Are we an endangered species?

(some thoughts and questions)

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What we're going to discuss

T$_E$X users
The publishers
The readers
Now ...
T$_E$X and MetaPost
The future authors
The future publishers
The medium
T$_E$X and MetaPost again
The coding
Conclusions

TEX users

- They are readers as well as authors.

- They often like writing.

- They have strong opinions on how things should look.

- Most of them are not trained in typesetting.

- Many of them are pretty well aware of how to save time.

- They like to concentrate on writing instead of formatting.

- They use TEX because of its quality.

- They can easily (and constantly) update their documents.

- They want to be (and often operate) at the front of technology.

- They don't know how to convince people to use TEX.

The publishers

- They used to consider typesetting to be a specialism.

- They are no longer primarily driven by content.

- They have to change, will change, and are changing.

- They want the highest quality for the lowest price.

The readers

- They more and more buy in WWW-bookstores.
- They will start using those dedicated devices soon.
- Many of them still want to own books.
- They still prefer 'look and feel' over 'bytes'.
- They want to see in advance what they buy.
- They keep old copies of articles and books.
- They will finally get tired of updating.

Now . . .

- will there be print?

- will there be design?

- will there be quality?

- what type of content will we deal with?

- who will be in control?

TEX and MetaPost

- Both can do a lot but are seldom used to full power.

- They are among the most powerful tools available.

- They demonstrated that typesetting can largely be automated.

- Like cats, TEX and MetaPost have many lives.

The future authors

- They must learn to think in structure and reuse.

- More and more they have to be aware of readers and possibilities.

- They had better not easily accept that something cannot be done.

- They have to learn to think in mixed text and graphics.

- They should be aware of 'eternal' use and reuse.

The future publishers

- They will publish, host, as well as typeset on demand.

- They will use techniques that go far behind current technologies.

- They will have to decide between greed and need (and quality).

- They have to combine psychology, ergonomics and technology.

The medium

- Are publishers willing to distribute document source code?

- How many holy grails do we expect to find?

- What technologies can we expect?

- We will move from paper to screen to mind.

TEX and MetaPost again

- PDF is an easy job for TEX and MetaPost.

- In many areas they beat competitors.

- They are still the most accurate tools available.

- Both provide cutting edge technology.

- Their users want to be in control.

- We still need to sort out some problems.

The coding

- SGML showed a way but XML got away with it.

- We can do math (ml), so we can do them all.

- It's not only in the coding, but also in the methods.

- How often do we want to redo the job.

- We will probably soon learn what we did forget.

- We had better learn to look into the future.

Conclusions

- Nothing that real impressive is happening.

- We are already 15 years ahead but often unaware of it.

- Coding is not the main issue, the (change in) content is.

- There will be documents, but we will not recognize them as such.

- We have the tools and new tools are coming.

- We have stability and finally people will see it.

- T_EX is one of the few life--long tools around.

- For a long time, T_EX will be around but nobody will notice.

- There are some millennia to come, so we can take some time.

- We must not forget the past and not ignore the future.