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ForAllTeX version 4

Terms of use:

4allTEX version 4

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The fourth edition of the 4allTEX cdroms is now available. This article describes the new features of this edition.

Introduction

4allTEX is a ready-to-run system for MS-DOS, WINDOWS and OS/2 users. Since 1994 this system is available on cdrom. In fact, back then it was the first TEX cdrom that offered true 'plug & play' for TEX. After this first revolutionary cdrom two more editions were produced, from which in total more than 5000 copies were sold worldwide, mostly of the third edition from 1995.

A new edition

Since 1995 a lot has changed in the MS-DOS and WINDOWS world. Therefore we (Wietse Dol, Maarten van der Vlerk and me) thought it was time to produce a new edition which would completely up-to-date. An important aspect in this respect was the emergence of WINDOWS 95 and the increasing popularity of WINDOWS NT. These operating systems enabled us to implement several features that simply couldn't be done before under MS-DOS or WINDOWS 3.x.

What's new?

Naturally we started off by updating all the relevant software that we supported on the old cdroms, and lots of new stuff that we found during the last two years. Of course the recently produced TEX LIVE cdrom was also a very helpful resource, for which we have Sebastian Rahtz to thank.

We copied many packages from that cdrom, updated things (it's amazing to see how fast updates of everything appear) and corrected some errors. Of course we added many other packages, fonts, programs and utilities that we thinks could be worthwhile for any TEXie to have at hand.

Here is a list of the most important differences between the third and the fourth edition of the 4allTEX cdroms:

- The installation script now recognizes the operating system on which 4TEX will run. This way you can have different configurations depending on

what OS you are running (MS-DOS, OS/2, WINDOWS 3.x, WINDOWS 95 or WINDOWS NT). The 4TEX batch files do not need any configuring, they automatically adapt to the OS, providing all features that are available on that OS.

- When running on WINDOWS 95/NT 4TEX can start other programs concurrently, so the menu remains available next to, e.g., a WINDOWS editor and a WINDOWS previewer. 4TEX is also able to automatically "kill" WINDOWS programs that you want to exit when 4TEX exits itself.

- 4TEX no longer supports computers equipped with a 80286 cpu or lower. If you have such a computer, you will have to manage with the standard EMTEX stuff.

- The spell-checker (still AMSPELL because ISPELL is still troublesome) now also supports South African, and of course the new Dutch spelling.

- 4TEX comes with and supports many more editors than before. E.g., the whole TSE family (formerly called QEDIT), PFE, WINEDT, NOTEPAD, EMACS, ZEUS, QUICKEDIT (not to be confused with QEDIT or QUICK-EDITOR) and MULTI-EDIT.

- 4TEX runs on the newest version of 4DOS, 6.0, and uses lots of its new features.

- Chinese is now supported via the LATEX package CJK. Fonts and everything else you need is ready to use.

- Donald Knuth himself requested a possibility to make 4TEX run TEX interactively (the "TEX prompt"). This feature is now available by choosing `null` as the main TEX file.

- Several dvi drivers cannot handle virtual fonts. Therefore you need to "devirtualize" a dvi file before such a driver can use it. The program DVICOPY does that for you, automatically if you want. E.g., if you choose DVIWIN as your previewer 4TEX will call DVICOPY before it starts the previewer. This feature can also be useful when using DVISCR. If the dvi file contains lots of references to virtual fonts DVISCR can easily run out of memory. Devirtualizing can solve this problem.

- Documentation in HTML format can now be viewed even by MS-DOS users in graphic mode (i.e., with pictures) by choosing the browser ARACHNE. It looks so much better than DOSLYNX... WINDOWS users can choose their own browser (e.g., INTERNET EXPLORER or NETSCAPE) or OPERA, a quick and small yet very powerful competitor.

- The METAPOST menu is much more powerful now. GHOSTSCRIPT (MS-DOS or WINDOWS version) can be used to preview pictures.

