

has been around the longest, has the largest user base, and is the clear choice as most evolved. Depending on your individual circumstances, it's probably the best, as well.

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We'll cut through the confusing issue of how the DOS and *Windows* version of *Grammatik* differ first. In short, they hardly do at all. The two products have identical feature sets, equal prices, and similarly named files. In fact, two of the utility programs included with both, designed to help you manually edit rules and dictionary files, are the same item; if you invoke them while running the *Windows* version, you are shelled out to DOS and returned when you exit the utilities. Overall, we found *Grammatik Windows* less convenient than its more seasoned brother in most regards. Its help system pales in comparison. The multiple windows it creates move independently of each other even though they're used together, and it will not run in *Windows 3.0's* real mode under any circumstances, eliminating use on 8088/86-equipped computers from consideration. It does provide a helpful bar display that shows the percentage of work completed while using it in non-interactive mode, and has a menu system that's designed slightly more intuitively, but unless you're using a *Windows*-specific word processor such as Microsoft's *Word for Windows* or *Write*, or Samna's *Amí* or *Amí Professional*, choose the DOS version of *Grammatik*. That said, let's speak about the *Grammatik* line generically. (From this point forward, we'll point out differences when appropriate; otherwise, all that follows applies to both versions of the product.)

Installing *Grammatik* requires no user intervention other than providing a target drive and directory. It takes up about a megabyte of disk space, reducible to some 450 kilobytes, and requires 325K of RAM to run under DOS, 512K under *Windows*. Installation procedures included with both versions ask for permission to modify the path statement in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file and include a SET statement, and *Grammatik Windows* also requests to add a file extension association line to your WIN.INI file.

Documentation consists of an installation/quick reference card and a book divided into four sections: getting started/tutorial, using *Grammatik*, inside view, and designing style guides. Reading through the first two sections is all the casual user will need to do to become conversant in all *Grammatik's* important functions, a process that can be completed in under an hour. The second half of the book is devoted to providing a semi-technical explanation of *Grammatik's* operation, and using the rule and help screen editor. Editing help screens is not too difficult, but only true masochists should attempt to edit rules.

Operating *Grammatik* is all but effortless. A few easily navigated menus (DOS diehards can specify most options with command line switches) provide access to all program functions, and since you tell *Grammatik* what word processor you use (from a very long list of candidates) during installation (it can be changed), you'll rarely need to use the choices on the preferences menu. *Grammatik* provides pre-programmed models for five kinds of writing (general, business, technical, fiction, and informal), and allows you to create custom styles easily by toggling environmental factors such as short/long sentence length definitions, and usage rules. Rules are found in *Grammatik's* three "rule classes". Respective examples of the rules controlled by the grammatical, mechanical, and style classes are checking for double negatives, correct presentation of ellipses marks, and use of jargon. The use of supplemental dictionaries can teach *Grammatik* to ignore reader-group specific phrases.

*Grammatik* gives you the option of checking your writing interactively or in an automated operation that makes suggestions all at once, leaving you to check the advice *Grammatik* generates manually. Interactive mode is fun to use and can be educational, but there are some problems inherent to it. For one, when you edit an error, your changes are reflected in the editing window, but their effect on the condition displayed in the error window is not. Accordingly, you'll need to run a second pass of the program to see what the net effect of *Grammatik's* work is. Another fault is *Grammatik's* method of handling certain types of flagged situations. "Long sentence" errors usually won't fit on screen in their entirety, so determining the full context of what you were trying to say can be difficult. On the other hand, the existence of an "ignore this class for the remainder of the session" option available only when using *Grammatik* interactively prevents you encountering and needing to process fifteen or twenty mixed capitalization errors such as "*dBase*".

Your general impression of *Grammatik* probably will be decided by your opinion of its idiosyncracies. "Informal" and "Colloquial"

checking are controlled by the same toggle, and some phrases with multiple errors don't always flag them all. For example, the expression "to densely populated" produces a split infinitive error flag, but no "wrong to (two, too)" notice. Yet for each of its problems, *Grammatik* counters with innovations. There's a very smart replacement feature (changing "already to" to "all ready to") Somewhere between good and bad lies the ability to run *Grammatik* from inside a few of the most popular word processors. In reality, the macros initialized by this option shuts down the word processor, runs *Grammatik*, and brings back the word processor when you're finished grammar checking. The documentation states that this option is not a memory resident program, and so doesn't impose memory overhead. That's half right. A TSR, it isn't, but the program that sets the macro up uses 76K of RAM that remains unavailable until you exit the word processor.

We wonder how many users will be excited about having their work compared to The Gettysburg Address or Hemingway past the second time they witness the trick, but *Grammatik's* many statistics presentation options can be fun. In general, using *Grammatik* may not deserve that extreme a description, but it does its job, and well. If you do much writing, *Grammatik* is terrific.