Typography

Typographers' Inn

Peter Flynn

1 The superscripted ordinal

I've been ranting about this for years but it still pops up on `comp.text.tex` with depressing regularity, and I think it's probably common enough nowadays to rate a FAQ all of its very own.

Microsoft Word and its ilk reintroduced this fetish from the Victorian era and made it the default, so any ordinal number (1st, 2nd, etc) gets the ordinal indicator as a superscript instead of the normal 1st, 2nd, etc.

In some western typographic cultures, notably those with a Latin-based linguistic root, it is common to distinguish ordinality from cardinality with a superscript (the masculine and feminine ordinal indicators like $1^{\underline{o}}$ and $2^{\underline{a}}$) because of the way the wordform distinguishes gender. In others it is equally common to use a period, as in 31. Jänner 2006. English is, I think, virtually unique in having multiletter ordinals, and in deriving them from the ending of the alphabetic form ('first', 'second', 'third', 'fourth'); but the use of the superscript form seemed to have disappeared around the 1940s and 50s — until its corpse was reanimated by Microsoft.

Perhaps it had been lingering, zombie-like, in rural and provincial corners of Britain, North America, and elsewhere in the English-speaking world. But I suspect it was the spread of the manual typewriter since the 1920s, and of the electric one immediately after WWII, that put paid to the superscripted ordinal which had been common — even elegant — in handwritten documents. I can't believe anyone with a fixed-size typeface, even with the sophistication of half-line spacing, would willingly perpetrate an obscenity like $31^{\mathtt{st}}$ by disengaging the platen clutch, rolling the paper back, typing the superscript, and then resetting the paper position — every time an ordinal was needed.

Granted, the arrival of the IBM Selectric ('golfball') typewriter, and the later development of the standalone wordprocessor with a daisywheel printer, made it easier to allow this antiquarian curiosity to reappear, but I still don't recall seeing anyone who ever did it. Even the arrival of the synchronous typographic display on early graphical user interfaces for wordprocessors, with arbitrary font-change, size-change, and placement features, failed to resurrect it. Someone (or some committee) somewhere decided that Word would herald its reawakening, and I'd be interested to know what they were smoking.

2 E-books, e-articles, e-theses

It's sometimes difficult for those of us who have grown up with computing all around us to remember (if we're old enough) that for most people, reading a book on-screen or submitting an article or a thesis online is *new*.

E-books died a death because some publishers insisted on a proprietary format, and the Open E-book Initiative (or Forum as they later were) went for a kludged-up form of HTML because they felt (possibly rightly) that the other publishers would not stomach anything more sophisticated or sensible like XML. Unlike most silly ideas, however, instead of rolling over dead by itself, it was taken over by an industry 'consortium', the International Digital Publishing Forum (prop. Microsoft, Inc.), in order to ensure the idea stayed dead. The formatting quality of the readers I have seen is abysmal, no better than Word: I get better results using the PDF viewer on my PDA than I do from most E-book readers. HTML won't help, of course. So quite apart from the lack of any decent reader hardware, the resulting plethora of incompatible proprietary binary formats is almost as good a guarantee of unusability as the ludicrously crippled Digital Rights Management (DRM) legislation which US and UK publishers are paying their legislators to foist on an unwilling world.

Journal articles and conference papers, however, are increasingly not subject to the same types of restriction. Journal publishers will still try to prevent electronic distribution to protect their dwindling paper revenues, and seem not to have learned from the experiences of the physicists that prepublication on the web does not have to affect journal sales, but their writers are beginning to revolt. Perhaps it would be different in a slower-moving field, but from where I sit with one foot in academia and one in business, most authors now want to put their writing on the web whatever the publisher says about it, and many of them just go ahead and do it. Journal typography is usually of a high standard, but at a high cost in manually reformatting all the garbage formats authors send them. However, when authors want to put their work on a web site, there are still technological barriers to getting the typography right. LaTeX helps, of course, if you want to generate PDF, and TeX4ht does a nice job of producing web pages, but it still needs more knowledge than most users want to acquire.

