

SS/SD: An acronym standing for 'Single-sided/Single-density'. Disks of this format can store up to 90K of information.

Text file: Synonymous with document - a file on disk that contains the text you created with your word processor.

User Dictionary: The dictionary provided with *Spell It!* containing words that you commonly used and are not found in the Main and Quik dictionaries.

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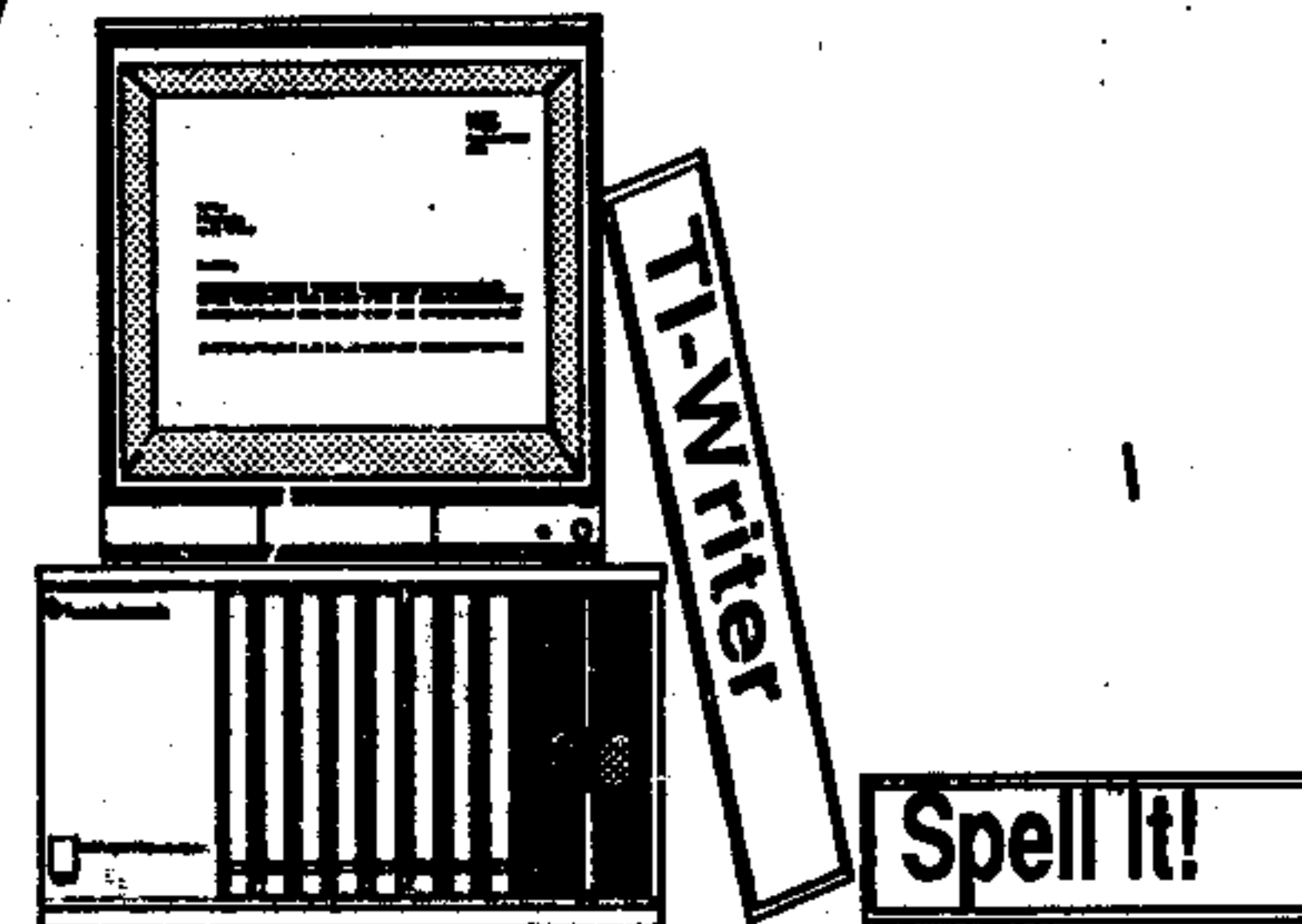
Written by Jim Reiss

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Spell It!



