

Getting Started with L^AT_EX on your machine

Please read this document until the end before you do anything, because order actually matters. In my opinion, there are 4 things you need to run L^AT_EX on your machine:

1. a L^AT_EX processing program;
2. an editor (in which you will actually do your typing);
3. a postscript to pdf conversion tool; and
4. a viewer for postscript files.

Below are my recommendations for each of those categories:

1. MiKTeX is one of the standard, best developed L^AT_EX engines for a PC. You can download the current release (2.9) of this program at <http://miktex.org>. Beware, this program is large (almost 139MB). I would install the “Basic MiKTeX 2.9 Installer” instead of the “MiKTeX 2.9 Net Installer” if I were you.
2. I will give you two recommendations in this category. The first one is WinEdt, which is the program that I use and love. You can find the current version (6.0) at <http://www.winedt.com>. This program has a fully functional trial copy that is good for 31 days (at which point it begins nagging you to buy it). Since the price for students is only \$30, I went ahead and bought it (when I was a student) because I liked it so much. But, don’t buy it before you try it out!

The other recommendation in this category is 100% free. It is called TeXnicCenter and the latest version (1.0 Stable Release Candidate 1) can be found at <http://www.texniccenter.org> (click on Download, then TeXnicCenter Installer). This has all of the functionality you need, and it is free. This is what we will be using in the computer lab during class. Development on this piece of software has recently been resumed, so there might be some nice improvements around the corner.

3. Ghostscript; this is really the only choice that I know of. Go here to get it: <http://www.ghostscript.com/>. Download it from sourceforge.net (grab gs900w32.exe). Totally free.
4. Ghostview; again, this is the only choice that I know of. Go here: <http://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~ghost/gsview/get49.htm> and get gsv49w32.exe.

Go ahead and download all of these programs to your machine. The order in which you install them actually matters, believe it or not. Actually, I think the only thing that matters is that you install your editor last, but do it in this order: – Ghostscript – Ghostview – MiKTeX – WinEdt or TeXnicCenter.

When you’re installing MiKTeX, there will be a question about whether you want to allow the program to automatically download “packages” from the web to compile your document if it is necessary. It is important that you either choose “yes” or “no” but not “ask me first.” Also, when installing MiKTeX there will be a moment when you need to choose your default paper size—choose “letter.”

When you are all done, create a “Hello, world!” file like we did during class. If you chose to use TeXnicCenter, we covered the necessary steps during class.

If you chose to use WinEdt, while you have the file open click on the L^AT_EX button near the top of the window. You will see a brief command window pop up and close. Then click on the magnifying glass with the letters DVI underneath it (it should be located near the L^AT_EX button). This will open a viewer in which you can see the document you’ve just processed. Hopefully you will get to this point without any snags.