Reports

Editor's note: The following short reports are reprinted from MAPS 31 by permission of the authors and editors. They are included in this issue of *TUGboat* simply for the sake of timeliness; they were not presented at the Practical TEX conference.

MetaPost developments

Taco Hoekwater

The MetaPost system by John Hobby implements a picture-drawing language very much like that of MetaFont except that it outputs Encapsulated PostScript files instead of run-length-encoded bitmaps. MetaPost is a powerful language for producing figures for documents to be printed on PostScript printers, either directly or embedded in TEX documents. It includes facilities for directly integrating TEX text and mathematics with the graphics.

The version number of the MetaPost executable is still well below the 1.0 mark (0.641 is current), but not much has happened in recent years. This situation is far from satisfactory, especially since a fairly large number of bugs are known to exist at this date, but John Hobby simply could not find the time to solve these bugs, let alone handle feature requests.

Resulting from a renewed community interest in MetaPost, last summer a small group of people have made a proposal to Hobby for the creation of a special development group that would take care of the development of MetaPost from then on. Luckily, he agreed, on the condition that he will only allow tested code to be inserted into the MetaPost distribution. Among the currently active group are the following people:

- Karl Berry
- Giuseppe Bilotta
- Hans Hagen
- Taco Hoekwater
- Bogusłav Jackowski

Karl Berry has created a home page on the TUG server for MetaPost:

- `http://www.tug.org/metapost`

He also created a mailing list for discussions and questions. Details can be found at:

- `http://www.tug.org/mailman/listinfo/metapost`

Taco Hoekwater has set up a project at Sarovar that hosts a source repository as well as a bug / feature request tracker:

- `http://www.sarovar.org/projects/metapost`

The MetaPost manuals (`mpman`, `mpgraph`, and `mpintro`) have recently been released under a BSD-ish license, with John Hobby's blessing. Dylan Thurston at Debian converted the sources to LATEX, and in the future they will become a standard part of the distribution.

As of today, the known errors in the documentation have been removed, and a number of bugs have already been fixed in the repository. More bugs will be fixed in the near future, and the group hopes that a new bugfix release will be available around EuroTEX 2005.

⋄ Taco Hoekwater
  `taco@elvenkind.com`