"The Best Thing Next to your Word Processor"

The modern spelling checker for word processor users!

- Fast
- Large word capacity
- No limit on text file size
- Compatible with Geneve, HFDC, RAM-disks, etc.
- Easy-to-use!
- Large user dictionary
- Changes file directly
- Features SmartCheck™
- And Much more...

**By
Jim
Reiss**

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INTRODUCTION

With few exceptions, TI-99/4A and Myarc Geneve users use their computers for Word Processing more than for any other application. It's no wonder then that there are over a dozen different popular word processors. - most of which based to one degree or another on *TI-Writer*.

However, while word processing programs have been refined and improved over the years, word processing utilities have stagnated. On other computers spelling checkers and grammar checkers consistently are some of the most popular programs sold. Many state-of-the-art word processing packages nowadays even include a built-in spelling checker. It is amazing then that until now no one has introduced a truly useable, modern spelling checker for *TI-Writer* and compatible users.

Spell It! is that spelling checker.

Experienced users who have suffered the idiosyncrasies of other spelling checkers will be pleased to note that using *Spell It!* is, in contrast to other such programs, easier than writing the document in the first place. Other spelling programs are hampered by slow speed, inefficient storage, or inflexibility bordering on uselessness. *Spell It!* was designed from the beginning to avoid those problems. Among other things:

- *Spell It!* is fast - depending on your computer hardware, up to a dozen times faster than any other spelling checker for the TI-99/4A.

- *Spell It!* is efficient. It features the proprietary SmartCheck™ algorithm (patent pending), which understand the English language. Other spelling checkers must wade through at times dozens of permutations of a word (e.g. 'work', 'worked', 'works', 'working', etc.) - *Spell It!* only needs the original word in the dictionary and understands the various permutations. Hence, the *Spell It!* dictionary is equivalent to one many times its size - the 25,000 words in the standard dictionary may be equivalent to over 50,000 words in another spelling checker. Needless to say, a smaller dictionary means less disk space required.

On the Myarc Geneve 9640, *Spell It!* requires the Geneve, one SS/SD disk drive, *M-DOS* 1.14 or higher, *GPL Interpreter* 1.01 or better, and either the disk versions of the above modules. *Spell It!* is compatible with the *EXEC* utility from Barry, and can be run directly through *M-DOS* with it.

Before Anything Else

Make a copy of your *Spell It!* disks using a disk managing utility, and store the original in a cool, dark place. If you are unable to make a copy, or the original disk(s) cannot be cataloged, you may be in possession of a damaged copy. Refer to the warranty section for information if this is the case.

If the copy will not load and run using the procedures described below, you may have a bad copy. Some track copiers are unable to accurately copy disks produced by our equipment (though not by our design) - you may have to make a copy using a more generic program such as *DM1000*.

Before you begin using any version of *Spell It!*, you should properly configure it for use with your own particular system by using the CONFIGURE program. Hard Disk users should additionally refer to the section after this one entitled "Installing *Spell It!* on a Hard Disk".

Loading CONFIGURE on the TI-99/4A

- Place the desired module in the cartridge port, turn on all peripherals, and then the TI-99/4A.
- Place the Program (or Program/Dictionary) disk in disk drive one.
- If using the Extended BASIC module, merely select it from the Module Menu, and a loading program will automatically execute. Choose option #1 from the loader menu - "Load and Run CONFIGURE". Select option #2 to load *Spell It!* itself.
- If using Editor/Assembler, select the module from the Module Menu, and select option #5 - "Run Program File". Type in the filename **DSK1.CONFIGURE** and press **ENTER**.
- If using TI-Writer, select the module from the Module Menu,

and select option #3 - "Utilities". As above, enter the filename **DSK1.CONFIGURE** and press **ENTER. ENTER**.

