

TALUG Meeting Notes

August 16, 2007

LaTeX For The Allergic: Presented by Abdulmajed Dakkak

During this meeting we did not have use of a Projector, but luckily almost everyone had a computer to view the presentation. The notes on this presentation are going to be fairly brief, as I was following along with the presentation and practicing using LaTeX at the same time.

Please see Abdul's presentation for details. If you want even more details... come to a future meeting.

Reasons To Use Latex

- Produces text as a typesetting program, the way it was *meant* to be.
- Text based, simple and fast.
- Open Source.
- Bibtex package.
- Easy to use.
- Good for mathematical formulae.

LaTeX is a full fledged typesetting program, capable of making intelligent decisions about formatting in the way a professional typesetter would. The document format is ASCII text, which is never going to go away. This is unlike most graphical editors, where if the project gets discontinued it would be difficult to access your own documents.

[Click](#) to see a comparison between LaTeX and a typical WYSIWYG editor (What You See Is What You Get)

Using LaTeX

Long documents can become difficult to manage. LaTeX allows a document to be broken down into sections which can be different files. Inside the `.tex` file, the command `\include filename.tex` can be used to source a file. This would be useful for a book, where the main TeX file would simply include the file for each chapter.

Also, pictures can be referenced, but are not included within the TeX file. This keeps sizes of the TeX files manageable.

LaTeX can be used from a live CD, such as the [LaTeX Live CD](#)

Starting A Document

First, a document class needs to be declared. Article is the most common document class. This can be declared as: `\documentclass{article}`

Book is another type of document, which uses asymmetrical margins to compensate for being bound.

The document doesn't actually start until the `\begin{document}` command is given. A document ends when the `\end{document}` command is given.

Using the section command

If the `\section` and `\subsection` commands are used, a table of contents can be quickly generated. It only takes one command, `\tableofcontents`

Compiling Documents

There are a couple of different ways to compile a TeX document.

- Using `latex` which makes a dvi file.
- Using `dvips` which makes a postscript file out of a dvi file.
- Using `pdflatex` which makes a pdf document.

Note that if a pdf format is desired, `pdflatex` will produce a higher quality pdf document than compiling through `latex`, and then to pdf.

Bibtex: Bibliography Manager

Bibtex allows the bibliography to be separated from the TeX file. It works by (you) building a list of all of your bibliography entries, and then referencing them within your TeX file by their keyword. Thus, you don't have to keep track of numbering, or even formatting of your bibliography. Styles can be easily changed from MLA to APA, etc.

L^AT_EX Programs and links

- [Online Latex Compiler](#)
- [lead2amazon](#) — Generates Bibtex info from Amazon.com
- [texmaker](#) — A graphical L^AT_EX editor.
- [citeulike.org](#) — A site to take care of bibtex stuff.
- [jabref](#) — Bibtex reference manager.
- [kbibtex](#) — Bibtex editor for KDE
- [Gnome Referencer](#) — Document organizer and bibliography manager for Gnome.
- [ctan](#) — Website that organizes many stiles by categories.

Software Freedom Day: Discussion lead by Matt Neilson

After a bit of a search, Matt Neilson has secured a location for Software Freedom Day 2007 in Toledo. The location is the West Toledo Branch Library ([map](#)). This location has a 200 seat auditorium with full AV capabilities. We are booked from 12-3 PM on Saturday September 15th, the official SFD.

At this point, there is a lot of work to do in the next four weeks. We need to do the following:

- Secure and/or confirm locations. (This is mostly done)
- Develop presentations and presentation format.
- Advertise
- Try to get *official* pressed CD's. (We may be too late on this one)

Locations

- At UT on Friday September 14th with a table, showing off FOSS software and handing out CD's.
- At West Toledo Branch Library on Saturday September 15th, giving presentations and demonstrations of FOSS programs. A table should be set up inside (outside with supervision?) with a computer giving a preview to attract visitors, as this auditorium is in the basement. Table should be set up with FOSS CD's (Distro's, The Open CD, TTCS OSS CD).

Presentations

We decided that it would be best to give ~5 presentations which last about 10 minutes each, given on a rotating basis. These presentations are designed to be an introduction to FOSS programs. Most of the people present will be unfamiliar or unaware of these programs existence. Topics suggested (need to be confirmed) are:

- What is FOSS: philosophy, merits. Why it is beneficial for *you*.
- Multimedia: Photo-editing (Gimp, Inkscape), music programs, video programs. . .
- Games
- Office: Openoffice
- Websurfing / Webprograms:
- Linux in general

It is better to present programs that are ported to windows, so that they can be used on most people's existing computers. Target presentation time is around 10 minutes, and should be mostly demonstration. A slideshow type presentation is not necessary. We need volunteers! If you are interested, please contact Matt or Andrew.

Once the general presentation areas get defined, we will need volunteers to give presentations. These can be given as an individual or small group. Preferably, we will be able to find people who already use and know how to use these programs. In this case, giving an intro demonstration 10 minutes long should not be difficult.

Advertising

Advertising is the key to a successful event. Needs to be well thought out and widespread. Abdul suggested putting a big poster in front of UT Engineering

Getting Official CD's

Matt Neilson is looking into this.

Other Thoughts

- Once a few decisions are made (within the next few days) we will have an organization meeting.
- Responsibilities need to be assigned to the different tasks (locations, presentations, advertising . . .), not necessarily to do them, but to ensure they get done.