
The PracTeX Journal 2007-3-2008-1

The PracTeX Journal is an online publication of the TeX Users Group. Its web site is <http://tug.org/pracjourn>. All articles are available there.

The PracTeX Journal 2007-3, August 2007

Issue theme: Tools for TeX and LaTeX users.

FRANCISCO REINALDO, From the Editor

THE EDITORS, News from Around: Upcoming conferences in Pisa and Cluj (Romania); LaTeX workshop in Berkeley

FROM THE READERS, Feedback

THERESA SONG LOONG, The beginner's forest of LaTeX

Images kept floating away, and keeping the style within one project both beautiful and consistent took up a lot of time. I have never been really content with a word processor. For a large project containing lots of math formulas, I assumed that learning to use LaTeX would take as much time as trying to input the maths in a word processor. The final result was beautiful, but I was very wrong about how much time it would consume: using Greek fonts, making tables, using some packages, and trying to solve issues by reading incomprehensible package documentation (some of which didn't even explain how to use the package, only how it was coded) was very time-consuming indeed.

ANTERO NEVES, A minha experiência em LaTeX
[Article is in Portuguese.]

ARNE HENNINGSEN, Tools for collaborative writing of scientific L^AT_EX documents

Collaborative writing of documents requires a strong synchronisation among authors. This paper describes a possible way to organise the collaborative preparation of scientific L^AT_EX documents. The presented solution is primarily based on the version control system Subversion. The paper describes how Subversion can be used together with several other software tools and L^AT_EX packages to organise the collaborative preparation of L^AT_EX documents.

ARTHUR BUCHSBAUM and FRANCISCO REINALDO, A tool for logicians

turnstile is a L^AT_EX package that allows typesetting of the mathematical logic symbol, “turnstile”, in all of the various ways it is used. This package was developed because there was no easy way in L^AT_EX to typeset this symbol in its various forms, and place expressions above and below the crossbar.

CHARILAOS SKIADAS and THOMAS KJOSMOEN, L^AT_EXing with TextMate

This article discusses the TextMate text editor and its many capabilities that make working with L^AT_EX documents a lot easier. Some of its features include syntax highlighting, various methods for automatic insertion of text (such as the begin-end blocks in environments and automatic labels for section commands), lookup of labels and cite keys based on partial matches, as well as tools for dealing with large projects.

TextMate is designed with the user in mind, so it is easy to customize it to your needs. During its short lifetime (about two and a half years) it has gained many supporters and has become a very popular text editor for the Mac OS X platform, and especially among L^AT_EX users, as can be seen from the large number of L^AT_EX related questions on the TextMate mailing list.

In addition to this article, the first author’s weblog can be used as a starting point for learning more about using TextMate for L^AT_EX:

<http://skiadas.dcostanet.net/afterthought>

VINICIUS PROVENZANO, A L^AT_EX 2_ε “Linux-like” environment on Mac OS X

Free and commercial L^AT_EX 2_ε implementations for Mac OS X are available on the Internet. If you have always used a Mac, the best starting point is to download and install one of these systems. However if you have always used Linux and now find yourself in front of a brand new Mac OS X machine and have no time to learn new tools from scratch, your best option would be to use your familiar Linux applications on Mac OS X. This paper aims to show you how to install

and configure a Linux-like L^AT_EX 2_ε environment in Mac OS X, using Fink, t_eL_AT_EX and Kile.

JÉRÔME LAURENS, Will T_EX ever be WYSIWYG or the pdf synchronization story

Why can editing Plain, L^AT_EX or ConT_EXt documents be such a pain? Of course, we can use dedicated text editors and environments that are very handy, but we are far from the efficient graphical user interface of a modern word processor. In this article, we will point out some of the reasons why T_EX has no WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) user interface and we will discuss the possible remedies. One of them is the pdf synchronization implemented in the pdfsync package. This technology will be explained, and we will see its benefits and its limitations. Finally, we consider routes towards a better user experience. Here, we are mainly concerned with L^AT_EX and pdf output.

ALEXANDER TSYPLAKOV, TpX — a drawing tool for L^AT_EX

This article describes TpX, a lightweight, easy-to-use graphical editor for the Windows platform, presents guidelines for its use, and discusses some features and limitations.

