
Preface to the fifth edition

My book *Practical L^AT_EX* [42] was published last year. Many of the changes in this fifth edition are based on *Practical L^AT_EX* and on my articles “What Is New in L^AT_EX?” in the Notices of the American Mathematical Society [36–41] and [43].

Part I. Short Course of the fourth edition was revised under the title *Chapter 1. Short Course*. I renamed *Part I: Mission Impossible*. This part now has a second chapter: *And a few more things ...* The new *Chapter 1* is what you absolutely, unquestionably must know to write your first T_EX document. It’s only 30 pages long, should not take more than a few hours to read and understand. No typing is necessary, the files you need are provided for you, see *Section 1.1.2*.

The new *Chapter 2* adds a few more topics that is helpful to know such as the aux files, what is their role, how to handle them. It deals in some detail with error messages. Finally, it contains Brian Davey’s list of L^AT_EX mistakes most often made by authors.

To create “vector graphics” illustrations (see page 343 for an example), many users switched to Till Tantau’s TikZ package. We introduce TikZ in *Chapter 13*. We hope that the few commands we discuss are sufficient to get you started.

I carefully revised all the material in this book. One would think that this is not necessary in a fifth edition. But as Fred says, there are infinitely many typos in any book, and even our best efforts remove only finitely many. And so many of the links have changed...

Finally, I should mention that I renamed the awkward *user-defined commands* to *custom commands*. How come I have not thought of this before?

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