

Our Introduction to \LaTeX

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1 Introduction

In Banaras Hindu University \LaTeX was taught to Research Scholars [1]. The course was conducted three times in the year 2006 and each time it was of one weeks duration. The present article deals with the experience of different participants.

2 Experience of Sindhu Singh

I am a research scholar in the Department of Ceramic Engineering, Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University.¹ One day I saw a circular announcing a short term training course on using \LaTeX to be conducted in our University. The contents of the circular mentioned that \LaTeX is very useful for preparing scientific documents having lots of mathematical formulas and handling bibliographic information is very easy. My Co-Supervisor, Prof. Devendra Kumar, advised me to participate in the course and learn \LaTeX .

At that time I was not only a beginner in \LaTeX , but also to computers. On the first day of this course a brief introduction of \LaTeX , including installing the software was given. On the second day, theory as well as practical classes explaining the concepts of \LaTeX and difference with word-processors were conducted. As already mentioned I was a beginner to computers at that time and it seemed easy to work in MS Word as compared to \LaTeX . After attending two days, I thought that attending this training was a waste of time.

On the third day we were taught about handling references and bibliography. Our instructor created a bibliography database for use with Bib \TeX and

1. Participant of first batch of \LaTeX course

showed us how easy it is to change the format of references by just changing the `bibliographystyle`. Then it looked something interesting.

On fourth day, when we were taught how to typewrite mathematics, I recognized the usefulness of \LaTeX . After that tables, inclusion of figures and other features of \LaTeX were taught to us. On the last day a test comprising of multiple choice questions, matching, fill in the blanks and true or false, was conducted. For this purpose our instructor used exam class so all the question papers looked different.

I think that most of the the trainees never used \LaTeX after completing the course, because whenever I ask something about \LaTeX to any of my fellow learners, they always advised me to work in MS Word. The well structured documentation of \LaTeX , and at the same time troubles in the forming a Word document always forced me to use \LaTeX . One week's time is very little time to teach a programme like \LaTeX to a naive. One should be well versed with basics of computers like operating system, downloading files from internet and installing programs. I have taken this as a golden opportunity to learn something new and put my documents in some new format, because since childhood I want to do things differently.

At that time as per university rules I had to appear in a qualifying examination and for that I had to submit a write up on the given topic and a presentation on the same. Then I decided to prepare my write up in \LaTeX .

The main problem during this was that till that time I did not know how to prepare a document with different chapters and combine them together. When I discussed this with our instructor, he explained me the process and after that I never looked back to MS Word. With the help of a simple command we can reshuffle the sequence of Chapters easily. I prepared my whole write up in \LaTeX . When my supervisor saw the result he was very glad with the whole outcome. At that moment one of my senior had to submit his thesis. And, to my privilege, my guide asked me to change the whole thesis into \LaTeX but due to shortage of time and lack of confidence in doing work in \LaTeX I did not do that.

Now I am planning to prepare my thesis and papers using \LaTeX . But the main problem at this moment is that my thesis has lots of tables and making tables in \LaTeX is a tedious job. The other problem is that if you see any correction in the output file then to search the corresponding input for rectification is also a hectic job. But still it gives me pleasure to work in \LaTeX . When I have any doubt I refer

to the two books given to us during the course [2, 3]. If I cannot find the right solution then I contact our instructor.

