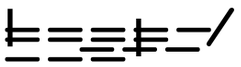
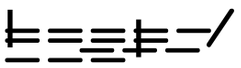
We discovered the work of Tom Lechner for the first time at the Libre Graphics Meeting 2010 in Brussels. Tom traveled from Portland, US to present Laidout, an amazing tool that he made to produce his own comic books and also to work on three dimensional mathematical objects. We were excited about how his software represents the gesture of folding, loved his bold interface decisions plus were impressed by the fact that Tom decided to write his own programming framework for it. A year later, we met again in Montreal, Canada for the 2011 Libre Graphics Meeting where he presents a follow-up. With Ludivine Loiseau (amateur bookbinder and graphic designer) and Pierre Marchand (artist/developer, contributing amongst others to podofoimpose and Scribus) we finally found time to sit down and talk.

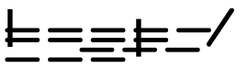


that I wrote to lay out my cartoon books in an easy fashion. Nothing else fit my needs at the time, so I just wrote it.



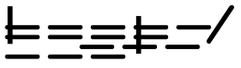
than laying out cartoons?

sically, and gradients. It does not currently do text. It is on my to-do list. I usually write my own text, so it does not really need to do text. I just make an image of it.



hirts?

I guess it's two forms of laying out. It's laying out pieces of paper that remain whole in themselves, or you can take an image and lay it out on smaller pieces of paper. Tiling, I guess you could call it.



hrough the process of doing the T-shirt?

n. I had just a shirt that sort of fit and I approximated it on a big piece of paper, to figure out what the pieces were shaped like, and took a photograph of that. I used a perspective tool to remove the distortion. I had placed rulers on the ground so that I could remember the actual scale of it. Then once it was in the computer, I traced over it in Inkscape, to get just the basic outline so that I could manipulate further. Blender didn't want to import it so I had to retrace it. I had to use Blender to do it because that lets me shape the pattern, take it from flat into something that actually makes 3D shapes so whatever errors were in the original pattern that I had on the paper, I could now correct, make the sides actually meet and once I had the molded shape, and in Blender you have to be extremely careful to keep any shape, any manipulation that you do to make sure your surface is still unfoldable into something flat. It is very easy to get away from flat surfaces in Blender. Once I have the molded shape, I can export that into an .off file which my unwrapper can import and that I can then unwrap into the sleeves and the front and the back as well as project a panoramic image onto those pieces. Once I have that, it becomes a pattern laid out on a giant flat surface. Then I can use Laidout once again to tile pages across that. I can export into a pdf with all the individual pieces of the image that were just pieces of the larger image that I can print on transfer paper. It took forty iron-on transfer papers I ironed with an iron provided to me by the people sitting in front of me so that took a while but finally I got it all done, cut it all out, sewed it up and