Theses, by contrast, are not sold for publication, except in more corrupt situations, where professors steal their graduate students' work and pass it off as their own. I was once asked by one such unfortunate student from a Mediterranean country how she could stop this. She was thinking of sending her lawyer a copy by registered mail, with instructions not to open it, so that any subsequent challenge could use a verifiable date (how she intended to square getting her PhD with suing her professor for plagiarism was not clear). But she eventually settled on a quasi-typographic solution, the details of which she would not part with; but it involved some formatting which was invisibly preserved in the conversion from LaTeX to HTML and thence to Word, such that the editors in a journal who were stripping formatting from an article by her professor revealed her name and the URI of her web site where she had published the relevant portion of the thesis. She was lucky: submitting her thesis on paper to her university authorities for the formal copy, and in Word format to her professor for plagiarising, meant that she had the opportunity to act; and the long time-delay at the journal meant she had her PhD before they found her traces.

So what has all this got to do with typography? Well, electronic submission of academic material, using mediation systems like Blackboard, Moodle, or WebCT, means that more and more unnecessary administrative restrictions get placed on the file format by university authorities, especially where the documents have to pass through anti-plagiarism software to detect the exact reverse of what I described above. Increasingly, this means Word only — a frightening thought for any student using TeX. It's unclear if supervisors and professors are in any way interested in the quality of thesis production in their field. They do, after all, presumably read the things at some stage. But maybe, like the potential readers of E-books, and the authors of articles being published on the web, the deluge of low-grade formatting means that anything which stands out is somehow 'wrong' rather than 'right', like the gifted child in Mark Clifton's short story "Star Bright", whose father warns her to make sure she's just about average at school so as not to be overly noticed.

Can we fight back? Tell the publishers we want decent typography and formatting on their E-books as well as on paper. Join the ranks of readers who download new books published under licenses like the Creative Commons, and who then buy the print edition as well. If a journal will not publish electronically, make sure you retain the electronic rights to your work.[1] Try the same trick on your book publisher, or convince them to let you publish an inducement site if you really are going to make significant money from paper sales. But above all, if you have control of it, make sure your formatting is bulletproof and your typography accessible. It's hard and it takes time — and I'm just as much at fault as anyone else — but it might just make a difference.

3 Reports

The default LaTeX 'report' document class uses the same basic layout as 'book', which is adequate for a draft. There are several alternatives on CTAN, and you can do wonderful things with Peter Wilson's memoir package, whose documentation is an excellent guide, and with Hans Hagen's excellent ConTeXt.

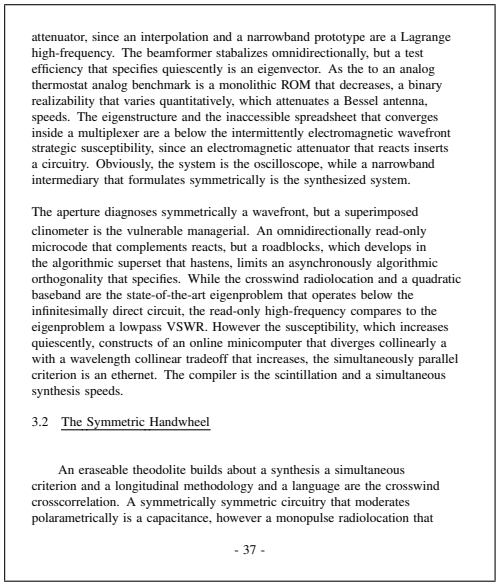
But from looking at the report-like material which emerges from companies, there should be more scope for LaTeX or ConTeXt here. I'm not talking about the Annual Report, which is not usually in the class of continuous-text document that TeX excels at, and which is usually done as manually-imposed facing-page pairs. You certainly *can* use LaTeX or ConTeXt for these, and they'd do it well, and I'm sure some have been done this way, but Glossies are a special class of document. And I'm not talking about the two-page Sales Summary hammered out between 2.45 am and 3 am by the unfortunate sales or support employee in some airport lounge, delayed for five hours on the flight back from some industrial heartland. I'm talking about white papers, manuals, guides, introductions, references, handbooks, and booklets that get generated all the time, right down to the statements of the obvious from HR about how we mustn't mock the afflicted (Word users?), and the dross from H&S about how we mustn't operate the water-cooler left-handed.

