
From the President

Karl Berry

Conferences

TUG 2010 (<http://tug.org/tug2010>) was a great success, with Don Knuth's earthshaking (or at least side-splitting) announcement, and numerous participants from all over the T_EX world. Video recordings of many talks are at <http://river-valley.tv/conferences/tug-2010>, thanks to Kaveh Bazargan and River Valley Technologies.

As part of the conference, a commemorative book was prepared, with selected articles from *TUGboat* by the Stanford T_EX project members, along with a foreword by Barbara Beeton and drawings by Duane Bibby, some especially commissioned for the anniversary. The hardcover book is available from the TUG store and general online bookstores. Also, the full PDF is available online to TUG members in the members area — <http://tug.org/store/tug10>.

Looking ahead to 2011, the TUG meeting will be held in Cairo, Egypt, from November 14–17. Hosam Fahmy, long-time TUG supporter and *TUGboat* contributor, is the chief organizer. <http://tug.org/tug2011> will be updated as planning proceeds.

<http://tug.org/meetings> has information on most T_EX meetings, past, present, and future.

Interviews

Since my last column, Dave Walden has interviewed Bart Childs, Joe Weening, Frank Liang, and Herbert Voß for the TUG Interview Corner (<http://tug.org/interviews>).

Incidentally, the book of interviews we prepared last year is still available — <http://tug.org/store/texpeople>. The full PDF for this book is now also in the TUG members area.

Software

The 2010 release of the T_EX Collection software was made near the beginning of September. It's been available for download from CTAN since that time. The physical DVDs have been manufactured and should begin mailing as this *TUGboat* goes to press.

The 2010 release contains the same major items as in the past few years: T_EX Live, MacT_EX, proT_EXt, and a CTAN snapshot. More details at <http://tug.org/texcollection>.

Again, we welcome anyone's participation, from testing the final candidate release to core development. And thanks to all the many, many, people involved already at every level.

◇ Karl Berry
<http://tug.org/TUGboat/Pres/>

Editorial comments

Barbara Beeton

Matthew Carter named MacArthur Fellow

Matthew Carter, type designer par excellence, is among the 23 Fellows named by the MacArthur Foundation for 2010. This award, sometimes called a “genius grant”, consists of \$500,000, no strings attached, over a period of five years. It is awarded “to talented individuals who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction.”

Carter's citation reads, in part,

... a master type designer who crafts letterforms of unequalled elegance and precision for a seemingly limitless range of applications and media. Throughout his career, which spans the migration of text from the printed page to the computer screen, he has pursued typographic solutions for the rapidly changing landscape of text-based communications. He has cut metal letterforms by hand in the manner invented over four centuries ago, created enduring works for machine- and phototype-setting, and produced many of the world's most widely used digital fonts.

Also among this year's Fellows is Nicholas Benson, stone carver, of the John Stevens Shop, Newport, Rhode Island. Like his father and grandfather, John and John, Jr. (“Fud”), Nicholas is a master of hand letter carving and a calligrapher. The family's inscriptional works embellish many important monuments and memorials in the U.S. In addition to his practice of this craft, Benson is “committed to teaching young artisans, who will create their own works and ensure that the legacy of this centuries-old artistic practice endures.” Benson is currently working in Washington, DC, on the new Martin Luther King National Memorial, on a site halfway between the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. Nicholas is the second member of the Benson family to be recognized by the MacArthur Foundation; in 1986, his uncle Richard, a photographer and emeritus dean of the Yale University School of Art, was named a Fellow.

Carter and Benson are not the first “craftsmen of letters” to be recognized as MacArthur Fellows. Chuck Bigelow, creator with his partner, Kris Holmes, of the Lucida fonts, and now Melbert B. Cary Distinguished Professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology (the chair formerly occupied by Hermann Zapf), was named a Fellow in 1982.

More information about the award and the Fellows appears at www.macfound.org.

Indie Excellence Awards for self-published books

Increasingly, T_EX users are choosing self-publishing. The Indie Excellence Awards, now in their fifth year, are sponsored by a marketing consultant with experience in bringing independently produced books to public attention.

All English-language books available for sale online or off, both e-books and in print, with publication dates from 2008–2011 inclusive are eligible. The deadline for submission is 31 March 2011. An entry fee is involved. Winners and finalists will be announced in May 2011. See www.indieexcellence.com.

City maps made entirely of type

Have you ever tried to follow a street on a city map, only to be interrupted by cross-streets, or to lose your place when a very long street is named only at one end? A new approach to the art of the city map uses only type to delineate streets and other landmarks, with striking and wonderfully comprehensible results. The representation of Lake Michigan, off the Chicago shoreline, is truly ingenious and evocative.

See an illustration at www.fastcodesign.com/1662468/infographic-of-the-day-city-maps-made-only-of-typefaces.

U&lc on line

Thanks to William Adams for spotting this item: fonts.com is making back issues of *U&lc* available as PDF scans.

The announcement and the first three issues are available here: blog.fonts.com/2010/10/25/ulc-back-issues-to-be-made-available/

William further comments, “I wish Adobe would do this with their *Font & Function* magazine...”

Some “under-the-covers” uses of T_EX

Jeffrey McArthur, on the `pdftex` mailing list (lists.tug.org/pdftex), responded to an inquiry regarding the existence of T_EX as a composition server with information about some very large projects with which he has been involved.

“Using UTF-8 encoding, and setting some characters active to handle the UTF-8 escape sequences [Jeffrey] typeset the Library of Congress Subject Matter headings. [...] The Library of Congress Subject Matter was particularly difficult because Unicode does not include all the glyphs needed [...]” The Library of Congress Subject Headings is a 4-volume work comprising around 7,000 pages.

The Leadership Directories Yellow Books (www.leadershipdirectories.com), each directory being about a thousand pages, and the Warren Com-

munications Television and Cable Factbook were also prepared in a similar manner. All were composed using Plain T_EX.

Beyond literate programming

Another current discussion, in a thread “Callable T_EX” on texhax@tug.org, has raised the topic of the evolution of computing and the lessening distinction between a program and a document.

James Quirk pointed out a newspaper article that appeared in the Manchester Guardian in February: “If you’re going to do good science, release the computer code too.” The premise: since so much scientific work is now being done by computers, the only way to be certain that conclusions are valid is to examine the programs that analyzed the data as well as the human logic written up in scientific reports.

A comment on the article by James also appears at the newspaper’s website. The URLs are too long to include here, but are linked from the thread in `texhax` in this message: tug.org/pipermail/texhax/2010-October/015880.html.

James contends in his comment that not only the computer code but the process by which it is applied needs to be made visible, through “self-substantiating technical documents which allow the interested reader to sample the reported work first-hand, right down to its smallest detail.” He continues,

It has actually been possible to author self-substantiating documents for a good ten years now, but the effort involved has been too high to make them practical for mainstream scientific use. [...]

In fact, all the software pieces are now in place that one could, today, take classic research papers by the likes of von Neumann and Turing and turn them into multi-threaded, annotated affairs where the reader is walked through the research material and allowed to interact with computational examples that help convey the importance of the work. The basic idea being to produce “computational classics” that rival literary ones; entities that could be used to inspire generation, after generation, to want to seek careers in math, science, and engineering.

Such “computational classics” would also go a long way to defining computational standards, which at present are usually conspicuous by their absence.

◇ Barbara Beeton
American Mathematical Society
`tugboat (at) tug dot org`