- The CONFIGURE program will load and run automatically.

Loading CONFIGURE on the Myarc Geneve 9640

With *EXEC*

- Place the *M-DOS* disk in disk drive one, and turn on your Peripheral Expansion Box. *M-DOS* will 'boot' and present you with the A> prompt (or whatever you have it defined as in your AUTOEXEC file).
- For convenience, place a copy of *EXEC* on your copy of *Spell It!* (you *are* of course using a copy and not the original?).
- Type **EXEC CONFIGURE** and press **ENTER**.
- The program will load and run.

Through the *GPL Interpreter*

- Load the *GPL Interpreter* and the disk version of your module of choice (disk space and the version of the software permitting, by typing **GPL XB** and pressing **ENTER**).
- Follow the directions above for loading CONFIGURE on the TI-99/4A with the appropriate module. *Spell It!* functions fine on any speed of the *GPL Interpreter*.

Using CONFIGURE

The CONFIGURE utility is quite simple in concept as well as execution. This little program simply asks a few questions, and then writes the answers directly into the program. For this reason, this utility should be used only on a floppy disk drive and with the program disk in drive one.

After entering in the filename of the program (e.g. **DSK1.SPELLIT**), this utility loads in the default information. Then CONFIGURE first asks whether you are using this on a 40 or 80 column capable computer. If you have a standard TI-99/4A, select 40 columns, otherwise on a Geneve or 80-column equipped 99/4A,

In other Word Processors

Virtually all non-*TI-Writer* derived word processors have some facility for saving text in Display/Variable-80 (or "*TI-Writer*") format. Before you can process text files created with these word processing programs, refer to the appropriate section in the manual accompanying those programs for information. Please note that *Spell It!* may not recognize any formatting commands those programs may insert into the text file they create - see the section on "Optimizing/Customizing the Dictionary" for details about adding these commands to your dictionary.

LOADING AND RUNNING *Spell It!*

Experienced users only need to know that *Spell It!* is a program-image, E/A Option #5 Assembly programmer with the program filename of SPELLIT. Any utility or program that has facilities for loading such programs can load and run *Spell It!*. For beginning users, read the following sections for more information.

Spell It! can be run in a variety of ways on the 99/4A and the Geneve. If you wish to run the program by itself, you can do so by following the instructions in the previous section for loading the CONFIGURE utility - simply substitute the filename SPELLIT for the filename CONFIGURE for similar results. However, the real power of *Spell It!* becomes clear if it is used within a word processing 'environment'. Most word processing packages have facilities for loading and running other programs from within them - *Spell It!* can be run in this manner.

On the TI-99/4A

With *TI-Writer*: *TI-Writer* provides a complete word processing environment. Create your text file with the *Editor*. Save it with the SaveFiles command and return to the *TI-Writer* menu (with the Quit

command). Next, select option #3, Utilities, and type the filename DSKn.SPELLIT and press **ENTER**, where 'n' is the disk drive or the pathname where *Spell It!* is stored. After using the program, quit from the program, and then load the Formatter to print out the checked document.

With *Funnelweb*: While *Spell It!* may be loaded in a similar manner as that described for *TI-Writer* above by using its built-in Program-file loader, the real power of *Funnelweb* is being able to Install *Spell It!* as a menu option on the *Funnelweb* menu. Refer to the documentation for *Funnelweb* for more information on doing this.

With *RAG Writer*: To use *Spell It!* within *RAG-Writer's* you will have to do one of two things. Either modify the LOAD program included with *RAG-Writer* to load the filename SPELLIT instead of UTIL1, or change the filename SPELLIT to UTIL1. For non-programmers, the latter course is the safest. Simply use a disk manager to change the filename.

In other Programs: Other programs (*BA-Writer*, etc.) have different methods of loading and running program-image Assembly programs from within their own environment. With some you will be able to load and run *Spell It!* as described in the instructions for *TI-Writer*. With others, you'll have to load it as you would with *RAG-Writer* above. Refer to the appropriate manual for more information.