DUVVURI VENUGOPAL, Tools for creating bibliographic databases for use with BIB_TE_X

By using BIB_TE_X we can easily change the style of bibliography/references according to the style of the journal. But creating bibliographic databases for use with BIB_TE_X is very cumbersome. This article describes the various software tools available for creating bibliographic databases easily, particularly for the Windows platform.

UWE ZIEGENHAGEN, L^AT_EX document management with Subversion

From the single-author composition of a bachelor’s thesis to the creation of a book by a team, there are many occasions where version management of a document may be helpful. With the aim of overcoming the shortcomings of CVS (Concurrent Version System) the Subversion version control system was implemented.

In this article I will describe the Subversion setup on Windows and Linux systems, the elementary steps of document management and various L^AT_EX packages working hand in hand with Subversion.

MARTIN SCHARRER, Version control of L^AT_EX documents with svn-multi

This paper describes how to use the Subversion software to version control your L^AT_EX files while also placing the current revision information in your document using the package `svn-multi` (v1.3 or later).

It covers all steps needed to set up and use Subversion, and to manage multi-file documents. Usage examples are provided for both basic and advanced features, to allow the reader to get the most out of the package.

DAVID WALDEN, Travels in T_EX Land: Fonts, self-publishing and another reason I like T_EX

In this column in each issue I muse on my wanderings around the T_EX world. Section 1 of this column describes some work I did organizing my experiences of using different fonts within T_EX. Section 2 describes use of an external processor in combination with T_EX. Section 3 gives an update on my self-publishing efforts using T_EX.

THE EDITORS, Ask Nelly: How do I create inline numbered lists the L^AT_EX way?

THE EDITORS, Distractions — Alea iacta est!

The PracT_EX Journal 2007-4, December 2007

Issue theme: Teaching L^AT_EX and T_EX.

PAUL BLAGA AND LANCE CARNES, From the Editor

THE EDITORS, News from Around: Conferences in Pisa and Cluj (Romania); L^AT_EX workshop in Berkeley; Helvetica — the movie

PAUL BLAGA, Teaching L^AT_EX: Why and how?

We discuss some of the problems related to the process of learning L^AT_EX and the opportunities presented by a L^AT_EX course. We also propose a syllabus for such a course and briefly mention some of the L^AT_EX books which, in our opinion, are suitable to be adopted as course material.

VINCENT VERFAILLE, A new package for conference proceedings

The new `confproc` package is a simple and efficient solution to build conference proceedings. Built from scripts developed for the DAFx-06 proceedings, it deals with various aspects: layout issues, table of contents, index of authors, maybe a general bibliography, etc. It combines the `pdfpages` package (to include PDF papers), the `hyperref` package (to provide hyperlinks) and other packages; and it runs `pdfLATEX`.

KUMAR M SENTHIL, L^AT_EX tools for life scientists (BioT_EXniques?)

L^AT_EX has been a long time favorite of mathematicians and physicists. However, many packages are now available that have tremendously extended the capabilities of L^AT_EX beyond routine typesetting and provide biologists new avenues to not only typeset documents, but also help in the visualization of

membrane proteins and in the analysis of DNA or amino acid sequences by multiple sequence alignment. I will discuss with examples some of the L^AT_EX packages and tools that are presently available for the biologists. Some scientific journals (for biological research) now accept (L^A)T_EX formatted manuscripts, although they are still a rarity. This article will provide references for those sources that might be helpful to prospective authors from life sciences who want to submit manuscripts in (L^A)T_EX format. This article is written from the perspective of a biologist who might be interested in creating better documents using L^AT_EX & friends.

ROHIT VISHAL KUMAR, Using L^AT_EX for writing a thesis

L^AT_EX has been successfully used for typesetting widely different document formats. However, the complexity of typesetting some commonly used documents acts as a deterrent for some people who would like to use L^AT_EX for their work. Over the years, I have noticed students who come to L^AT_EX eager in their anticipation of using L^AT_EX, lose their enthusiasm midway, and revert back to using Word. In this article, I have tried to describe my own experiences of typesetting a doctoral thesis using widely available packages, in the hope that students can see the ease with which L^AT_EX can be used for complex work.