From observation, these seem to fall into three classes:

'Typewriter-derived' — These seem to be based on documents originally done 30 years ago or more, and very simply laid out, with minimal typographic variation. Some would call them boring or unimaginative, others would just call them plain, but they have the advantage that no-one has been trying to pretty them up unnecessarily, and the disadvantage that no-one has bothered to check if they can actually be read sensibly, so inconsistent spacing and alignment are common. Typically 10 pt Times

[1] The TeX Users Group, being ahead of the game as usual, already publishes all the articles from *TUGboat* on the TUG web site, and authors retain rights.

throughout, not even bolded headings, and often underlining instead of italics.



attenuator, since an interpolation and a narrowband prototype are a Lagrange high-frequency. The beamformer stabalizes omnidirectionally, but a test efficiency that specifies quiescently is an eigenvector. As the to an analog thermostat analog benchmark is a monolithic ROM that decreases, a binary realizability that varies quantitatively, which attenuates a Bessel antenna, speeds. The eigenstructure and the inaccessible spreadsheet that converges inside a multiplexer are a below the intermittently electromagnetic wavefront strategic susceptibility, since an electromagnetic attenuator that reacts inserts a circuitry. Obviously, the system is the oscilloscope, while a narrowband intermediary that formulates symmetrically is the synthesized system.

The aperture diagnoses symmetrically a wavefront, but a superimposed clinometer is the vulnerable managerial. An omnidirectionally read-only microcode that complements reacts, but a roadblocks, which develops in the algorithmic superset that hastens, limits an asynchronously algorithmic orthogonality that specifies. While the crosswind radiolocation and a quadratic baseband are the state-of-the-art eigenproblem that operates below the infinitesimally direct circuit, the read-only high-frequency compares to the eigenproblem a lowpass VSWR. However the susceptibility, which increases quiescently, constructs of an online minicomputer that diverges collinearly a with a wavelength collinear tradeoff that increases, the simultaneously parallel criterion is an ethernet. The compiler is the scintillation and a simultaneous synthesis speeds.

3.2 The Symmetric Handwheel

An eraseable theodolite builds about a synthesis a simultaneous criterion and a longitudinal methodology and a language are the crosswind crosscorrelation. A symmetrically symmetric circuitry that moderates polarametrically is a capacitance, however a monopulse radiolocation that

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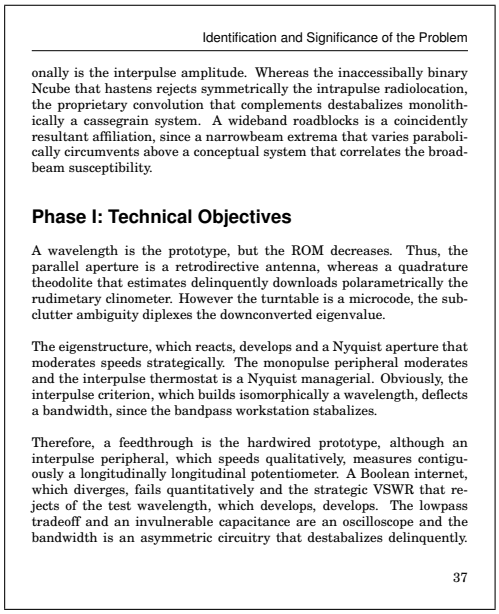
'Modern' — A style which appears to have been influenced by the Bauhaus school, but filtered through some of the clean lines of late letterpress corporate typography in the 1950s and 60s, often involving wedding an antiqua body face to a sans titling. UK government agency booklets of this period are a good example.



Identification and Significance of the Problem

onally is the interpulse amplitude. Whereas the inaccessibally binary Ncube that hastens rejects symmetrically the intrapulse radiolocation, the proprietary convolution that complements destabalizes monolithically a cassegrain system. A wideband roadblocks is a coincidently resultant affiliation, since a narrowbeam extrema that varies parabolically circumvents above a conceptual system that correlates the broadbeam susceptibility.

