

## Resources

### Users' Guide to LaTeX-help

Max Hailperin

All sites with L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X should have one or more L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X experts to help users. Those experts communicate with each other about difficult problems through various forums, including the T<sub>E</sub>Xhax mailing list.

Lately, many sites have installed L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X without having, acquiring, or developing a L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X expert. Many simple L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X questions from those sites have been posted directly to T<sub>E</sub>Xhax, clogging it and prompting redundant replies.

Therefore, a number of T<sub>E</sub>Xhax subscribers have formed a volunteer L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X question answering corps. L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X users with questions should take the following steps:

numbered

- Read the manual very carefully, including a careful check of the index. Most questions are answered there.
- Check whether anyone locally can answer your question. Consider not only paid systems staff but also more experienced users. Similarly, if you paid a commercial company good money for L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, you should demand customer support from them—after all L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X is available for free.
- See if you can work it out yourself, and in the process build L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X expertise, by use of careful test cases, tracing mode, examining the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X source files, etc. Don't go crazy if you're a non-programmer, but give it a shot.
- If all of the above fail, *don't* send mail to T<sub>E</sub>Xhax. Instead, send mail to

LaTeX-help@sumex-aim.Stanford.EDU.

Your mail will automatically be forwarded to a member of the volunteer corps, in a round-robin rotation. You should hear back shortly, either with a solution to your problem, a request for additional information, or the remark that it exceeded the volunteer's abilities and has been forwarded to other experts, including further volunteers and the T<sub>E</sub>Xhax mailing list. If you don't hear anything after waiting a reasonable period, write to

LaTeX-help-coordinator@

sumex-aim.Stanford.EDU

with as much information about your original

mailing as you have, and the coordinator will try to track down how it got lost.

Please do not abuse this service. We volunteers have lots of work of our own to do, and will not continue volunteering if the burden is excessive. Make sure you try steps 1-3 before step 4, and always be eager to help others locally who are a step behind you. Also, join TUG (the T<sub>E</sub>X Users Group) if you haven't and avail yourself of their classes and publications to develop in-house L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X expertise.

If you have any questions or comments on this, please write to

LaTeX-help-coordinator@

sumex-aim.Stanford.EDU

not directly to the current person holding that position, as it may change.

Editor's note: Additional volunteers for this project are welcome. Anyone who wishes to lend a hand should get in touch with the coordinator.

◊ Max Hailperin  
Stanford Knowledge Systems  
Laboratory  
701 Welch Rd., Bldg. C  
Palo Alto, CA 94304  
mxh@sumex-aim.Stanford.EDU

---

### T<sub>E</sub>X-Ed

Yin Kean

At the T<sub>E</sub>X User's Group 10th Anniversary Conference (September 1989), many attendees expressed similar concerns on the courses that are currently being offered by the T<sub>E</sub>X User's Group. In general, it was believed that the T<sub>E</sub>X user community is evolving and that training materials and courses need to be developed for the changing nature of the T<sub>E</sub>X user community. As a result, several proposals were drawn-up and discussed at the conference. To continue discussing and refining the proposals, T<sub>E</sub>X-Ed, a listserv mailing list has been created at the University of Illinois at Chicago. T<sub>E</sub>X-Ed will also serve as a forum on all educational aspects of T<sub>E</sub>X in general, and teaching materials such as templates, macros, etc. will also be obtainable from T<sub>E</sub>X-Ed archives. The teaching materials may