



FrameMaker vs. Word

Analysis

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FrameMaker vs. Word

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Introduction

Technical writers have to produce many different kinds of documents (letters, specifications, data sheets, white papers, reference manuals, installation guides, getting started guides, user guides, etc.) in many different kinds of formats (printed, HTML, online help, electronic publishing, etc.). We must often publish the same text in several formats. Is there a “one tool–one source” solution available? Is it possible to write once and publish many times? What’s the best tool — Word or FrameMaker?

Over the last decade, Microsoft Word has evolved into a powerful, intuitive writing tool that deserves its hold on the marketplace. Word 97 is by far and away the best version of this word processor to date, and Word 2000 will more than likely improve upon its predecessor. FrameMaker has also carved a significant niche in the technical documentation world with its advanced automation features, multi-platform availability, and DTP approach to complex documentation. And at its current level (5.5.6), it offers advanced integration with Adobe Acrobat, support for export to XML, and improved Word 97 filters.

I don’t intend to answer the question of which is better, FrameMaker or Word. People buy and use both FrameMaker and Word — many writers have both installed on their computers — so there is apparently some appropriate use for each of these tools. They both have strength and weaknesses depending on the specific task you wish to perform.

What I hope to provide in this document are guidelines for deciding which to use for a particular task. Specifically, I will:

- List and explain the differences between Word and FrameMaker
- Point out how using FrameMaker will help us perform tasks related to documenting our products
- Describe the plan for FrameMaker implementation and conversion

Note • Much of the information in this document compares the features of Word 97 with FrameMaker 5.5.6. Word 2000 will probably be an improvement over Word 97 in a lot of areas, but I couldn’t include it in the comparison because I don’t have a copy.

Conclusion

Please keep in mind that this is one person's opinion, based on my own personal experiences and the research that I have gathered elsewhere, and should not be regarded as the only valid opinion on the subject.

About Word

First of all, let me say that I think MS Word is a great product. We all use it to one extent or another in our daily activities, and its functionality, flexibility, and stability have improved significantly with every new version. The following are some reasons why I think Word is such a good product:

- It is a generic product capable of an extraordinary level of specialization and customization. There are few products that are more programmable and customizable (if you know how) on the earth.
- Everyone has it on their desktops. Therefore, sharing information with other people in the organization is easy. If you distribute doc in PDF format, this doesn't apply as much anymore (especially if people can cut and paste directly from a PDF).
- Some people like it as a single-source solution for both hard copy and online help because it integrates well with single-source solution products such as RoboHelp and Doc-To-help. If your philosophy is that printed documentation and online help are similar and should work hand-in-hand, then this integration is a good thing. If you believe that printed documentation and online help are fundamentally different, then you probably don't care as much about this integration.
- The jump between Word 6.0 and Word 97 was significant in terms of how stable Word became in handling long, complex documents. Although Word 97 isn't perfect (neither is FrameMaker), it has made the issue of stability while working with long documents less of a problem.
- Word is a Microsoft product. This can be a good or bad thing depending on your viewpoint, but one thing it does mean is that Word will integrate well with Windows 98, Windows 2000, and Windows NT. As long as Windows is your OS, you can be assured that Word will take advantage of the latest innovations related to every new version of your OS.

However, having said that, you have to consider two things:

- **What is Word intended to do?** Word is a word processor, plain and simple. It's arguably the best one available in the market today, but that doesn't change the fact that it is a word processor. Therefore, Word is intended to allow users to write letters, memos, faxes, short technical publications, design documents, articles, and many other types of miscellaneous documentation. And it does this very, very well.
- **What do you need to do?** Is your product documentation extensive? Are manuals broken out into several volumes, or at least 150 pages in length?. To work with such long documents, you need an authoring tool that 1) can handle these types of documents without crashing, 2) allows you to quickly perform cross-document TOCs, indexes, and lists, 3) provides you with the built-in functionality to smoothly

manage related documents as an integrated manual. In addition, you need a tool that can take you where we want to go (online documentation) in the best manner possible.

So, does Word fit our needs? Because of Word's flexibility and ever-growing list of features, I think the answer to this question is "yes, it can." Obviously, it has performed adequately in the past, and if we stick with it, I think it will continue to in the future. It is one of Microsoft's premier products, and shows no sign of slowing down.

However, I think the better question to ask is: Is Word the *best* choice to fit our needs? My answer to this question is "no."

About FrameMaker

When it comes to producing long, complex, business-critical documents for print, online, CD-ROM, and Web applications, I think our requirements go "beyond word processing." While MS Word is excellent for everyday business applications and short documents, FrameMaker software has been designed for and offers superior benefits for producing long documents.

- The ability to manage multiple documents within the same manual is superior to what Word has to offer. The ability to work with, maintain, and generate lists (TOC, index, etc) from all the sections within a manual is an integral part of what FrameMaker is all about.
- FrameMaker's implementation of master pages (templates) makes it easy to change page layouts within a document or across multiple documents simultaneously.
- FrameMaker maintains organization within documents by automatically generating and maintaining cross-references, tables of contents, and indexes—as well as complete lists of figures and tables for long documents. Other powerful features include automatically number headings, illustrations, tables, figures, footnotes, and more.
- Built-in hypertext authoring features enable you to create reliable hypertext links in a FrameMaker document. The hypertext links update as the document changes and automatically transfer to online formats such as XML, HTML, and PDF. When saving FrameMaker documents to HTML and XML, you can map FrameMaker templates to cascading style sheets for the latest in HTML typographic and page layout control. Images and graphics are automatically converted to GIF, JPEG, or PNG, and lengthy documents can be broken up into smaller, separate sets of linked HTML files for faster online delivery.
- In terms of document sharing, Adobe Acrobat allows us to distribute our manuals to anyone in the company quickly and easily, and that documentation will appear in the manner it was intended. In the latest version of Acrobat, users of our PDF documents have a variety of annotation tools they can use to edit our doc, which would be great when distributing our doc to developers and product authorities for review. And because both Acrobat and FrameMaker are Adobe products, we can be assured that they will continue to have a high level of integration.

- Also consider the control we have over using the current and future versions of Word. If our company decides that everyone will move to using Word 2000, does that mean we have to upgrade as well? What affect will that have on the way we write, edit, and produce our doc? To what extent will we have to test and fix our template and doc so that it works well in Word 2000? If we were to use FrameMaker, we could gain more control over the version of the authoring tool we use because the decision to upgrade would be ours, not the IS department's.

Please refer to the [Summary of FrameMaker Benefits](#) section for more detailed information about the benefits of using FrameMaker.

