

A Newbie View of T_EX

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I am neither a mathematician nor the son of mathematican. But the need to produce a variety of MS Word, PDF and HTML documents from the same source files brought T_EX and L^AT_EX to my Mac OS X machine. Word disqualified itself from the job because of inconsistent handling of styles, graphics and numbered lists, plus its less than standard exporting of HTML. T_EX and its friends meet all of my requirements, plus eliminate the need to think about realtime formatting.

Mac OS X has both free and commercial implementations of T_EX. I use these free resources:

- gwT_EX distributed by Gerben Wierda.
- L^AT_EX macros by Leslie Lamport and hundreds of others
- T_EX4ht by Eitan Gurari
- T_EXShop by Richard Koch and many others

The learning curve is about the same as Word. Helpful documentation for the newbie¹ is available but difficult to find and often makes too many assumptions. The people on the *OS X T_EX* mailing list are extraordinarily helpful and friendly.

It would be helpful if L^AT_EX had better support for wrapping text around graphics. I am considering ConT_EXt for layouts requiring more detailed control.

T_EX and its offspring are productive and interesting tools capable of serving both simple and complex publishing needs. For my requirements, one T_EX file contains re-usable content for multiple applications.

¹Because I now layout a monthly newsletter using *minipages* I am not supposed to call myself a newbie, but I know only a couple of dozen control sequences, which are enough.