

Preface

THIS BOOK PROVIDES students with an introduction to technical writing and computer presentations with L^AT_EX, which is the de-facto standard in computer science and mathematics. The book may also be used as a reference for seasoned L^AT_EX users.

The book offers techniques for writing large and complex documents, preparing computer presentations, and creating complex graphics in an integrated manner. The book's website, which may be found at <http://cswb.ucc.ie/~dongen/LAF>, has three separate chapters explaining how to use a widely used L^AT_EX distribution on Windows, on Unix, and on the Mac. These chapters also provide an introduction to some selected integrated development environments (IDES).

I have tried to minimise the number of classes and style files the reader has to know. This is one of the main reasons why I decided to use the `amsmath` package for the presentation of mathematics, and decided to use `tikz`, `pgfplots`, and `beamer` for the creation of diagrams, data plots, and computer presentations. Another advantage of this approach is that it simplifies the process of creating a viewable/printable output file because everything should work with `pdflatex`, which is a program that turns L^AT_EX into pdf.

The book avoids the use of what is known in the L^AT_EX community as “verbatim” commands and environments. except when it comes to including, well, verbatim program listings. The main reason for this decision is that verbatim commands in the hands of beginners often lead to errors that are difficult to find and are not always so easy to resolve. By no means should the decision to omit verbatim commands be a limitation; this book was written without verbatim commands, so why should you need them when you're writing a thesis or dissertation?

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Cork
2011



<http://www.springer.com/978-3-642-23815-4>

LaTeX and Friends

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2012, XXV, 300 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-642-23815-4