(These reports were written for *The PracTeX Journal* issue 2006-4; we thank the authors and editors for allowing their inclusion here also. The online version at `http://tug.org/pracjourn` also includes photos, which we regretfully had to omit. *Ed.*)

The 3rd Annual G$_U$IT (Italian TeX Users) Meeting
— Onofrio de Bari, G$_U$IT vice president

- The G$_U$IT06 site, with additional information and photos: `http://www.guit.sssup.it/GuITmeeting/2006/2006.en.php`.

- A podcast of the conference, provided by Kaveh Bazargan of River Valley Technologies: `http://web.mac.com/kaveh1000/iWeb/GUIT_2006/Podcast/Podcast.html`.

The third annual meeting of G$_U$IT, the Italian TeX User Group, was held on 21st October 2006 in Pisa, Italy. Because of all the activities since G$_U$IT was founded in 2004, we are pleased to see ourselves rapidly reaching the level of interest that other European national user groups receive in their countries. The founding of G$_U$IT with a charter, the publication of our journal, *Ars TeXnica*, and the annual meetings are the result of very intense but gratifying work. In particular, we are very happy to receive many requests from Italian users to join G$_U$IT and help with our efforts.

The annual meeting is always a special day, giving G$_U$IT members the chance to abandon their "net anonymity" and to meet each other in person to discuss LaTeX, its use and its future, both in Italy and internationally. The talks at this year's meeting covered a wide range of topics, and were chosen to appeal to all levels of users.

The conference started with an introductory speech by Lance Carnes, editor of *The PracTeX Journal*, about PracTeX and what it means for regular TeX users.

Next was Enrico Gregorio who spoke about category codes; in particular, he described an application he developed for entering math expressions by redefining LaTeX category codes and commands.

Gustavo Cevolani introduced a review of several methods to create booklets using LaTeX packages. Some methods were custom-developed for a specific purpose, while others were adaptations of existing methods to obtain the desired result.

A paper on LaTeX tables by Lapo Mori, who could not attend in person, was presented by Maurizio Himmelman. He gave a detailed description of the problems that can arise when creating tables, and solutions supplied by numerous packages to solve these issues.

Kaveh Bazargan, of River Valley Technologies, gave a talk about mimicking the vertical grid spacing common in traditional typesetting with LaTeX. This was a very interesting subject, presented with "eye-candy" slides which caught everyone's attention.

The morning session ended with a talk by Jean-Michel Hufflen who talked about MlBibTeX, a reimplementation of BibTeX. The goal of this project is to improve BibTeX to work better in a multilingual environment.

In the afternoon it was time for me to give my talk, about GNU Emacs. I tried my best to make people aware of basic GNU Emacs editing features for LaTeX, and continued by analyzing features of sophisticated TeX and LaTeX environments such as AUCTeX and preview-latex.

Salvatore Palma presented the use of LaTeX to produce interactive mathematics tests for high schools. His results are impressive, and this subject will be developed further in the future.

The final three talks were about critical editions using LaTeX. In the first talk Jeronimo Leàl presented a course given to university students about critical editions. The next two presentations were about the Maurolico Project, oriented to critical editions of the works of the Italian mathematician, Francisco Maurolico. Pier Daniele Napolitani, head of the project, and Massimiliano Dominici supplied a general introduction to MauroTeX (the language built for the project) and a review of its features and developments. Roberta Tucci described her experience using MauroTeX for the critical edition of a single mathematical work.

Lastly, G$_U$IT president Maurizio Himmelmann closed the meeting with some brief remarks and thanked the speakers and organizers.

The level of attendance at the meeting was extremely satisfying. During the day about eighty people attended the conference. Thirty attendees were from outside Tuscany, who came by car, train or plane to attend the event; among them were Claudio Beccari (one of the first TeX users in Italy), Gianluca Gorni, and many others who will forgive me if I don't mention their names here.

As vice president of G$_U$IT, I am very pleased to say that the scientific level of this year's meeting was extremely high. Most of all, speaking for all G$_U$IT members, I want to say thanks to Lance Carnes, editor of *The PracTeX Journal* and Kaveh Bazargan of River Valley Technologies. Their contributions to the meeting were invaluable, not only for their presentations but also for their personal interest in our evolving user group.

I cannot omit, of course, to say thanks to the Sant' Anna School of Advanced Studies who provided the meeting facilities, and in particular to Prof. Giulio Bottazzi of the Laboratory of Economics and Management, without whose support this meeting would not have been possible.

Last but not least, as is often said in such cases, a big "thank you" to the G$_U$IT staff and to the attendees. We have received and still receive emails of congratulation which encourage us greatly in what we are trying to do for the Italian and international TeX community. Our hope is to make G$_U$IT an organization which will improve and grow in coming years.

UKTUG sponsors day of LaTeX
— Charles Goldie, UKTUG Committee Member

- LaTeX Workshop slides and handouts:
  `http://uk.tug.org/events/workshops/`
  `living-and-working-with-latex`

The UK TeX Users' Group (UKTUG) held a workshop "Living and Working with LaTeX" on October 20, 2006. This was something of a renewal event for the Group, which in recent years has found it hard to find volunteer energy enough to mount any major event. The breakthrough came with the realisation that it would make sense to outsource the practical aspects of the day, leaving the volunteer organisers to concentrate on where knowledge of the TeX world was needed, namely deciding on a theme and recruiting presenters relevant to it. The outcome was a meeting run as far as practical matters were concerned by the London Mathematical Society, at its new conference facility in central London.

The workshop focussed on using LaTeX to write technical documents, theses, books and articles. A major theme was using LaTeX better, for example to make it easier to collaborate and to re-use and revise documents. Centrepieces of the day were three major presentations:

- Peter Flynn: "Sorry, Professor, the dog ate my thesis: how to expect the unexpected when using LaTeX",
- Nicola Talbot: "Writing a thesis in LaTeX: hints, tips and advice",
- Jonathan Fine: "Avoiding problems, solving problems, asking for help".

About 55 attended, essentially filling the room used for the plenary sessions. Groups on particular topics formed naturally in breakout sessions in between the presentations. Participants seemed to be a mixture of relative newcomers and experienced TeX-setters. Most found that what they gained from the workshop was commensurate with their input: asking a question or making a point forces you to formulate your thoughts clearly; then back come reactions, help, collateral information and the identification of others with similar concerns.

Presentations and background materials are on the web under `http://uk.tug.org/events/`. UKTUG expresses its heartfelt thanks to the three presenters for their contribution to the success of the day. The Group was encouraged by the outcome, and hopes to mount a further event or events on a similar model in the future.