The Bottom Line

While Word is a good, well-established product, I believe that FrameMaker is the better tool to simplify our long document process. It will save us money and time, increase our productivity, and, ultimately, have a positive effect on our bottom line.

FrameMaker vs. Word: What's Different?

In the following sections, I describe some of the main differences in functionality between Word and FrameMaker (as I see it), and how those differences can help or hurt us in the documentation tasks we perform. Specifically, these sections include the following information:

- *Managing Your Documents*. Compares how each product manages multiple documents within a manual.
- *Exporting to Different Formats*. Describes the capabilities of each product to produce output as PDF, HTML, XML, and online help.
- *Controlling Page Layout*. Describes how each product enables you to control and manage the layout and structure of your documents.
- *Printing*. Describes the printing capabilities of each product.
- *Using Cross References*. Describes how each product handles the use of cross references within a document.
- *Content Correction*. Lists features related to spell checking, grammar checking, and auto formatting.
- *Paragraph Styles and Character Tags*. Describes some issues related to how styles and tags are used within each product.
- *Tables*. Lists some miscellaneous issues concerning tables.
- *GUI - Ease of Use*. Describes some general issues related to the GUI of each product.
- *Graphics*. Includes a few comments regarding the use of graphics.
- *Macros*. Discusses the macro capabilities of each product.
- *Summary of FrameMaker Benefits*.

Managing Your Documents

How Word and FrameMaker help us to manage and update manuals made up of multiple documents is especially important because of the size and complexity of our documentation. Without the ability to easily automate the tasks behind managing our manuals, the time we spend working on background production tasks (such as generating TOCs and indexes, fixing pagination, and printing) takes away from the time we should spend writing.

The section covers some of the major issues concerning how each product approaches these documentation management tasks.

- **Word's Master Document feature**—Word's "way of thinking" is focussed on individual documents. If you want to create a book, that is, a document made up of a number of "chapters," you must either manage them individually or use Word's Master Document feature. Unfortunately, this feature is cumbersome to implement and use, and doesn't work consistently.
- **FrameMaker's Book File feature**—FrameMaker uses a "book file" to tie all of the files in a book together so you can work with them as a unit.

A book file provides quick access to all files contained in the book and ensures correct numbering of pages, paragraphs, and chapters, as well as updated cross-references. It also allows you to automatically create a table of contents, an index, and various other generated lists (such as lists of figures, tables, or imported graphics).

Word vs. FrameMaker comparison—The following table compares document management features in Word and FrameMaker:

Task	Word	FrameMaker
Chapter Numbering	Manually updated —In Word, the chapter number is defined manually—"hard coded". If you add a new chapter to a book or change the sequence of the chapters, you must manually readjust all the chapter numbers and RD fields yourself.	Automatically updated —If you add a new chapter to the book or change the sequence of the chapters, FrameMaker readjusts all the chapter numbers and page numbers automatically—using the Generate/Update feature of the Book File.

Task	Word	FrameMaker
<p>Page Numbering</p>	<p>Manually defined—If you want to continue page numbering across chapters (say Chapter 4's last page is 54 and you want Chapter 5 to start on page 55), then you have to manually set the starting page numbers for each chapter yourself. Since this method is tedious and error-prone (you'll have to redo this every time you print, including draft copies), many writers prefer to use the chapter number-page number method (Chapter 4's pages are numbered 4-1 to 4-whatever, Chapter 5's are numbered 5-1 to 5-whatever, and so on). This is pretty easy to do (but not automatic).</p> <p>Starting page side: manually defined—If you want each chapter to begin on a right page (as many technical manuals do), then you're on your own. You'll have to manually add the missing pages to flesh out each chapter to an even number of pages.</p>	<p>Automatically defined—If you want to continue page numbering across chapters (say Chapter 4's last page is 54 and you want Chapter 5 to start on page 55), then you have to set up each file and define its page numbering as "continue". You can "restart at 1", for example, if you want multiple series of page numbers in the book — the preface and TOC in Roman numerals, and the book itself to start at 1 (Arabic) and go on from there. FrameMaker then handles this for you automatically.</p> <p>Starting page side: automatically defined—If you want each chapter to begin on a right page, check an option in a dialog box. FrameMaker adds the missing pages automatically, and takes care of the page numbering for you.</p>
<p>Creating a Cross-Document TOC or Index</p>	<p>RD fields manually defined in TOC and Index files—If you want a TOC to refer to more than one file, you must add hidden RD fields to the TOC file, in the correct order.</p> <p>Automatic hypertext links—not available.</p>	<p>TOC & Index defined in book file and automatically generated—You can easily generate an accurate cross-document index and TOC for a book file.</p> <p>Automatic hypertext links—Entries within a TOC and index are <i>live hypertext links</i> in the document. If you click on it, FrameMaker takes you to the source of the TOC or index entry. This feature is very useful for debugging, especially for index entries that don't have page numbers, where Word offers no help in locating the source.</p> <p>Additionally, these hypertext entries are automatically converted to <i>active links within a PDF</i>.</p>

Task	Word	FrameMaker
Creating a Cross-Manual TOC and Index	Theoretically, you can use Word's Master Document Feature to have a master document that includes other master documents within its RD fields. I haven't tried to do this so I don't know if it works.	You can also generate a multi-manual/volume index and TOC using FrameMaker's book feature. For example, say you want to create one index for all the QicClaim/2 volumes. FrameMaker can generate index entries that look might look something like this: Enrollee Maintenance v1 5, 101, 167 v4 45, 108, 204-209 v7 197, 208
Printing	Manual printing of each chapter —In Word, you have to print every chapter in a manual separately. When creating online doc from your source files, this means creating a separate PDF for each chapter and then using Acrobat to merge those PDFs into a single PDF.	Automatic printing of entire book into either one large file, or separate files —A book file enables you to choose to automatically print all the documents within a manual to either: ■ a printer Or ■ a single postscript file Or ■ individual postscript or PDF files Or ■ a single PDF of the entire manual When printing, FrameMaker's files are stable, the cross-references are there to stay, and there are no surprises with page numbering.
Updating Document Formats	Can update styles only, not page layouts —You can update the styles within multiple files simultaneously, but you cannot do the same for page layouts. For example, to change the header and footer for a manual, you must manually change the header and footer in each file within that manual.	Can automatically update the page layouts and styles of all files in a book —A book file enables you to update the paragraph tags, character tags, and page layouts for all the files within a manual simultaneously

Task	Word	FrameMaker
Opening, Closing, and Saving	Individual —Word enables you to close or save all the files that you have open. Also, you must open up each file individually.	All at once —A book file enables you to open, close, or save all the files within a manual simultaneously.
Generating Lists	Not supported.	A book enables you to generate lists of figures, tables, paragraphs, markers, and references that appear within manual.

