

Having worked with many software applications for the IBM and the Apple Macintosh in the past did not prepare me for Ventura Publisher in the Mac Version. Even with all the warnings by the demonstrator, who said that this program was more difficult to learn; I still went into the assignment with enthusiasm. I love learning new things and I have never had too much trouble with learning any new program I have tried so far.

Like other programs, there are pros and cons in using them and in utilizing their design. The benefits were apparent before even beginning the evaluation and were only confirmed by its use.

Ventura Publisher comes in four versions now. But no matter which version you use, its main functions are to allow continuity in longer documents and with less memory space used than in any other multi-function program. It is multi-functional in the sense that it can pull all forms of documents and graphics needed to do any publishing job.

The best layman comparison would be it outputs page set-ups similar to Pagemaker 4.0. Ventura Publisher has the same capabilities as the Pagemaker in its placing the following:

- Text from almost any wordprocessing program

- Graphics from several scanners

- Ready-made graphics in almost any format

The differences are that Pagemaker converts the information into its own language and by doing this it uses more memory space than needed by including the Pagemaker identifications along with the original space needed for the imported item. In Ventura, instead of importing the entire article and converting it to its own language; they tag the text or graphic needed as a type of finder and leaves it where in its original program. In other words, lets hypothetically say that this article was originally written in Microsoft Word 4.0 and I import it into Ventura Publisher with a text tag. The article stays in Microsoft Word but it now has been linked instead of copied in its entirety. And Ventura does not convert it, but instead memorizes the location of the text to pull it when needed.

When producing a document to be linked with Ventura, it is a very good idea not to set in any formats. Once linked with Ventura, you will have to go back to the original in the other program to edit any major changes or to take out any formatting, so you won't have problems later in formatting your tags to the text in Ventura.

In embarking in this software adventure, I thought the best place to begin was the all dreaded "USER'S MANUAL." From the very beginning I was disappointed with the organization and flow of the manual, because it lacked either one. It was also repetitive and gave many unnecessary information that was inappropriate because it lacked any program functions. Instead of going right into needed information on how to do a function, the writer first had to give an editorial. For example, giving us definitions of simple functions such as RIGHT HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT and then giving us their opinion on whether we should use it. The writer editorializes, "Text that is right-aligned is not as easy to read as left-aligned or justified text." A definition and circumstances when to be used should really be put in a glossary if they found it was necessary to include. The User's Manual is filled with these occurrences and makes for a lot of fluff reading, which takes more time, which would be better used learning how to do all the functions.

On a positive note, the Ventura User's Guide is very detailed and when they do describe the steps in performing a function they keep it detailed to exacts. What the publisher really needs to do in the next attempt at giving Mac user's a Ventura Publisher Program they can really use more versitily, they will definitely need to rewrite the manual. Ventura Publisher is a semi-tough program to learn and you have to use the manual to learn it, so it is necessary to have a well organized and written tool to assist you.

The forward section of the Ventura User's Guide is filled with precautions in Ventura's use with your Mac System. Some of these cautions may hinder the way you normally use your Mac. Here are the precautions the Ventura User's Guide includes:

1. Do not use the Finder to copy chapters, because Ventura Publisher uses files from many sources and these source files remain in their original folders even after being used in a chapter. Instead, use Ventur's COPY ALL OPTION.

When installing and using Ventura Publisher the following precautions are to be applied:

2. Limit the number of INIT's installed in the system. Any activated INIT takes up memory. Start-up screens takes a lot of memory. For example: Color Desk and special sound effects.

3. Do not leave desk accessories active while running the Ventura application. You can lose some of your tags to text files if your screen saver activates while you leave the program running to go make diner. I unfortunately know this is true from experience.
4. When under Multifinder so not run applications at the same time as Ventura. You also should increase the size of the Multifinder portion by way of "Get Info" while in the Ventura.
5. Run Ventura under the Finder only, instead of the Multifinder, if you only have 2MB of RAM in your system.
6. If an Adobe Type Manager is installed in your system, either deactivate it or reduce the size of the font cache to the minimum allowed.
7. Reduce or turn off the RAM cache completely through the Control Panel.
8. And of course, after doing any of the above, make sure you reboot for these precautions to take affect.

In the Macintosh Edition of Ventura Publisher the System Requirements are the following:

- Macintosh Plus, SE, SE/30, II, IIx, IIcx, IIci, IIfx, & Portable.
- 2 MB RAM
- System Level 6.0 or higher
- Finder 6.0
- Hard disk drive with 20 MB or higher recommended.
- Apple LaserWriter driver 6.0.1 recommended.

The demonstrator has contested that it is 7.0 compatible, but I would review those precautions before using it under 7.0, because of the Multifinder limitations for some systems.

Something else I noticed in passing while using the program, they have gone "Hog Wild" on the windows for almost every function available. You can tell they have been used to writing programs in IBM language and then with the capability of windows they utilized them to the max. This is where the manual becomes especially

important when trying to figure out what the window does and how to use it effectively.

If you have a Mac Plus, SE, SE30 or a Mac Classic which has the small screens the visibility of viewing what you are doing on the screen becomes hindered by Ventura's side tool boxes. Even when deactivating some of the tool boxes you are not gaining any room on the working area. This calls for more scrolling and if you only have 2MB of RAM this becomes a slow and arduous task.

Ventura Publishers main uses are for long documents, such as books, catalogs, and manuals. I used my six chapter unfinished book to use as a comparison tool between Pagemaker 4.0 and Ventura Publisher for the Macintosh.

Pagemaker 4.0 has the capability of linking files and producing linked chapters for a book. It ultimately took less time to correlate and print the chapters on the Ventura Publisher because the Autoflow on the Pagemaker runs over any Master sheets laid into the pages. Which meant either going into each individual page to fix or try again without the Autoflow, but you would still have to go into every page to lay in the text. And the printing time was less because Ventura took less memory space. The original text was written in the Microsoft Works Program, which also does not take very much memory space.

I can recommend Ventura for the longer documents but for smaller ones, such as a four page newsletter, I can not. Although Pagemaker still more memory space, it took a lot less time to do on the Pagemaker than on the Ventura. The tagging was what took all the time. But on the other hand, Ventura was easier to re-tag or edit when multiple layers were being produced on the newsletter. There was no moving one layer over to get at the one underneath and then having to try and fit the layer back exactly where it was.

The list price for the Ventura Publisher is \$799 from the manufacturer or \$499 from many mail order organizations such as Mac Zone and Mac Connection.

The bottom line, in my opinion, is even for \$499 through a mail order company, the Ventura Publisher for the Macintosh is just a little too much cost for what you would be getting. I do not produce a

multitude of long documents at the present time. And Pagemaker meets my needs for publishing smaller documents.

My recommendation would be to wait until their next Mac update in hopes that they reduce the complexity of their program and when they rewrite the User's Manual. I was going to try the Quark Express next, but I changed my mind after the Mac Expo and decided that Adobe Illustrator would be my next program to learn.