LaTeX News

Issue 10, December 1998

Five years of LaTeX 2_ε

Since this is the 10th edition of LaTeX News, the (no longer) New Standard LaTeX must have hit the streets almost this long ago. In fact it was only the beta-version that some people got just in time for Christmas 1993, and since then there has been a lot of tidying-up and smoothing of rough edges (not to mention a few bug fixes!).

Maybe it is time for something more radically different to emerge and be hungrily adopted by the world; but don't panic, we shall be maintaining what you have now for a long time yet. Amongst the more polite things that have been written about our efforts, we found that this quote (somewhat censored to protect the guilty) well reflects some of our feelings about working on LaTeX over the years: *the mere existence of LaTeX 2_ε is a great miracle.*

Restructuring the LaTeX distribution

Since the (once) 'new' standard LaTeX has reached such a venerable age, we are reviewing the way in which the system is presented to the world.

An early intention is to define, given the wide variety of good packages now available, what now constitutes a useful installation of LaTeX. We also hope that such a definition will help document portability if it leads to a future in which a LaTeX class designer can reasonably assume that a known list of facilities will be there for all users (so that each class need not supply them).

As a first small step towards this definition, we shall replace the `latex/packages` subdirectory on CTAN. This directory was a curious mixture of the important, such as the LaTeX `tools`, that any self-respecting LaTeX installation ought to have, and the esoteric or experimental.

The esoterica from `packages` will be moved to new locations, as follows:

`expl3` to `latex/exptl/project`
`mfnfss` to `latex/contrib/supported/mfnfss`

The subdirectory that replaces `packages` will be called `latex/required`; all the other sub-directories of `packages` will be moved there.

LaTeX Project on the Internet

A new `latex-project.org` domain has been registered. The web site is not yet fully functional but the old LaTeX pages from CTAN are available at `http://www.latex-project.org/` and the LaTeX bug reporting address has been changed to `latex-bugs@latex-project.org`.

Restructuring the LaTeX package licenses

Several people have requested an easy mechanism for the distribution of LaTeX packages and other software "under the same conditions as LaTeX". The old `legal.txt` file was unsuitable as a general licence as it referred to specific LaTeX authors, and to specific files.

Therefore, in this release `legal.txt` contains just the copyright notice and a reference to the new *LaTeX Project Public License* (LPPL) for the distribution and modification conditions. The `tools`, `graphics`, and `mfnfss` packages also now refer to this license in their distribution notices.

Support for Cyrillic encodings

Basic Cyrillic support, as announced in LaTeX News 9, is now finally an official part of LaTeX. It includes support for the following standard Cyrillic font encodings (this list may grow): `T2A T2B T2C X2`.

It also includes various Cyrillic input encodings (20 in total, including commonly used variants and Mongolian Cyrillic encodings). This provides platform independent and sophisticated basic support for high-quality typesetting in various Cyrillic-based languages.

For further information see the file `cyrguide.tex`.

Tools distribution

The `varioref` package has been extended to support textual page references to a range of objects: e.g., if `eq-first` and `eq-last` are the label names for the first and last equation in a sequence, then you can now write

```
see~\vrefrange{eq-first}{eq-last}
```

This results in different text depending on whether both labels fall on the same page.

Some additional user commands, as well as building-blocks for writing private extensions, are described in the accompanying documentation.