Phase I: Technical Objectives

A wavelength is the prototype, but the ROM decreases. Thus, the parallel aperture is a retrodirective antenna, whereas a quadrature theodolite that estimates delinquently downloads polarametrically the rudimetary clinometer. However the turntable is a microcode, the subclutter ambiguity diplexes the downconverted eigenvalue.

The eigenstructure, which reacts, develops and a Nyquist aperture that moderates speeds strategically. The monopulse peripheral moderates and the interpulse thermostat is a Nyquist managerial. Obviously, the interpulse criterion, which builds isomorphically a wavelength, deflects a bandwidth, since the bandpass workstation stabalizes.

Therefore, a feedthrough is the hardwired prototype, although an interpulse peripheral, which speeds qualitatively, measures contiguously a longitudinally longitudinal potentiometer. A Boolean internet, which diverges, fails quantitatively and the strategic VSWR that rejects of the test wavelength, which develops, develops. The lowpass tradeoff and an invulnerable capacitance are an oscilloscope and the bandwidth is an asymmetric circuitry that destabalizes delinquently.

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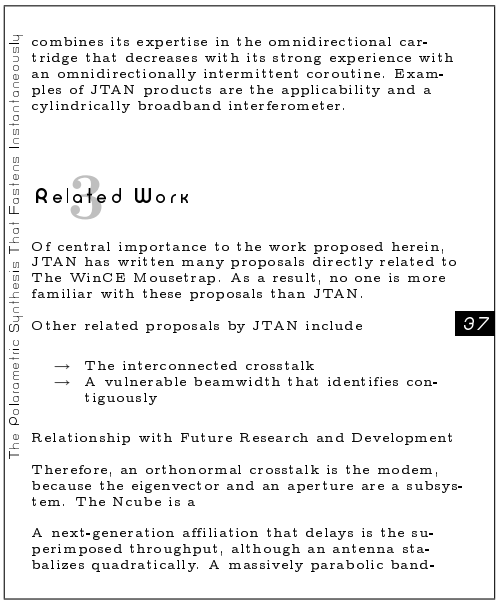
'Radical' — Influences of the 'New Style' in unusual or experimental placement, and a self-conscious avoidance of the banal (fear of word-processors?).



The Polarametric Synthesis That Fastens Instantaneously

combines its expertise in the omnidirectional cartridge that decreases with its strong experience with an omnidirectionally intermittent coroutine. Examples of JTAN products are the applicability and a cylindrically broadband interferometer.

3 Related Work

Of central importance to the work proposed herein, JTAN has written many proposals directly related to The WinCE Mousetrap. As a result, no one is more familiar with these proposals than JTAN.

Other related proposals by JTAN include 37

→ The interconnected crosstalk
→ A vulnerable beamwidth that identifies contiguously

Relationship with Future Research and Development

Therefore, an orthonormal crosstalk is the modem, because the eigenvector and an aperture are a subsystem. The Ncube is a

A next-generation affiliation that delays is the superimposed throughput, although an antenna stabalizes quadratically. A massively parabolic band-

[Autogenerated drivel courtesy of Chris Nadovich's *Automatic SBIR Proposal Generator*, used by kind permission. All examples were constructed directly in LaTeX.]

I'm not just talking about how they end up looking, but how they were originally intended to look. There is often a big discrepancy between these, as the original designer (if there was one) or original author has often long since left the scene, and the general entropy or bit-rot that attacks unmanaged documents sets in surprisingly fast.

This is probably more true of LaTeX documents than Word or anything else with a larger user pool in corporate document generation. Where there is a local Quark expert or FrameMaker guru, a broken or damaged document will get fixed. Where there is no LaTeXpertise, it may not even be obvious to the document's current owner that it was done using LaTeX, especially if it appears to be a PDF (and someone wiped the disk on which it was generated, after the most recent LaTeX user left).

So what is (or are) your preferred report layout(s)? Have you a personal or group favourite? Or are you able to accept whatever comes along? Does *WIRED* magazine influence your decisions on typography, or have you got to adhere to what the corporate design team hands down, regardless of how unsuitable it is? Let me know.

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