

L^AT_EX (“Lamport’s T_EX”) is a typesetting system used to render mathematical expressions. It renders specific sequences of plaintext: for example, the phrase “`x = {-b \pm \sqrt{b^2-4ac} \over 2a}.`” will be rendered as the quadratic equation. This allows for both full L^AT_EX documents, as well as embedding within other files, such as PDFs and HTML. As such, it is one of the most widely used tools for rendering mathematics and science-related special characters, and sees significant use within academic circles.

Although L^AT_EX syntax is quite intuitive, the staggering number of characters supported by the language and its libraries makes it difficult for beginners. For example, the `/prod`, `/Pi`, and `/pi` characters are rather similar in both their syntax and appearance, but have very different use cases. Memorizing each and every one of L^AT_EX’s thousands of commands, including many which are so similar, is a daunting task.

Therefore, I propose the creation of a Tensorflow image recognition model which would recognize handwritten mathematical characters and supply the user with their L^AT_EX equivalents. Users would be able to sketch a desired character (for example, a “ π ” shape) and receive the commands which best match the sketch (“`/pi`”). This CNN would use open-source data available from the [Detexify project](#). Tensorflow’s Keras API will be used to create the model, while the Numpy and Pandas libraries will be used to load and process the data into a format usable by the model.

Although a website with this functionality already exists, a Tensorflow model will allow for use of this tool in desktop applications and other webpages, as well as tuning and modifying it for other uses.