

L^AT_EX News

Issue 10, December 1998

Five years of L^AT_EX 2_ε

Since this is the 10th edition of L^AT_EX News, the (no longer) New Standard L^AT_EX 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 L^AT_EX over the years: *the mere existence of L^AT_EX 2_ε is a great miracle.*

Restructuring the L^AT_EX distribution

Since the (once) 'new' standard L^AT_EX 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 L^AT_EX. We also hope that such a definition will help document portability if it leads to a future in which a L^AT_EX 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 L^AT_EX tools, that any self-respecting L^AT_EX 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.

L^AT_EX Project on the Internet

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

Restructuring the L^AT_EX package licenses

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

Therefore, in this release `legal.txt` contains just the copyright notice and a reference to the new *L^AT_EX 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 L^AT_EX News 9, is now finally an official part of L^AT_EX. 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.