

How to set up your computer to start using LaTeX

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July 12, 2011

1 Introduction

Thank you for your interest in \LaTeX typesetting system and this article will help you to get you ready for starting to use \LaTeX on your computer.

Although I would like to write a continuous text on how to install everything on different kinds of OSes (Operating Systems), I believe, that it is not necessary to duplicate any content, if it can be found in a better shape elsewhere. Therefore, I suggest you reading chapters of the book called \LaTeX hosted on the website called wikibooks.org. You can find an on-line version of the book or the PDF version of it, which I think is much more suitable for reading or printing.

The list of the needed software is already there and if somebody feels very comfortable with his system, no specific directions should be necessary for them.

2 Software from the Department of Chemistry

Computer Office is already providing images for deploying the whole OS and necessary software for Chemistry Department members. As far as I was informed, there are images for Linux and Windows systems. For Macs, there are easy installers already available on this page.

3 Linux machines

3.1 Introduction

There are various Linux Distributions, which are different in their philosophy and usually they have different base software. For our purposes the most important differences are those in how the packages are distributed and installed. If one feels comfortable with the package manager of his distribution, then the setup of the computer should be a very strait forward thing to do.

3.2 Debian family or '.deb' distributions

All Debian based distributions share a common package managing system and they have so-called .deb binary packages being distributed. As for list of the distributions which are based on Debian it is very lengthy, mainly because Ubuntu is based on Debian and all Ubuntu derivatives should fall under this category as well.

3.3 Redhat family or '.rpm' distributions

Here all distributions using '.rpm' packages would fall under this category. This includes Redhat, CentOS, Fedora, OpenSuSe and similar.

3.4 ArchLinux, Chakra

ArchLinux is a community based project and it usually provides a 'bleeding-edge' packages and sometimes things break. So once you have your \TeX setup up and running do not update the system if you need a stable system. However, ArchLinux probably provides the easiest and fastest way to install all the needed packages. Just execute these commands as root:

```
pacman -S texlive-most
```

3.5 Gentoo, Funtoo, Sabayon

4 Mac OS X

One can follow the links on the and get the '.dmg' files from the internet or use the aforementioned Departament installers. The recommended software includes:

- Full installation of MacTeX distribution
- Editors:
 - For people who like well IDEs (Integrated Development Environments), TeXShop is a really great choice
 - For people not being afraid of a steep learning curve, but very rewarding results, Vim/Emacs should be their main choice
- Bibliography managers:
 - BibDesk could serve most of the people very well
 - Another approach would be to use the same Vim/Emacs setup as both editors have a lot plug-ins to deal with various things
- PDF viewers:
 - If you do not care about loading times and stability of the software but prefer a really elaborate feature-set, then choose Adobe's products.
 - If you want a lighter alternative, then you can use Preview. Skim might be also worth looking at.
- Graphics post processing tools:
 - Adobe Illustrator will definitely fulfil your requirements, but it is really heavy.
 - A lighter but still capable of producing good quality graphics could be open-source Inkscape software.

5 Windows

You want to install MiKTeX distribution and it would be a clever thing to select an option to install the missing packages only when their are actually needed in the document. This will make you MiKTeX distribution smaller, but if you won't have an internet access when you need a new package, then you might have some inconveniences. Hence, the alternative of installing all the packages at once might be a safer option.