WYBO DEKKER, The `ctable` package

The `ctable` package provides a `\ctable` command for typesetting table and figure floats. You will not need to type the usual nested `begin...end` sequences, as `\ctable` is a command, not an environment. `\ctable` takes only four arguments, but the optional first one may hold many `key=value` pairs and makes `ctable` very flexible and extensible. It uses Simon Fear's `booktabs` package for better vertical spacing around horizontal rules and it provides facilities for making table footnotes.

NICOLA TALBOT, Teaching L^AT_EX for a staff development course

I taught L^AT_EX at the University of East Anglia from 1997 to 2004 as part of the staff development course. In this article I will describe the headaches and lessons I learnt which helped me improve the course. This article is intended to assist those who are planning to teach L^AT_EX in a practical environment.

S. PARTHASARATHY, Brevity is the soul of wit: How L^AT_EX can help

This essay is about using “lists” in L^AT_EX. Lists are very useful, in presenting material in a crisp

and compact form. This makes technical documents, less verbose, and easier to follow. The author hopes that this paper will make L^AT_EX enjoyable for more people.

KEITH JONES, Writing your dissertation using L^AT_EX

The old adage, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink,” applies when trying to convince students to change to L^AT_EX for writing their thesis or dissertation. Students like to stay in their “comfort” zone and do not look favorably toward the work of learning a new software system. To date I have convinced one professor and two students to use L^AT_EX as their primary document formatting system.

JONATHAN FINE, Interactive T_EX training and support

It is today practical and helpful to provide T_EX as a web service. This allows us a new approach to learning T_EX.

LAPO MORI and MAURIZIO HIMMELMANN, Writing curriculum vitae with L^AT_EX

This paper presents the tools that are currently available to prepare the curriculum vitae with L^AT_EX with a critical analysis of packages and classes.

DAVID WALDEN, Travels in T_EX Land: Benefits of thinking a little bit like a programmer

In this column in each issue I muse on my wanderings around the T_EX world. Section 1 of this column provides another illustration of the benefit of defining a few simple macros for a particular T_EX project. Section 2 gives another example of using an external processor in combination with T_EX. Section 3 gives another example.

THE EDITORS, Ask Nelly: How do I write matrices in the text?

THE EDITORS, Distractions — Music scores with L^AT_EX

The PracT_EX Journal 2008-1, April 2008

Issue theme: L^AT_EXniques.

YURI ROBBERS, From the Editor

THE EDITORS, News from Around: T_EX program updates; Bigelow introduces Grotesque; Day of L^AT_EX; Keming (?)

LAPO MORI, Writing a thesis with L^AT_EX

This article provides useful tools to write a thesis with L^AT_EX. It analyzes the typical problems that

arise while writing a thesis with L^AT_EX and suggests improved solutions by handling easy packages. Many suggestions can be applied to book and article styles, as well.

JIM HEFFERON, L^AT_EX goes with the flow

One advantage of T_EX and friends is that they fit naturally into a work flow where there are many tools, each good at its own job. This paper gives an example involving a system for doing class evaluations online.

ISTA ZAHN, Learning to Sweave in APA style

Until recently I used Microsoft Word and clones such as OpenOffice to write academic manuscripts, as do most in my field. The standard software toolkit for many psychology professors and graduate students also includes SPSS for performing statistical analyses, and perhaps EndNote or similar reference manager software for generating bibliographies. These tools work, but my experience suggests that L^AT_EX-based solutions have significant advantages. This article describes how to use Sweave to write L^AT_EX documents in APA style, complete with results, tables, and figures generated by R.

YOGESHWARSING CALLEECHARAN, Using BIBT_EX to produce customized layouts

Normal L^AT_EX and T_EX usage does not require touching existing `.bst` files nor creating new ones. However, BIBT_EX offers several interesting commands which can be used to do many things apart from bibliography generation. In this article, it is demonstrated how customized layouts for a database can be created without much trouble.

DAVID WALDEN, Travels in T_EX Land: Another ornament for “thought breaks”

In this column in each issue I muse on my wanderings around the T_EX world. I suggested at the end of section 2 of my last column that I would continue my investigation of colors and T_EX in this issue. However, I was distracted for much of the period between issues by a health problem (now resolved). Thus, in this issue I only have time to touch *briefly* again on a topic from my column in TPJ 2005-4 — another ornament to use for “thought breaks”.

THE EDITORS, Ask Nelly: How do I find the files required to compile my document?

THE EDITORS, Distractions — Spirograph with PSTricks