

T_EXShop review

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Abstract

This paper is an introduction to and review of the T_EXShop Mac OS X program for typesetting T_EX document source files and previewing the output. Features of this tool and user experience will be presented. This information might be helpful to the novice user looking for a T_EX typesetting environment on the Mac.

1 Introduction

For some decades now I have been using plain T_EX and L^AT_EX computer typesetting for scientific documents, lecture notes and other stuff. After starting typesetting on DEC VAX/VMS computer terminals I was pleased to see the integrated development environments for both Windows and MacOS.

Currently, I use T_EXShop version 1.42, installed with the t_EX distribution on an old Mac PowerBook G4. (My office PC runs a MiK_T_EX distribution with T_EXnicCenter.) My first impression was that T_EXShop is fairly basic, but reliable.

The next section will describe a sampling of the features included in T_EXShop, and report on my user experience.

2 T_EXShop features

This section lists essential features of T_EXShop, with some user comments added. In a typical typesetting session the program will open three windows, as shown in Figure 1: the source editor, the PDF preview and the console window that reports the document compilation progress, warnings and errors.

2.1 Preferences and typesetting engine

The **Preferences** menu contains a number of tabs: e.g., the source **Document** editor font setting and window position, **Preview** window parameter settings, the typesetting **Engine** binary path and and options lists. The default typesetting engine is tickmarked in the **Typesetting** tab. A full range of engines, including T_EX, L^AT_EX, ConT_EXt, and XeL^AT_EX is available in the pulldown menu **Typeset**; there, also, workflow enhancement scripts or tools such as pdfT_EX, T_EX+Ghostscript, BIBT_EX and MakeIndex can be found.

As a L^AT_EX user I select either the pdfT_EX or T_EX+Ghostscript typesetting engine; the latter is required for including scientific diagrams created with

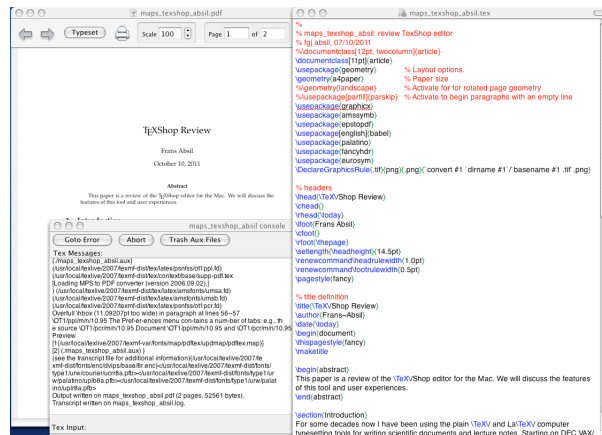


Figure 1: Overview of the three T_EXShop windows: editor, previewer and console

the PStricks package. Naturally, in that case all figures have to be available as separate PostScript .eps files, whereas for the former option all figures are included as PDF files. And, by the way, if one drops a recognized figure file type on the editor window, it will generate the appropriate `\includegraphics` command.

2.2 Editor features

The source file editor uses colour coding, with L^AT_EX commands shown in blue, comments in red, and parenthesis grouping in green, for easy code consistency checks. Although line numbers are not displayed, the **Edit** menu contains a **Line Number** and **Go to Error** command. This menu also contains items for running a spell checker and showing document statistics, such as word, line and character count excluding the L^AT_EX commands.

The **Find** panel, under the **Window** menu, has a number of nifty options: it accepts regular expressions for advanced search, it applies find and replace to selected subregions in the source document (local scope) and it will list all appearances of the search string, a convenient option for navigation and as check before a global replace. It will also remember all previous search and replace strings for the current session.

