

# QUATTRO PRO 9 vs. EXCEL 2000 vs. LOTUS 123 VERSION 9 vs. STAR OFFICE SPREADSHEET 9

Preface: I should point out that I do not depend upon the use of spreadsheets for my bread and butter. I teach the basic use of spreadsheets in some of my math classes, and use them to organize data and to do fairly simple operations. I have personal limited uses for spreadsheets. Because the address book in WP 7 was notoriously unstable, I stored my address information in Quattro Pro, which could then be easily exported as a data base and imported into pretty much any address book, including Organizer, Corel's Address Book in Corel Central, Outlook and Sidekick.

When comparing the presentation software of the various suites, I left out Lotus Freelance Graphics, as Lotus is no longer producing this suite. However, Lotus 123 has long be held up as the mother of all spreadsheets and often as the standard; so I had to include their final version in this comparison.

I read some superficial reviews on the various suites. Some commented how Lotus 123 was the standard; however, I continued to find it inferior in many ways. The only reason I can see someone using Lotus 123 is that is the spreadsheet that they cut their teeth on. Then, another reviewer mentioned how Excel 2000 showed few improvements over Excel '97; however, there were several things which in Excel '97 were like pulling teeth to do, which were quite easy to do in Excel 2000. It makes me wonder if these people spend more than an hour with the program before reviewing it or whether they have actually used the program for any reason.

Prior prejudices. As is well-known, I do have a preference for that which is not Microsoft. I was expecting Lotus 123 to be the master; I figured that Star Office Spreadsheets, being built from the ground up, to be innovative and intelligent; and I expected Quattro Pro to be the best. I did not expect these programs to be as different from one another as they were, nor did I expect to find the great deficiencies that I did in Lotus 123 and in Star Office.

We will be comparing these programs in the following areas: [Compatibility with Other Suite Components](#), [Compatibility with Other Suites](#), [Customizability](#), [Formatting](#), [Formulas](#), [Menu](#), [Sheets](#), [Stability](#).

Compatibility with Other Suite Components					
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Copying and pasting of cell contents from a table in another document or from a document	Colors, fill, fonts, font features and formulas are not preserved. Numbers and text are. Some text alignment retained.	Various fonts retained; exponents retained. Formulas are not retained but the numbers and text are. €€	This is a <b>big</b> improvement for Excel since Excel '97.	Colors, fill, fonts, font features justification and formulas are all lost. Only numbers and text are retained.	Fonts, fill, font effects, some justification, and fill colors are retained. I could not enter in formulas into Star Writer 5.1 (although it is obviously made to handle that). €€
Compatibility with Other Suites					
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Formulas	A spreadsheet could be created in QP 9, saved as an Excel file, and then opened in Excel, formulas in tact.	Although a spreadsheet could not be saved in QP format, it could be opened by QP with the formulas in tact.			
Grading program	I exported the data in the grading program which I use, and imported it into Quattro Pro. It opened just as you would expect it to.	When I opened the exported data from the grading program by Excel '97, <i>all</i> of the data was placed into cell A-1, a rather unique approach to data management.	I did have to remove the quotation marks around the data in QP.		
Lotus 123	QP would not open a simple Lotus 123 worksheet. It had to be saved as a 123 previous version.				
Quattro Pro	QP 9 files cannot be opened by earlier versions of QP unless saved in an earlier version's format. To open a QP file in another program, a QP 9 worksheet had to be saved in another format.	Could not open a simple QP 9 file.	QP had the greatest number of alternate formats in which a document could be saved.	Could not open a simple QP 9 file.	Could not open a simple QP 9 file.
Save as...	A QP worksheet could be saved as a QP DOS through version 9; as a paradox file; as Excel 5, 7 or '97; Lotus versions 1-5; 3 types of databases, 2 types of texts, CSV, DIF, STLK and HTML.			Lotus could save a worksheet as a CSV, as a database file, Excel (three versions; up to '97), as a Paradox file and as text.	
Customizability					
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Keyboard	This is a big improvement over Quattro Pro 8; I did not want to learn new shortcuts for a program which I used only occasionally. I was able to take my WordPerfect shortcuts and add them to QP.		The assigning of keystrokes to various functions was more convoluted in QP than was necessary.	Not possible.	
Location of Files	Go to Tools -> Settings -> File options. Like the other Corel applications, browsing puts you into explorer and you can do whatever file management you want to do, including created new folders. €€	You must know the entire path for your default folder for Excel. You don't get to create a folder or browse. Go to Tools -> Options -> General -> Default file location.	Maybe I am the only person who does this, but I have a lot of different files, and I do not keep my spreadsheets with my other files.	File -> User Setup -> 123 preferences -> File locations. You cannot create a folder while doing this; the folder must already be there. €	Default file was moderately convoluted to locate, but relatively easy to change once I found where it was. Tools -> Options -> General -> Paths -> Work Folder. New folders could be created. €

