Chair's Report 2009

This past year has been one of steady progress. The website is up and running again, and we have resumed publication of our magazine Baskerville. Routine activities, such as distribution of TeX Live DVDs and of the EuroTeX proceedings, take place.

At last year's AGM, with much support from the membership, we replaced the previous quirky and sometimes impractical constitution with one that will work better for us.

Last year's AGM passed a motion, that the Committee produce and present to the members a report on the purpose and goals of UK TUG. I regret to say that we have not had the energy to do this.

TeX is, of course, part of a publishing system that is particularly well suited to mathematical content. It is also open-source software. Much has changed since the start of the TeX project as Stanford 32 years ago, in 1978.

These changes challenge the TeX community, both in the UK and world-wide. There are perhaps 6 to 8 major problems facing us, and here I identify just three. Online documentation for LaTeX, compared to that for Python for example, is poor. It is still difficult to put complex mathematics on web pages. Writing styles for TeX requires knowledge of TeX's complex and unusual macro programming language.

I have now been Chair of UK TUG for 3 years, and expect that in 2010 I will not be standing for re-election. I would like over the next year to work with others to make real and solid progress with some of these major challenges.

Many thanks are due to Committee members, and particularly the officers, for the hard work they've put in over the past year. I encourage you to stand for the Committee or, if after the AGM, ask to be coopted.

Jonathan Fine
UK-TUG Chairman