3 Experience of A.K. Gautam

I am a research scholar in the Department of Electronics Engineering, Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University.² One day I saw a circular announcing a short term training course on using L^AT_EX to be conducted in Center for Bioinformatics, School of Biotechnology of our University. The contents of the circular mentioned that L^AT_EX is very useful for preparing scientific documents having lots of mathematical formulas and handling bibliographic information is very easy. Since I have authored more than 10 Engineering books, I am aware of the many problems faced during the publication of these books. I am really excited and applied for the course. Since I am an Electronics Engineering graduate, I am familiar with computers. Before learning the L^AT_EX I mainly used MS Word to write research papers. But I was facing a great problem with MS Word in that manner, suppose if I have to shift my matters from one computer to other then all setting were changed. Another problem was that if I want to send my research paper to a different journal then a lot of time was wasted in converting these matters into the journal format. On the first day of this course a brief introduction to L^AT_EX including installing the software was given. On the second day, theory as well as practical classes explaining the concepts of L^AT_EX and difference with word-processors were conducted. As already mentioned, I was facing some problems with Word. It seemed easy to work in L^AT_EX compared to MS Word. After attending two days, I was so motivated that in the same night I worked with L^AT_EX and typeset a research paper in L^AT_EX. Although I faced some problems in doing so but I was quite satisfied with the outcome.

On the third day I showed my paper to our T_EX guru. He really appreciated my work and showed it to the class. That day we were taught about handling references and bibliography. We were, in particular, introduced to BibT_EX and the instructor showed us that it is easy to change the look entire reference list, by changing the `bibliographystyle`. Then it became much more interesting.

On the fourth day when mathematics portion was taught to us then many of

2. Participant of second batch of L^AT_EX course

my doubts were cleared. By that day, I was comfortable with L^AT_EX. After that tables, inclusion of figures and other features of L^AT_EX were taught to us. In the same night I tried to include the figures with document. I was partially successful. On the last day a test comprising of multiple choice questions, matching, fill in the blanks and true or false, was conducted. For this purpose our instructor used exam class so all the question papers looked different.

After completing the course, I stopped using MS Word, I am using L^AT_EX only. In the beginning, I faced many problem but I am enjoying the L^AT_EX. After that I and our instructor spent many hours in discussing about inclusion of figures. Finally one day, my instructor discussed about T_pX program for creating figures. After that I never looked back. Now, I am very comfortable with L^AT_EX. Whenever I face any problem/confusion I always discuss it with my guru. I was given the responsibility to demonstrate typesetting mathematics in L^AT_EX to the third batch of L^AT_EX course.

Now my thesis work is about to finish and I am preparing my thesis in L^AT_EX. I am also preparing my pre Ph.D. Seminar using pdfscreen. Up to this point, I have published five reseach papers in peer reviewed international/national journals which were typeset using L^AT_EX.

4 Experience of C.Vishalakshi

I am a research scholar in the Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, Banaras Hindu University.³ One day I saw a note describing a short term training course on using L^AT_EX: *A documentation programme* to be conducted in the Centre for Bioinformatics, School of Biotechnonology of our University.

My Supervisor, Prof. B.N. Singh, advised me to join the course and learn L^AT_EX. At that time I had already prepared a manuscript and faced many problems with MS Word.

On the first day of this course a brief introduction of L^AT_EX including installation the software was given. On the second day, theory as well as practical classes explaining the concepts of L^AT_EX and difference with word-processors were conducted.

On the third day we were taught about handling references and bibliography.

3. Participant of third batch of L^AT_EX course

The instructor created a bibliography database to be used by Bib \TeX and showed us how to change the format of references by changing the `bibliographystyle`. He also informed about the freeware `bibdb` which is useful for creating bibliography databases.

On the fourth day when mathematics portion was taught to us then I recognized the usefulness of \LaTeX .

We have been introduced afterwards to tables, inclusion of figures and other features of \LaTeX .

After that I had prepared a manuscript in \LaTeX (on the seventh day) and showed it to our revered teacher. He really appreciated my work and showed it to the class and above all it was surprising that the paper was accepted in the *Current Science*.

On the last day a test comprising of multiple choice questions, matching, fill in the blanks and true or false, was conducted. To this aim, the teacher used the exam class, which allowed him to give a different format to every question.

My research work is about to finish and I am planning to present my work using `pdfscreen` and write my thesis using \LaTeX .

At last, I would appreciate that this type of training course (particularly \LaTeX) should be conducted in the various universities of the country, which definitely will be helpful to research scholars in myriad ways during their Ph.D. life and in future scientific career also.

References

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