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◇ David Salomon
California State University,
Northridge
Computer Science Department
Northridge, CA 91330
bccscdxs@csunb.csun.edu

Query

Editor's note: When answering a query, please send a copy of your answer to the *TUGboat* editor as well as to the author of the query. Answers will be published in the next issue of *TUGboat* following their receipt.

A Scribe-to-TEX Converter

One of the SEMATECH consortium members donated a software product with lots of documentation. Unfortunately it's marked-up using Scribe. SEMATECH has modified the software product to meet our needs, but the prospect of un-SCRIBE-ing and then TEX-ing hundreds of large user and system documentation files with a text editor is not attractive. Please let us know if you are aware of any Scribe-to-TEX translators.

Terry Bush
SEMATECH
Montopolis Research Center
University of Texas
2706 Montopolis Drive
Austin, Texas 78741
(512) 356-3443
terry_bush@sematech.mrc.utexas.edu

LATEX

Towards LATEX 2.10

Frank Mittelbach and Rainer Schöpf

After the TUG meeting at Stanford, Leslie Lamport expressed interest in future developments of LATEX. He and one of the authors (FMi) agreed on a two-stage procedure for this [1, 2]. The first step will be a new style file interface. Therefore we are interested in any style file which implements features that are not provided in the current document styles.

Independently of these efforts we are planning to publish the implementation of a number of enhancements to the current LATEX version:

- A new verbatim environment.
  This includes a \verbatimfile command to read in a file of verbatim text, and a comment environment that discards all text in its body. Other features are: no limitation on the size of the verbatim text, and the possibility of using verbatim inside other environments.
- A new version of the doc–option.
  One of the most important improvements over the version published in the previous issue of *TUGboat* is the introduction of a check to detect truncations during transmission. We are very interested in hearing about experiences other people have had with this style option. Suggestions for improvements are welcome.
- Enhancements to the new array and tabular environments published in *TUGboat* 9#3. Again, suggestions are welcome.
- The interface between LATEX and the new font selection scheme.
  This interface consists of two parts: one emulates the font selection mechanism of standard LATEX and is ready to use. The second part is made to give full control over the new scheme. However, field tests have shown that the commands we provided for this are not user friendly enough to be released yet.

We are sorry that we have to report a small but very important typo in the article on the new font selection scheme (*TUGboat* 10#2, pp. 222–238).[1] It is very important because it is in the code, namely in the macro \mathversion (p. 230): in the first line of the macro definition the primitive \endcsname is erroneously spelled "\endscname".

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[1] Thanks to Sebastian Rahtz for finding this one.

Recently there were some queries in TEXhax and UKTEX about a TEX overflow while using the `doc` option. The source of this is the size of TEX's save stack: usually Don Knuth's original value (600) is used. This works well with `plain` TEX, but it is much too small for LATEX documents.[2] Even size changes in the argument of a `\caption` command can result in an overflow of the save stack! Therefore we strongly suggest to all TEX implementors that they increase this parameter to a value at least as high as 1500.

References

[1] Frank Mittelbach and Rainer Schöpf, "With LATEX into the Nineties." Talk given at the 10th Anniversary TUG meeting, Stanford, August 1989, *TUGboat* 10#4, to appear.

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⋄ Frank Mittelbach
  Electronic Data Systems
  (Deutschland) GmbH
  Eisenstraße 56
  D-6090 Rüsselsheim
  Federal Republic of Germany
  Bitnet: `pzf5hz@drueds2`

⋄ Rainer Schöpf
  Institut für Theoretische Physik
    der Universität Heidelberg
  Philosophenweg 16
  D-6900 Heidelberg
  Federal Republic of Germany
  Bitnet: `BK4@DHDURZ1`

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² A similar problem arose with TEX's main memory size and hash table size which were increased when LATEX was released.

The Development of National LATEX Styles

Johannes Braams, Victor Eijkhout, and
Nico Poppelier

Abstract

At its autumn 1988 meeting, the Dutch TEX users group (NTG) established a working group (number 13) that was to concentrate on the problems involved in the use of TEX for Dutch texts. Since then the working group, which includes the authors, has created a number of style options for LATEX that remedy some common problems with the non-English use of LATEX, and is along the way developing document styles that are compatible with the standard styles, but have a layout that is more palatable for Dutch users. In this article we treat implementation aspects of the styles and style options, and we discuss some matters of layout.

1 The need for national TEX

On several occasions it is stressed in both *The TEXbook* [1] and the LATEX book [2] that non-English users of TEX may have to take steps in order to adapt TEX to their native language. For several languages such steps have indeed been taken, for instance for the German language [3]. It was only natural that the Dutch TEX users group (NTG) would also initiate an effort in this direction. Thus the active life of working group 13 began somewhere about the beginning of 1989.

As the use of LATEX is quite wide-spread in the Netherlands, and because most matters of national standardization can be conveniently handled in the context of document styles — and also because the Dutch language does not have the problems of national characters that are prominent for TEX users to the North, South and East of this country — it was decided to focus mainly on the development of national styles and style options for LATEX. This article treats some of the problems encountered and the way they were solved.

2 The 'chapter' problem

One of the first problems non-English users of LATEX run into, is that of English terms ('Abstract', 'Contents') contained in the document styles. The resourceful user, or the TEXnician consulted, will probably take out a text editor and hunt through the style file for the offending string, replacing it by its equivalent in his/her native language. This process will most likely result in new styles, called (for Dutch) `artikel`, `rapport` and so on.