In 1994, Brooks/Cole Publishing introduced the first new version of EXP compatible with Windows. For most EXP for DOS users, the new version provided very little improvement. Version 3.0 did provide a more user-friendly environment for those who were not very experienced using the DOS version. For those new users, version 3.0 was a blessing in allowing them to use the best WYSIWYG program on the market without all the hassle that the DOS version encompasses (see the review in JAMSA 8:1 (1995), 99-100). There were many “bugs” but given time, users were sure that they would be worked out. In March, 1996, version 4.0 was launched with great hope of being a major breakthrough for EXP.

Unfortunately, the deficiencies have not only not been worked out, more faults seem to have appeared. In version 3.0, anyone having a generation 4 HP Laserjet was disappointed to find that after typing a document and printing it out, many of the symbols did not appear or were substituted by strange symbols which made no sense at all. The only alternatives were to retype the document in version 2.1 (because a file cannot be saved to a lower version) or find another printer. The exclusion of the series 4 printer drivers was a great error. One could surely understand if the driver were for an off-brand printer but the incompatibility with the HP printers is absolutely ludicrous. Hewlett-Packard is one of the leading printer manufacturers on the market today. Surely version 4.0 would take this shortcoming into account especially since HP has now introduced the generation 5 printers. But no, the problem still exists. Documents typed carefully in either version 3.0 or 4.0 still print without certain characters and symbols. After two years, one would think that the programmers could catch up to the technological advances of the printers the software will be using.

Version 4.0 promises to “convert EXP documents to \LaTeX{} for submission to journals and to work with other \LaTeX{} users”. If one were new to the software and purchasing it based on this statement, they would be greatly disappointed. Yes, indeed EXP 4.0 does convert documents to \LaTeX{} format but not cleanly. There are still many things to clean up and commands that \LaTeX{} does not recognize that must be corrected. Even the sample document given in the package had to be cleaned up a bit before \LaTeX{} would run it. This feature reminds one of the EXP2\LaTeX{} product introduced years ago that was a huge disappointment. It was very expensive and those using it found that it took more time to clean up the converted document than it would have taken to type it in \TeX{} to start with.

The new version of EXP for Windows still does not measure up to the original version for DOS. Even with having to download the fonts in order to print a document, one can still print it without being surprised by the final output on an HP series 4 or 5 printer in the DOS version. This reviewer was sadly disappointed to say the least with version 4.0 and hopes that Brooks/Cole takes a good hard look at these faults before the introduction of version 5.0.

There are some items I would like to see included in future versions of EXP for Windows that are taken from the EXP for DOS version such as macros. Most wordprocessors include some type
of macros and since it takes two separate keystroke sequences to make a centered equation, a macro to expedite matters would be extremely helpful and logical. In EXP for DOS, all the commands for a centered equation are done either with macros or in one sequence using the F1 key. In EXP for Windows, however, one is forced to use two separate keystrokes. There are shortcuts (which are not macros by any means) such as using the F5 key and the F4 but it still takes a few keystrokes to manipulate the equation. Macros are a MUST for any wordprocessing software in order for the user to be able to customize the software to his/her needs. EXP 4.0 does NOT provide macros for the user. One can buy a macro application available from another company but not from Brooks/Cole.

There are some symbols which are not included in the Windows version which are not included in the DOS version either but at least in the DOS version, the symbols can be manipulated such as ≠. Using the strike command in the DOS version, this symbol can be made easily.

The table feature is very nice along with the graphics feature for importing graphics in the new version. This is definitely an improvement from the DOS version. If Brooks/Cole could find a way to take the excellent features from the DOS version combined with the nicer features of the Windows version, EXP would far exceed the capabilities of \LaTeX and become the leading scientific wordprocessing program on the market.

EXP for Windows, Version 4.0
The Scientific Word Processor

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