MATHTYPE FOR WINDOWS, VERSION 4.0 A SOFTWARE REVIEW

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When I was asked to do this review, my mind instantly said to itself, "What? Use something else besides $\text{\texttt{EXP}}\text{?!}$? No way can any program even compare to $\text{\texttt{EXP}}$." So I started to use this program with a very hesitant and biased mind-set. Much to my surprise, this software is really great. It is very easy to use, contains features that allow one to customize it to their specific needs, and it is very versatile. I am completely amazed. I must point out, however, that MathType is primarily an add-on to wordprocessors such as Word or WordPerfect, whereas $\text{\texttt{EXP}}$ is a completely standalone product.

One of my biggest complaints against the equation editor in Word and WordPerfect has been their formatting. It is very difficult to have equations appear exactly as the user intends. I love $\text{\texttt{EXP}}$ because it allows me to have control over what the equation looks like rather than have the equation editor do it for me. With Word, WordPerfect, and especially, TeX, it is very difficult for the user to control the look of the equation. MathType in a sense, follows the same pattern as Word and other popular wordprocessors, but there is a little more leeway for the user to format his/her own equation.

The tutorial provided with the software is very easy to follow and can have you work in MathType in less than a few hours. ($\text{\texttt{EXP}}$, on the other hand, takes a much longer time to get used to, because of different menus and functions.) I was off and running very quickly.

One of the feature I truly like is that equations can be saved as GIF files and then used on web pages. As a web page designer for our department, this has been an issue I was facing for a long time. MathType found an easy way to accomplish my goal of designing web pages without having to change from one program to another.

MathType's Reviewer Notes state that it is the professional version of Equation Editor, which is licensed to Microsoft for its use in Microsoft Office and to Corel for WordPerfect. It is an upgraded equation editor offering customization of toolbars, more mathematical characters and templates, greater control over formatting, and the ability to save to various graphic file formats, including the above mentioned GIF files. It also has TeX and MathML translation capabilities.

Some of the interesting features, which are provided by this version of MathType, include color (all or parts of an equation can be colored), fonts in both TrueType and PostScript formats, a customizable toolbar, which can be floating or stationary at the top of each equation window, an extensive “expression library” that provides quick and easy access to hundreds of symbols and templates, many templates, a “drag-and-drop” capability, which allows mathematical expressions to be moved or copied within an equation easily, TeX, LaTeX and MathML translators, and a zoom up to 800% of the normal size. Also, MathType allows the user to add-on math text to graphics created with Corel, Micrographic Designer, and other graphic programs. These features along with its very reasonable price make MathType very appealing.

I have not had enough time to fully test all its features as yet, but from what I have seen, MathType really does deliver. I plan on using it regularly and it looks like it can give MathType a run for its money. I think MathType helps one not to shy away from using other wordprocessors when necessary for technical typing and it is definitely worth buying.

MathType 4.0

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Price:

MathType (either Windows or Macintosh version) \$129.00 USD

MathType (academic price*) \$99.00 USD

Upgrade from any prior version of MathType \$49.95 USD

Upgrade to another platform (Macintosh to Windows or vice-versa) \$49.95 USD

*For faculty, staff and students of schools, colleges and universities only. The name of the academic institution will be required when ordering.