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[Mellel: Virtual Typewriter and More](#)

Truly a tool for the power writer

There are many word processors out there for the Mac, and each is a bit different in what it does and who it is made for. While the better known general public orientated applications like Microsoft Word, and it's ever growing army of twins, has all the options the average user could ever need, many of them are not truly needed. After all, if you are looking for a word processor, you are probably looking to go work with words. Although after the writing there is usually a formating step, in which you get everything ready to be printed by laying out and making everything look good, and Word can do this better than most word processors, when it comes down to just working with words, Word is a bit bloated with marginally useful features. This is where Mellel is different. **Who is it for?** Well, you use Word because everyone uses Word and because it's Word, then this is not for you. However, if you write for a living, working almost entirely with words, then this might be the perfect application for you. Mellel is intended for those people who want as much control as possible over their text, without any of the fancy gizmos and gadgets. The main focus of this program is the writing itself, not compatibility with the Windows universe. **Why it is good** One of the most powerful features of Mellel, although you won't tell before you've actually started working with it, is an incredibly flexible auto-numbering system. This lets you auto-number parts of the document such as the tables, pictures and sections, each part being further dividable into levels, while each level can have its own predefined format. All these divisions let you structure your document as you write it and the Outline view makes it easy and fast to browse and make changes to the structure. Mellel also features the best implementation of footnotes, generation of content table, and bibliographies that I have never seen. But this is only scratching the surface, as Mellel is truly a power user's tool, designed to be used by very specific people, for use in specific tasks. To give you an idea, the Mellel user guide that you can download has three hundred and thirty three pages, and is written entirely using this very program. Just parsing quickly through it you can get a pretty good idea of what this program is capable of. Best part is Mellel is stable and responsive even with documents of hundreds of pages, unlike other programs who become choppy and unresponsive after 50 and have a strong drive to crash if the page count is in the hundreds. **Highlights** Because of how much control and how many options the program gives you, I cannot go into very much depth. However I will point out the highlights of this program, and will note that many of the features now present in Mellel and improved by the latest version are user requested, and many of them are unseen in other programs, Word included. **Hyphenation** In order to avoid those nasty gaps that tend to appear in justified text, Mellel gives you the option of using hyphenation dictionary. If you wish greater control, you can use a personal dictionary, hyphenation limit, hyphenation zone, or you can even create your own hyphenation pattern. **Columns** Columns are present in nearly all word processors, and Mellel supports up to hundreds of columns, with balancing, gutters and gutter lines, not to mention different column numbers within the same page. You can even set space above the lines, set space above columns and set the gutter lines... All in a very easy manner. **Sections** More than just the bits of text which you use to set columns, they also allow you to structure the document as well as set up section styles that can be used over different documents. Sure, they take a while to get used to and integrate into your workflow, but after that it's pure magic. **Import and Export** Mellel plays nice and imports and exports in the Microsoft Word format as well as several other widely used formats, but like always, its strengths lie in the writer orientated aspects such as footers, headers, sections, and columns. **Many Many others** I will note that while Mellel is a writer orientated program, it does not completely ignore the visual aspect of

documents, giving you many options and features that, despite not being as easy to use in some cases, and much easier to use in others, will eventually yield the same results as other programs. **The Good**This is a great program for writers and everybody else who writes a lot. Powerful and customizable, and more accessible than other commercial alternatives. **The Bad**The words 'learning curve' fit Mellel like a glove. This is not the kind of program you jump in and start using. And reading the over three hundred page long documentation will take you some time. But after that, you have the power to write the way you want to. **The Truth**This program is not for everyone. That having been said, if you feel like Mellel might be for you, go ahead and download it, chances are, it will be all you expect and more. Here are some screenshots, click to enlarge: