

L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} — Second Test Release Available

Leslie Lamport and the L^AT_EX₃ project team

14 February 1994

The second test release of L^AT_EX is now available. Notes about this release are at the end of this announcement. The first release revealed a few serious bugs and several other areas which need attention. Many people reported that documents and style files had been processed by the new system without serious problems; this includes one very important test — the original text of ‘The L^AT_EX Manual’! We can also report that this release has been tested with all the files in the L^AT_EX 2.09 test suite and produces only predictable differences in the output.

First, here is the original announcement

L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} is the new standard version of L^AT_EX — prepared and supported by the L^AT_EX₃ project team. It is upwardly compatible with L^AT_EX 2.09 documents, but contains new features.

Over the years many extensions of L^AT_EX have been developed. This is, of course, a welcome development, since it shows that the L^AT_EX system is in a healthy state. It has, however, had one unfortunate consequence: there are now several incompatible systems, in the sense of format (.fmt) files, all claiming to be L^AT_EX. Therefore, in order to process documents coming from various places, a site maintainer needs to provide several format files: L^AT_EX (with and without NFSS), S_Li_TE_X, $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{M}\mathcal{S}$ -L^AT_EX, and so on. In addition, when looking at a source file it is not always clear for which format the document was written.

L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} puts an end to this unsatisfactory situation — it will give access to all such extensions based on a single format and thus end the proliferation of mutually incompatible dialects of L^AT_EX 2.09.

It uses an enhanced version (NFSS2) of the New Font Selection Scheme. Files such as `amstex.sty` (formerly the $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{M}\mathcal{S}$ -L^AT_EX format) or `slides.sty` (formerly the S_Li_TE_X format) will become extension packages, all working with this single format.

The introduction of this new version will also make it possible to add a small number of often-requested features (such as extended versions of `\newcommand`).

To summarize:

- **Standardisation:**
a single format incorporating NFSS2, to replace the present multiplicity of incompatible formats — NFSS, `lfonts`, `pslfonts`, etc.

- **Maintenance:**
a standardised system supported by a reliable maintenance policy.

L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} adheres, as far as possible, to the following principles:

- Unmodified version 2.09 document files can be processed with L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} .
- All new features of L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} conform to the conventions of version 2.09, making it as easy as possible for current users to learn to use them.

L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} is described in a new edition of ‘L^AT_EX: A Document Preparation System’ by Leslie Lamport (to appear during 1994) and ‘The L^AT_EX Companion’ by Goossens, Mittelbach and Samarin, both published by Addison-Wesley.

L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} will be distributed twice a year. This distribution is a preliminary test release, and doesn’t contain all of the files that will be part of the full release. In particular, it does not contain the planned extensions in the area of graphics inclusion.

The first full release will be available in Spring 1994.

This is a test release, so please get it and test it on as many different systems as possible!

Getting the second test release

L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} can be retrieved by anonymous ftp from the CTAN archives:

```
ftp.tex.ac.uk    /tex-archive/macros/latex2e/core
ftp.shsu.edu    /tex-archive/macros/latex2e/core
ftp.dante.de    /tex-archive/macros/latex2e/core
```

Bug reports

Please report any problems with L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} by using the report-generating program `latexbug.tex`, included in the L^AT_EX_{2 ϵ} distribution. Error reports should be sent to the following e-mail address:

```
latex-bugs@rus.uni-stuttgart.de
```

Help for style/package/class file maintainers

We shall be producing a short document summarising the changes that may be needed in order to turn a style file for old L^AT_EX into a class or package file. To get the latest information on this subject or to report problems, please send a message to the following address:

```
bugs@minnie.ZDV.Uni-Mainz.de
```

Please ensure that it starts with the following line *exactly*:

```
>Category: latex-class-writing
```

If you want a prompt and useful reply, please make your message as short and precise as possible.

Notes on the second test release

- Only the straightforward bugs and the serious bugs found in the first release have been fixed; other problems are still being worked on. Some of the reports uncovered features of the original LaTeX which some consider to be bugs; whether these should be ‘fixed’ is not always clear.
- There are thus several areas, including things arising from bug reports, on which we are still working.
- The details of the distribution, unpacking etc are still under development.
- The details of the typography in the standard classes is not finalised.

- The precise functionality of the compatibility mode is not fixed.
- Still no graphics package!

Warning

If you have installed the first release then you must remove it completely and start again. This is because there are many small differences, including new file names, and because the installation procedure now behaves differently.

For the L^AT_EX₃ Project

Johannes Braams
David Carlisle
Alan Jeffrey
Frank Mittelbach
Chris Rowley
Rainer Schöpf