2.3 Panels for the novice user

L^AT_EX commands are mnemonic. However, at the entry level T_EXShop contains menu items and special panels for entering source code. Figure 2 shows the menu for font selection. A separate L^AT_EX panel (see Figure 3) shows the most frequently used symbols, environments and other document elements. Clicking an item on the panel will put the L^AT_EX source code

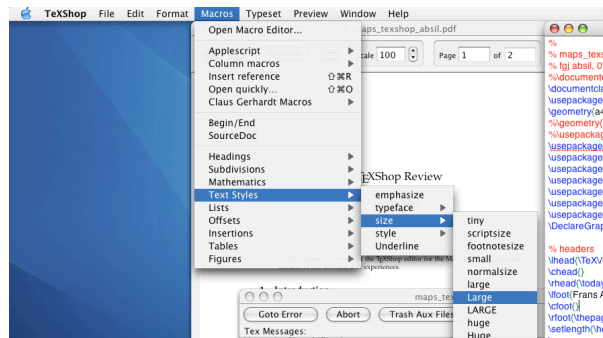


Figure 2: T_EXShop's **Format** menu with font selection items

in the current document in the editor. T_EXshop supports multiple editor windows.

In the **Preview** window there are the usual scrolling, paging and scaling functions. A nice feature is the magnifying glass; when selected, clicking anywhere in the previewed document will show that section in sufficient magnification to inspect typesetting details.

The novice user might also refer to the concise but adequate **Help** menu.

2.4 Miscellaneous

The **Format** menu has items for (un)commenting or indenting blocks of source code, a feature that is useful when debugging documents.

The **Macros** menu contains items for automating a workflow. My favourite from this set is the **Insert reference**: it opens a window with a list of `\label` commands in the current document for selecting the appropriate entry. Also convenient is the **Bibliography Applescript**, which does the multiple runs needed for creating bibliographical references in a document.

For larger documents, which consist of a set of smaller files (e.g., book chapters), there is the option of setting the project root, i.e., the path to the project `main.tex` file; this is available under the **File** menu. What is missing, however, is a window representing the structure of a large-scale project as a tree graph with directory paths to source files, figures etc. T_EXnicCenter has this window, which is a great help during editing and debugging report or book class documents.

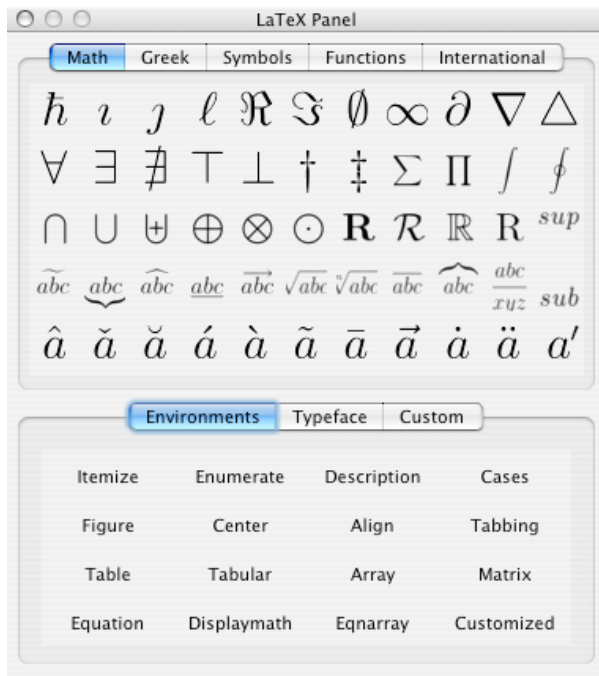


Figure 3: L^AT_EX panel for selection of common symbols and document elements.

(Newer versions of T_EXShop than mine can display a PDF outline, e.g., as made by `hyperref`, in the Preview Window. Clicking in the outline, then CMD-clicking in the PDF, will get to the corresponding source file and position. This is some of the same functionality, though quite a different approach.)

3 Conclusion

This old version of T_EXShop, running on a Mac OS 10.3.8 operating system, is a reliable workhorse. Although there are differences I have no problem using this tool and T_EXnicCenter on my Windows PC in parallel.

A much more recent version, at this writing T_EXShop v. 3.59 for Mac OS X 10.7 (Lion) and later systems, is available at <http://www.uoregon.edu/~koch/texshop/>. It is also included on the T_EX Live DVD. A comparison between many L^AT_EX editors can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_TeX_editors; this has a table with the features of each program.

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