**Learning Journal**

9th August – 16th August

**Working with LaTeX**

Problem 1

Upon opening a LaTeX document, I immediately encountered issues. I thought I would attempt to get into the habit of using underscores in my project names and titles. This didn’t work in LaTeX. The text looked very strange; there were no spaces in my title and the first letter of each word was lower and smaller than the others. Evidently, the underscore is used as a sort of ‘subscript command’.

Solution 1

The solution was simple – replace the underscores with spaces in ‘Rich Text’. Rich Text looked confronting and seemed to behave temperamentally when I clicked on different places in Rich Text, and I am frankly afraid to click on too many things, but I see how it can quite easily be figured out.

Problem 2

When I Recompiled by document, I got a message saying “Error Rendering PDF Document” multiple times. This made my PDFs inaccessible for a while, and it was worrying at first.

Solution 2

Recompiling the document again fixed this problem, and my PDF (which I didn’t actually know was a PDF until that error showed up, although it seems obvious in hindsight given that I can’t directly type into it) was returned to normal. I have no idea why this happened or continues to happen, and I can’t find any hints in Rich Text. However, it doesn’t seem to be putting any of my data in Rich Text at risk, so I am not too concerned. I will have to ask about this.

Problem 3

Lost internet connection. The entire webpage was inaccessible, so I couldn’t even type, which is not normally something you need to worry about when working on a mere word document. Fortunately, I save often and I was able to recover my document easily, at least this time.

Solution 3

Naturally, save more often. Also figure out how to upload LaTeX documents to GitHub. It’s easy to upload the PDF, but as of yet, I don’t actually even know how to save a TEX document to my desktop, if that is even possible. Updates soon… (solution cont. below)

Problem 4

Out of curiosity, I clicked on a button whose function I didn’t know. It didn’t have a tooltip. It turned out to be a ‘back’ or ‘main page’ button. I think I may have lost a small amount of data since my last save. Not a big setback, but something to remember. Fortunately, I discovered how to download my LaTeX document – from the main page. It came in a ZIP folder. The next job will be figuring out how to reopen it from the ZIP folder or my desktop, or if it needs to be done from the site.

Solution 4

Luckily, I found the solution to problem no. 3 through this problem. To avoid problem no. 4 in the future, I will play around with a document one day and click on every button to test what they each do, so that I may learn.

Problem 5

There are some errors that I’m being notified about in the log. Some commands are apparently not working as desired on lines 64 and 75. It seems they were caused by deleting bullet points from Rich Text. Fortunately, they don’t seem to be affecting my document in any way.

Solution 5

I was too afraid to attempt to fix this problem before I uploaded the document, as nothing appears to be broken, so the ‘errors’ are still there in the upload. However, after I uploaded, I went back to the document to try to fix the error messages. I clicked on ‘Source’ and I deleted the commands on lines 64-66, and then the message disappeared when I recompiled the PDF. My document only appeared to go up to line 73, but there was an apparently useless ‘\end{itemize}’ command on line 71, so I also deleted that and ten the other error messages went away. I only have two notifications left in the log: “Overfull \hbox (10.5551pt too wide) in paragraph at lines 55—56” and “Overfull \hbox (0.9729pt too wide) in paragraph at lines 30—31”. These notifications are blue – not red, as the other ones were. I can’t see anything anomalous in my Rich Text or Source, and it doesn’t appear to be affecting my document in any way, but it bothers me somewhat that I can’t see the problem or fix it, as I suspect these types of error message could give me grief later.

**Notes and Reflection**

LaTeX has a confusing format at first, but I am becoming more familiar with it. I can assume the function of most of the lines of code that appear in Rich Text and Source when you start a new document, but I don’t yet understand know what ‘\usepackage[utf8]{inputenc}’ could possibly do. I intend to play around with the commands to try to break the document and see what other things I can do. I will also try to find a list of commands if such a thing exists; I don’t see a place on the page where this could exist.

When I was trying to download the TEX document, I ran into so many problems that it shocked me. I didn’t think I was too bad with computers and software, and I knew I was not particularly knowledgeable with these aspects, but working with all these different file types made me realise how little I know about how files actually function. I don’t even know what a ZIP folder technically does aside from store and compress files. Maybe that’s all it does. I really need to do some research on my own time about this next week. Right now, trying to figure out basic software is making me feel like a child.

**Committing PoC PDF to GitHub and Problem with Overleaf**

Uploading the PDFs to GitHub was an easy task. No problems encountered. However, after uploading my TEX documents to CloudStor, I redownloaded them to make sure they were opening correctly. They did open correctly on Overleaf, but this also inadvertently created three other files of the same name (‘Proof of Concept Scoping Exercise 1/2/3’). I can see how to ‘archive’ them, but so far, I cannot find a way to actually delete them. Perhaps this is intended to reduce the possibility of disastrous human errors. I will now archive them and then see if I can delete from the archives.

Update: I have entered the archives and seen that I can delete them. I have deleted the unnecessary extra copies. I like this feature; it’s an effective mitigator to only be able to delete files once they’re archived.

**Thoughts on GitHub**

So far, GitHub has been easy to use and effective. As of yet, I haven’t run into any problems at all.