Exporting to Different Formats

With the increasing need to produce documentation for a number of formats other than hard copy (e.g., PDF, HTML, XML, Online Help), an authoring tool must offer an easy way for us to generate usable doc in those formats. Even if we don't adopt the single-source philosophy, the ability to create reliable postscript and PDF output from one source will still be important.

Note • Because of the flexibility of the FrameMaker architecture, Adobe can easily add support for new format standards to meet ongoing customer needs.

PDF

Because of our move to present and distribute our documentation in an online format using Acrobat PDFs, the ability of an authoring tool to automatically produce reliable and feature-rich PDFs has become an important issue.

- **Microsoft Word**—Without the PDFMaker add-on (it's free), Word doesn't know anything useful about Acrobat or PDF.
- **FrameMaker**—Because FrameMaker and Acrobat are both Adobe products, the level of integration between the two is exceptional. Navigation features, such as bookmarks, hypertext links, and article threads, are automatically generated, so you can create high-quality online documents with no post-processing.
- **Feature comparison**—The following table compares Word and FrameMaker's support for PDF features:

PDF Features	Word	FrameMaker
Can you convert a source file to PDF?	Yes	Yes
Are cross-reference links in a source document converted as hypertext links?	No ¹	Yes
Are web links in a source document converted as hypertext links?	No ¹	Yes
Are TOC entries in a source document converted as hypertext links?	No ²	Yes
Are index entries in a source document converted as hypertext links?	No	Yes
Are PDF bookmarks automatically inserted?	No ¹	Yes
Can you convert an entire manual to PDF in one click?	No	Yes

¹Yes, if you have PDFMaker for Word

²Yes, if you have PDFMaker for Word, but only the page numbers in a TOC entry are linked

- **PDF creation *much* faster with FrameMaker**—Additionally, by using FrameMaker, we no longer would have to create a PDF for each section within a Word manual, merge those PDFs, and then add bookmarks. Creating a PDF version of a manual would be a simple one- or two-step process that could be done in *minutes*, rather than *hours*.

HTML

Both Word and FrameMaker have an HTML conversion capability built in, although the HTML conversion features in FrameMaker are more robust (see the [Creating HTML Files in FrameMaker](#) section.). However, third-party products such as InfoAccess's HTML Transit (\$495) and Quadralay's WebWorks (\$895) make the conversion to HTML very easy in both cases.

If we decide to produce HTML versions of our documentation using these third party tools, we will be able to convert doc to HTML fairly easily for either application. If we don't want to purchase one of these tools, FrameMaker currently is the better choice.

Creating HTML Files in FrameMaker

Creating HTML files is *built into* FrameMaker 5.5.6. You use a dialog box to adjust the mapping of paragraph, character, and cross-reference formats to HTML tags and formats. FrameMaker supports cascading stylesheets to provide the latest in HTML typographic control.

- **Ease of conversion**—Documents that are formatted consistently usually convert easily to HTML. To minimize cleanup when you save documents as HTML, create the documents using the supplied FrameMaker templates. The formats in these templates map easily to HTML equivalents.
- **Graphics**—Graphics in anchored frames in the main text flow are automatically converted to image maps in GIF format, though you can choose another file format, such as JPEG or PNG, for all graphics.
- **URL links**—Before saving as HTML, you can add links to URLs.
- **How a document is converted**—The fastest and easiest way to convert a FrameMaker document or book to HTML format is to use the **File ▶ Save As** command and choose the HTML option. FrameMaker then converts only the contents of the main text flow. All graphics you want to convert must be in anchored frames in the flow.
- **Hypertext links in TOC and index**—When FrameMaker converts a document to HTML, cross-references and hypertext links in the table of contents and indexes are automatically converted to the appropriate HTML formats.
- **Fine tuning**—After the initial conversion, you can fine-tune the paragraph, character, and cross-reference mappings of formats to HTML elements. To do this, you edit the mappings in tables on the HTML reference page or BookHTML reference page. For example, you might want to start new a web page when a major heading is found. This enables FrameMaker to split long documents into several HTML files.

- **Special functions**—You can use conversion macros to perform special functions. For example, you can easily insert code that defines a Java applet.

XML

XML stands for Extensible Markup Language. Industry experts have referred to it as “SGML Lite” or “HTML done right”. The reason is that like HTML, XML is based on SGML. Unlike HTML, however, it isn’t really a markup language but instead a simplification of SGML that creates an architecture for creating custom markup languages.

XML is going to pop up more and more as its standards are established by the W3C (e.g., IE, Navigator, and JavaHelp already support and use it), and we might need to have the flexibility within our authoring tool to take advantage of it. Currently, FrameMaker supports export to XML (as well as SGML), whereas Word does not. This will probably change when the next version of Word is released.

Online Help

With the need for good online help, the ability to quickly and easily convert our documentation to formats such as HTML Help, JavaHelp, WinHelp, or WebHelp becomes more and more important.

- **Word and Online Help**—There are several tools for generating online help from Word source documents. Products such as Doc-To-Help (\$799) and RoboHelp (\$895) allow you to generate the aforementioned types of help while integrating Word into their interface. In theory, this integration provides fairly good synergy between the products. Using one of these tools, you can work with Word’s familiar GUI and features to edit your help topics, format your help project, and generate the desired online help.
- **FrameMaker and Online Help**—Quadralay’s WebWorks (\$895) accepts FrameMaker source documents as input and converts those documents to the desired online help format. Using the same setup work that you’ve already done for FrameMaker print jobs, you can create customized and automated output for HTML Help, JavaHelp, WinHelp, and Quadralay’s WebWorks® Help (similar to Blue Sky’s WebHelp).

Controlling Page Layout

Use of Frames

- **FrameMaker**—FrameMaker lays out a page based on frames: text frames, graphic frames, etc.
 - Each body page in a document has an associated master page (usually, these are First, Right and Left), and the text flows automatically from one frame to another on consecutive body pages.
 - A master page can also hold standard background text and graphics for body pages (e.g., headers, footers, standard icons, etc.).

- FrameMaker's implementation of master pages make it easy to change page layouts within a document or across multiple documents simultaneously.

- **Word**—Word does not use frames within its documents.