Please note that for sake of ease of use on a floppy-disk based system, you may wish to install *Spell-It!* (actually just the file SPELLIT) on the disk containing your word processor program. The other ancillary utilities provided should also be included if space permits. In using *Spell It!* in this matter, a two-disk drive system is a necessity to avoid swapping disks.

On the Myarc Geneve 9640

With My-Word: You can load *Spell It!* from within *My-Word* in a manner similar to that described above with *TI-Writer*, except that instead of quitting to return to the *TI-Writer* Main menu, simply press **U** for "Utility" on the command line, and enter the filename **DSKn.SPELLIT** and press **ENTER**. As above, 'n' is the disk number or pathname.

USING *Spell It!*

Checking the Document

After loading *Spell It!*, a title screen will appear. Press any key to advance beyond it.

Spell It! is quite simple in operation - as a spelling checker should be. After the title screen, the program will prompt you to enter in the filename of the text file that you wish to check. If you configured the program, it will have as the default disk drive or hard disk pathname whatever you specified when you ran **CONFIGURE**. At this point, simply enter in the filename of your document, and press **ENTER**. If the filename isn't found, *Spell It!* will prompt you to place the disk containing that file in the disk drive being used, and to press **ENTER**. You can also press **FCTN-9** ('Back') to re-enter the filename of your document.

Spell It! will then read in your text file and compose a "unique word list". *Spell It!* doesn't check every word in your text file, just every unique word (in other words, if you used the word "I" in your document 200 times, it would only check it once against the dictionary and not 200 times). Next, *Spell It!* checks the various dictionaries, and creates a list of words it doesn't know. If every word in your text file is spelled correctly, it will not find any words it doesn't know. The program will prompt you to press a key to proceed to the next stage.

The 'Word Review'

The program then goes through the lists of words it couldn't find one after the other. With each word you have the option to:

- A)dd to dictionary
- C)orrect word
- L)ookup word
- N)ext word
- P)revious word
- V)iew context

To select an option, press the letter on the keyboard corresponding to the first letter of the option desired.

A)dd to dictionary

Press **A** to access this function. The "Add to dictionary" option does exactly that - it adds the word not found to your user dictionary. After the word has been added, it won't come up "not found" in documents spell-checked in the future.

Words added to the user dictionary will be added immediately to the file and will be removed from the listing of 'words not found'.

Please note, you should take care when adding words to the dictionary. Each additional word added slows down future spell-checking minutely. While a slowdown won't become evident with a few dozen, or even a few hundred words, several thousand could degrade the performance of the program severely, even on a hard-disk based system. See the "Enhancements" section, and specifically the sub-section on "Optimizing/Customizing the Dictionary" for information about how to counter-act this effect.

C)orrect word

Press **C** to select this option. This function allows you to enter in the correct spelling for a misspelled word. The program will simply prompt you to enter in the correct spelling of the word, and proceeds on to the next word in the list of words not found in your document file.

After all the corrections have been made, *Spell It!* will write any words corrected to the document on disk - and if necessary changing all instances of a word if it appears more than once in the text.

L)ookup word

Press **L** to access this function. If you are unsure of the spelling of a word, and want to consult the dictionary before entering the correct spelling, *Spell It!* will generate a list of words that are similar to the one misspelled by selecting this option.

When you select this option *Spell It!* consults the dictionary and creates a list of words that the misspelled word might be. While some of the 'guesses' may not be on the mark, chances are unless the incorrect word is wildly wrong, or the correct spelling simply isn't in the dictionary, this option will list the proper word on the screen.

If the list is too long to be displayed on the screen, the program will ask you to press a key to continue onto the next screen. When you have found the proper replacement, and reached the end of the list, simply enter in the correction. A future version of *Spell It!* may permit you to simply select the correct spelling from the list generated with this function.

Please note that this function may be awkward to use for SS/SD disk drive users as it may require you to change disks one or more times.

