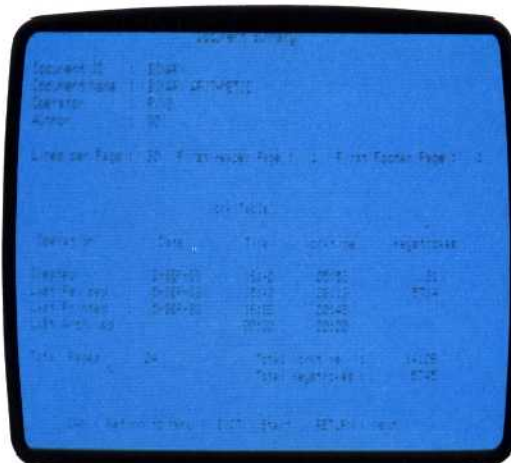


The program offers several sophisticated aids. All word processing programs sense the end of each line as it approaches and automatically 'wrap round', carrying the whole of the last word down to the beginning of the next line. This means that the typist no longer has to be concerned about 'carriage return' at the end of each line. Instead, he or she can type in an endless stream, while the program creates each new line as necessary. Where a new paragraph is to be started, however, the typist has to press the RETURN key.

On a conventional typewriter, you are faced with the prospect of correcting a mistake mechanically, usually by whitening out the error and typing over the top. It is pretty messy. If there are one or two corrections, the only alternatives are to send out a messy letter or to start again. With word processing, the problem is solved. The flashing cursor on the screen is, as always, the indicator of your current position. You move it back along the already written words until it is at the point where, say, you have typed the wrong word. You are then able to make the mistake disappear and type in the correction.

Once the editing power of a word processing program is realised, users are motivated to be more thoughtful in the preparation of the text. For example, it is possible to use the INSERT command to add a word, a whole sentence, or a paragraph just as easily as a single letter. This encourages the user to reconsider what is being said in the letter or

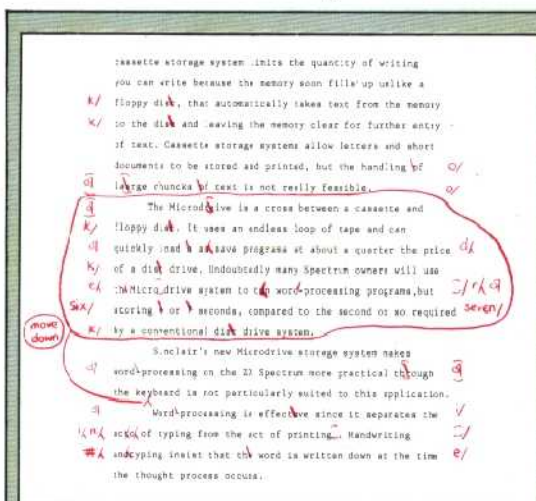


Seeing The Menu

The photograph shows the 'menu' from a sophisticated word processing package. The menu will appear on the screen as soon as you insert the software and guides you to the various editing functions available on the word processor. Examples of editing functions are: tab setting and margin positions, line spacing, counting the number of words in the document, rearranging paragraphs and creating an index.

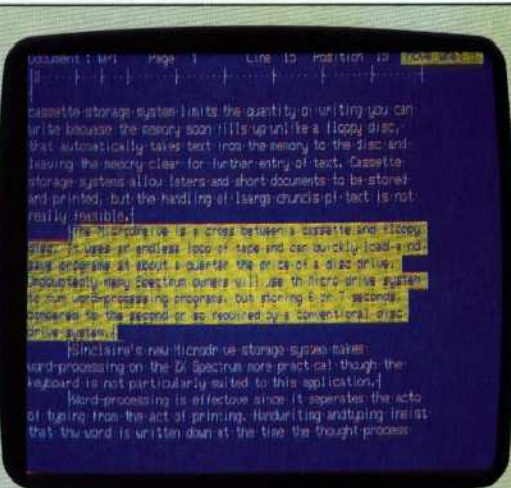
some degree of word processing power. The Sinclair ZX81 can operate with a simple text-editing program, which allows the user to write a letter or document on the screen and then edit out corrections. Text editing is the phrase usually applied to a limited word processing program, which may be able to handle a page or two of text but which is unable to manipulate and store longer documents. The small RAM in the ZX81 and similarly-sized computers severely limits the amount of text that can be displayed and worked on.

One problem with the ZX81 is the touch-sensitive keyboard, which prohibits any real



Electronic Editing

The main advantage of a computer-based word processor system over a typewriter is its amazing flexibility and speed. Whereas the typewritten text entails laborious editing and correcting, with a word processor it can all be done at electronic speed. And all these operations can be done while the text is displayed on the screen. A sophisticated system can: search through the text;



change words; transpose lines from one position to another; make corrections automatically throughout the text; and even correct your grammar and spelling. In fact, the word processor can save so much time that it is now gradually beginning to replace the ordinary typewriter.

Compare the 'messy' corrections on the typescript to the clean electronic editing of the word processor.

document. The instruction to delete text is also easy. A command causes unwanted words and letters simply to disappear off the screen and remaining text to close up, restoring the perfect appearance of the page. Many professional authors and journalists are now using word processors and they generally report that both the quality and quantity of their work has improved.

Even the smallest microcomputers can offer

attempt at fast typing. Although the keyboard on the ZX Spectrum is considerably better, it is still not the mechanical kind that typists are used to. If you are considering buying a micro for word processing use, it is a good idea to examine the keyboards of the machines under consideration as these have a significant effect on typing speed and comfort (see page 32).

A computer of 16 Kbytes or 32 Kbytes,