

News from Around

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The summer heat has hit and there's not much news floating around. But still, we do have some bits and pieces for you.

User Group News

News from GuIT, by Maurizio Himmelmann

- The user group logo and name: G_UI_T: Gruppo Utilizzatori Italiani di T_EX e L_AT_EX
- The website: <http://www.guit.sssup.it/>
- Next meeting: Friday, October 22, 2005, in Pisa.

GuIT was born in 2000 as a small website with only a bit of information for L_AT_EX beginners, and a discussion forum for those who needed urgent help. We chose a forum instead of a mailing list so that all discussions would be in the public domain. This seems to have been a good choice because, after a while, it caught on and an increasing number of people have been using the forum as a “virtual meeting point” to solve one another's problems, or in general to share knowledge about the main topics (T_EX, L_AT_EX, ConT_EXt, related programs and typographical problems).

In 2003 we began to work hard to rebuild the entire website, putting more and more information up and improving the forum's performance. Our target was to propose GuIT as the main L_AT_EX resource on the Italian scene. That same year, we asked (and obtained) permission to become an official user group.

However, some other problems had arisen: once GuIT was formed, all the work was being done by only six people — we needed to involve other people and share the work load with them. In the beginning we tried to set up a kind of free partnership, where anyone was free to give his/her contribution, but in spite of the big number of so-called “members”, none seemed willing to participate actively. In addition, we needed some funds in order to expand the activity. The “all free” strategy was no longer viable; we opted for a “low cost” membership.

In October 2004, GuIT organized the first Italian LaTeX conference, called GuIT-meeting. With only a limited budget, thanks to the great help received from the Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, we succeeded in involving more than 70 people, who came from every corner of Italy: it was a success beyond our most optimistic forecasts.¹

As we strongly believe that “Sharing knowledge means increasing knowledge”, we are now working hard to organize an even bigger and better meeting on October 22, trying to do our best to spread and support L^AT_EX knowledge throughout Italy. We warmly welcome your contributions to the meeting. More information is available at:

<http://www.guit.sssup.it/guitmeeting/2005/2005.en.php>

News from GUST: BachoT_EX 2005

For a photo-story on a recent (April 30–May 3) meeting of the Polish User group, go to:

<http://www.gust.org.pl/BachoTeX/2005/en/index.html>

click on the British flag (for English text), and then on the “Photos” link at left.

There are pictures of the attendees, of course, but also some of the lake district where the conference took place. Click on a picture, and not only will it get larger, but there are navigation buttons to then keep going “Next” for a good 15 to 20 minutes of images. Looks like it was a very enjoyable meeting.

¹For photos, see http://www.guit.sssup.it/GuITmeeting/2004/fotografie_1.php.

News from TUG

TUG 2005 election — results and record, from Barbara Beeton

Karl Berry has been elected president for the term that ends with the 2007 annual meeting.

The following votes were counted:

183 for Karl Berry 177 for Lance Carnes

Both candidates made a good showing, although the total number of voters was only a third of those eligible.

Of 1,080 members as of the ballot closing date (May 17), 360 valid ballots were received. Ten ballots postmarked after the closing date, and three received with no return address, were not opened or counted.²

As previously announced, the number of candidates for open board positions was fewer than positions, so these board candidates were declared duly elected for a term ending with the 2009 annual meeting:

Steve Grathwohl • Jim Hefferon • Klaus Hoeppepner • Ross Moore
Arthur Ogawa • Steve Peter • David Walden

Continuing board members with terms ending in 2007:

Barbara Beeton • Kaja Christiansen • Susan DeMeritt
Cheryl Ponchin • Sam Rhoads • Philip Taylor

Gerree Pecht has been reappointed, and Lance Carnes was also appointed; terms for both end in 2007.

This was the first contested election since 1991. Thanks to everyone for their participation.

Practical T_EX 2005

This year's Practical T_EX meeting was held 14–17 June in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Visit <http://tug.org/practicaltex2005/> for information. See elsewhere in this issue of TPJ for attendee comments.

For yet another set of conference photos here are some taken by Alistair Smith:

²Although there may be a concern for privacy, the return address is the only way to tell that a ballot is coming from an eligible member. The count was made by a teller with no stake in the outcome, who was supplied with a list of eligible voters; every envelope was checked against this list before the envelopes were opened, and care was taken to make sure that only the envelope with the latest postmark was processed from any one voter.

<http://tug.org/practicaltex2005/photos/>

On 16 June, a one-hour Member Meeting was held, Robin Laakso of the TUG Office has provided the following summary.

