

Publisher's Powerpak
Atech Software

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To an already popular and highly regarded product for use with Microsoft *Word* and *Works* and WordPerfect's *WordPerfect*, *LetterPerfect* and *PlanPerfect*, Atech has now added (OK, updated) a version of *Publisher's Powerpak* redesigned for use with *Windows 3.0*. Offering the same Courier, Times-Roman, and Helvetica equivalent typefaces as the DOS version of the product (including hollow versions), *Publisher's Powerpak/Windows* provides an inexpensive and transparent method of producing screen fonts on the fly, eliminating the need to devote large portions of your hard disk to font storage. If the fonts that are distributed with the product aren't sufficient for your needs, Atech has an extensive library of add-on typefaces that are inexpensive, compatible, and take up on average only about 50 kilobytes of space each.

After its installation via a series of batch files that determines the version of *Windows* you're using and your display driver, *Publisher's Powerpak* puts the appropriate files on your disk in the *Windows* directory and a subdirectory it creates, occupies about 750K of space, total. You can move them, but the installation procedure refuses to work in a user defined directory, as is true for the DOS-based version. You can always move the files and reinstall the individual components to suit your tastes, but as distributed, *Publisher's Powerpak* is ready to run in under five minutes, with a minimum of hassle. You are left, however, with modified SYSTEM.INI and WIN.INI files, only the former of which is first backed up.

In its twenty pages of documentation, *Publisher's Powerpak* manages to convey to you that it operates by serving as a replacement printer driver for, and with greater management capabilities than those distributed with *Windows*. Simply select the appropriate fonts as you need them (any existing fonts in your system are unaffected), and *Windows* does the work of generating screen output and rasterizing printer output into graphics that look like the text characters they replace, automatically. Besides the space savings afforded, this approach to font management has the added advantage of allowing you to create "fonts" larger than your printer might otherwise recognize, limited only by the capabilities of your software. The list of supported printers is best characterized as extensive.

As in the DOS world, there are pluses and minuses to be considered. We've enumerated the upside criteria; now here is the down: creating the fonts (and their equivalent graphics) takes time. This is not as much of a problem under *Windows 3.0* as in other environments, but it's there, so be aware of it.

The problem of mediocre output present in the DOS version of *Publisher's Powerpak* is all but eliminated by the rasterization process employed under *Windows*, so if you can live with the speed issue, (*Publisher's Powerpak* certainly qualifies as a good enough deal financially) give this one a look before you spend more money on another product.

Dragnet
Prompt
Access Softek

What do you get when you take a small company, a distribution deal with a not-so-small one, and a couple of good ideas? In the case of Access Softek, Broderbund, and *Dragnet* and *Prompt*, you get two very different programs that are marketed to look like close complements.

In truth, *Dragnet* and *Prompt* share eleven files out of the twelve that make up each package, so it's easy to see where the idea that they are closely related came from. The eleven are made up of several *Windows* Dynamic Link Libraries, plus various file viewers (.CGM, .DRW, HPGL, and .DBF) and launch pads (*Word*, *WordPerfect*, *Windows Write*, and *1-2-3*) for popular third party software, and text interpreters, and are not all imperative to operation of the programs, but needs in this regard are not identical for *Dragnet* and *Prompt*, so unless you're very comfortable dealing with system crashes, you're probably best off following the directions for installation that accompany each product: copy the contents of the \WIN3 directory found on each disk into your main *Windows* directory and leave them there. Total disk space required: 340 kilobytes for the accessory files,

72K for *Dragnet*, and 128K for *Prompt*.

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Both packages come with 5¼" and 3½" diskettes, are accompanied by short (40-odd pages) documentation booklets, and are designed for file management, but the similarity ends there. *Prompt*, in essence, is a replacement for *Windows*' File Manager, sans on-line help. It's much more flexible, easier to use, occupies a similar amount of disk space, and makes nearly the same demand on system resources as does File Manager, giving up only the ability to format diskettes from within *Windows*. *Prompt* also adds a few features to the mix. You can encrypt files (don't forget your password), compress them (you must decompress them to use them), toggle the inclusion of hidden files in directory listings, and search for files by creation date, as well as *Windows*' name-based hunting.

Prompt does File Manager better in several areas. Disk drive icons are shaded to show their state of fullness, you can have multiple directory trees (as well as contents) on screen simultaneously, and maintenance is point and click simplicity: just drag the directories or