TUGboat, Jiří Veselý

Review of

Petr Olšák: Typografický systém TEX (Typeseting System TEX), CSTUG, Praha 1995, ISBN 80-901950-0-8.

Also CSTUG has some difficulties with its size (it would be better to have for administrative work, contacts with members, publishing the journal, etc. full-time employee). The last published issue of "Zpravodaj" was 4/1994 but two interesting books in Czech appeared. Both Czech authors are active CSTUG members. The author of the book under review created also the last package of CSTEX based on Eberhard Mattes products but equipped with a menu program allowing very user friendly handling of installation and daily use.

The book is based on the author's own experiences from this work and administration of the subnet of Czech Technical University and reflects also his typographical education. Book has very good typographical level. Soft glossy cover in Springer's yellow colour contains 272 pp. It contains a lot of tables, pictures and Appendixes A – G prepared with a great care. It is by no means a book for beginners. It starts with a short and easily written introduction (an ant Fred, popular hero of Czech fairy tails, plays a role in it), continues with a description of "different TEXs" (among others macros `plain`, `AmSTeX` and `LaTeX` as well as the role of `IniTeX` and `virTeX` are treated) and then browses in numerous relations of TEX to related topics. Special chapter is devoted to installations under DOS and UNIX, Czech (and Slovak) language (both of them are similar to each other and they belong to most heavily accented languages) and work with fonts (NFSS, virtual fonts, etc.). Other chapters contains information on TEX as programming language, about METAFONT and tinny questions of the use of PostScript. Final three chapters contain explanation how to handle pictures (METAFONT, `bm2font`, `EPS`), references and indexes, and how to document programs (`doc`, `C-WEB`). Many useful information are contained in Appendixes (e.g. dictionary of TEX primitives, TEX archives, List of useful books and articles, font tables).

The kern of the book reflects its origin: the author wrote a long series of articles on TEXfor Czech Software News. Some orthodox readers complain that the book is more about things around TEX than on TEX itself. I found this fact positive: it contains material which one would search with difficulties and which appears in Czech for the first time. Sometimes even more detailed explanation would be needed but it is a book of daily use for experienced TEX-users.