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Authoring systems for EP-odd

INTRODUCTION

For those readers who cannot comfortably digest an article until they have decoded the title, a word of explanation seems in order. Even before the appearance of this specimen issue, news of the journal appears to have spread far beyond the editors and the publishers. The acronym EP-odd seems to have caught on already, though not without much rolling of eyes to the heavens as each unwary initiate encounters it for the first time.

If the obvious emotions about the acronym, ranging from tacit politeness to total mystification, were not enough, it has been even more unnerving to face the sheer disbelief in some quarters, accompanied by simulated fainting attacks and fits of uncontrollable mirth, when we reveal our intention of supporting various 'electronic' manuscript origination schemes. To be fair, for every prophet of doom foretelling avalanches of manuscripts using 'home-brew' word-processors — written in assembler and submitted on non-standard hard-sectored 17⅞" floppy discs — there have been a dozen other enthusiasts welcoming the idea so eagerly, while faithfully promising to follow the standards laid down, that our only remaining worry is whether we can match reality to expectations.

The remainder of this article will survey what we think we can support in the immediate future. Copious details for all origination schemes are available from the publishers (see 'Notes for Authors' on the inside back page).

GENERAL POLICY

We believe it would be a nonsense to launch an electronic publishing journal without being prepared to handle manuscripts submitted in some electronic form. For this reason the publishers are expanding their text processing facilities, in order to handle the systems described later, recognizing that many of our authors will wish to play their part by helping things along in the pre-production phases. However, it is important to remember that the publishers remain in control of the production process, and their decision is final on all matters in this area.

The editors and publishers accept the unique challenges and opportunities presented by allowing a degree of author participation in the production of EP-odd, and are concerned only that the area for experimentation should be carefully circumscribed until experience has been accumulated with the various production methods, software systems and computing machinery. If all the technology fails us then the journal might have to be set using metal type, engraved blocks, composing sticks and galleys — but we hope it won't come to that!

As a first manifestation of our caution we shall be insisting that manuscripts submitted to the journal shall be sent as hard copy, in triplicate, via the traditional route of conventional mail. Manuscripts should be accompanied by a completed transmittal form

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(you will find a sample in this issue) which informs the editor of the authoring system used. If at the same time the author wishes to send a note to the appropriate editor, via electronic mail, advising that a manuscript is on its way, then that will act as a useful confirmation. Please *do not* submit the document itself by e-mail, even if you have the technology to do so, until one of the editors asks for it. This request will probably not occur until the refereeing process is complete and a decision has been made on acceptance or rejection. We may be able to relax these restrictions at some stage but before we can do so we need to install some fairly powerful and capacious computing machinery, devoted solely to EP-odd, at both Nottingham and Palo Alto.

It is important that authors should not feel pressed into using an unfamiliar 'electronic' system if they do not feel happy about it — a conventional manuscript is perfectly acceptable and particularly so for those papers where the precise details of the final appearance are not of great concern. On the other hand we do not want authors to feel excluded from the production process if they wish to participate and so we accept that the degree of author involvement in the production process may range from zero (traditionally submitted typescript) through to sophisticated camera-ready copy (perhaps in the form of a PostScript file), which reproduces some exotic effect in precisely the correct journal format. The majority of our authors will doubtless settle for some middle way, and to this end we intend to support four distinct authoring schemes for the submission of manuscripts, either in electronic form or on floppy discs. Three of these methods use the approved software packages, which will be device-independent *troff* running under UNIX, TEX (with the possibility of LATEX at some stage) and Ventura Publisher. The fourth method consists of sending a file of ASCII characters (preferably untarnished by word processor control codes).

The advantage of generating the initially-submitted hard copy from one of our approved authoring systems is that it enables the editors to request the corrected manuscript via electronic mail, or on floppy disc, for relaying to the publishers, whereas conventional typescripts, with no machine-readable form, will have to be re-keyboarded. In every case, once the publisher has the manuscript, all copyediting and requests for proof-reading and corrections will take place between author and publisher in the conventional manner.

