
Editorial comments

Barbara Beeton

T_EX 3.1415926 is here, and other Knuthian references

Don Knuth has completed his periodic review of bug reports, and has released the new versions of all programs, fonts and macros. His summary of the changes made in this round appears later in this issue.

The period between reviews increases by a year with each round. The review just completed was actually begun in 2007, after a five year hiatus. The next review is scheduled for six years from then—2013. For the present, I will continue to act as Don’s “T_EX entomologist”. However, I may relinquish this post before the next cycle ends; any change will be announced here, and posted on Don’s T_EX web page: <http://www-cs-faculty.stanford.edu/~knuth/abcde.html>.

Ulrik Vieth noted, at the announcement of the new release, that “we all silently missed the 30 year anniversary of T_EX78 which started on March 10, 1978.” He also reminds us that the saga of T_EX development and updates is chronicled in the file `errorlog.tex`, which “is still an interesting read for the historians”. Thanks, Ulrik.

Another note, from Nelson Beebe, points to an interview with Don at <http://www.informit.com/articles/article.aspx?p=1193856&r11=1>. Quoting Nelson, “Don talks about T_EX, METAFONT, literate programming, and the writing of his famous books, *The Art of Computer Programming*, and responds to a number of questions about software development and tools, and the trend towards multicore and multithreaded CPUs.”

And finally, Don appears in the comics: <http://xkcd.com/163/> and xkcd.com/342/.

Phyllis Winkler, RIP

Phyllis Winkler, Don Knuth’s secretary for many years, passed away on December 7, 2007. She was much more than Don’s secretary. It was for her, as well as for himself, that Don created T_EX. (We announced her retirement in *TUGboat* 19, no. 4, page 351.) Phyllis was kind, generous, and strikingly competent. The T_EX community has lost a good friend.

New domain name for CervanT_EX

Late last year, the president of CervanT_EX, Juan Luis Varona, informed us that their domain name,

`cervantex.org` was stolen, and held for ransom, which, as a small group, they are unable to pay. Although they would greatly prefer to have an `.org` name, showing that they represent T_EX for everyone who writes in Spanish, they have had to make an accommodation.

Their new site is <http://www.cervantex.es>. They ask everyone who may have a link to the old name to please update it.

Interactive typography courses by Jonathan Hoefler

The Resources page at the Typophile web site (<http://www.typophile.com/resources>) always lists interesting material. Two items of particular interest are “Typography 101” (Type Styles) and “Typography 110” (Typeface Design), interactive courses by Jonathan Hoefler.

The first course presents images of well-known typefaces, along with text placing each face in its appropriate design category and historical environment. Related faces are identified for further exploration. In the second course, the participant is asked to experiment with irregular shapes that illustrate the behavior of lettershapes (while not being themselves letters) in order to understand principles such as balance and typographic color; the shapes are then transformed to be styled like some of the typefaces presented in the first course, paying attention to the design principles that characterize these faces.

Another feature at Typophile is an extensive forum on Typographic Education. Look for <http://typophile.com/forum/16>.

A helpful CTAN feature: “get”

Although it has most likely been there for quite a while, I just learned about the “get” feature of CTAN. If you are reasonably certain of the location of files you are looking for, the command www.ctan.org/get/ presents a nicely formatted directory list of the archive’s top level, and adding a directory name takes you to that area directly, using an available mirror to spread the load. This is a convenient alternative to the search page.

Thanks to the CTAN crew whose efforts are always appreciated, if not acknowledged nearly often enough.

Recreating the Gutenberg press

In April, a documentary video was aired by the BBC chronicling the invention of the Gutenberg Press. This description was posted by RIT Professor Emeritus Michael L. Kleper.

Stephen Fry travels to France and Germany on the trail of Johannes Gutenberg, and sets about reconstructing a replica of Gutenberg's first press. This is a must-see program. Owing to contractual restrictions, it's not available outside of the UK.

For awhile, it was posted on YouTube, but pulled in response to the BBC's copyright claim. Watch for it—it may reappear, or be released elsewhere. Before it disappeared, I managed to view most of it; Prof. Kleper's description is spot on!

Copy-editing the wayward apostrophe

Do you become exasperated reading signs in which words are (mis-)spelled in sometimes seemingly random ways, and apostrophes appear in places where they don't belong, often changing the meaning of what is being advertised?

Well, you're not alone, and someone is doing something about it.

Jeff Deck, a Dartmouth College (New Hampshire, USA) graduate, is on a mission to correct typographical errors in public places. You can read about his quest at

<http://abcnews.go.com/Travel/BusinessTravel/story?id=4593597&page=1>.

He also writes a blog (<http://www.jeffdeck.com/teal/blog/>) where he ruminates on the activities of the Typo Eradication Advancement League (TEAL).

Join the hunt.

A font game for your amusement

At <http://fontgame.ilovetypography.com>, one finds a page entitled “the rather difficult Font Game”.

Below this heading appears a small font sample—a word, a date, or other string of glyphs from a font—with four font names; choose the one you think the sample came from.

The game consists of 34 such samples, and it keeps score. When you have identified all 34, you can look at the correct answers, check the scores of other testees (the average score is reported to be 23 out of 34 points), or start again with new samples.

The game was created by Kari Pätälä of Joutseno, Finland. It can be played on an ordinary browser or on an iPhone.

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