

# L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X News

Issue 19, September 2009 (L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X release 2009-09-24)

## *New L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X release*

This issue of L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X News marks the first release of a new version of L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> since the publication of The L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X Companion in 2005–2006.

Just in time for T<sub>E</sub>X Live 2009, this version is a maintenance release and introduces no new features. A number of small changes have been made to correct minor bugs in the kernel, slightly extend the Unicode support, and improve various aspects of some of the tools packages.

## *New code repository*

Since the last L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X release, the entire code base has been moved to a public SVN repository<sup>1</sup> and the entire build architecture re-written. In fact, it has only been possible for us to consider a new L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X release since earlier this year when the test suite was finally set up with the new system. In the process, a bug in the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X picture fonts distributed with T<sub>E</sub>X Live was discovered, proving that the tests are working and are still very valuable.

Now that we can easily generate new packaged versions of the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> distribution, we expect to be able to roll out bug fixes in a much more timely manner than over the last few years. New versions should be distributed yearly with T<sub>E</sub>X Live. Having said this, the maintenance of the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> kernel is slowing down as the bugs become fewer and more subtle. Remember that we cannot change any of the underlying architecture of the kernel or any design decisions of the standard classes because we must preserve backwards compatibility with legacy documents at all costs.

Even new features cannot be added, because any new documents using them will not compile in systems (such as journal production engines) that are generally not updated once they've been proven to work as necessary.

None of this is to say that we consider L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> to be any less relevant for document production than in years past: a stable system is a useful one. Moreover, the package system continues to provide a flourishing and stable means for the development of a wide range of extensions.

## *Babel*

One area of the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> code base that is still receiving feedback to be incorporated into the main distribution is the Babel system for multilingual typesetting. While the Babel sources have already been added to the SVN repository the integration of the test system for Babel is still outstanding.

## *The future*

While work on L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> tends to maintenance over active development, the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 3 project is seeing new life. Our goals here are to provide a transition from the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> document processing model to one with a more flexible foundation. Work is continuing in the expl3 programming language and the xpackages for document design. Future announcements about L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 3 will be available via the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X Project website and in TUGboat.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.latex-project.org/svnroot/latex2e-public/>