Menu, customization	The customization was easy enough to figure out; but decidedly different from WP. €	Once you have mastered modifying or adding a toolbar or menu in one program in MS Office, you can do it in any program. €	None of these programs had a menu which was easy to customize. MS was the most consistent and, once mastered, easy to do in the other MS applications.	I saw no way to change or modify the menu.	Although you could customize the menu or make up a new menu, it was still difficult to make sense out of it. Even worse is that the organization of the features. <i>Close all documents</i> was under one heading; <i>Close document</i> was under another. <i>Open file</i> was found with the former, not the latter.
Menu, choices	4 menu options (QP 7, QP 8/9, Lotus 123, and Excel). Tools -> Settings -> Compatibility -> Menu bar. €	Only one menu to choose from. Keep in mind that suite wide, there are options as to how the menu will open and what is displayed (everything vs. recently used options). €	In QP, one would expect the selection of Menus to be found under customization of Menus. With MS, when you rule, there is no need to offer options.	Choice of present menu or classic menu. It was not easy to find and it pretty much looked and behaved like the old DOS version of a menu (you don't want it, trust me).	There appeared to be one menu only. It could be changed and a new menu designed.
Preferences	This should be redesigned so that preferences and customization are grouped together, as in WP.	Although I don't see a lot of reason to have both <i>options</i> and <i>customization</i> , this is how it is done in all MS's applications.	In this way, Corel does feel more like a group of separate, almost independent applications.	Easy to set up various preferences from the file menu, although they were limited in scope.	Configuration and Options are more acceptable in Star Office as the changes which are made in <i>options</i> are made suite-wide and those which are made in <i>configuration</i> apply only to that program.
Property Bar				A toolbar can be set to pop up in any particular environment.	
Status Bar	Although this could function as a status bar, toolbar buttons could be added.			Calling the bottom bar a status bar is probably a misnomer. Pretty much all the formatting choices are found at the bottom of the screen. The various options were easy to figure out, even for a first-timer.	
Toolbar	Although not the same as WP, it was similar enough and very intuitive.	Customizing toolbar is exactly the same in Excel as it is in Word. It is easy to do.		Toolbar is easy to modify.	
Toolbar, modifying button	Very quick and easy and intuitive. A right click to change the toolbar, a right click then on the button to customize (choose properties), and then a right click to copy or paste the image on the button.	Very quick and easy to copy and paste icon from one button to another.	Quattro Pro did not have clear directions as to how to do this. I generally try right clicks to do what I need to do, but not everyone would think of doing that.	Although I could choose a button, modify it and save it under another name, I did not know how to use that icon.	
Toolbar placement	Toolbar can be placed top, bottom, either side, or as a floating palette.	Toolbar can be floated or it can be placed at the top of the screen. Toolbars can be placed next to one another or on top of one another.		Toolbar is at the top of the screen only.	
Toolbar view		Several rows of toolbars can be shown at any given time.		Only one row of toolbar buttons possible.	

