Editorial

Regular readers of this journal will already have seen our Special Issues on 'Teaching of Electronic Publishing', 'Hypertext' and 'Information Retrieval'. The next two years will see some new ventures along these same lines with three more Special Issues, in late 1993 or early 1994, on the topics of 'Active Documents', 'Multimedia' and 'Computer Processing of Type'. Submission details for these can be found at the back of this issue (or in the previous issue in the case of 'Active Documents'). If you are working in these areas and would like to submit a paper for consideration then contact the appropriate Guest Editor and let him or her know of your intentions. If you are not able to meet the deadline for the Special Issue of your choice then be reassured that the Editors of *EP-odd* (whose names you will find at the foot of this editorial and inside the front cover of the journal) are always happy to receive your paper for possible inclusion in some future regular issue of the journal.

The eagle-eyed among you will have noticed, at the back of issue 5.3, an advertisement for no fewer than *four* conferences, on various aspects of Typography and Electronic Publishing, all to be held during the same week, at Darmstadt, in 1994. John Wiley & Sons Ltd. (the publishers of *EP-odd*) are also to publish the conference proceedings for two of these — EP '94 and RIDT '94. Conference delegates will receive a copy of the Proceedings, in the normal way, at the time the conference takes place, but these Proceedings will also constitute Issues 1 and 2 of Volume 7 of *EP-odd*. If all goes well we shall eventually be incorporating these proceedings into the incrementally updated *EP-odd* CD-ROM (in Adobe Acrobat format) that was announced in the Editorial of the previous issue. We feel sure that our readers will welcome the opportunity of having new developments, described at these conferences, integrated into the archive of papers already established in *EP-odd*.

Turning once again to the Editorial in our last issue, we must say a word concerning two of Dan Berry's papers which were mentioned there. The impression may have been given that these papers needed to be processed with special versions of device-independent *troff*. Dan Berry has written in to point out that this is *not* the case and that it is an article of faith for him that *troff* itself shall not be changed (except, perhaps, for recompilations to create bigger or smaller versions — e.g. if more fonts were required). The extra items needed for his papers are the appropriate *postprocessors* for the output from *troff*. We are happy to tender our apologies and are pleased that, quite coincidentally, the present issue contains a paper by Johny Srouji and … Dan Berry ! After considerable interaction between authors, editors and referees we have decided that the introductory sections of this paper are of sufficient interest to warrant the publication of a much longer item than we would normally accept. The background material in these introductory sections *is* available from a variety of other sources but much of it is not easily accessible.

Connoisseurs of Berry's previous adventures with *troff* (in *EP-odd* Vol.2, No.3 and Vol.3, No.2) will be delighted to see that this time we have another delicate variation which allows Arabic to be typeset. Indeed, when the definitive history of text processing

comes to be written, and the Academy Awards for 'Lifetime Achievement' are handed out, it is to be hoped that *troff* is not forgotten. We are approaching the twentieth anniversary of this the last of the battleships, and still it stays afloat! Looking at the twenty-four pre- and post-processors for *troff* shown in Figure 7 of Srouji and Berry's paper one is reminded of Brian Kernighan's words: "It has proven a remarkably robust tool, taking unbelievable abuse from a variety of preprocessors and being forced into uses that were never conceived of in the original design, all with considerable grace under fire".

We complete this issue with a short contribution from Fred Cole and Heather Brown in our 'EP Odds and Ends' series. Prompted by the paper on the RITA structured editing system (described in Vol.4, No.3 of *EP-odd*) they propose some ways in which RITA's functionality might be extended by the use of 'fall-back classes' during the process of cut-and-paste editing. The combination of class concepts, subsequence incompleteness and deterministic finite-state automata — even in a brief contribution such as this — confirms that the fascination of EP for computer scientists continues unabated. Electronic documents turn out to have all of the characteristics of computer programs but with some additional twists in the tail.

<div align="right">DAVID BRAILSFORD AND RICHARD FURUTA</div>