Editorial Comments

Barbara Beeton

Adieu, Daniel Taupin

Daniel Taupin, perhaps best known in the TeX community as the creator of MusixTeX, was killed in a mountaineering accident in the Pyrenees on August 26, 2003. His love of the mountains was great, and he has been honored by his colleagues with a commemorative plaque on the Viaduc des Fauvettes (an old railway bridge that provides access to a number of climbing venues), which was restored in large measure through his tenacious urging. A web site in his memory is at `http://www.pyrenees-pireneus.com/taupin.htm`.

I met Daniel at several meetings of TUG and other groups, and enjoyed his company. He held strong opinions, but always had something interesting to say.

Several papers by Daniel were published in *TUGboat*, beginning with the proceedings of the 1993 annual meeting (**14**:3), where his two main hobbies were introduced in two papers, the first on "Using TeX and METAFONT to build complicated maps" — a description of a "tentatively exhaustive catalog of all the 1500 known climbable crags of France outside the high mountains", and the second, "MusicTeX: Using TeX to write polyphonic or instrumental music".

Another memorial to Daniel appears at `http://icking-music-archive.org/Memorial/Taupin/Statements.html`.

Don Knuth to Michael Downes

I received a note from Don Knuth which had been intended for Michael Downes, written just an hour before he read Michael's obituary. Since the note is on a matter of historical record, it's presented here with Don's permission.

10 Sep 03

Dear Michael

Your fine article in AMS Notices (Dec 2002) sent me to my diary re footnote 2 on page 1389.

TeX 2.0 was installed on Saturday 04 January 1986, on Stanford computers via internet connection from my apartment in Boston where Jill & I were on sabbatical ... the same day as METAFONT 1.0. The diary also says "typed the index of Volume C thru 'Davis'; never took time to get dressed today

– don knuth

The article in question is entitled "TeX and LaTeX 2_ε". It briefly describes the history of TeX, its use at the AMS, development of the AMS packages, and some future directions. The cited footnote refers to November 27, 1985, as the date on which TeX 2.0 was released:

Conjectural; the historical record for this release seems to be unclear. The 11/27/85 date is the date of the last change recorded in `tex82.bug` after the release of version 1.5 and prior to other changes designated as belonging to version 2.1. An announcement by David Fuchs in the March 1986 issue of *TUGboat* stated that "TeX 1.5, when used with the new CM fonts, is officially called TeX 2.0." Should this be interpreted, perhaps, to mean that the release date of 2.0 is the same as for 1.5?

Another honorary degree for DEK

On June 5, 2003, Don Knuth received the Doctor of Science degree from Harvard University. The citation, he observed, was rather poetic:

Donald Ervin Knuth, Doctor of Science
Font of digital ingenuity, icon of algorithmic invention, whose artful efforts have programmed the course of a powerful modern science.

Background information in support of the citation can be found in the June 5 edition of the *Harvard Gazette*, at `http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2003/06.05/01-honorary.html`.

Help save the French Imprimerie nationale

The French Imprimerie nationale, an institution broadly equivalent to the US Government Printing Office or the HMSO in the UK, is heir to the centuries-old tradition of French government printing, starting with the Imprimerie royale, set up by Cardinal Richelieu under King Louis XIII in the 17th century, with forerunners from the Renaissance.

This institution is being disbanded by the French government, with no thought to the preservation of its historic heritage — part of the institution is classified as a "historic monument" — other than to pack it into crates for permanent storage. This move is scheduled for the first half of 2005, destination unknown.

A petition is posted at

`http://www.garamonpatrimoine.org`

for the purpose of encouraging the French government to preserve this unmatched resource. Please read and sign it. The following text is excerpted from the petition.

The historic collection of the Imprimerie is a unique, priceless testimony of the history of the written form, from the 16th century to the present. It includes the Cabinet des poinçons, or Punch Room, holding hundreds of thousands of letterform and character punches, for both western and oriental scripts; functional workshops — a foundry, presses for typography, lithography and copper-plate engraving work, stitching and binding — as well as a library with over 30,000 volumes, and the archives of the State printing works. Set up in 1539 by King Francis I, at the same time as the Collège de France, the national center of academic excellence, this collection stands as the memory of specialized know-how and expertise, and as a center for creation, now fated to disappear if its continued survival is not ensured.

This whole must not be scattered or split up, as regards either its contents, or its functions: museum and conservation, typeface creation, publishing and research. It must be released from the oversight of a ministerial department driven by concerns of economic profitability. This heritage must be housed in Paris, held by an institution guaranteed adequate resources, having the capacity to further enlarge and expand it. Better still, it could be set up as a foundation — a controlled, non-profit organization — which would be a dedicated space for conservation, but equally of interfacing with outside elements, and for research. Concurrently, and as of now, measures should be taken to ensure that the transfer of equipment and expertise proceed speedily, using a transition formula, with no interruption to production, conservation, research or training activities.

Priceless artifacts must be saved, but equally persons, skills, a store of knowledge must be safeguarded, that are at risk of being lost to all humankind.

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A message from Jef Tombeur to the TYPO-L discussion list (July 28, 2004) communicated this additional information from the French organization Convention typographique and the European Monotype University:

> Just imagine if the Eiffel tower was made by hand. Not just as it is, but even more so — each bolt, each and every component forged and adorned with care, craft and art. So what? Would just be another French monument. The Cabinet des poinçons (punches), and the French Imprimerie nationale library, are something really different. Not just another French landmark. It is your history,

since the [16th] century, that is to disappear, buried, forgotten, maybe dispersed. Because it [is] not only French writing, but Chinese, Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, etc., that are concerned: there are punches and fonts for nearly every written language known till the last century. And books in all writings and languages. But there is another way. And that [is] why, we, the [not] for profit organization Convention typographique, and so many [other] organizations, and individuals, from so various countries, ask you to add your name to the petition (on-line :
http://www.garamonpatrimoine.org,
or print it, or ask for a PDF in your own language or a language [you] understand, to be sent to you; Xerox it, and spread the word around).

Avoid obsolescence: Guidelines for LaTeX users

A couple of years ago, a document by Mark Trettin arrived at CTAN, listing a number of things of which a user of LaTeX 2_ε should be aware. This document, originally in German, has now been translated into English ("An essential Guide to the dos and don'ts of LaTeX 2_ε, or obsolete Commands and Packages, and some more Mistakes to avoid") and several other languages. A search of CTAN for the keyword "l2tabu" will find it. The suggestions here are helpful for even experienced LaTeX users, giving reasons as well as directives.

Hidden TeX use in Germany

Need a personalized train schedule? If you're traveling on the German railway (Deutsche Bahn AG), you can get one — prepared under the covers using TeX. The company providing this service, and a lot of others, has an interesting web site: http://www.hacon.de/hafas_e/print2web.shtml. The site http://www.travelinfosystems.com/palm/query/query-p2w.cgi/en provides a similar service for the UK.

Bank statements and similar documents are also created in the same way, but only in Germany, as far as I am aware. (Certainly the statements from my bank aren't produced this way.) Thanks to Volker Schaa for calling these services to my attention.

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