

**WordPerfect 8 For Busy People** by Elden Nelson  
Osborne/McGraw-Hill; 320 pages

The “For Busy People” series of computer books is one of the easiest and most expeditious training vehicle available — in book form. Besides regularly selecting knowledgeable authors to prepare the text, Osborne/McGraw-Hill has developed the formula prerequisite for busy lawyers to quickly obtain answers to technical questions pertaining to application software such as WordPerfect. This formula comprises: (1) maximum use of colorful graphics; (2) a “Fast Forward” overview/highlight section; (3) “Expert Advice” boxes that provide timesaving tips and techniques; (4) “Shortcuts” boxes that provide quick keystroke combinations or mouse-clicks to immediately invoke functions and features; (5) “Cautions” boxes that help avoid common pitfalls and clarify elusive or confusing features; (6) “Definitions” boxes to elucidate computer jargon in vanilla language; (7) “Step by Steps” graphical screen depictions that walk through the execution of complicated features; and (8) “Upgrade Notes” boxes to emphasize enhancements and improvements. Doesn’t this sound like a sure-thing?

WordPerfect for Busy People accomplishes the impossible: successfully emulating the behavior and dynamics of WordPerfect 8's powerful word processing features and functionality in a mere two-dimensional medium. But, it is the masterful use of color screens, menus, and dialog boxes in the context of realistic word processing tasks and challenges that effectively captures the essence of working with WordPerfect. Ironically, if simply being used to refresh one’s recollection about how to invoke a particular feature, the book has been designed to graphically present this information in the Fast Forward section located in the front of each chapter. That is, even if the Fast Forward section contains the answer to the technique or feature being sought, a modest graphic is typically still encountered by the reader.

For instance, if the question is how to open a recently used file, the Fast Forward section of Chapter 4, entitled “File Management in WordPerfect,” neatly informs the reader to first click the File menu which shows the recently used files, and then to click the document being sought. On the other hand, if the question is how to select text, then Chapter 3, entitled “Everyday Editing,” presents a graphic that shows the WordPerfect workspace with selected text and pointing out the beginning of the selection, the selected text, and the end of this selection. To accomplish this selection with a mouse, each of the methods of Click-and-Drag, Click and Shift-Click, Double-Click, Triple-Click, Quadruple-Click, Menu, and the QuickMenu (Right-Click) are presented. Accomplishing selection using the keyboard is also discussed. Expert Advice boxes further elucidate how to turn off selection of whole words for multiple-word selections and how to extend selection using the keyboard. Ergo, in just a few well-designed pages, the text selection process is effectively emulated.

Another example of a helpful illustration is how to switch between documents when several documents are simultaneously open. Explained in Chapter 3 as a file management issue, first, a Shortcut box describes how to use combinations of the [F6] key to switch between documents. Next, an illustration is shown with six cascaded documents loaded into the WordPerfect workspace. In conjunction with a related isolated illustration of the Windows 95 Application Bar, corresponding to there being six open documents in an application — six open WordPerfect documents — the reader is instructed to simply click the document to be activated, whereby the clicked document becomes active in the workspace.

WordPerfect For Busy People manages to explain the core features of WordPerfect 8 in only 300 pages organized into twelve chapters. An appendix addresses special tools specifically applicable to the law office, including generating a Table of Authorities, generating pleading paper, making document comparisons, and using outlines. The cross-reference index affords an easy access device for finding a solution to word processing situations.

The For Busy People slogan "The book to Use When There's No Time to Lose!" is a true and correct rendition of the message delivered. Other equally effective books in the series include Word, Windows 98, Netscape Communicator, The World Wide Web, Quicken 98, and America Online.