
Too Many Errors

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One of the attractions of T_EX the program is that it is substantially without error. Sadly, the same is not always true for macros written for T_EX. I would like to see a regular column in *TUGboat* where errors discovered in previous issues are reported. Perhaps a small prize could be given each year to the person who finds the most. Here is my contribution for the June 1991 issue (vol. 12, no. 2).

Some tools etc.: Part I—Lincoln Durst (p.248–252). Here, the error is slightly complicated to explain. The macro `\Pageno` (p.252) is intended to help write zero-padded page numbers (001, . . . , 009, 010, . . . , 999) to an index file. Its use is within a context equivalent to

```
\edef\next{\write\inx{\Pageno}}  
\next
```

but the definition supplied by Durst (not reproduced here) will produce 0010 if called within text that is considered (i.e. typeset) for page 9 but actually appears on page 10.

This will not happen if the `\noexpands` are taken from `\Pageno`, and `\noexpand\Pageno` used in place of `\noexpand\number\pageno` in Durst's `\makehref` macro.

The bag of tricks — Victor Eijkhout (p.260). Here, two macros `\storecat` and `\restorecat` are defined, to be used as in `file1`. (In the article, `\storecat` is mistakenly also called `\savecat`.)

```
% file1.tex
\storecat @
% macros
% @ is a letter
\restorecat @
```

The purpose is to allow `@` to be a letter within `file1`, but then to restore it *to what it was before*, when `file1` is finished.

But now suppose we input `file2` below, using the definitions supplied by Eijkhout.

```
\storecat @
% file2.tex
\input file1
% macros
\restorecat @
```

When `file2` is finished, `@` will have `\catcode 11`, *regardless of what it was before file2 was input*. This is not what is wanted.

Babel, a multilingual etc. — Johannes Brahm (p.291-301). This article is inconsistent in its use of `%` to eliminate the space tokens that `TEX` would otherwise place after `{` and `}` characters at the end of a line.

The use of `\expandafter` in Fig. 1, and its second use in Fig. 4, add nothing and are redundant.

These defects are relatively slight, for they do not prevent the macros from working as advertised.

Letter from Victor Eijkhout (p.303). Here, he quotes a user as writing

```
\def\caption#1{\hbox{\hbox{ ... }\vtop{#1}}
```

This line has 4 left braces but only 3 right braces.

Conclusion. Errors lie in the dark side of programming. Usually, nobody likes making them, finding them, reporting them, or being told about them. We all wish that they did not exist. I hope that this letter has not made me any enemies,

and has encouraged authors to submit more articles with fewer errors.

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