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE SYSTEMS

It may be helpful to review the computing machinery and the production techniques that will be used at the Chichester (UK) office of John Wiley in producing each issue of the journal. A personal computer (compatible with the IBM PC-AT) has been purchased and its hard disc has been partitioned for UNIX and MS-DOS. We intend to run *troff* and its pre-processors under UNIX with MS-DOS being used for Micro-TEX and Ventura Publisher. The final output language will be PostScript, which will be proofed on an Apple LaserWriter and typeset on a Linotronic 300. Conventional typescripts and ASCII files may be set in-house or may be sent for external typesetting.

The editors are in touch with key production personnel, most of the editorial board and many external referees via electronic mail. We hope that this will lead to an enhanced turn-round time at the refereeing stage. Electronically submitted papers will be held temporarily on a SUN 3 machine in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Nottingham, prior to being transferred over PSS to Chichester.

The paragraphs below give an overview of the submission methods that the journal will operate. The descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely to outline the options which are available. Full and detailed sets of instructions should be requested for whichever authoring system is chosen, and additionally authors will need to follow the Style Guide for the journal because rigorous standards have been set. Further information about the documents available will be found on the inside back cover.

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Conventional manuscripts

The journal is happy to accept conventional manuscripts, in the form of typescript or other legible hard copy, with separately drawn illustrations. Brief instructions are given at the back of this issue. If the paper is accepted then the manuscript will be copyedited and typeset by the publisher and proofs will be sent to the authors for correction. It is worth remarking that this authoring method may well lead to faster publication than the other 'electronic' routes.

Electronic manuscripts

In choosing *troff*, TEX and Ventura as our three supported systems we have been guided by the near-universality of the first two among the computing community, and by the availability of all three at Chichester. Ventura is already a popular product and may commend itself to those with fairly straightforward IBM PC facilities and access to floppy disc media, whereas the first two systems enable more sophisticated material (e.g. line diagrams, mathematics, tables etc.) to be set in a controlled fashion.

All three systems will be supported via specially configured sets of macros, or tags, which enforce the house-style of the journal. The macros for the system of choice will be made available, either via electronic mail or on a 5¼" disc suitable for IBM PC machines. Note that the IBM MS-DOS disc is the *only* unit of negotiable floppy currency, at least for the first few months. Any relaxation of this policy will be announced by means of a Note at the back of some future issue. Authors wishing to send an accepted paper as a simple ASCII text file may opt to do so either via electronic mail or, once again, on a 5¼" disc suitable for the IBM PC.

We hope that these facilities will enable authors to work in a familiar environment while giving author and editor alike the option of easily revisable form and content. However, it must understood that adherence to the approved macros, and the submission of a manuscript using them, does not in any way guarantee that the content of the paper will be acceptable to the journal. Only when the paper has been submitted as hard copy, and refereed and approved in the normal way, may the author then be invited to submit the final revised copy of the manuscript by e-mail or on floppy disc.

Camera-ready manuscripts (including PostScript masters)

In addition to the routes already described the editors acknowledge that some accepted papers will need to be produced by the authors themselves. This may occur when the complexity of material is such that it would be uneconomical for the publishers to

reproduce the effects, or when detailed typographic considerations are of importance to the content of the paper (e.g. fonts not normally available to the publisher). However, when we refer to this submission route as 'camera-ready', we cannot over-emphasize the necessity for demonic and punctilious attention to layout detail. The requirements to be imposed on the author will far exceed those asked for by traditional camera-ready journals because, to maintain high standards, we are determined that authors submitting camera-ready copy shall provide it at typesetter quality on bromide paper and that the layout shall faithfully follow the guidelines laid down in the Style Guide. Page numbers and running-heads will be stripped in by the publishers, but all other aspects of the appearance of the article will be largely under the author's control.

It is clear that the camera-ready method will require more learning and more commitment by the author than would be the case if the manuscript were submitted as described in the two previous sub-sections. It requires the author to participate, as compositor, in the correction cycles at the copyediting and page proof stages, which would normally be undertaken entirely by the publishers. For these reasons it is almost certain that camera-ready articles will take longer in production than those submitted by other methods. Authors determined to follow this route should have good reasons for so doing and should be prepared for the fact that publication will be delayed for as long as it takes for the copy to reach the standards required by the journal.

