LaTeX News

Issue 4, December 1995

Welcome to LaTeX News 4

An issue of *LaTeX News* will accompany every future release of LaTeX. It will tell you about important events, such as major bug fixes, newly available packages, or any other LaTeX news. This issue accompanies the fourth release of LaTeX 2_ε.

LaTeX getting smaller

The last release in June started a trend of LaTeX becoming smaller, we are pleased to announce that this has continued with this release. In particular the experimental 'autoload' version described in `autoload.txt` is much smaller as more parts of LaTeX are autoloaded.

New 'concurrent' docstrip

The time taken to 'unpack' this release from the documented sources should be much reduced (roughly half the time, depending on installation conditions). This is due to an improved version of the docstrip program that has been contributed by Marcin Woliński. This can write up to 16 files at once. The previous version could only write one file at a time which meant that it was very slow when producing many small files from the same source file as the source needed to be re-read for each file written.

New T1 encoded fonts

This year Jörg Knappen has completed a new release of the 'Cork' (T1) encoded Computer Modern fonts: the dc fonts release 1.2.

This release of the dc fonts fixes many bugs (including the missing `?‘` (¿) and `!‘` (¡) ligatures) and improves the fonts in many other ways. It is strongly recommended that you upgrade as soon as possible if currently you are using the old dc fonts, release 1.1 or earlier. The new fonts are available from the CTAN archives, in `tex-archive/fonts/dc`.

The names of the font files are *different*. This does not affect LaTeX documents but *does* affect the installation procedure as it assumes that you have the *new* fonts, and will write suitable 'fd' files for those fonts. If you have not yet upgraded your dc fonts then, after unpacking the distribution, you *must* `latex olddc.ins` to produce 'fd' files for the old dc fonts. This must be done *before* the format is made. Running the test document at `ltxcheck.tex` the end of the installation will inform you if the wrong set of 'fd' files has been installed.

Note that this change does not affect the standard 'OT1' Computer Modern fonts that LaTeX uses by default.

More robust commands

The commands `\cite` and `\sqrt` are now robust.

Although most commands with optional arguments are fragile, as documented, such commands defined using the second optional argument of `\newcommand` and its derivatives are now *robust*.

New Interface to building 'extension' classes

The mechanism provided by `\DeclareOption`, `\ProcessOptions` and `\LoadClass` has proved to be a powerful and expressive means of defining one class in terms of another 'base' class. However there have been some requests to simplify the declaration of the common case where you want the 'base' class to be called with *all* the options that were specified to the extension class. This is now provided by the new command `\LoadClassWithOptions`. A similar command `\RequirePackageWithOptions` is provided for package use. More details of this feature are provided in `clsguide.tex` and `ltclass.dtx`.

More Input Encodings

The experimental `inputenc` package allows a more natural style of input of accented and other characters.

Three new input encodings are now supported.

- `ansinew` the Windows ansi encoding, as used in Microsoft Windows 3.x.
- `cp437de` a variant of `cp437`, which uses ß rather than β in the appropriate slot.
- `next` the encoding used on Next computers.

Further information

For more information on TeX and LaTeX, get in touch with your local TeX Users Group, or the international TeX Users Group, 1850 Union Street, #1637, San Francisco, CA 94123, USA, Fax: +1 415 982 8559, EMail: tug@tug.org. The LaTeX home page is `http://www.tex.ac.uk/ctan/latex/` and contains links to other WWW resources for LaTeX.