Where have you been all my life, WriteItNow? (updated)

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I only recommend things I use and love, which is why I frequently mention how much I love Inspiration, and rarely say anything about Word (use it, hate it).

I almost never find anything I love, or even like, where writing software is concerned. I've tried a lot of it, and most of it is an enormous waste of money. So when my agent forwarded me an envelope containing writing software, I was cynical, to say the least.

Ah, the difference a day makes. In twenty-four hours, I have gone from "Yeah, yeah, yet another useless writer's tool to try," to "Oh. My. God. **Somebody** knew what I needed."

The tool is WriteItNow, the platform is either Windows or Mac OS X (including Intel versions—it works just fine on mine), the price is $37.55 US, and let me tell you why it's cool. Why it's necessary. Why it will ease your writing burdens.

- **Everything you need, you can see in the left-hand column.**
  I do not remember the majority of my character names, place names, or language and worldbuilding names when I'm writing a book. Part of this is that I do books with lots of characters and detailed worldbuilding, part of it is a short-term memory issue, and I've been dealing with both parts of this equation for my entire writing career. I've always dealt with it by keeping my maps pinned to a nearby wall or board (place names), covering my computer with sticky notes (character names, ideas,

world details), and keeping my language vocabulary sheets on the desk while I'm writing (vocabulary). With WriteItNow, I added every Osji vocabulary word and special worldbuilding term to notes (I found them by doing a spellcheck of the already-written chapters I imported—the whole process took just a few minutes). Found my character and place names in the manuscript the same way, and added them to Characters and Locations respectively. Now I look left, and the names and terms I need are right there. But it gets better than this.

- **This program is a perfect adjunct to the *Create A Character Clinic* and the *Create A Culture Clinic*.**
  I went through my Character Clinic questions and developed each character in the Characters section of program. Then—HA!—I exported my notes (Export/Text…check all backgrounding boxes, then go to note you want, export) into beautifully formatted printed pages that went into my RUBY KEY notebook. Ditto Culture stuff—most of that went into Ideas. This gave me a nicely organized (typed) notebook that is also a perfect backup for the rest of the MOON AND SUN series (HARDCOPY BACKUPS WILL SAVE YOUR WRITING), since now all the information I need is also right in the writing program. But it still gets better than this.

- **This works with my notecarding process.**
  Every category is sortable by alpha, reverse alpha, or clicking on an event, location, or whatever and pushing up and down arrows to move it around. So you can sort characters alphabetically or by their importance in the story (what I do), sort locations by when they show up in the story, how important they are, or by name, sort ideas and notes any old way you please. And…and…and…for me this is the big one. You can dump a bunch of ideas for events into the program by title only (just click in the body of the text and your title is added),

brainstorming things you think you want to put into the story. And THEN you can move them around to your heart's content, until they land in an order that works for you. But even yet more wonderfulness awaits. Because……

- **Everything links to everything.**
  I linked my culture notes to character names, linked ideas to events, linked locations to chapters. I added relationship links to my characters, added birth and death dates, created a timeline by adding the first event in the book and giving it a date, and then creating an event for the ending and giving it a date. Connected characters to the events in which they particpated. Spent an extra couple of seconds guesstimating the times that each event started and ended (there are little click-it clocks and calendars [even including BC dates] in events to make this whole process a no brainer.)

  And then I checked the charts. Yes. **WriteItNow** generates charts, and you can see if you have one person in two places at the same time. You can see if it would be impossible to get from point A to point B in the given time. You can see if somebody who's dead experiences a miraculous resurrection two days later because you forgot you killed him. You can put dates on those not-yet-in-the-story events you notecarded in the step above and see how long it will take your characters to get through the story. I cannot begin to explain how huge this is. How beautiful.

  But it isn't everything. There is, in fact, even more.

- **You're stuck. You don't know what to do next. Help arrives in the form of dice.**
  UPFRONT DISCLAIMER:
  I am the most anti-random-generator person on the planet. I do not flip coins to decide character genders,

I do not randomly generate names, I loathe random-generator plots. Basically, if you can randomly generate it, I want nothing to do with it, because I like worlds where the pieces fit, and I have found than random generators do a horrible job of making the pieces fit.

For those who like such things, **WriteItNow** offers a slightly-better-than-average random character generator (go to Character, click the dice icon [yeah, it's only a single die, but "die icon" sounded like something you would never, under any circumstances, want to click]) that will give you a name; a birthdate; an already-configured personality slider for Health, Wealth, Happiness, Friendliness, Generosity, Aggression, Extroversion, and Caring; and a description like: "Bud is of average height, wiry and thuggish. His hair is very short, light brown and unruly. As a child he was aggressive. Bud is interesting and goofy. He loves 'The Three Musketeers' by Alexandre Dumas. Bud likes bacon strips. He loses sleep thinking about social standing. In summary he is very excitable," This description is copied directly from the program.

I'll never use the random character generator.

But **WriteItNow** does one random-generation thing that I find intriguing enough that I may try it out from time to time. Go to Ideas. Click the dice icon. By drawing from what you've already developed (and occasionally pitching in stuff that is wildly out of place), the program will offer up new ideas. Example: "Oris is injured and can't carry out his duties. Could The Cat be less rational? Create an outline for this idea by dictating to a friend." Sometimes, a couple of off-the-wall questions can kick you loose from your stuckness. I figure it's worth a try.

Is that everything, then? Not a chance.

- **You can track submissions.**
  And in a very cool, very organized way. And even that ain't all.

- **You can see how long people have known each other, and what their relationships are.**
  Not only that, but you can see how those dates overlap in a chart page specifically for relationships. The program will tell you how old your folks are, will keep track of gender if you remember to click gender in the Characters section, and will also remind you that someone is dead, and tell you how long that person has been dead, in relationship to your story time.

- **I've used the program for one work day.**
  I'm betting there's more wonderful stuff I haven't even found yet.

So…

Is it perfect?

NOTE: Comments pending. Just got a note from Rob, who created this masterpiece, addressing the three issues I had with the program. He's already modified the Windows version of the program and the new version will be available later today. Mac version will follow.

Talk about WOW.

The wordcount chapter at a time and inconvenient issue:

The single-space type issue AND the no-blue-background/white text issue: