

output routine

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output routine. When T_EX has accumulated at least enough material to fill up a page, it chooses a breakpoint and places the material before the breakpoint in `\box255`. It then calls the current *output routine*, which processes the material and eventually sends it to the `.dvi` file. The output routine can perform further processing, such as inserting headers, footers, and footnotes. Plain T_EX provides a default output routine that inserts a centered page number at the bottom of each page. By providing a different output routine you can achieve such effects as double-column output. You can think of the output routine as having a single responsibility: disposing of the material in `\box255` one way or another.

The current output routine is defined by the value of `\output` (p. ‘`\output`’), which is a list of tokens. When T_EX is ready to produce a page, it just expands the token list.

You can make some simple changes to the actions of the plain T_EX output routine without actually modifying it. For example, by assigning a list of tokens to `\headline` or `\footline` (p. ‘`\footline`’) you can have T_EX produce a different header or footer than it ordinarily would.

The output routine is also responsible for collecting any insertions; combining those insertions and any “decorations” such as headers and footers with the main contents of the page and packaging all of this material in a box; and eventually sending that box to the `.dvi` file with the `\shipout` command (p. ‘`\shipout`’). Although this is what an output routine most often does, a special-purpose output routine might behave differently.