
Editorial Comments

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T_EX 3.141592, METAFONT 2.71828

On December 23, 2002, Don Knuth posted new versions of T_EX, METAFONT, Tangle, VFtoVP and related files. Here are the highlights of the new distribution.

T_EX 3.141592 contains fixes to four bugs: two affecting leaders, and two affecting alignments.

METAFONT 2.71828 has one fix for the auto-rounding of huge paths.

Tangle 4.5 contains a trivial change re numeric comments, “possibly unnecessary”.

VFtoVP 1.3 has one small correction to the out-of-range error correction.

For `plain.tex`, `hyphen.tex` and `plain.mf`, only the uncopyright notice has changed, to clarify under what conditions the file may be copied, modified and redistributed. (Copying and redistribution of the unmodified files is unlimited; modifications are permitted, but only if the name of the resulting file is changed. “Everybody’s `plain.tex` file should be the same, worldwide.”)

For `cmbase.mf`, `accent.mf` and `csc.mf`, small changes were made to improve robustness. The shape of the numeral 7 is altered slightly in `cmbx5` through `cmbx8`. No metrics are affected.

Details of the changes are recorded in the files `errata.tex`, `tex82.bug`, `mf84.bug`, `cm85.bug`, `errorlog.tex` and `errata.ten`.

Most changes will not affect most users, so upgrading is not urgent. The new versions will be included in the 2003 edition of T_EX Live.

Glitch in *TUGboat* 22:4

Again a glitch. . .

The article on “Eukleides: A geometry drawing language”, by Christian Obrecht (pages 334-337), was published without the proper graphics, only the graphics calls. (It was processed without using Eukleides, which was required.)

A corrected version appears in this issue.

Farewell, Michael Downes

Michael John Downes, the principal author of the AMS- \LaTeX packages, and an employee of the American Mathematical Society since 1985, died on March 8, 2003. He had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer in December 2002.

Michael was born August 2, 1958, grew up in Lansing, Michigan, and attended Michigan State University, graduating from the University’s honors program with a degree in Russian and a minor in mathematics. After graduation, Michael moved to Rhode Island, where he worked for 17 years as both an editor and a publications technical specialist.

Members of the AMS may have seen Michael at several annual meetings, where he presented sessions for AMS authors in the use of AMS- \LaTeX ; he also wrote an article on this topic for the AMS *Notices* (T_EX and \LaTeX 2_ε, volume 49, number 11, December 2002, pages 1384–1391). He was a member of the \LaTeX team, helping to plan its future direction; this involvement led to the acceptance of AMS- \LaTeX as a “required” component of \LaTeX .

Michael was active in his church and community, and looked for opportunities to help others. He leaves three daughters, his former wife, his mother, four brothers, three sisters, and many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins. He will be greatly missed.

Last cartoon by Roy Preston

This issue contains the last of the type-related cartoons drawn by Roy Preston that we’ve been able to enjoy for the past few years. Roy has “retired” from cartoon-drawing for personal reasons. We will miss his wit and wry observations.

Thanks for brightening our days, Roy.

A web site for Arabic typography

The web site <http://www.arabictypography.com> is a non-commercial site that was developed as an academic project in the Netherlands. Designed and maintained by a young Lebanese designer, it provides information on typography and calligraphy, recommendations for resources, links to related sites, and animated examples. A Flash plugin is required to view the site.

Recognition for the Plantin Museum

The Plantin Museum, in Antwerp, Belgium, has been entered in UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register. This lists documentary heritage which has been deemed of world significance. The citation for the Plantin Museum reads as follows:

The Officina Plantiniana can be regarded as the most important printing and publishing house that Belgium has ever had. It was founded in 1555 by Christoffel Plantin who, in one of the most turbulent periods of Western history, succeeded in making himself the greatest typographer of his day, and was continued until 1876 by his descendants, the Moretuses.

The rise and the heyday of the Officina in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries coincide with an era in which scholars from the Low Countries—present-day Belgium and Holland—were able to play an extremely important part in the development of Western thought.

The history of the Officina Plantiniana is therefore more than an account of the fortunes of a large capitalist enterprise: it also reflects and is part of the great cultural currents of the West. Since the business archives of the house have, providentially, been preserved almost intact it is possible to illuminate three hundred years of book history in all its aspects and problems with an incredible wealth of detailed and accurate data.

The Register can be accessed at <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm/>; in the panel to the left, click on the entry Memory of the World: Register.

The museum is well worth a visit, both for the ambience of an early printing house and type foundry and for the exhibits from the extensive library, including not only works printed there, but also many other important early books.

The museum’s web site is found at http://museum.antwerpen.be/plantin_moretus/.

An alphabet game for children of all ages

Another web offering is this charming little puzzle made in Flash: <http://www.orgdot.com/abc/>.

It invites one to construct letters of the alphabet from line segments that rotate on a grid. In addition to the usual 26 letters of English, there's a bonus (it was created in Norway): \emptyset , \mathcal{A} , and \mathring{A} .

Making T_EX Work on CTAN

A free html version of Norm Walsh's book, originally published by O'Reilly, is given in the file `info/makingtexwork/mtw-1.0.1-html.tar.gz`.

The root of the html tree is `makingtexwork/html/index.html` in the expanded archive.

Many thanks to Norm for submitting this package to CTAN.

T_EX for the Impatient

This book was originally published in 1990 by Addison-Wesley, written by Paul Abrahams, Kathryn Hargreaves, and Karl Berry. It contains tutorial and reference information on primitive and plain T_EX, as well as introducing Eplain (<http://tug.org/eplain/>). It does not discuss L^AT_EX.

It has been officially declared out of print and Addison-Wesley has reverted all rights to the authors, who decided to make the book available in source form, under the GNU Free Documentation License, as their way of supporting the community which supported the book in the first place.

The book will be included in future editions of T_EX Live. It is also part of the GNU Project.

Primary distribution point:

`ftp://tug.org/tex/impatient`

CTAN location:

`http://ctan.org/tex-archive/info/impatient`

Source repository: `http://savannah.gnu.org/projects/teximpatiant`

Email contact: `impatiant@tug.org`.

Information about the free edition is included in the preface, the copyright page, and the **README**.

The authors would be interested in hearing about any projects undertaken with this material. They do not plan to make any further changes or additions to the book, except for correction of any outright errors reported to them, and perhaps inclusion of the illustrations.

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