

Welcome to *Formatting Information*

This is the print version of *Formatting Information*, a book about how to use the L^AT_EX document preparation system. L^AT_EX takes over where wordprocessors and desktop publishing systems leave off, making it possible to automate your formatting consistently, accurately, and reusably, without the tedious and repetitive manual formatting required by other systems.

This book has helped thousands of users get started. It's now in its eighth edition (2023), but this is also a production release: everything has been tested but some details had to be rewritten and this was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic until the release of T_EX Live (2023). The only things you need are a computer and a copy of L^AT_EX...and a document that you want to typeset. L^AT_EX works on almost any computer, and you can [download it](#) from the TUG web site, [install it](#) from the TUG DVD, or use one of the online in-browser versions like [Overleaf](#).

In the web and eBook editions, this page doubles as the index, but in the print (PDF) edition, the index is at the end (p. 325). If you haven't done any typesetting before, I recommend that you start at [the beginning](#). If you're itching to get started, and you feel you know enough about computers and text-editing already, you can try the [Quick Start](#) instead.

Either way, welcome to L^AT_EX. Take it gently for a while, and get used to being able to spend more time actually *writing* than formatting. If you find mistakes, please [let me know](#) so that I can correct them.

Some font conventions are used in the text and the index to distinguish between different meanings. These are listed in 'Symbols and conventions' [on page xxxix](#). The entries in the index are all hyperlinked to their source. In the web and eBook editions, subsequent multiple occurrences give the section number or name. Page or section numbers in **bold type** indicate a canonical location where the entry is explained.

