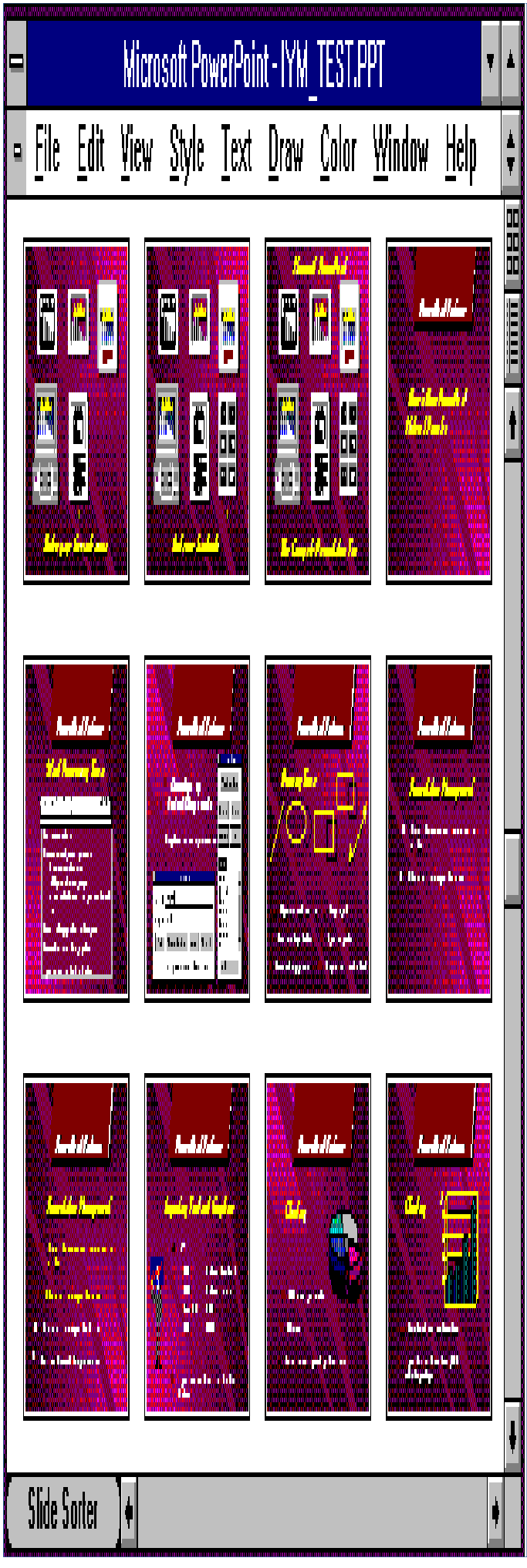
confusing.


Microsoft PowerPoint - IYM_TEST.PPT
File Edit View Style Text Draw Color Window Help
Slide Sorter

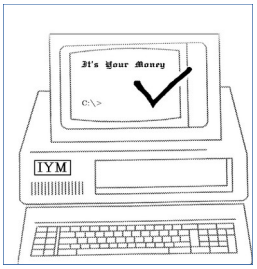
PowerPoint runs only in *Windows*' standard and 386-enhanced modes, so an 80286 based system is the minimum allowable (and at that level, waiting for screen draws is very painful). If you install all the support files along with it (templates, samples, clip art, and graphics filters) it occupies nearly seven megabytes of hard disk space, but after you've learned *PowerPoint*, the files that must be kept are few, and aggregately total under 2MB, including the 500 kilobytes of help files, which are useful only for those who refuse to use manuals.

If you've left the default program groups installed by *Windows* intact, *PowerPoint* is installed in the "*Windows* Applications" group; otherwise, a new group with that name is created. The installation process makes all necessary modifications to WIN.INI to install its fonts, references it's file extensions, and then cleans up, removing itself from your disk. *PowerPoint* is accompanied by a program that automates the process of sending your files to a regional Genigraphics production center (they're also the authors of the clip art), a voucher for several free slides to try out the service, and free offers for Bitstream *FontWare* and a MacIntosh-to-PC-and-back file conversion utility.