Use of Templates

- **Word**—In Word, when you attach a document to a template, most but not all of the template's properties are imported into the document. For example, the page layout and header and footer formats are not imported. You have no way of choosing which properties to import —Word decides for you.
- **FrameMaker**—In FrameMaker, there's nothing special about a template — it's just another document, and there is no record of the template that a document was last attached to. FrameMaker's "Smart Document" architecture keeps content and format separate, allowing you to change the layout of an entire document or collection of documents with a single mouse-click. You can automatically change the format of a document at very specific levels, all the way down to paragraphs, tables, characters, and color definitions, simply by applying new templates. For example, you can change the paragraph formats from centered text to left-aligned across thousands of pages simply by choosing a new template. The results are global and instantaneous, with no additional or manual adjustments required.

Run-in Headers and Side Heads

- **Run-in headers**—FrameMaker allows you to create run-in headers. Word does not. A run-in header is a header paragraph that prints on the same line as the next paragraph. This feature is useful when you want to reference the run-in header, but don't want to set it off in a printed paragraph of its own. Word has its own way of doing this, though it doesn't have run-in headers.
- **Side heads**—FrameMaker handles side heads easily. This can be done in Word, but it's awkward compared to FrameMaker's implementation.

Conditional Text

FrameMaker has conditional text, with as many conditions as you can handle. This means you can maintain multiple versions of the same document within the same file. With support for conditional text and graphics, you can automatically publish multiple versions of a single document with each one featuring unique content. For example, the online version of a document may have different graphics in different formats than those in the print version, or you may want to distribute different version of a document to internal and external customers.

Crop and Registration Marks

FrameMaker generates crop marks and registration marks automatically. This makes it easy for printers to create both 8.5 X 11 and 7 X 9 versions of your documents. In Word, you have to draw them yourself, as part of the header, and worse: you have to position them on the page very carefully (differently for every page size).

Rotated Pages

You can create and print a rotated page with standard headers, (i.e., the text in landscape mode and the headers and footers in portrait mode). Word can't do this.

Graphics Positioning

FrameMaker gives you many more options regarding positioning a graphic on a page, anchoring it to text, and running text around it. Word is not as reliable or consistent when positioning graphics.

Pagination

- **FrameMaker**—Because index entries, cross-references and other markers do not take up any space within the text, and since in FrameMaker, “you are always in page layout mode”, pagination is very clear and defined -- what you see is what you get.
- **Word**—In Word, if you are in Normal mode with hidden text turned on (to see the index entries), you have NO IDEA what page you are on. I think that if you were to update cross references, TOCs, or indexes at that point, they would all be wrong.

Printing

Word

You have to print every chapter in a manual separately.

FrameMaker

- You can't print a discontinuous range of pages (other than odd or even). In Word, you can select a range of pages such as 1,3,6-8,11-12,14.
- You can print all the documents within a manual to a printer, single postscript, or PDF file simultaneously. When printing, FrameMaker's files are stable, the cross-references are there to stay, and there are no surprises with page numbering.
- You can print a rotated page with standard headers, i.e., the text in landscape mode and the headers and footers in portrait mode. Word can't do this.
- You can easily print lists of just about anything in your document.

Using Cross References

Cross referencing is *far superior* in FrameMaker. In FrameMaker, cross references are built in.

FrameMaker

- **Automatic hypertext links**—In HTML and PDF documents, cross-references automatically become hypertext links.

- **Cross-referencing another document**—In FrameMaker, it is very easy to reference something in another document — just select it from a menu.
- **Automatic cross-reference checking**—A very important feature is that FrameMaker tells you when a reference goes bad, whether it's a cross-reference or a graphic file imported by reference. You will never unknowingly print a document with error messages instead of text.
- **Custom cross-reference formats**—You can set up custom cross-reference formats. You can reference any paragraph, and the result of the reference can be any combination of the paragraph's text and its properties, and the page number. The appearance of a cross-reference is dependent upon which pre-defined "format" you select from a list.

Examples:

- See [Using Cross References](#)
- See [Using Cross References](#) on page -15
- See [page 15](#)

For chapter cross-references, the chapter number is automatically updated whenever the chapter number changes:

- See Chapter 10, [DB2 Syntax](#)

Whatever you define in the cross-reference Format will appear in your cross-reference. For example, you can have FrameMaker insert quote marks and the words 'on page' in a cross-reference of the format, such as:

See "[Cross-reference](#)" on page 10.

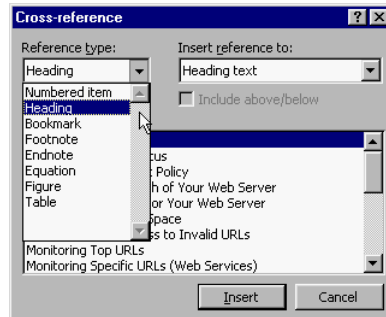
You can also have cross-references act as variables to tie together manual titles and headings to headers and footers.

- **Cross-reference markers**—In FrameMaker, there are two types of cross-references: those that point to paragraph text—such as headings and chapter titles—and those that point to an individual word or phrase in a paragraph. The latter are called "spot" cross-references, and use "cross-reference markers" that you manually insert. For example, you'd use a spot cross-reference to refer to a definition in a paragraph of text.

Word

- **What is a heading in Word?**—In Word, you can cross-reference either a "Heading" or a manually-inserted "bookmark". However, Word only considers paragraphs with the style name of Heading 1, Heading 2, etc. to be "headings". If your headings use

ANY other naming convention—such as h1 Heading1, or Head1—these paragraphs will not show up in the list of Headings in the cross-references dialog box.



- **Necessity of using bookmarks**—Because of Word's strange definition of “what is a heading”, you will probably have to create bookmarks to even have your headings show up on the cross-reference dialog box.

Therefore, to insert a cross reference in Word (something like: see “References” on page 4), you have to mark off the referenced text and define it as a bookmark. Then, that bookmark will appear in the cross-reference dialog box, and you can then insert a reference to that bookmark somewhere else in the document.

This two-step method has the advantage that the reference can be to any text, anywhere in the document, even to a few words in the middle of a paragraph. It has the disadvantage that the bookmarks are unstable and the references are easily corrupted.

- **Big problem with bookmarks**—In Word, you can choose to either view or not view bookmarks. When you turn bookmarks on, you will see that a bookmark is represented as straight brackets before and after the bookmark text [...], as shown here:



The HUGE problem here is that you usually have bookmarks turned off. If you have a heading marked as a bookmark, and you want to add some text or a page break symbol before the heading, you usually just put your cursor before the first letter in

the line and insert the page break or new text. With bookmarks turned off, the inserted text or symbol mistakenly gets inserted after the first bracket ([]) but before the first word in the heading, as shown here:



Now, the bookmarked text consists of both text and a manual page break. When a cross reference of this bookmark is updated after this page break has become “part of” the bookmark, the cross reference will also *contain a page break* -- a VERY confusing situation unless you are specifically looking for it. This problem can be avoided, but it is VERY tedious to fix and have to remember.

