A WORD TO THE WISE

The prime requirements of a computer that is to be used for word processing are the quality of the keyboard and of the display. On both counts, the BBC Microcomputer scores highly. The two most popular software packages are available in Read Only Memory, which cuts out loading time and makes them very fast in operation.

One of the most popular word processing packages for the BBC Micro is Wordwise, which is stored on a chip that fits into a ROM socket in the computer. Once fitted, key in *W and the BBC becomes a word processor. The Wordwise package as delivered comprises the ROM chip, fitting instructions, a 30-page manual and a cassette that displays the text of the manual on the screen and usefully illustrates the functions of various commands.

Wordwise is straightforward to use and can be put to work almost immediately without prior training and constant reference to the manual. To get started you simply choose the edit mode by pressing the Escape key, and start typing. Editing is carried out by the cursor and letters can be keyed in or deleted. Wordwise makes use of the BBC function keys for moving and copying text.

As the user becomes more familiar with the greater flexibility that a word processor offers over the typewriter or pen and paper, more of the features can be explored. Jumping to the beginning or end of a line or page by using the Shift and Cursor keys, or overwriting letters by use of a function key, soon become part of the user's repertoire.

Characters appear on the screen in the 40-column mode and are clearly legible on a domestic television set. The final appearance of the text can be previewed on the screen in the 80-column mode by use of a function key. This shows how the text will appear as printed. It is probably at this preview stage that the newcomer to Wordwise first considers the general layout and appearance of the text and needs to refer to the section in the manual that covers embedded commands. These commands deal with the presentation side of word processing. An example is the command LM

Setting Up

The well-equipped word processing set-up should include keyboard and monitor (or television), disk and drive for storage, and printer and stationery for a hard copy print-out of text

MONITOR

PRINTER

DISK DRIVE

DISK

STATIONERY

MICROCOMPUTER

KEVIN JONES