The Technical Council and Special Interest Working Groups*

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Chair, Technical Council

The primary purpose of the TEX User Group's Technical Council is to provide a forum and mechanism for studying technical issues concerning TEX, Metafont, and their auxilliary support systems. Although this includes such important service, standardisation, future tools projects, as Archives (TWG-Archives: George Greenwade, TWG-Chair), Multiple Language Coordination (TWG-MLC: Yannis Haralambous, TWG-Chair), and Independent Research Projects (IRP-TWG: Alan Hoenig, TWG-Chair) which includes the LATEX3 project (Frank Mittlebach, Project Chair), it is the 'Special Interest Working Groups (SI-TWG)' that will have the most interest for the ordinary TEX user. SI-TWGs are dedicated to the exploitation of TEX systems for the specialised needs of particular user groups. These vertically integrated interest groups are destined to be an incredibly exciting part of the TEX community.

Our first SI-TWG was 'TEX for the Disabled' with T.V. Raman (`raman@cs.cornell.edu`) as the chair. Raman, who is blind, has created a very impressive system for interpreting the control codes and structures of TEX by means of audio tones. His TWG is not only concerned with making TEX more accessible for the blind, but also for persons with other disabilities. This group has been able to connect people who need and people who produce such things as braille fonts for mathematics, Computerized Books for the Blind, and appropriate online versions of the LATEX manual. There has also been discussion and offers within the group to write some specialized prorams, such as adapting DOS for the vision impaired. This SI-TWG is an exciting beginning to, what I believe, will be a very important part of the TEX environment.

At this moment, we are in the process of organizing two new SI-TWGs. The first is to address the needs of those that are using, need to use, or merely interested in, the coupling of TEX and SGML (Ken Dreyhaupt: `dreyhaupt@spint.compuserve.com`). This is a very important area for the enhancement of cooperation and understanding between two communities, and will also serve as means of discussion and research for those that must straddle both areas. The other new SI-TWG being organized concerns the relation of TEX and

Adobe's new file format Acrobat (Doug Henderson, `drh@bluesky.com`).

SI-TWG may reflect the specialized technical interests of a particular community such as publishers, scientific organizations, chemists, astronomers, physicists, historians, logicians, theoretical computer scientists, or musicians, or perhaps satsify a need for the, possibly specialized, use of a tool such as LATEX. One particular area might be Human/Computer interfaces for LATEX.

What does it take to start an SI-TWG? First, and foremost, it takes an enthusiastic person with a burning interest. There also should be a user community with similar interests that will come together, usually electronically, for discussions and actions. Each TWG has a chair and a member of the Technical Council, who is sometimes the chair, to act as a liason between the TWG and the TUG Board. The TWG chair is expected to report, usually through the Technical Council Liason. its activities to the Technical Council and hence the board. The chair is also encouraged to report the TWG's activities in any forum that he/she feels beneficial and to seek cooperation with individuals and institutions as appropriate.If there is any action that a TWG would like to report to the board for formal (TUG) recognition, this action or recommendation will be evaluated by the Technical Council, and then brought to the board. It is anticipated that there will be little need for such action by a SI-TWG but the possibility is there.

The TWG chair is completely responsible for the membership and activities of the TWG. The Technical Council and its liason is charged only with reporting the activities of the TWG and carrying recommendations to the TUG Board. If you would like to participate in a particular TWG, please contact the Chair. If you would like to start a TWG, please contact any member of the Technical Council.

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*Reprint from the Daily Telegraphs TUG'93 conference, Aston, July 26–30, 1993.