To make a long story short, if any text is mistakenly added to a bookmark you forgot about (or one that you couldn't see because bookmarks were turned off), the cross reference to it will then include that text.

- **Cross-reference integrity problems**—Another problem is that Word just doesn't care about a document's integrity (the validity of its references, for example). If Word can't resolve a reference, it substitutes an error message something like “**Error. Reference cannot be found**” and continues printing. If the reference is to another document, then a successful resolution depends on what the current directory is (this is not necessarily the current document's directory). I once printed a whole book with that error message in place of what had been, until only a few minutes before I created the file that I sent to the service bureau, a perfectly valid reference.

Content Correction

- **FrameMaker**—FrameMaker allows personal, document, and site dictionaries. All of these are editable. There is no on-the-fly Spell checking or grammar checker, as there is in Word.
- **Word**—Only Word has the convenient Autotext feature. If I had written this document in Word, I would have been able to type “FM” and Word would have expanded the “FM” to “FrameMaker” when I pressed F3. Or even better, I could have defined “FrameMaker” as the correct spelling of “FM” and Word would have made the substitution automatically.

Paragraph Styles and Character Tags

Both Word and FrameMaker use paragraph and character styles to define the formatting of text.

A character tag is like a paragraph tag, except that it can be applied to text within a paragraph. So, for example, you can have a character tag named “code” that you can use to format a few words of program code as Courier (like this: a few words of program code), while leaving the rest of the paragraph as is.

Word

- **Hierarchical styles**—In Word, you can define styles so that changes to Heading 1, for example, will ripple through all lower-level headings. FrameMaker's tags aren't hierarchical, so if you want to change a document's font, you have to individually change the font of each and every paragraph tag.
- **Shortcuts for applying styles from a list**—The list selection mechanism for selecting a paragraph format in FrameMaker from the list is different from Word. In Word, when you pull down the Styles drop down list and type in the first letter of a style, the list will “jump” to the styles that begin with that letter. You can then click on the style you wish to apply.

FrameMaker

- **Shortcuts for applying tags from a list**—To choose a tag you wish to apply from FrameMaker, you can simply press F9, enter the first one or two letters of the tag's name, and press Enter. You can also use the up and down arrows on your keyboard to scroll through the available tags after pressing F9.
- **Paragraph and character tag format selection “windows”**—The paragraph and character format selection lists can be left open as windows, resized, and placed on-screen as is convenient.
- **Attaching graphic frames to paragraph styles**—As part of a FrameMaker paragraph style definition, you can attach a border or graphic to appear either above or below a paragraph (e.g., logos, lines, icons, etc.). This is useful for things like “Warning” or “Note” paragraphs, where you could apply the symbol with the paragraph, or with headings if you want to have a line automatically appear above or below your text.
- **Autonumbering**—Auto-numbering options are much more flexible and more reliable than in Word. You can also easily define custom series for things like steps.
- **Color support**—Frame has good color support, including CMYK and Pantone colours. If you need to use color in your documentation, FrameMaker wins over Word, hands down.
- **Double-byte character support**—Frame supports double-byte character sets, e.g., Japanese.

Tables

Table Tags

- **FrameMaker**—tables have styles and properties, in the same way that paragraphs do. This makes it possible to create a new table in one step, complete with a numbered caption and all cells formatted with the proper paragraph formats and rulers.

Additionally, in FrameMaker, a table's caption is one of its properties. FrameMaker knows which are the heading rows and which are the body rows, so if a table is continued on another page, the caption and heading rows are automatically repeated on the second page, and you can add the word "continued" to the caption if you like.

- **Word (no table definitions)**—Each table is a separate entity—the rules, shading, and cell sizes must be individually formatted. This makes it difficult to ensure that all tables throughout a documentation set are presented in a consistent manner.

Positioning

Positioning of tables is different in Word and FrameMaker.

- In Word, a table acts just like a paragraph, it is positioned where the insertion point is when you create the table.
- In FrameMaker, the table is positioned by an anchored frame and the default is to position the table one line below the frame anchor. So when you insert a table, your insertion point should be at the end of the line above where you want the table to go.

Rotating Text in Cells

In FrameMaker, you can rotate text in table cells, for example, when you want narrow columns. (Word 97 can now do this, but text can only be vertical.)

GUI - Ease of Use

Simply stated, Word's GUI is better. In FrameMaker, there are some quirky times when you just know that a window wasn't designed with Windows in mind. Probably the most important GUI feature missing from FrameMaker is drag-and-drop. You can't move text around by dragging it. FrameMaker has a "quick copy" feature (good for copying, but not for moving).

Viewing the Document

FrameMaker is faster than Word, both in screen redraws and in moving around the document (this is especially true in documents with tables). Printing is faster and there's none of the document repagination that Word loves to do.

Using the GUI

- There is no generic 'repeat last action' command in FrameMaker. You can repeat the last paragraph and character formatting commands, but that's all.

- FrameMaker doesn't move the Find dialog or the spell-check dialog out of the way when it highlights selected text.
- Search and replace in FrameMaker has no pattern matching feature. There is a Use Wildcard feature and you can match text copied from the clipboard. Word is more powerful here, including support for regular expressions.
- In FrameMaker, you can't open two parts of a document in separate windows.
- Undo is limited to one action only in FrameMaker.

Graphics

- Both Word and FrameMaker come with drawing tools. FrameMaker's are more sophisticated than Word's, but both suffer from the drawback that the graphics they create are embedded in the document.
- In FrameMaker, the method for inserting graphics into text and anchoring them is different from Word. You have to create an anchored frame, then insert the graphic into the frame, then manually resize the graphic. However, using the "shrink-wrap" key command in FrameMaker to automatically resize the anchored frame to match the resized graphic makes using graphic frames quite easy.
- FrameMaker includes more filters for importing different graphic file types.

Macros

- **Word**—One of the best and most powerful features of Word is its ability to let you use macros to automate repetitive tasks. If you have someone experienced in writing macros for Word, you can pretty much automate any task within a document. Considering the power of Visual Basic for Applications that is built into the Microsoft Office products, this can be a big advantage for Word over another application that doesn't have equivalent functionality.
- **FrameMaker**—And until just a few years ago, FrameMaker for Windows had no macro capability to compete with Word. That was until a company called Finite Matters LTD introduced a new product called FrameScript. FrameScript is basically a script language that allows high-level users to customize and access FrameMaker's capabilities, much like you can do using a macro in Word. Although Word's macro language is more established and more used, the capability to use macro-like functionality is available for FrameMaker.