N)ext word

Press **N** to select this function. *Spell It!* will list every word in the document not found in the dictionaries. Sometimes, there will be words in your document that you know are properly spelled but you do not need to add to your USER dictionary because they are used infrequently (proper nouns, foreign language phrases, etc.)

This function essentially allows you to "ignore" those words - simply press the key for this function and the program will proceed to the next word in the "not found" list.

P)revious word

Press **P** to access this function. If you too hastily pressed the Next word command described above, this option allows you to skip back to the previous 'word not found' in the listing. Please note that you cannot re-enter corrected words, but you can correct words that you previously skipped.

V)iew context

Press **V** to select this option. Viewing the context allows you to do just that - view the words immediately before and after the word not found in the listing, as well as highlights the word itself.

This has multiple uses. For one thing, if you don't know what the word is the context of the word can often tell you what the word should have been (particularly if the word not found was incredibly garbled when typing in the document). For another thing, this option can be used to tell when a word has been properly used in a sentence or not - there are many words in the English language that sound the same and are even spelled similarly yet emphatically do not have the same meaning.

When you select this option *Spell It!* reads in the text file, finds the first instance in the document of the unknown word, and displays a few of the lines of text before and after the word. This is comparable to spelling checkers on other computers. On a 40-column display the text will be wrapped to fit on the screen, while on an 80-column display it will appear true to the original text (another argument for upgrading to 80-columns).

When *Spell It!* is done

After you have gone through the entire list of 'words not found' in your document (the 'Word Review' portion of *Spell It!*), the program will create a corrected copy of the document on the same disk or in the same hard-disk directory where the original was located. A letter "S" will be appended to the filename (hence the reason why filenames should be 9 characters or less in length). The corrected version of the file TEXT1, for instance, would be TEXT1S. Depending on the number of corrections, this can be

anywhere from a speedy to a slow process.

Finally, please note that while *Spell It!* does not have a limit on the size of the text file it can check, it does have a limit to the number of unique words it can have in memory at once. Depending on the length of those words, between 1-5,000 unique words can be in memory at once. Considering that the average person uses no more than 4-5000 words to communicate in their lifetime, this limitation will pose no difficulty to the majority of users (even the average doctoral thesis uses no more than 2-3000 unique words including jargon).

However, if you do ever run into this limitation, there is a simple solution. If *Spell It!* runs out of room to store unique words in memory, it will allow you to scan through the ones it can hold, and then write any corrections back to the text file. You can then check the document again and it will find fewer unique words in the second trip through. Repeat a third time if necessary. While this solution isn't ideal, it is forced upon the program by the limitation of memory in a standard TI-99/4A. It may be addressed in future versions if it poses a difficulty for a substantial number of users.

Spell It! STRUCTURE

Before proceeding to the next section, "Enhancements", you should understand what each of the files on the *Spell It!* disk is, and some about how *Spell It!* works.

Contents of *Spell It!* Program Disk

CONFIGURE - The program Configuration disk described above. This utility only has to be used when you move *Spell It!* to another computer, if you upgrade your current system, or wish to change some defaults.

SPELLIT - The main program. This file is essential to using *Spell It!*. This file can also be renamed without impeding the use of the program any.

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QUIK -

This file consists of the approximately 1000 most common words in the English manual. When checking a typical document, *Spell It!* will find approximately 50-75% of all the in a document in this file. This speeds up the checking process.

USER -

This is your User Dictionary.

Spell It! performs what could be called a "hierarchical" search when checking a document. First, it checks to see if a word is in the QUIK listing. There is a 50-75% chance it will be found here. If not, then it checks the dictionaries found on the Dictionary disk(s). If a word is not found here, it then checks the USER dictionary. Finally, if not found it tells you the word isn't in the list. At that point you can add it to the USER dictionary, enter in a replacement word, or scan the regular dictionaries yourself to see how it should be spelled.

