



WordPerfect's **ENVOY 1.0**

A Review

c 1994 by *Paul Kinnaly*

If you read the October '94 Preview Issue of *WindoWatch*, you have already had a look at Envoy. Published by **WordPerfect**, a division of Novell, Envoy 1.0 is a Windows authoring tool and represents one of several operating system formats used to publish *WindoWatch* electronically.

As a result of a series of critical comments about the *WindoWatch* Announcement issue, it was suggested that if I really had the need to critique I should put this latent talent to work and review the Envoy product for *WindoWatch* readers. I tried to demur, but soon found a package in my mailbox containing one write-protected 1.44mb diskette and a trifold document entitled "Envoy QuickStart Card".

Having been victimized too often by ill-behaved Windows programs, I backed-up my system, scanned the diskette for viruses, and took the leap...

The installation of Envoy proved to be simple and straight forward. The near standard *setup* program politely informed me that installation would take 1272kb of disk space in the program directory and a further 288kb in the Windows directory. *Setup* asked for my name, company, and license number, allowing each to remain blank, and then proceeded to install itself on my system. There were no options or choices other than selection of drive and directory.

The completed installation gave me the "WordPerfect Envoy" program group containing icons for the Envoy Viewer, several sample documents, and an on-line user's guide, itself an Envoy document. The sample Envoy documents were apparently produced by such varied applications as Excel 5, CorelDraw 4, and several word processing and desktop publishing programs. One further icon featured the ubiquitous *Readme.Txt* file, which I promptly selected. This was a *very* pleasant surprise: a truly useful listing of information. There were sections on topics such as System Requirements, Troubleshooting, both during and after installation, Compatibility, Customer Support, as well as a section detailing the uninstallation of the program. This section contained a listing of every file

installed on the system, where it would be found, and what its purpose was - an excellent feature I wish more developers would copy!

The on-line user's guide was somewhat sparse; while it made use of Envoy's hypertext links to take you from a subject list to a topic, the information provided was brief and assumed a degree of knowledge. As a supplement to a manual it would be ample, as a substitute for one it is weak. Telephone support is also available for the program using either a toll-free number with a \$25 per call service fee or on a no-fee basis for a toll telephone call to Utah.

From a user's perspective the installation was simple and swift. Technically, however, it left something to be desired as it modified - without asking - the *WIN.INI* file heavily, adding lines to the [Windows], [PrinterPorts], [Ports], [Devices], and [Extensions] sections. Not only didn't it ask, it didn't make a backup copy of the file before altering it. Thus, the detailed directions for uninstalling the program became not just a "nice touch", but a necessity.

The *raison d'être* of this and other authoring tools is the ability to create hypertext links within a document. Those who viewed the *Windo Watch* Preview issue saw these in action; a mouse click on the highlighted name of the author in the table of contents would jump the reader immediately to the article itself. This feature allows the reader to jump through an electronic document viewing only chosen sections without tedious scrolling through the entire document. From an editorial and layout standpoint, it's important that the creation of these hypertext links be easily understood and appropriate - while still flexible.

Envoy loaded rapidly and presented me with a screen with standard Windows menus at the top, a button bar, a large white area covering most of the screen, and a status bar at the bottom. I found that merely placing the mouse cursor over a given button caused a brief description of the button's function to appear on the status line. Generally, as is true of most Windows applications using such a button bar, functions available there are duplicated in the Windows pull-down menus.

Creation of Envoy documents (.evy) is done in a manner similar to that used by many PC fax programs - Envoy installs itself as a standard Windows print driver. One merely "prints" the desired document to Envoy instead of to a hard-copy printer. I was pleasantly surprised to find that Envoy simplified the process even more. The File menu contained an Import selection. A click here brought up the standard Windows file selection menu. A double-click on the desired file name launched a whole sequence of events: Envoy started my word processor, Word for Windows, loaded the Word document, "printed" it to the Envoy driver, shut down Word, and presented the resulting Envoy document on the screen. Elapsed time - less than a minute. Simple and quick! I was impressed. Envoy's printer driver may be customized to allow specific PostScript or TrueType fonts

to be “embedded” in the document. This feature ensures that the reader will see the document as you created it, even if some fonts are not on his system - but it greatly increases the size of the resulting file.