We may also distinguish a form of 'electronic camera-ready copy'. Under exceptional circumstances the journal will accept PostScript masters for setting on a Linotronic. The only difference between this route and traditional camera-ready copy is that the PostScript submission can be converted into camera-ready form by the publishers themselves. Nevertheless, the previous strictures about the author needing to become compositor, proof reader and copyeditor apply with even greater force for submissions by this route. In particular, neither the publishers nor the printers are prepared to become involved in the hand-editing of PostScript files which fail to produce the required output on the typesetter. If there are any problems then the bromide proofs will be returned to the author, together with a request for another PostScript master that will produce the required effects. In the last resort, if the Linotronic's output stubbornly fails to produce what the author wants, then it will be the author's responsibility to provide a bromide copy of the paper.

Illustrations

In *troff*, (using the *pic*, *grap* and *chem* preprocessors) and in LaTeX, there are facilities for including line-diagrams within the running text. More complex illustrations will need to be enclosed on separate sheets and the EP-odd Style Guide gives further information on figure caption standards. The instructions for other artwork are summarized at the back of this issue and have the usual strictures about clear lettering and submission at about twice final size.

Provided prior notice is given to the publisher, artwork may be accepted as encapsulated PostScript files on IBM 5¼" floppy discs, or on Macintosh discs, after origination via software such as Adobe Illustrator. If this route is followed the illustration should be at actual size and, once again, it will be necessary for the author to participate in the proofing and editing of such artwork if it does not conform to the house-style of the journal.

THE REASONS FOR THIS EXPERIMENT

It is interesting to analyse the disturbingly masochistic tendencies of editors and publishers in working towards a truly electronic journal when, to put it bluntly, production would take place more economically and with much less fuss, if there were an insistence on traditional typescripts, accompanied by hand-drawn illustrations in Indian ink!

The publishing viewpoint

The publishers believe that the processing of accepted papers in this way will put them at the forefront of 'new wave' publishing and will give them valuable experience in handling manuscripts submitted by these systems. An additional long-term benefit is the possibility of marketing secondary products, and in particular a version of the journal entirely in PostScript, given that the journal moves progressively towards the adoption of PostScript as the common final form for all papers.

Above all it is important to remember that Wiley are not going through this pioneering exercise in an attempt to save money. The price for innovative methods is that the journal will inevitably be more expensive to produce than a conventional one. We can only hope that the quality of the articles obtained, and the feeling of involvement by the authors and the editorial board, will lead to such a wildly successful product that the publishers will be happy to live with the additional expense and aggravation of allowing amateurs to participate in the production cycle.

The author viewpoint

Accepting then, that the publishers are trading-off increased production costs against the somewhat dubious benefit of being innovative, it might be as well to examine the benefits for the author, in the hope that here at least things may seem more clear cut.

There is a view, held by at least fifty per cent of the editors, that a desire by authors to participate in the setting, copyediting and production of their manuscripts is prompted by either vanity or stupidity, or some non-orthogonal linear combination of the two. The other fifty per cent would like to believe that this is not the case, and yet there is a rueful feeling that the more libellous such a charge may seem, the closer to the truth it must be. So let us be plain about this — there are very few authors with a good enough eye for detail, and possessed of sufficient practical talents at page lay-out, for them to produce a camera-ready bromide acceptable to the publishers at the first attempt. Equally, we hope that there are very few contributors misguided enough to believe that page lay-out, typography and the design of illustrations is a job for ungifted amateurs. The text processing schemes we support seem a sensible compromise between participation and desecration; they enable the authors to work in a convenient and comfortable environment, giving them some control over both content and form, while helping to limit the damage that can be done by having non-specialists in total and uncontrollable charge of the final appearance.

A less cynical view of author participation is that it stems from a genuine desire to help the publisher, in the belief that keyboarding is a major part of the production effort. Most of our authors will be sufficiently aware of the realities of publishing to know that this is just not the case.

So we earnestly seek your papers on all aspects of electronic publishing, as outlined in our Editorial, while entreating you to adhere to the guidelines in the EP-odd Style Guide applied to the authoring scheme of your choice. Keep the papers flowing — we need plenty of them in order to put together a lively, interesting and relevant journal — but please spare us the nightmares of non-standard disc media and non-standard software. If you are using anything more technologically advanced than a typewriter it would be as well to send off for your Style Guide and authoring system notes straight away!

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