The main disadvantage of FrameScript is that it is not free and requires a licensing fee per installation of FrameMaker.

Considering that Word uses macros to automate much of what FrameMaker does inherently, the use of macros or scripts is not as big an issue as some users might believe.

Summaries

This section summarizes the benefits of FrameMaker and Word, and lists the cost of related applications.

Summary of FrameMaker Benefits

This table summarizes the benefits of using FrameMaker instead of Microsoft Word 95 and 97 for long document publishing. It shows some ways that using FrameMaker will benefit us in cost and time savings and increase productivity.

Feature	FrameMaker Benefits	FrameMaker 5.5.6	MS Word 95 and 97
Long and Multivolume Documentation Creation and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Saves time: FrameMaker software's automation takes care of the "manual" tasks. ■ Increases productivity: User can concentrate on writing the document instead of creating and managing it. ■ Saves time and increases productivity: Long document updating and management is automatic instead of manual. ■ Saves time: Books are not subject to corruption due to file size. 	<p>Templates are "multidimensional," with built-in automatic support available for items such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sophisticated tables ■ Headers and footers ■ Master pages ■ Tables of contents, lists of figures and tables, and indexes. ■ Long documents are automatically managed and easily updated in book format. ■ User can combine multiple files into a book. Cross-references, chapter numbering, indexes, and tables of contents are automatically updated. ■ Because of book structure, document management is not affected by file size limitations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Templates have limited built-in features and many items may have to be added manually. ■ Many long document items, such as headers and footers, must be manually inserted and changed. ■ User must set up any automation. ■ Long documents may be managed in Master Documents, many of which may require manual steps. ■ User may have to assemble long documents manually to ensure accuracy. ■ Master Documents are limited to 32 MB in size and are subject to corruption due to large size.

Feature	FrameMaker Benefits	FrameMaker 5.5.6	MS Word 95 and 97
Reports	Saves time and increases productivity: Reports help manage long publications and get the job done more quickly and efficiently.	A variety of reports are available to help manage long publication details, such as fonts, imported graphics, cross-references, and comparison of old to new documents.	Only two reports are available: One gives some document statistics and the other is a style sheet.
Support for Publishing for Online, CD-ROM, and Web Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Saves money: Only one package is required for PDF generation and enhancements. ■ Saves time and increases productivity: PDF generation is automatic and user does not have to manually insert bookmarks and annotations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adobe Acrobat is included and integrated to work automatically with FrameMaker. ■ PDF generation is done from FrameMaker with automatic generation of PDF bookmarks, annotations, and article threads. ■ TOC, Index, and cross-references are automatically converted to hypertext links. ■ Cascading style sheets are automatically generated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PDF generation program (Adobe Acrobat) must be purchased separately. ■ If Adobe Acrobat is installed, PDF may be generated using Word macros, but generation of PDF bookmarks, annotations, and article threads is not automatic. ■ Third-party applications must be purchased to automate the generation of PDF bookmarks, annotations, and article threads. ■ HTML generation tool is "barebones" in MS Word 97 (not available in MS Word 95).

Feature	FrameMaker Benefits	FrameMaker 5.5.6	MS Word 95 and 97
Professional Publishing Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Saves money: Only one package needs to be purchased.■ Saves time and increases productivity: FrameMaker contains all components necessary for professional publishing. The user only has to learn and use one program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ FrameMaker has built-in professional publishing features, such as support for professional graphics and color management (including 13 color libraries) and Adobe PostScript® .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ MS Word does not support built-in professional publishing features, such as support for color output and PostScript.

Summary of Word Benefits

This table summarizes some of the advantages of using Word instead of FrameMaker.

Feature	MS Word 95 and 97	FrameMaker 5.5.6
Macro Capability	Word has a powerful built-in macro editor that allows you to group together a series of Word commands as a single command to accomplish a task automatically.	FrameMaker has no built-in macro capability. You must purchase a third-party tool (FrameScript) to have similar functionality.
Drag-and-Drop	You can manipulate text by dragging and dropping it within your document.	Does not support drag-and-drop text manipulation.
Grammar Check	Natural language grammar checker proofreads for grammatical errors as you type and displays possible corrections with a click of the right mouse button.	Not available.
Spell Checking	Enhanced editing tools proofread for misspellings as you type and display possible corrections with a click of the right mouse button.	On-the-fly spell checking is not available
Undo	The Undo command allows you to scroll through and undo multiple actions.	FrameMaker's Undo command is limited to one action only.
HTML Import	Provides a filter for importing HTML documents.	HTML import filter not available.
Viewing	You can view two parts of a document simultaneously.	Not available.
Printing	You can print discontinuous pages.	Not available.
Hierarchical Styles	Styles are hierarchical. You can make a change to Heading 1 so that the changes will ripple through all lower-level headings.	Styles (tags) are not hierarchical. You must manually change each heading tag as needed.
Customization	Provides many options for customizing the GUI.	Offers only a few options for customizing the GUI.
Repeat Last Action	Provides a Repeat option on the Edit menu that let's you repeat your last action.	There is no generic "repeat last action" command.

Feature	MS Word 95 and 97	FrameMaker 5.5.6
Find	Let's you know when you have reached the end of your document.	The Find command will keep cycling through a document. It doesn't stop or warn you after it's searched the complete document.
Style preview	A drop-down menu shows you the styles exactly as they will appear, making it easy to find the style you're looking for.	Not available.

Summary of Pricing

This table summarizes purpose and cost of the applications I mentioned in this document. These prices are current as of 8/20/99.

