

Events and Sightings

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TeX Users Group Annual Conference

The TeX Users Group (TUG) held its 30th annual conference 28–31 July 2009 on the University of Notre Dame campus near South Bend, Indiana.

TeX is the computer typesetting system invented in the late 1970s and early 1980s by Donald Knuth of Stanford University. TUG was founded in 1980 for educational and scientific purposes, to provide an organization for TeX system users and for those who have an interest in typography and font design.

When Knuth finished his breakthrough work on computer typesetting and returned to his computer science and mathematics research, he arranged TeX so other users and developers could add to or build on his system. Thus, TeX and its derivatives (e.g., LaTeX) have remained viable over the years. They continue to be a mainstay of mathematics, scientific, and other specialty publishing domains that demand high-level typesetting quality (in any language).

Several luminaries from the TeX world attended the 30th annual conference:

- Nelson Beebe, University of Utah, who maintains a massive online database of bibliographic information from a variety of publications (<http://www.math.utah.edu/~beebe/bibliographies.html>);
- Barbara Beeton, American Mathematical Society, editor for 26 years of *TUGboat*, TUG's cross-disciplinary print journal (<http://tug.org/tugboat>);
- Hans Hagen, Pragma ADE (Netherlands), who is leading the effort to produce a new generation of the TeX system (<http://luatex.org>);
- Jonathan Kew, Mozilla (United Kingdom), who opened the current world of TeX up with support of modern OpenType and Unicode fonts (<http://www.tug.org/xetex>); and
- Paulo Ney de Sousa, Mathematical Sciences Publishers, which distributes math books and journals (<http://www.mathscipub.org>).

They and other conference attendees gave presentations on topics as diverse as Arabic typography, tagging PDF files to help blind readers, typesetting inside an e-book reader, and creating online, self-scoring tests. Videos of the presentations are available at <http://river-valley.tv/category/conferences/typesetting/tug2009/>.

TeX has had considerable impact on more recently invented commercial typesetting systems. It also is likely the longest running open source development

success story, as summarized in a pair of articles by Nelson Beebe:

- <http://tug.org/TUGboat/Articles/tb25-1/beebe-2003keynote.pdf>
- <http://tug.org/TUGboat/Articles/tb26-1/beebe.pdf>

The TUG 2010 annual conference will be held in June in San Francisco, with Donald Knuth and his Stanford students who helped him develop TeX scheduled to be in attendance.

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Computer History Museum Report

The Computer History Museum rarely misses an opportunity to celebrate significant anniversary milestones in the history of computing, as this past quarter demonstrates. First off, the venerable IBM 1401 computer system, announced in 1959, was honored on 10 November at a sold-out event. The 1401 system was one of IBM's earliest transistorized computers and introduced thousands of businesses to stored-program computing while its tape and disk peripherals freed them from the decades-long practice of storing data on punched cards.

In addition to the IBM 1401 anniversary, the museum also celebrated the restoration of two vintage 1401 systems from its own collection. The 1401s were restored over several years by a cadre of ex-IBM customer engineers and are demonstrated regularly to museum visitors.

Watch the lecture at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ComputerHistory#p/a/u/6/FVsX7aHNENo>.

Microprocessor Marketing Wars

On 20 November 20, the museum held a fascinating lecture on how early microprocessor companies conceived of their customers and the approaches they used to attract their business. "Microprocessor Marketing Wars: Chip Makers Discover the Consumer" featured a panel of senior industry experts from AMD, Intel, and Motorola. In the first decade or more of microprocessor sales, there were battles over technical specifications, performance benchmarks, software architectures, RISC, 32 bits, and much more. Over the years, the fight shifted from one for hardware design engineers' hearts and minds to a battle for computer company CEOs and, ultimately, the consumers themselves. This combative environment drove the

evolution of specification-based to brand-based microprocessor marketing.

Watch the panel discussion at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ComputerHistory#p/a/u/3/pLzBYfNhRF8>.

The HP Phenomenon

The CHM hosted a lecture with HP senior executive Chuck House to feature his new book *The HP Phenomenon: Innovation and Business Transformation* on 7 December. The lecture focused on what made (and makes) HP a special company, "one where serendipity and multiple lines of investigation and inquiry lead to very defensible competitive positions against seemingly more focused, more aggressive and more innovative companies."

Watch the lecture at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ComputerHistory#p/a/u/1/Y9GVC4FH2gU>.

Russian visit

Also in December, CHM CEO John Hollar and Curator Alex Bochanek took a 10-day tour of the former Soviet Union. The purpose of the trip was to investigate the possibility of

acquiring Russian/Soviet computing artifacts and included personal visits with some of Russia's leading computer scientists and academicians as well as a presentation to the Russian Academy of Sciences. Forging strong ties with international institutions and individuals is a cornerstone of CHM's policy to interact broadly across cultures and nations in order to present a truly global view of the history of computing.

Holiday caroling

Continuing the Museum's annual tradition, the PDP-1 Restoration Team hosted its caroling session with the PDP-1 minicomputer playing music on 16 December to round out the season. A joyous time was had by all!

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Selected CS articles and columns are also available for free at <http://ComputingNow.computer.org>.

Annals Through the Years highlights seminal articles from each year of *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing's* publication.

→ <http://computingnow.computer.org/CT>

Annals Through the Years

The graphic features a background image of a large, ornate clock face with Roman numerals. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image. At the bottom, there is a dark horizontal bar with the title 'Annals Through the Years' in white serif font.