Within this Envoy document, I could utilize any of the three authoring tools built into the program: annotations, bookmarks, or hypertext links. What I could *not* do, was add to, modify, or rearrange any of the text! This work must be done using a word processing program before importing the file to Envoy. This struck me as a strange limitation for an “authoring tool”.

Creation of a hypertext link is simple; the program leads you step-by-step through the process. After selecting the hypertext tool from the button bar, the key word(s) that will form the “source” of the link are highlighted using the mouse. A message appears on the status bar directing the author to now highlight the destination of the link. As soon as you begin to highlight this area, a new message appears on the status bar telling you to click the *right* mouse button to select the link properties - such as text color or underlining.

Rather than highlighting *text* as the source of a hypertext link, the author may highlight a blank section of the page and have Envoy place a “button” there. Several different icons are provided to use as buttons including arrows and the “information” icon (an “i” within a circle). These buttons may be dragged around the page to place them where desired.

Envoy also features another potentially useful form of annotation through the creation of “bookmarks”. The author selects the icon for bookmarks from the Button Bar, highlights an area of text, then types a label for the bookmark. Upon receiving the document, the viewer merely clicks on the bookmark icon on the status bar to get a list of all the bookmarks in the document. Clicking on any one of these takes the viewer to the appropriate section marked by the author. Envoy’s third main authoring tool is “sticky notes”. A click on the “Note” icon, followed by a click on the appropriate section of the document places a yellow “sticky note” there, within which you may type comments, corrections, etc.

Saving a document in a compiled and Windows ready format was as easy as selecting File | Save As from the menu. The dialog box that appears offers the choice of saving as an “editable” Envoy document (.evy) - which is only usable if the full Envoy program is on the system, as a text file (.txt) - which could be copied to the clipboard, or as a file incorporating the Envoy run-time viewer (.exe) - which can exist as a stand-alone application. The dialog box also contains a button for “Security” which allows setting a password to access the document and controls the degree of access a user will have to the document: Unrestricted - i.e., annotatable with Envoy’s authoring tools, read and print access only, or read-only access. For those systems with electronic mail access using either the VIM or MAPI standards, Envoy can activate your mail program to allow

electronic transmission of the newly created document. This is a particularly useful feature in a workgroup environment.

The biggest drawback of creating a stand-alone application is the size of the Envoy run-time viewer which gets packaged with your document. A 41kb Word for Windows text document was a whopping 399kb Envoy run-time file. Curiously, when I repeated this process with a large 397kb Word newsletter - replete with graphics, the resulting Envoy run-time file was only 416kb. Clearly the program stores the data (including graphics) in a very compact form; only the viewer itself is large.

Some of the buttons available on the Button Bar are usable by both the author and the reader to move around the document and customize the view, even in restricted access documents. These include Page Forward and Page Back, Return to the source of hypertext link, Zoom In, Zoom Out, etc. A particularly nice touch is the File | Preferences | Main View dialog allowing the reader to choose their own default view. One finds choices of fitting the document to the width of the window, to the height of the window, the entire page in the window, or a specific percentage zoom setting. Envoy allows selection of nine "standard" zoom percentages using the Zoom In/Out buttons or from the menu. Another button lets you return all of these to the default settings.

A concern of many these days is the amount of resources a program takes during its operation. This can be a significant consideration in a multi-tasking environment - particularly for an author. Envoy acquitted itself well in these areas. Norton's SystemWatch showed that Envoy used only 2% of GDI and 7% of *User* resources. Exiting the program freed up the *User* resources, but not the GDI. Restarting the program, however, did not further deplete GDI, so apparently whatever is left by Envoy in the GDI heap remains available to it when it is re-run.

Overall, despite my proclivity towards criticism, I found little to criticize here. My gripes about its actions on installation and its inability to add or modify document text were counter-balanced by the ease of use and the flexibility of the software. While we at WindoWatch did not utilize its capabilities given the content and the targeted reader, the program certainly has good potential in an authoring environment. The combination of hypertext links and bookmarks provides the author with a readily accessible means of leading the reader through a complex, multi-part document with ease. I'd recommend its consideration by anyone in need of creating such distributable - but protected - documents.

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