Application	Description	Cost
Adobe FrameMaker	A desktop publishing tool.	\$725
Microsoft Word	A word processing tool.	n/a
InfoAccess HTML Transit	A tool for converting Word and FrameMaker documents to HTML.	\$495
Quadralay WebWorks	A tool for converting FrameMaker documents to HTML, HTML Help, WinHelp, JavaHelp, etc.	\$895
Wextech Doc-To-Help	A help authoring tool that you can use (with Word) to generate HTML, HTML Help, WinHelp, JavaHelp, etc.	
	■ Doc-To-Help 2000 Professional Edition	\$799
	■ Doc-To-Help 2000	\$499
Blue Sky RoboHelp	A help authoring tool that you can use (with Word) to generate HTML, HTML Help, WinHelp, JavaHelp, WebHelp, etc.	
	■ RoboHelp Office 7.0	??
	■ RoboHelp Classic 7.0	\$499
	■ RoboHelp HTML Edition 7.0	\$499
FrameScript	Finite Matter's tools add-on to FrameMaker that allows you to create and run scripts (macros) within your FrameMaker documents.	\$149

Supporting Materials

Credits

I used many different sources of information to create this document. Without all the work and research people had done before me on the subject of Word vs. FrameMaker, I would not have been able to express all the above-mentioned issues nearly as well. Here is a list of some of those sources of information:

- Keith Soltys, for his article “A Word User’s Perspective on FrameMaker” available at <http://www.interlog.com/~ksoltys/coredump/WordFrame.html>.
- A compilation of FrameMaker vs. Word extracts from the TECHWR-L newsgroup prepared by Axial InfoSolutions, Inc
- Alex ragen, for his excellent article “Word vs. FrameMaker — one technical writer’s opinion” available at <http://www.infocon.com/>.
- Adobe’s comparison of Word and FrameMaker available at <http://www.adobe.com/supportservice/custsupport/NOTES/8016.htm>.
- Adobe User Support Forums at <http://www.adobe.com/supportservice/custsupport/forums.html>. The people who post on these forums are not only very knowledgeable, but also extremely helpful.
- The Worldwide Online FrameMaker User Network at <http://www.frameusers.com>, for all the useful tips on FrameMaker
- Planet PDF at <http://www.planetpdf.com/> for all their insight into PDFs and Acrobat
- And Pat Howe of CA, for all her FrameMaker and editing expertise

More Related Links

The following links will take you to case studies of companies that have benefited from using the combination of FrameMaker and Acrobat to produce their documentation. There really is some interesting information here.

- <http://www.adobe.com/studio/casestudies/cisco/main.html>
- <http://www.adobe.com/studio/casestudies/PDFS/IBMsp8.pdf>
- <http://www.adobe.com/studio/casestudies/PDFS/baynetworks.pdf>
- <http://www.adobe.com/studio/casestudies/PDFS/sgmlXerox.pdf>
- <http://www.adobe.com/studio/casestudies/frmfujitsu.html>
- <http://www.adobe.com/studio/casestudies/PDFS/sgmlMcDonnell.pdf>

Feedback from the Experts

The section includes internet posts and e-mail I have seen and received from other writers who have either experienced the conversion from Word to FrameMaker, or who have strong opinions about the merits and drawbacks of each application. I included these posts and e-mails not to bash Word or praise FrameMaker, but to show what other tech writers and DTP users have encountered in the FrameMaker vs. Word debate. They also say some things in a better way than I have so far.

These messages were posted in the public domain. The material contained herein and the views expressed remain the intellectual property of their original posters.

- “My answer to the “Word vs. FrameMaker” question is this (and remember that this is one writer’s personal humble opinion): Word is a word–processor, and FrameMaker is a desktop publishing system. Word is okay for the secretaries and the engineers to use for their letters and inter-office memos, but if you want to do a book, use FrameMaker.” - Alex Ragen, Check Point Software Technologies, Ltd.
- “My bottom line about FM is always this: Are you a bunch of amateurs producing amateur-quality products or are you a professional organization producing world-quality products? If the answer is "professional organization" then you should be using a product that is intended for professional document publication (FM) and not one intended for casual computer users (WD) writing letters to grandma!” - Jon Kibler, Advanced Systems Engineering Technology, Inc.
- “Word got a lot better going from Word95 to Word97 as far as tables were concerned (rotating text, fusing cells both vertically and horizontally, etc.) but Word97 (and Word 2000) still have stability problems with long documents, complex numbering, etc and basically can't handle color professionally. We redid the policy and procedure manuals for a local hospital using Framemaker, as it allowed us to share chapters between various department's manuals, and the TOC, indexing, and page numbering actually worked. I don't know of anyone who has used the master document feature of Word without tearing their hair out. Basically that feature doesn't work reliably or fast in Word. For us, that was a sufficient reason to switch to Framemaker. The PDF export was also a major difference in favor of Framemaker.” - Philo Calhoun
- “I've maintained a private database of "time it takes to do stuff" since my first freelance writing job 13 years ago (very useful for estimating stuff, but that's another issue). About 18 months ago, my then-team switched from Word to FrameMaker. My numbers indicate that:

Within 2 months we had leveled off at about a 35%-40% increase in productivity (total production time per page) for a group of five people. Frame paid for itself and made a profit for us in a hurry in this case. 2. This FrameMaker team beat the productivity on other Word teams I've led/worked in by anywhere from 10% to 50% (NOTE: tool isn't the only consideration; other factors had an influence as well). 3. In no cases did a Word team come up with better productivity than this FrameMaker team. Data not scientific as I only have data for one FrameMaker team.” - Candace Bamber, Castek Software Factory

- “If you have to do industrial-strength books, Frame has no peer. Yes, you ***can*** do long books in Word - but the workarounds are difficult and, worse, inconsistent among writers, and they're frequently not very stable. True story - I once did a 750-page design guide in Word. I spent, literally, 2/3 of my billable hours wrestling with Word. I explained to my client that the time I spent fighting with Word would have bought several copies of Frame - and all I'd wanted was one! (That shop switched to Frame shortly thereafter)” - Mitch Berg, Integrity Solutions
- “For heavy lifting, we use Frame. Period. It's just too damned expensive to do anything else. We've learned the hard lesson that the major expense in a project isn't up-front, it's out-back, where the changes are made. It's much, much more expensive to make alterations than to write initially, or to set up the template, but we're almost always working in an environment that expects a document to be extraordinarily malleable even as it's heading for the "out" basket. Enter Frame. With a strong template and heavy structural enforcement, changes get to be extremely simple, even when the changes ripple through thousands of pages. It's reliable, stable, and flexible, with great template control. Our general rule is that when a document is over a hundred pages or so, Word isn't the tool we choose, unless the client insists.” - Tim Altom, Simply Written, Inc.
- Having used Word, Frame, Pagemaker, Quark, etc. on Unix, Windows, and Macintosh, I would strongly suggest that for creating material of any significant size, you use Frame. Microsoft Word can have some *VERY* serious practical file size limitations depending on your machine/network configuration. Without going into the gory details, MS Word can cause you terrible problems with documents over about 50 pages, especially in a networked environment.” - Erika Peterson, Sybase, inc.
- “One of the most important reason why we stick to Frame is because of their Technical support. Frame's technical support has always pulled through for us. On the other hand I have never even tried to get support for Microsoft Word. I remember having to call for a Windows question. What happened? I was transferred three or four times before talking to the right person. I hope Microsoft's support has improved since, but never the less Frame's Tech sup-port is one of the best in my book.” Luc Langevin, Speedware Corporation Inc.
- “Both Word and FrameMaker can produce professional documentation. Frame has more traditional typesetting controls and is a bit more powerful with regard to page layout capability. However, I know from experience that you can create complex and advanced pages using Microsoft Word (and a good bit of patience ;)

FrameMaker is much better at working with large documents. Word bogs down at about 150+ pages with text and graphics. Text only, about 400+. This is because Word, by default, tries to keep the whole document loaded at one time. There are a number of methods to work with larger documents in Word, but FrameMaker makes it easy.

