

Highlights of the Practical T_EX 2004 Conference

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Delegates came from the US and from around the world—Ireland, England, The Netherlands, Germany, Australia, and Vietnam—to the Holiday Inn Fisherman’s Wharf in San Francisco, the site of the first annual PracT_EX meeting, July 19–22, 2004.

The purpose of the conference was to focus on the practical, day-to-day use of L^AT_EX, T_EX, ConT_EXt, and other applications. Speakers gave talks and held workshops on a wide range of topics, including T_EX on the Web, basic and intermediate L^AT_EX, ConT_EXt (a comprehensive T_EX-based documentation system), and more.

The conference began with a welcome by TUG President Karl Berry, and a keynote address by Peter Flynn titled “T_EX and the Interface”. The conference program consisted of numerous presentations—a few are presented in the first issue of the new TUG online publication, The PracT_EX Journal (<http://tug.org/pracjourn/2005-1>), and the bulk are published in this volume of *TUGboat*.

On Monday afternoon long-time TUG contributor Wendy McKay and Apple Computer Product Manager Ernest Prabhakar held an Special Interest Group meeting on T_EX running on Mac OS X. The meeting was video conferenced using technology lent by Marratech.

For beginning users and those who wanted a refresher, workshops on beginning and intermediate L^AT_EX were offered each morning of the conference, in parallel with talks. Sue DeMeritt and Cheryl Ponchin (Center for Communications Research, and TUG board members) presented these popular workshops.

During the conference there were daily Q&A sessions, and on the final day a panel discussion was held. These sessions were valuable for getting input from attendees. The consensus seemed to be a need for more education in the use of L^AT_EX and T_EX, and the need for more sources of practical information.

On the day after the conference three one-day courses were held: Cheryl Ponchin and Sue DeMeritt conducted a workshop on Intermediate L^AT_EX; Peter Flynn (Silmaril Ltd., Ireland) taught “T_EX on the Web”; and Hans Hagen (Pragma ADE,

The Netherlands) taught an introductory class on his ConT_EXt system.



Hans Hagen, Practical T_EX Man of the Year



Keynote speaker Peter Flynn

Attendees were treated to three social events: an opening reception, a San Francisco treasure hunt, and a Chinese banquet. The treasure hunt challenged teams of attendees to decipher clues as they explored San Francisco’s North Beach and Chinatown districts. (When it was learned that Don Knuth was entering a team, a special Wizards Hunt was added with more difficult clues.)



Don Knuth



Leslie Lamport

The banquet was at the Empress of China restaurant, which has a commanding view of the northern area of San Francisco, including Alcatraz, the Bay Bridge and the financial district. Some special guests at the banquet were Don and Jill Knuth, and Leslie Lamport. Barbara Mastrian of Rutgers introduced Barbara Miller, a pioneer T_EX

user who over the years has taught many others how to navigate the boxes and glue.



Barbara Mastrian and T_EX pioneer Barbara Miller



Treasure Hunt winners (Heidi Sestrich, Alistair Smith, Jenny Levine, Terri Spence, Alan Wetmore)

There were two coffee breaks and lunch each day, which provided for plenty of attendee interaction during the three-day conference. There was a cybercafe with an ample number of computers, lent by Apple Computer, which delegates used for checking email and experimenting with new applications.

It was great to see several T_EX and TUG pioneers again: Cal Jackson, Dave Fuchs, Art Ogawa, Nelson Beebe, and Peter Flynn.

From the follow-up comments it seemed everyone had a good conference and an enjoyable visit to San Francisco. See <http://tug.org/practicaltex2004/post.html> for more photos and information.

The next PracT_EX conference will be held June 14–17, 2005, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, hosted by Steve Grathwohl and the Duke University Press. See the web site for information and registration: <http://tug.org/practicaltex2005>.



Karl Berry,
TUG President



Robin Laakso, TUG
Executive Director



Lance Carnes,
conference host

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