

Q & A

JUST PLAIN Q&A: New Column

Alan Hoenig

Look Here for \TeX Advice

The Editorial Staff at *TUGboat* is planning a new column. If you let us know your \TeX problems and puzzles, we'll answer them in this column. This column *can't* fly without reader response, so please write!

We hope to provide a service comparable to that available on the \TeX hax network. That an ever increasing proportion of TUG's members have no access to this network is an important reason for starting this column.

Ground Rules. Being naturally optimistic, we expect to receive many more queries than we can possibly deal with in this column, so we'll choose problems whose solution might be particularly instructive to the \TeX community at large. Note, though, we solicit only just plain \TeX questions. Continue to forward L \TeX problems to Jackie Damrau, and she will continue to ably provide assistance in that area.

No problem is too trivial or elementary! As a reliable rule of thumb, assume that if you have a problem, so do (dozens of) others. If we use your question, we'll be pleased to include your name and affiliation in the column (although we will honor requests for anonymity from the modest and humble).

Try to keep your questions specific. We're not enthusiastic about answering questions like *how would you design a complete macro package to typeset a newsletter?*

Write or phone your problems to the undersigned. (But if you phone, please realize that we can't and won't provide an answer on the spot.) You may e-mail your problems directly to *TUGboat* at `TUGboat@Math.AMS.com`. Please time your inquiries so we receive them at least **four weeks** prior to the current *TUGboat* submission deadline. (You can find this calendar inside your current *TUGboat*.) Items received after a deadline will be considered for the next issue.

We hope to hear from you.

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Tutorials

Output Routines: Examples and Techniques. Part II: OTR Techniques.

David Salomon

The warnings and disclaimers in Part I* of this article also apply to this part. The methods and macros described here are not canned. They should not be copied and used verbatim. Rather, they should be carefully studied and adapted to specific needs.

The following techniques are discussed in this article, and are applied to practical situations:

1. Breaking up `\box255` in the OTR into individual lines by means of the `\lastxx` commands.
2. Identifying individual lines or paragraphs to the OTR by means of `\rightskip`, `\parshape`, or the depth of `\box255`.
3. Attaching very small amounts of `\kern` to certain lines of text, to identify those lines to the OTR as special.
4. Placing large negative penalties at certain points in the document. This has the effect of invoking the OTR at those points. The OTR does not have to shipout anything.
5. Attaching very small vboxes below certain lines, to identify them to the OTR as special lines that require special treatment.
6. Using marks. This is a common OTR technique.
7. Setting `\vsize` to a very small value. `\box255` consists, in such a case, of just one line of text, which is then easy to examine.
8. Using a 2-pass technique where, in the first pass, certain information is written on a file, to be read by the second pass. Certain complex problems may even call for a multi-pass job.

We also remind the reader of the notation used in Part I: [...] alone makes reference to an item or items in *The \TeX book* (e.g., [400] refers to page 400 and [Ch. 6] refers to Chapter 6 in *The \TeX book*), whereas [§...] refers to a module or modules in *\TeX : The Program*.

* *TUGboat* 11, no. 1, pp. 69-85.