Please note that all dictionary files are stored in Display/Variable-80 format and can be edited and modified with *TI-Writer* or compatibles. When saving a modified dictionary file be sure to Print the file to disk to avoid the characters most *TI-Writer* or compatible programs append to the end of a Saved text file. Note, NEVER make changes to the original dictionary disks - only to working copies.

ENHANCEMENTS

When Upgrading your system

At some point after purchasing *Spell It!* you may decide it's time to expand your computer system. At that point you'll most likely be pleased to know that *Spell It!* can be quite easily modified to take advantage of new hardware.

From a SS/SD to a DS/DD disk drive

If converting from one or more SS/SD disk drives to a single

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DS/DD drive:

- Run CONFIGURE on a copy of your *Spell It!* disk. Change the device names for the dictionary and the text file to 'DSK1.'
- Copy the contents of your dictionary disks to a single DS/DD disk.
- Run *Spell It!* and it will refer only to 'DSK1.' when checking.

From one disk drive to multiple disk drives

If you purchase a second disk drive:

- Run CONFIGURE and specify another disk drive as your text drive. Keep drive one as the dictionary disk drive.

From a Floppy system to an HFDC system

If you purchase a hard-disk sub-system:

- Using MDM5, create a sub-directory on your hard disk to hold the contents of your program and any dictionary disks. Copy the contents of these disks to this sub-directory.
- Run CONFIGURE off of the hard-drive and modify the hard drive copy of the program. Specify the newly created sub-directory as the pathname for the dictionary. Indicate a new default pathname/diskname for text files, if desired.
- If you want the additional words in the HFDC version, send a check for \$15.95 to Asgard Software (the difference in the prices between the two versions) - order the "HFDC *Spell-It* Upgrade".

If you add a RAM-disk

If you buy a RAM-disk that you wish to use with *Spell It!*, and if the RAM-disk has 360K or more available, you can place the program and the dictionary entirely on the RAM-disk. This will speed up the checking process dramatically. Follow the configuration process above for converting to a DS/DD disk drive system.

If your RAM-disk has less than 360K available, you should consider using it only as a temporary storage area for your document or text files. This will speed up the checking process perhaps by 10%. No special procedure has to be followed in this case - simply use the RAM-disk as you would any floppy disk drive.

Optimizing/Customizing the Dictionary

While *Spell It!* is fast enough for most needs, there are a number of things you can do to make it even faster beyond the obvious of buying faster equipment (such as a hard-drive, RAM-disks or a Geneve).

- Go through the QUIK and regular dictionaries and remove words that you don't use/know. The fewer words that are in either, the faster the dictionary can be searched - particularly with the 200,000+ word HFDC version. In fact, there is a large number of words in the HFDC version version that the average person will have never heard of. Feel free to remove these words from the work copy of your dictionary disks.
- Sort the USER dictionary by frequency. If, for example, you tend to use a number of words rarely, place them at the end of the list.
- Place oft-used words in the USER dictionary in the appropriate main dictionary. The only thing that you have to be careful about is placing those words in the proper file in alphabetical order with the rest. Failure to do so can cause unpredictable results.
- Remove multiple permutations of words in the USER dictionary - such as the plural or possessive versions of the same word. The SmartCheck™ algorithm in *Spell It!* automatically looks for those, and their presence just slows down the search.

Again, any modifications of this nature should only be done to a working copy of *Spell It!* and not to the original disks.

Speeding up things Further

While an oversized dictionary can contribute to a loss of performance, there are a number of other things that can be done to also shave time off a spell-check of a document.

- Always run *Spell It!* on Speed 5 on the Geneve in the *GPL Interpreter*. Building the unique word list in *Spell It!* can take quite a bit of time, and the faster the computer goes the faster this will be done.

● Upgrade from SS/SD disks to DS/DD ones. While *Spell It!* has been designed to reduce the number of disk swaps needed to a minimum, you may never need to swap disks with 1-2 DS/DD disk drives. The Corcomp and Myarc controllers have been available for 6 and 5 years respectively - no one should be using the TI disk controller any more.

