be written. New ways of storing data are starting to appear. The Sinclair Microdrive, for example, is cheap yet can store large amounts of data and find a specified part of the text in seconds. However, few word processors for the Spectrum are able to work with the Microdrives yet. Another interesting system is the tape drive used by the Coleco Adam, a home micro obviously designed with word processing in mind because it includes a daisy wheel printer. It uses modified cassette tapes to store its data and these can find any item within a few seconds.

Saving word processed copy on tape or disk allows long articles to be written over several days, standard letters to be used many times and copies of all work to be kept. It's also a good idea to make copies of long items at various stages while they are being written. If this isn't done there is a danger that some accident such as a power cut will destroy all the work.

Some programs have odd commands and awkward key combinations to memorise, while

Sinclair Spectrum

This is the cheapest efficient word processing system, but it is still quite expensive. Several limitations are imposed by the Spectrum, including a poor keyboard, the lack of a monitor interface and the provision of Microdrives instead of disk drives. However, it would be possible to add a better quality keyboard. Tasword Two is one of the few Spectrum word processors that will work with the Microdrives

Sinclair Spectrum (48K)	£130
Interface 1	£50
Two Microdrives	£100
Tasword Two software	£14
Shinwa CP80 Printer	£230
RS232 adaptor for CP80	£60
Printer cable	£15
TOTAL	£599

