

## General Delivery

### Opening words

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As we head into the summer months of holidays and hot weather, no-one wants to read a long column — much less write one! So I'll keep it short.

In my previous column I mentioned a big four-way meeting planned for Darmstadt in April — RIDT'94 and EP'94, along with workshops from two other organisations (PODP'94 and TEP'94. Lucky for us, Michel Goossens, TUG's vice-president, was able to attend, and he's written up a nice report you might find interesting.

And something that's been moving in slow stages over the past several months — ISO recognition of de facto standards. That is, the ISO people are willing to discuss the fact of there being standards in areas where ISO has none, standards which have arisen out of common consent, and where the full specification is published or publicly available. Examples include TCP/IP, PostScript — and T<sub>E</sub>X. Nothing definite has been set down yet — at this stage, all that's being examined is the structure and procedure for recognising such de facto standards. The issue will be on the board agenda this summer, and we will probably come up with an official TUG statement at that time. In the interim, a number of people have come forward, saying they too support this potential procedure regarding de facto standards, and that it would be most appropriate to consider T<sub>E</sub>X a good candidate for this status.

I believe it will be of long-term benefit to T<sub>E</sub>X, which often must be left behind when companies or research institutes are required to submit documentation prepared according to recognised standards. If T<sub>E</sub>X can become a recognised formatter for electronic documentation, then we are taking a major step forward in ensuring its long life and widespread use.

It's an exciting prospect. If anyone is interested in hearing more, please contact myself, or Barbara Beeton, editor of this publication.

So that's it. Short and sweet. Enjoy your summer. I hope to see many of you at the meeting in Santa Barbara. If not, then we shall meet again in the fall.

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### Editorial Comments

Barbara Beeton

#### 1 “L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub>” is now just “L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X”

The L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 3 project team has announced the release of “the new standard version of L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X”. This is the version that, until now, was referred to as “L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub>”. From now on the “old L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X” will be referred to as “L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 209”.

From the announcement:

[The new L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X] is upwardly compatible with existing L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X documents, and contains new features including the long-awaited graphics extensions.

Over the years many extensions of L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X have been developed. This is, of course, a welcome development, since it shows that the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X system is in a healthy state. It has, however, had one unfortunate consequence: there were several incompatible systems all claiming to be L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X.

The new L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X puts an end to this unsatisfactory situation — it gives access to all extensions such as S<sub>L</sub>T<sub>E</sub>X, A<sub>M</sub>S-L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, and P<sub>S</sub>L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, based on a single format. This will end the proliferation of mutually incompatible dialects of L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X.

We have also introduced a small number of often-requested features (such as more control over float placement) and an improved interface for writers of document classes and packages.

The new L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X is described in a new edition of *L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X: A Document Preparation System* by Leslie Lamport (to appear during 1994) and *The L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X Companion* by Goossens, Mittelbach and Samarin, both published by Addison-Wesley.

From now on, a completely updated release will be made twice a year, in June and December. In between scheduled releases, bugs will be fixed using a patch technique that has been built into the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X system. Users should read the documentation included in the package and check periodically for patch updates. A formal procedure, also described in the documentation, is provided for reporting bugs.

The new L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X can be retrieved by anonymous ftp from the CTAN archives; see below for addresses. At all the major sites, the distribution can be found in the area

`/tex-archive/macros/latex/base`