Demonstration of trackchanges.sty

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August 29, 2006

Abstract

The intention of this text is to demonstrate the use of `trackchanges.sty`. The package defines five editing commands:

- `\note[initials]{note text}`
- `\annote[initials]{note text}`
- `\add[initials]{additional text}`
- `\remove[initials]{removed text}`
- `\change[initials]{original text}{new text}`

1 Introduction

While planning to write some complex[c1] document together with some of my colleagues the same discussion was started over and over again: should LaTeX or some office suite like OpenOffice.org[c2] be used? Strengths of LaTeX are its deterministic behavior, its reliable handling of split documents and unreached typesetting of formulas. On the other hand, current office suites provide the user with several features that are at least very desirable when collaboratively writing a document: they provide integrated merging facilities and are able to track changes and attach notes to the text. The merging issue can be reasonably handled by version tracking systems like SVN or CVS,[c3] but there was no acceptable solution to the issue of change tracking available. Of course, some [c4] LaTeX purists tried to convince me that all change tracking can be handled by insertion of LaTeX comments. I have tried to handle one project like this but it did not work out! The main reason was that reading and editing of large documents is mostly handled in DVI[c5] format and not on the LaTeX source level – but LaTeX comments cannot be seen in DVI! Especially if you have sent one version of the document to a colleague and you want to skim quickly over it to see what has been changed.

While returning from a project meeting and staring out of the train's window I had the idea how we could combine the "best of both worlds" for collaborative text editing: by adding change tracking and note facilities to LaTeX! This is the basic idea of the `trackchanges` LaTeX package. But this is only one part of the change tracking convenience offered by an office suite. The second part of the story is that changes and notes need to be accepted or rejected! This is the goal of the other programs of the **trackchanges** open source project hosted on sourceforge[1]

[c1] *text added by FS*

[c2] PS: Microsoft Office

[c3] FS: Should we emphasize that UNIX diff only works on line basis?

[c4] *removed text by PS:* militant

[c5] PS: what about PDF? The changes can be seen in PDF as well ...

[1] Please visit `http://trackchanges.sourceforge.net`