Final TTN Editorial

[Editor's note: Following the decision to merge \TeX{} and TUG News (TTN) into TUGboat, a number of other items required publication, and so it is only as of this issue of TUGboat that the merger takes shape. A number of items originally destined for TTN now appear here, but only a few suffer from datedness. In his unpublished editorial regarding the merger, TTN's editor, Peter Flynn, made a number of points which are best included in this return of TTN, now an integral component to TUGboat.

It is with a mixture of relief and delight that we include some of the material which was intended for publication in TTN, issues 4.3 and 4.4.]

\TeX{} and TUG News and TUGboat

At the 1995 meeting in St. Petersburg Beach, it was decided that TUGboat and TTN should once again be published between the same covers.

The most overriding issue in the merger was that having two separate publications was diluting the effort and militating against members finding the information they want. Another factor was that it was considered less economically viable for TUG to maintain two publications, each with their own production budget.

Neither TUGboat nor TTN will change their own unique flavour, at least not immediately, and there is no question of either publication being forced to adopt any elements of style or editorial policy from the other (I have known Barbara Beeton and admired her work on TUGboat for too long to have any wish to impose on her). Barbara and I have also discussed the technical problems that will face us, and we feel sanguine that they can be overcome.

Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est

One canard I wish to lay to rest before we go any further, however. Much concern has been expressed by some scientific and technical members of TUG — \TeX{}'s original constituency — that TTN and the decision in Santa Barbara to unbundle TUGboat from the TUG membership fee meant that TUG and TUGboat are in some way being watered down.

To many members this will seem strange, as no-one who reads TUGboat or knows its reputation could for more than a second imagine that anyone associated with it would permit that to happen.

To other members, however, the implication that TUG should restrict TUGboat to technical discussions, and to mathematical or scientific work has unsettled them. Many non-scientist, non-technical TUG members use \TeX{} for purposes other than for typesetting mathematics, a fact which has long been recognised by TUG, in that TUGboat regularly publishes articles on linguistic and other areas of the humanities (albeit necessarily of a technical nature).

The \textit{raison d'etre} of TTN was that TUG should try to embrace these members (and the potential membership in their hinterland) by providing a publication which did not assume as high a level of technical expertise as that possessed by some readers of TUGboat.

In this, TTN has, I believe, been uniquely successful. It has been harshly criticised for dragging \TeX{} down to a non-technical level — and I am delighted to have been a part of that. I believe that only by providing this kind of service can we help those members (who wish to expand their use of \TeX{}) start the technical learning curve.

It is therefore significant that in reviewing the publications of TUG, TTN should be brought within the fold of TUGboat. An increasing sophistication on the part of the non-technical users may indicate that perhaps four years of separate publication has had the desired effect.

○ Peter Flynn
Computer Center
University College
Cork, Ireland
pflynn@curia.ucc.ie