

CrafT_EX

Applying T_EX and friends in crafts

Everything started at my job as Documentation manager in hi-tech industry: when the word processor gave up on our big fat instruction manual and the purpose-built software wasn't within budget, we ended up with ConT_EXt. The transit period wasn't easy, but in time I learned to appreciate this software that does *not* make assumptions on what I'm attempting to do.

Thus, when I suddenly found myself with a textile craft book to be translated and prepared for printing, I thought of ConT_EXt. Life happened and the booklet is still sitting on my desk waiting for its turn, but in the meanwhile I have learned many other things about T_EX based systems and started to exploit their potential in crafts.

The experience has been mind-blowing! I come up with new implementations almost weekly, although I don't usually try things out until I have a real need for them. I am not a programmer, but I realize that a computer is especially useful in reducing the tedious repetitiveness of the planning stages. Nothing can ever prepare a crafter to what happens when you play with real yarn and real paper and glue, but the 'what if that's lighter blue' and 'I guess this really is the wrong font here' process can be sped up significantly by computer simulation.

I don't feel complete until I've shared my knowledge with others. I don't get that many face-to-face opportunities to do that, so I decided to go online instead, <http://www.lucet.fi/>. I haven't had the energy to fight with WordPress about the printing styles, so instead I'm planning to do printer-friendly pdf instructions with ConT_EXt and MetaPost.

Besides enhancing my creativity, I also use ConT_EXt to deal with the boring but necessary parts of having my own little craft business, e.g. for creating price lists and business cards. This migration is still very much in process, but eventually everything will be done with ConT_EXt and possibly MetaPost and with as few different style definitions as possible.

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