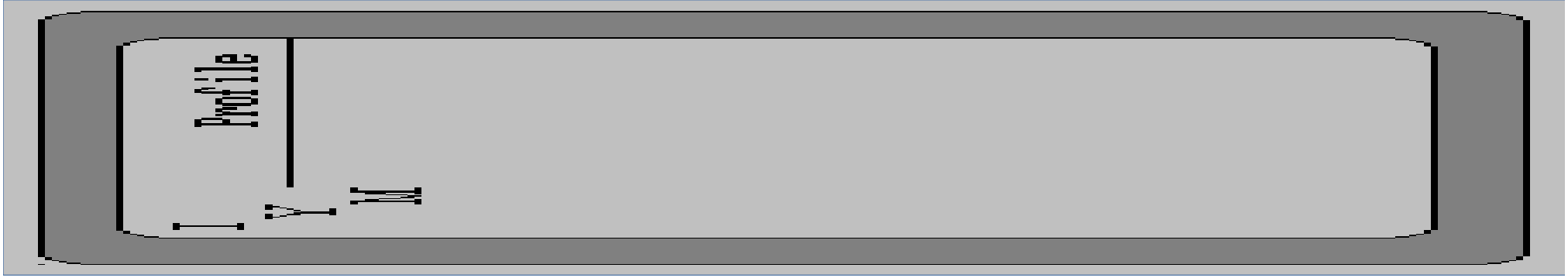
Documentation, in another departure for Microsoft, consists entirely of printed materials. There are several specific purpose booklets (getting started, using the Genigraphics service, and using templates), a quick reference card that lives up to its name nicely, and a single, 400 page hard bound volume that looks like nothing if not a text book. It even has color illustrations on inserted high-gloss paper. After a seventy page tour of the basic facilities (there's also about twenty pages on business graphics basics), you're pretty much left on your own to figure out *PowerPoint*, but believe it or not, that should be fine! Poke around a little, and you'll be productive in almost no time.

So what's so terrific about *PowerPoint*? Everything about it has been designed to make creating presentations easy, and making even novices productive quickly. If you've ever sat through a presentation that uses different backgrounds for each slide (or overhead, or screen shot), and come away with a headache, or been witness to contrasting colors that weren't meant to be in the same building, much less the same picture, you'll appreciate *PowerPoint* immediately. While ultimately the user can set things up any way he likes, *PowerPoint* comes with a set of color schemes that were professionally designed for effectiveness, and you select them in a way that makes so much sense, you'll find yourself gasping when you first see it. After you tell *PowerPoint* what background color to use, it prompts you to select a primary foreground color from a group of several acceptable choices, then offers you multiple sets of accent colors to choose from, each designed to complement the background/foreground set you've specified. Remember, though, this is *Windows*, so if you want to mix your own colors using a set of RGB sliders, you can.

The usual *Windows* tools are present. Copying and pasting via the clipboard is supported as usual, and you change characteristics for an object (or grouped set of objects) by highlighting it and making choices from the pull down



menus. The flexibility incorporated therein by *PowerPoint* is not to be understated, however. There are twenty-two fill patterns and several choices for line characteristics, and the opportunity to apply shadows and the like to anything on screen will satisfy the frustrated graphic artist in anyone. *PowerPoint* also incorporates a customizable spelling checker, and a set of Zapf Dingbats that provides over ninety choices for attention points in bullet charts.



Rather then create charts inside *PowerPoint*, Microsoft has chosen to implement those functions from a separate program with a strange mix of features, structure-wise. It is a separate entity, and can be shrunk to an icon while running, but if you try to run *PowerPoint Graph* independently, you are told that it can only be run from inside *PowerPoint*. More than anything, it looks like a superset of the Chart function in Microsoft's *Excel* spreadsheet, offering variations on area, bar, column, line, pie and scatter charts that are selected from a full-screen graphically based menu displaying examples of the available choices. It offers a generous 127x127 cell data grid, and imports data from .wk1, .wks., .wr1 (*Symphony*), .xls (*Excel*), ASCII, and SYLK files. Graphics import directly to *PowerPoint* is supported for .pic, .cgm, .tif, .eps, and several variations on .pcx bitmaps.

We've saved the best for last. *PowerPoint* works by grouping the slides in a presentation into a single file, which makes disk management easier. What this also allows is for the images in your presentation to be displayed in a group on screen (see figure). Moving the images from one position to another in the presentation is no more difficult than dragging