- The list of supported output devices has grown. Completely new is the option to use GHOSTSCRIPT to produce PDF.

- 1200 dpi laserjets are now supported thanks to a 32-bit version of EMTEX's DVIHPLJ.

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- The PostScript Type 1 versions of the Computer Modern and AMS fonts that were donated to the public domain recently are being used now instead of he older BaKoMa/Paradissa set.
- Conversion of *any*TeX to HTML through Gurari's TeX4HT is now fully supported.
- The ConTeXt format by Hans Hagen (Pragma) is available, including documentation.
- Gnuplot (both MS-DOS and Windows version) can be started from the 4TeX utilities menu.
- GSview (version 2.3), the Windows PostScript previewer based on Ghostscript (version 5.03) can now be selected as previewer.
- An up-to-date LaTeX 2$_\varepsilon$ Windows help file can be consulted for information on LaTeX commands.
- LaTeXmac is available to make typing of e.g., formulas, symbols and complete LaTeX environments a lot simpler. The WYSIWYG interface lets you choose what you need and it then simply pastes the code into your editor.
- The Windows program LaTeXcad can be used to make drawings that can easily be incorporated into TeX or LaTeX documents.
- 4TeX has been optimized for speed. Internally large pieces of code have been rewritten and/or simplified. Externally an enormous excellaration was achieved (up to a factor 2!) by giving the emTeX compiler faster access to files by reducing the number of subdirectories to a minimum (subdirectory searching costs lots of time, especially on slow media such as cdroms).
- Thanks to Ghostscript good quality public domain versions of all 35 standard PostScript fonts are now available.
- Both cdroms can be 'browsed' with any WWW browser thanks to a file `index.htm` in each directory, which contains links to all directories and files.
- In the root of both cdroms you will find complete listings of all there is on the cdrom (like `FILES.byname` on CTAN). In the emTeX root there is a file `ls-R` that can give fast access to all TeX sources to any Web2c user (be it an MS-DOS, Window, Unix user or whatever).
- The new cdroms are ISO-9660 compliant which makes them useable on almost any operating system. This is useful because most of the stuff is operating system independent. Windows users will find that they can see long file names (thanks to the 'Joliet' extensions). Especially on the second cdrom long files names are used, e.g. for WWW files with extension `html`.
- The complete 4TeX documentation is available on the cdrom in electronic versions (DVI, PostScript, PDF and HTML). Of course the documentation has been fully updated. The installation process is now more thoroughly explained.

- The installation script has been improved significantly. Now it's much easier to install 'all' on your hard disk, simply by choosing the modules that you need. Even *after* doing the installation it's easy to add modules without going through the whole installation process again.
- On the second cdrom you will find a wealth of programs and information which can be useful for any TEX user. Several distribution sets of other TEX user groups are available. Also other 'shells' such as EMTEXGI and TEXTELMEXTEL are available.
- The complete 'LATEX catalogue' is there in HTML, POSTSCRIPT and PDF. The catalogue describes a huge set of LATEX packages.
- Information on user groups is as complete as we could get it. The new Greek user group has been added. Electronic magazines produced by several user groups are available.
- The TEX courses have been updated and extended. Now there is also a Spanish, a Polish and a Greek course.

Many thanks to...

Just like before many, many people have contributed to this new edition of 4allTEX, either by sending us files or programs, by giving hints for improvements and extensions, by sending bug reports, or by beta-testing. There are simply too many of them to list here, so we'll just say to all: many thanks!

Availability

Like before this new edition of 4allTEX will be sold by the Dutch TEX users group NTG. The price of the double cdrom including the paper manual will be the same as before: 60 Dutch guilders (currently about 15 US dollars). But you can also buy the cdroms without manual because the manual is also on the cdroms. In that case you pay only 30 Dutch guilders. Prices include shipping. Note that TEX user groups can get a significant discount if they buy larger quantities from the NTG and resell to their members.

More details about payment, distribution etc. will be made available through the usual channels, such as WWW, mailing lists and Usenet.

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