

Book Reviews

Book review: Two new books on T_EX in the Czech Republic

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With support from C_STUG, two interesting books in Czech appeared in 1995. Both authors are active C_STUG members. The author of the first book reviewed below also created the most recent C_ST_EX distribution, based on Eberhard Mattes' products, enhanced with a menu program that allows very user-friendly installation and daily use.

C_STUG has some difficulties with its present size (it would be helpful to have a full time employee to handle administrative work, contacts with members, publishing the journal, etc.); the last published issue of "Zpravodaj" was 4/1994. Nonetheless, C_STUG is active and interest in T_EX in the Czech and Slovak Republics is growing. This is the most important thing which would stimulate efforts to overcome administrative difficulties, especially with publishing of our journal.

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Petr Olšák, *Typografický systém T_EX (T_EX Typesetting system)*. C_STUG, Praha, 1995, 272 pages. ISBN 80-901950-0-8.

This book is based on the author's own experiences from his work and from administration of the subnet of the Czech Technical University; it also reflects his typographical education. The book is very attractive typographically, and is bound in a soft glossy cover in Springer's yellow colour. It contains a lot of tables, pictures, and seven appendices, all prepared with great care. This is by no means a book for beginners.

The book starts with a short and simply written introduction (an ant, Fred — a popular hero of Czech fairy tales — plays a role in it), continues with a description of "different T_EXs" (among other topics the macros of plain, $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{M}\mathcal{S}$ -T_EX and L^AT_EX are treated, as well as the role of In_iT_EX and virT_EX), and then browses among various topics related to T_EX. Special chapters are devoted to installation under DOS and UNIX, to the Czech and Slovak languages (they are similar to one another, and both are among the most heavily accented languages using the Latin alphabet), and to work with fonts (NFSS, virtual fonts, etc.). Other chapters contain information on T_EX as a programming language,

about METAFONT, and a few questions on the use of PostScript. The final three chapters contain explanations of how to handle pictures (METAFONT, **bm2font**, EPS), references and indexes, and how to document programs (**doc**, **C-WEB**). Much useful information is contained in the appendices, including a dictionary of T_EX primitives, information about T_EX archives, a list of useful books and articles, and font tables.

The coverage of the book reflects its origin: the author wrote a long series of articles on T_EX for Czech Software News. Some orthodox T_EXists may complain that the book is more about things related to T_EX than on T_EX itself. I found this fact positive: it contains material which one would search for with difficulty and which appears here in Czech for the first time. Sometimes an even more detailed explanation would be needed than the one given, but this is a book for daily use by experienced T_EX-users.

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Jiří Rybička, *L^AT_EX pro začátečníky (L^AT_EX for beginners)*. Konvoj, Brno, 1995, ISBN 80-85615-42-8.

This book reflects the author's experience from teaching at the Technical University, Brno. It is a completely rewritten part of his lecture notes on systems for computer typesetting which the author published three years ago in collaboration with Petr Příkryl. The content of this book is in a way more standard than that of Olšák's book, but it also contains a portion of less usual subjects like treating pictures (among five appendices one is, for example, devoted to the **bm2font** program, another to a description of dvi drivers of Eberhard Mattes). It also covers the latest development of L^AT_EX and the clear chapter structure helps in the study of the book. In comparison with the first reviewed book, this one will be really useful for beginners.

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