● If you can afford it, buy a hard drive. A hard drive is as fast as a RAM-disk, and certainly offers quite a bit more room for your files.

● If you can't afford a hard-drive, purchase a RAM-disk. Place your dictionary files on the RAM-disk (or at least the QUIK list). This will save substantial amounts of time in checking. The bigger the RAM-disk, the greater the time savings. In the optimal situation, all the dictionaries, the programs and the text files should be on the RAM-disk.

Appendix I: Foreign Languages and Spell It!

While languages other than English aren't specifically supported in *Spell It!*, the spelling checker 'engine' driving this program only requires a dictionary in the appropriate language in order to support it. Please note that support for CHARA1 files is already included with *Spell It!*, so that special character required in some languages can be readily used.

Users who speak another language can create a dictionary in their language in a variety of ways. The simplest way to create a dictionary in another language is to check a large number of documents in that language with *Spell It!*, and then to add every word not found to the user dictionary. The major drawback to this method is that anything more than a few thousand words in the USER dictionary can seriously degrade performance of the program. One solution to this would be to simply erase the contents of the English language dictionary files included (though not the files themselves). A better solution would be to add the words to the main dictionary files, delete them from the USER dictionary, and then to delete any English words not used from the main dictionaries.

If it isn't evident, all of these processes can be very time consuming. Asgard Software has a number of utilities which can make the process of creating a new dictionary simpler (specifically in creating the individual main dictionary files), but the dictionary provided was created with similar labor, so any replacement will require at least as much.

If you have a word list in another language, contact Asgard Software for information and help in turning it into a *Spell It!* dictionary.

Appendix II: Creating a Custom Dictionary

The process of creating a custom dictionary for technical or professional use is only as difficult as the number of words needed. A dictionary of several hundred words can be readily added to the USER dictionary simply by checking a few dozen documents and adding words not found to the dictionary.

For a professional or technical dictionary of 500 or more words, the process of creating the dictionary can be as lengthy as the process of creating a dictionary in another language (see the previous section).

In order to prevent much reduction in checking speed on a large technical or professional dictionary, do the following:

- Get the words to be added into a text file by either typing them in directly or adding them to the USER dictionary.
- Sort the words in alphabetical order
- Add them in alphabetical order to the appropriate main dictionary (DA holds the 'A's, DB the 'B's, etc.).

As with creating a dictionary in another language, Asgard Software has a number of proprietary utilities that simplify the task. Contact our firm for information and help in creating a really large custom dictionary.

Glossary

Configure: A utility provided with *Spell It!* that tells the program where to look for certain things, and how to re-act to certain devices if encountered.

Customize: What one does when they use the CONFIGURE utility on *Spell It!*.

Device Name: The name that you use when addressing a disk drive. For instance, disk drive one has a device name of 'DSK1.'

Document: A file created on your disk containing your text. Synonymous with "Text File" below, and used as such in this manual.

DS/DD: An acronym for 'Double-sided/Double-density' disks. DS/DD disks can store up to 360K of information on a single disk.

HFDC: A device manufactured by Myarc Inc (Hard & Floppy Disk Controller), that allows you to attach one or more hard-disk drives and up to 4 floppy disk drives to a TI-99/4A or a Myarc Geneve 9640.

Main Dictionary: The dictionary that contains the bulk of the words that *Spell It!* searches through.

Optimize: The process of making a program word faster and more efficiently. This can be done by removing redundant or unused information, or by "customizing" the program to work with your particular hardware configuration.

PathName: The sequence of device names and subdirectory names that compose the location of a file on a hard disk system. For instance, the dictionaries in *Spell It!* could be placed in WDS1.SPELLIT.DICT. This is the pathname to those files.

Quik Dictionary: A dictionary included with *Spell It!* that contains the 1000 or so most common words in the English language.

SmartCheck™: A proprietary algorithm included with *Spell It!* that has some understanding of the English language, and automatically calculates common endings of words - thus allow them to be removed from the dictionaries and hence saving space and checking time. Patent pending.