Frame, Frame, Frame. If you are serious about big, complex documents, do yourself a favor and get Frame. Microsoft Word is a *great* Word processor. In fact,

I often say, "You can have my copy of Microsoft Word when you pry it from my cold, dead fingers." But, it is just a word processor. Frame is a publisher. And a damn fine one." - David Mitchell, SKYNET

- "The way FM handles indexes, table of contents, cross-references, and such, I find to be far superior to Word. I also find it to be much faster. The number and kind of graphics that can be imported and used by FM, and the way you can reference, rather than embed them is superior to Word.

Using Word to create long documents is like programing using Notepad. You can do it, but why would you want to? The bottom line is that Word is a word processor designed to compose short documents like letters. It does not do structured documentation. It is not intended to create and maintain long, complex documents incorporating numerous tables, graphics, paragraph formats and character formats. It was not designed to compile 100 plus pages, multiple files, and references into a book. Word is a word processor with pretensions of page layout. FrameMaker is a document processor that has the adequate tools handle page layout.

If you want to construct a canal, don't give your workers spoons to dig with." - Scott Turner, Control Systems International, Inc.

- "I've been a technical writer for almost 14 years, and used a variety of word processing and desktop publishing systems on mainframes, minis, and personal computers. I have been using FrameMaker since 1991, and although I haven't used the most recent versions of MS Word, I feel that there is no comparison between the two when it comes to publishing large books and in maintaining one source for both printed and online documents.
- Many writers object to FrameMaker's structure; it is comparable to structured programming languages that require you to set up templates before you begin writing or coding, and adhere to those templates. That is why some people find it annoying to use the formal paragraph styles in Frame. However, because of the structure imposed, Frame is easily portable. Frame documents can be used interchangeably on Unix, Mac, and PC platforms. Documents truly ARE interchangeable, it's not just marketing hype.

There is a huge difference in underlying concepts between a desktop publishing system and a word processing system. The description of your needs implies that you really do need a publishing system. Frame's methods of using master pages for running headers and footers, it's highly developed hypertext capability, and its structure which is close to SGML and compatible with it -- all these things make me believe you would not be as happy with MS Word.

Right now, my company is in the process of converting some documents for an online documentation system. I am one of the few writers here who uses Frame (gives you a clue about standards, doesn't it??) and my documents are far ahead of most writers in the conversion process.

In addition to my experience with Frame, I've recently been applying for jobs in the Bay Area, and about 99% of the jobs posted require FrameMaker experience. Most of the major software companies in that area have standardized on Frame, and I think it's because it does the best job." - Karyl Severson, ADP Dealer Services

- “Frame is a lot more flexible in the layout department. You can make multiple master pages, and change between portrait and landscape pages in the middle of a document (say you wanted to include a really wide table or some-thing). It handles paragraph and character styles a lot better too.

Frame is known for its ability to handle large volumes better than any other product. We have several manual chapters that are over 200 pages, and have never had a problem.

In my experience, Frame blows Word out of the water for handling things like headers, footers, tables, indices, and tables of contents. Partially due to their variable definitions and cross-referencing formats.

Individual document maintenance is probably going to be the same for either one. But Frame's "book file" strategy allows you to group together several files into a Book file (basically, a list), and maintain certain aspects across all documents in the file. For example, you can update cross references for all files in one step from the Book file. Frame plans to add more features to Book files in the future.” - Lisa, Gordian

- “We don't single-source our documentation and online help. Our approach/philosophy is that the information in the help is directed towards a different type of need than the printed manual. In essence, the manual gives users an overview of what the product does, why they want to use different features, how to do some basic things, and scenarios of how the features can be used. The help, on the other hand, gives specific information and procedures to assist a user in understanding the interface presented to them. This difference in approach precludes using a single-source document.” - Cindy Abrnethy, Symantec Corp.

- “We set up a series of templates in Word for a customer who wanted to use it for long technical documents and frankly, I'd advise against it. Don't get me wrong. Word is a terrific tool and I use it every day, but the kinds of problems we ran into seem to be unavoidable when you try to apply it to documents that go much beyond 50-60 pages:

1. You can't really use the automated cross-referencing feature effectively. Word repaginates the entire document, every time you make a link. On one of the documents, each autoref took 20 minutes. Last I heard, the people developing the template had not found a way to turn that behavior off.

2. The performance of Master/Subdocuments is dismal. The writers now use single files and Master/Sub feature is only used when absolutely necessary -- basically, for the final production.

FrameMaker is built to handle long technical documents. I'd recommend it as a much more realistic choice. You can still use Word for drafting parts of the document, especially if you take the time to synchronize the Word and Frame stylesheets. But for really putting those docs out, Frame is the product I'd recommend.” - Chet Ensign, Logical Design Solutions

- “The basic difference between Frame and Word as far as I can see is that Frame, through sophisticated variable, cross reference and conditional text facilities, allows far shorter overall document production times for any document that is likely to

undergo review, reissue etc. A colleague of mine, a word user, only yesterday spent about three hours updating all figure references (etc.) in his document. This would have taken about 2 seconds with Framemaker...

The snag in all this is that Framemaker is only better if it is used to its full capability. Casual users of applications may prefer Word as it is easier to get started.” - Jerry Trigger, BT Laboratories”

- “I did some work last year for a group that insisted on Word. They paid a lot more money for my time because I had to struggle to make Word do things that I could have done in minutes in FrameMaker. For serious documentation, graphics, and layout, Word will cost you money in time and productivity.” - Fred Wersan, Peritus Software Services
- “Take features such as paragraph formats. List what frame and word do. Then list HOW. Frame (for me) starts getting better than word when you see HOW paragraph formats work in a document and more importantly, how they work across multiple documents. I would also emphasize items such as FrameMaker's master pages, reference pages, and ability to work with color.
- Bottom line is, if you compare feature to feature, both do pretty much the same stuff. But, if you look at how each accomplishes the task of putting stuff onto paper, then you see why one outshines the other.” - Glen Accardo, Software Interfaces, Inc.