#### Formatting

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Changing of font in the middle of a cell	Just click on <i>font box</i> . €	Just click on <i>font box</i> . €		Can't be done. All of the font choices (in fact, the menu and toolbars are <i>turned off</i> while you are typing in a cell).	Changing fonts, and some attributes are easy. €
Exponents or superscripts	The buttons for these are on the toolbar. €€	I have not been able to figure out how to do this strictly in Excel. €	In Excel, if you need exponents or superscripts, you simply do it in Word, then cut and paste (this could not be done with Office '97).	I could not figure out how to do this in Lotus 123.	There is an equation editor which is not so easy to figure out.
Font from drop down menu		Drop down menu shows the name of the font in that particular font.		You don't really know what the font will look like until you choose it and type.	
Font from menu		Font from menu can be adjusted and viewed. All the options are easy to choose and view.		Even from the menu, you do not know what the font will look like. Even though the options are easy to choose, you don't know what it will look like until after the fact.	

Formulas					
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Copying a formula	Grab the lower right-hand corner of the cell you want to copy and drag it down. Cell references will be automatically changed.	Ditto.	In QP, Excel, and Star Office, there is a thin cross which indicates that you have placed your mouse correctly.	Ditto.	Ditto.
Entering simple formulas	Quite simple; type an <i>equal sign</i> and then the formula (like A1+B3).	Ditto.	The spreadsheets act identically here.	Ditto.	Ditto.
Entering a formula by typing which takes in a series of cells	@SUM(A1..A5) or =SUM(A1:A10)	=SUM(A1:A10)	If you typed this into 123 incorrectly, it was about impossible to get out of the cell. Note, that if you are used to Excel or 123, QP is easy to adjust to.	@Sum(A1..A10)	=SUM(A1:A10)
Entering a formula which takes in a series of cells	In QP, you could type in an equal sign, click on the function button, and then choose the cells to apply the function to. However, if you clicked on the function button first, the process is longer and can confuse the first-time user.	Click on equal sign, then choose down arrow next to the name of a function (it will be the last function you used), and then choose a function. If it is not on the drop down list, then choose <i>more functions</i> . Once the function is chosen, then, when the number box appears, you click the small box on the right (the dialogue box will compress), choose the cell, click that box again, and click <i>ok</i> .	QP, Excel, and Star Office act almost identically here. On Excel, a <i>function</i> button can be added to any toolbar (why isn't it there by default?). When you type in an equal sign, the function choice is apparent in QP and Excel. 123 was probably the easiest from which to choose a function and apply it to a group of cells.	Click on function sign, choose the function, then choose the cell(s) that you want to apply the function to using the mouse; then hit return.	Click <i>Function auto pilot</i> ; then choose a function; click <i>next</i> ; type in the number or click on the box on the right; choose the cell(s); click that box again; click <i>ok</i> .
Entering formula shortcuts	Type an equal sign, click on function button (@), choose function, then choose cells with mouse and click green check mark.	Type an equal sign, type in function and parenthesis, then choose the cells with mouse.		Couldn't figure out how to do this.	
Formulas	About 450.	234.	Most of you will use fewer than 10 different functions.	About 340.	257.
Menu					
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Organization					
Sheets					
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Adding sheets	Insert -> sheet (as if you would need to)	Insert -> worksheet		Create -> sheet	
Default	Way too many.	Three sheets.		One sheet.	
Stability					
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Stability	<p>I have heard so many stories here. I have a friend who was a long-time proponent of Corel products who is changing all of his spreadsheets into Excel because of the lack of stability in QP. He claimed to lose 2 hours of work one time (with all the backup options, I don't know how any experienced user could do that). On the same computer, last year, QP 9 was very unstable for me, opening a half dozen or so worksheets before needing to be closed and fired up again to function. This year, same computer, ghosted, and QP added, and now it is the bastion of stability (on the same computer, WP 9 is now acting hinky). On my home computer, the toolbars for QP 9 have disappeared and I cannot seem to recover them.</p>	<p>I have always known Excel to be stable.</p>	<p>It is the MS operating system. Since the code is not given to outsiders, it is difficult to make a complex program stable on it.</p>	<p>I haven't had enough experience with Lotus to say.</p>	<p>Star Office regularly quit on me when opening and working on a text document. I had to erase and reinstall three times.</p>
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