The Self Publisher's Newsletter

Contents

Beginning Thoughts

After looking over the initial issue of *The Self Publisher's Newsletter* we thought a little tweaking is in order. So we are changing the basic typeface. We chose Bookman Light which is just a tad heavier than the Computer Modern we used before. If you kept the first issue (hey, it's a collectors's item now!) you can compare the two in your pdf reader. This issue should be a little nicer to look at.

MSWord vs. TEX

Today we read a book *Become a Published Author* published by Infinity Press and sent free to anyone expressing an interest in their services. It is an extended sales brochure of course. It was typeset in MSWord by an expert, you have to look hard to tell it from real typesetting. But we can spot a few boo-boos.

On page 74 the ellipsis mark "..." is used twice in the same sentence but with different spacing between the dots each time. And on pages 51–52 the footnotes overflow from one page to another (acceptable) but the overflow appears at the **top** of the following page!

Now we have had our own problem with the ellipsis. We use the TEX typesetting system and while the standard ellipsis glyph prints just fine Adobe Acrobat Reader treats it as a very small graphic and substitutes a gray dot like this: . So we wrote our own little macro for the same glyph: ...; ours displays as well as prints out. And it doesn't change shape or spacing!

The point is, if you are in the book business you need to put your best foot forward. Probably the novice aspiring author won't notice these fine points, but reviewers and purchasing agents will.

There is simply no excuse for going to print with improperly formatted footnotes. If you can't do them right use endnotes instead.[1] Our favorite program TeX allows us to insert text like

```
\footnote{This is a footnote}
```

...anywhere in the text and the typesetting program takes it from there.[2]

But the main shocker in this tiny tome occurred on pages 45–48 which contain detailed instructions on how to combine individual chapter files into a single MSWord document using highlighting and pasting into a master file. I guess we are spoiled by TeX. We type something like:

```
\input chapter1.tex
\input chapter2.tex
\input chapter3.tex
```

```
(etc.)
```

...in our master file and the job is done. We use a variation on this technique regularly in "Rowse Reviews" but we put major headings in the main file. Here is a sample:

```
\section{Fiction}
\subsection{SF---Fantasy}
\input charles.tex
\divider
\filbreak
\section{Nonfiction}
\subsection{Publishing}
\input ross.tex
\divider
```

(the `\divider` command adds a decoration and the `\filbreak` command causes a pagebreak unless there is room for the next review on the current page. Just so you know!) You don't

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[1] Now we know why MSWord users are so fond of endnotes
[2] This is a footnote.

need to be a TEXpert to figure out the technique. And it doesn't take 3 1/2 pages to explain it. Of course, since TEX files are plain ascii documents anyhow we could also combine the chapters by calling them into our main file using the "read" function of our editing program. Since we use Linux we could also use a

```
\cat
```

type command.

The major advantage of using MSWord is supposedly ease of use. But the inability to combine chapters of a long document without going into elaborate and error-prone cut and paste gyrations hardly qualifies as ease of use for the book writer. And MSWord can blow up on big files, particularly if the author does extensive indexing.

TEX never blows up in that sense, although it will halt if erroneous codes are inserted. But since it is reading a plain text file and writing a separate output file you can't lose your source file short of a lightning strike!

Many/most readers of this newsletter will assume that the shortcomings of MSWord and similar commercial products are inevitable burdens to be borne. We will show you ways to sidestep them.

Final Thoughts

Normally we would have held the above article for a later issue. But the book mentioned above hit half a dozen of our hotbuttons. Actually we are playng hooky from a long and boring indexing job we have in house. So we still welcome your input and will include it in a newsletter if you wish. Just write: **selfpub@wexfordpress.com**

and share your views with the rest of us!

Take care.

John Culleton, Editor
Self Publisher's Newsletter