About 25–30 people attended. Karl Berry opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending, including a special thanks to Lance Carnes for running for President this year, and for his valuable input on membership ideas. Robin Laakso provided a quick overview of TUG’s financial statements, member statistics and TUGboat production. Discussion about how to increase TUG membership and change member benefits (among other topics) followed. Here are some discussion highlights/suggestions:

- Add a member-only support mailing list. If you’re a TUG member you’d be given an option to subscribe to the tech support list. Your question would be answered by a volunteer support crew, and possibly read by members (this part hasn’t been decided yet).
- Write a “ \TeX for Dummies” book or, by whatever name, a more practical kind of book, along the lines of “ \TeX by Example” or “Practical \TeX Step by Step”.
- Ask \TeX developers to add a promotional line at the end of their email, such as, “Please support your local \TeX Users Group”.
- Design posters about \TeX /TUG — make them freely available to graduate and undergraduate departments and at cost to individuals.
- Re-print and/or re-design \TeX t-shirts: “Practice Safe \TeX ”, “You can’t do that in horizontal mode”.
- Encourage small local users groups on campuses, institutions, localities.
- Hold conferences at a university and allow students to attend free of charge.
- Investigate holding a conference where and when the JMM or another math conference is held.

TUG 2005 in China, from the meeting website

TUG 2005, the 26th annual meeting of the T_EX Users Group, will be taking place soon: 23–25 August, in WuHan China. The conference is supported by CTUG (the Chinese T_EX User Group, founded in 1999), in the birthplace of ancient typography, and TUG (the T_EX Users Group, founded in 1980). To register for TUG 2005, go to <http://www.tug.org/tug2005/register.html>.

At present, the preliminary list of speakers and talks includes:

- **Keynote:** Wai Wong (Chinese University of Hong Kong, China): “Typesetting Chinese: A personal perspective”
- Nandan Bagchee and Eitan Gurari (Ohio State University, USA): “Spatial Math Exercises and Worksheets”
- Nelson Beebe (University of Utah, USA): “T_EX, Metafont, and software development”
- Hong Feng (CTUG, China): “Wavelet Transformation and Chinese fonts Design”
- Hans Hagen (NTG, The Netherlands): [tbd]
- Yannis Haralambous (ENST Bretagne, France): “CJK Processing with Omega₂”; “Textemes vs. Characters and Glyphs” (with Gábor Bella)
- Jonathan Kew (SIL International): “XeT_EX, the multilingual lion: T_EX meets Unicode and smart fonts”
- Karel Piska (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Czech): “Converting Metafont sources to outline fonts using MetaPost”
- Chris Rowley (Open University, UK): “L^AT_EX Maintenance and Development”
- Karel Skoupý (ETH Zentrum, Zurich, Switzerland): “Free-shape text formatting”
- Philip Taylor (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK): “Typesetting the Byzantine Capelli; Grid typesetting in L^AT_EX”
- Suki Venkat (TnQ Books and Journals, India): “Moving from bytes to words to semantics”
- Jin-Hwan Cho (University of Suwon, Republic of Korea): “Practical use of special commands in DVIPDFMx”

- Ross Moore (Macquarie University, Australia): “PlanetMath.org and the Free Encyclopaedia of Mathematics”
- Steve Grathwohl (Duke University Press, USA): “On ConTeXt”
- Klaus Höppner (Darmstadt, Germany): “Strategies for Including Graphics in L^AT_EX Documents”
- Jerzy Ludwochowski (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): “World Wide T_EX User Groups Review”
- Volker R.W. Schaa (Darmstadt, Germany): “XML Workflow and EuroT_EX 2005 Proceedings”

See the website <http://www.rons.net.cn/tug2005.html> for details.

New TUGboat posting policies

Effective with the first issue of volume 26 (2005), *TUGboat* will be available on-line to members immediately upon print publication. On-line publication to non-members may be delayed up to one year after an issue’s print publication, to give members the benefit of early access. The mechanism has not yet been implemented, but will be in place by the time the first issue of volume 26 is distributed, and members will be notified in due course. More details can be found in *TUGboat* 25(2).

T_EX Collection/T_EX Live

The T_EX Live group is aiming for an October 1st distribution date for the next iteration of the T_EX Collection, most likely to include T_EX Live, proT_EXt, and a CTAN snapshot, like last year. See <http://tug.org/texlive/texcollection.html> for an overview. In case anyone’s counting, this will be the 10th release; the first was in 1996.

So, I hear that this backhoe ...

In case you were wondering, TUG’s CTAN node was cut off for 12 hours on May 26. The following is a highly exaggerated version of the exchange between Lance and Jim Hefferon, TUG’s CTAN maintainer.

So, I was transferring some files from TUG's CTAN site, and it just went dead. Stopped right in the middle of fetching that new version of the caption package. And now I get this:

Error 440: url cannot be found.

(*#\$#&(&**E(&*R(#WE&U*\$#!!!! Hey, Jim! What's wrong with CTAN?!
Is your site under attack from a spammer or something?

Um ... no ...

Unexpected power-down to fix someone's air conditioning?

No ...

Unscheduled system upgrade to the back-ups?

Um ...

SOOOO!! What happened down there?!

A backhoe took out AT&T in our area. No Internet, no 800 numbers, etc. We had to live off the land.

A backhoe did that? Wow ... talk about being cut off!