
The T_EX Hour

Jonathan Fine

1 History

I write as the founder and host of *The T_EX Hour*, a weekly online video meeting devoted to T_EX and related matters, especially access to STEM documents. It also covers related computer technology.

About two years ago I started the T_EX Hour as a response to both the possible dissolution of UK-TUG and also the Covid pandemic. Since then we've had almost 100 meetings, most of which have been recorded and published.

The website <https://texhour.github.io> has up-to-date information about future meetings and links to videos of previous meetings. The T_EX Hour usually meets 6:30 to 7:30pm on Thursdays, BST (i.e. UK) time. All are welcome.

2 Gradual growth: T_EX in STEM

The T_EX Hour now has sturdy roots and is gradually growing. Last month we had a Special T_EX Hour, which nicely shows how the weekly meetings fit into the annual cycle of T_EX conferences.

This special T_EX Hour was on *Rethinking T_EX in STEM*. It was two hours. The first hour was talks from speakers from recent T_EX Conferences, namely Peter Williams, Martin Ruckert and Dennis Müller. The second hour was discussion.

We are fortunate that T_EXnical people at the arXiv attended this T_EX Hour. The resulting discussion showed very strongly how the weekly T_EX Hour cycle complements and adds value to the presentations at the annual T_EX conference. This is best experienced by visiting the website for 29 September 2022 T_EX Hour.

3 L^AT_EX and Accessibility

There will be a similar special T_EX Hour, devoted to L^AT_EX and Accessibility, on Thursday 1 December at 6:30pm BST (i.e. UK) time. We will be fortunate to have Jonathan Godfrey, a blind lecturer in Statistics, as a special guest.

As Jonathan lives in Auckland, New Zealand for him this T_EX Hour starts at 7:30am on Friday 2 December! More details will appear on the website.

4 Open source video meeting platform

A recent T_EX Hour announcement prompted some discussion on T_EX-fora hosted by TUG, about using an open-source video meeting platform. I moved this discussion off-list. I'm pleased that Paulo Ney de Souza joined that discussion. Paulo is a driving force behind the T_EX conference organised by TUG.

Paulo and I formed a rough agreement that the most important issues for using an open source video meeting platform were:

1. Availability of clients on all platforms, including Chromebooks, Android and iOS.
2. Stability, including the use of servers at the Calyx Institute.
3. Bandwidth to deal with meetings of 10, 100 and 1K participants.
4. Availability of features necessary for conducting small meetings classes, office hours, small and large conferences.
5. Recording and YouTube streaming.
6. Accessibility, particularly to blind and visually disabled.
7. Ability to handle mathematical content, either directly or via a plug-in.

I welcome using the T_EX Hour as a trial for use of an open-source video meeting platform. I'm personally very interested in the online sharing of mathematical content.

Surely we can in 2022 do better than using screen sharing to communicate a bitmap video of a Beamer presentation. Such improvements would provide a strong reason for preferring an open-source platform.

5 Our Zoom license

Meanwhile, we continue to use Zoom. I thank River Valley Technologies for funding our license for the next 12 months. I'm happy to use this license to host other T_EX-related online meetings. I'm also very willing to open up the T_EX Hour for any T_EX-related topics (loosely understood) that you'd like to discuss or present on. All are welcome, especially new users and other beginners. They often ask the best questions!

6 Conclusion

To summarize. For up-to-date information about past and future meetings visit the T_EX Hour website. Meetings are usually every Thursday, 6:30 to 7:30pm BST (i.e. UK) time.

◇ Jonathan Fine
Milton Keynes, UK
jfine2358@gmail.com
<https://texhour.github.io>