

# Re: getting out of LaTeX

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- *From:* Alexander Magidow <[amagidow@xxxxxxx](mailto:amagidow@xxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 29 Aug 2006 13:18:00 -0500
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Brian M. Scott wrote:

On 29 Aug 2006 05:31:11 -0700, "Peter T. Daniels"  
<[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in  
<[news:1156854671.785353.70960@xx](mailto:news:1156854671.785353.70960@xx)>  
in sci.lang:

Felix Rawlings wrote:

[...]

Peter, when are you going to take the trouble to learn just a little bit of TeX/LaTeX, and thus stop making a fool of yourself when, from your deep ignorance of this system, you criticize it at every possible opportunity?

I see its output; that's all I need to know that it's crap. When I also see that in order to format anything you basically have to program every change, that confirms that it's crap. It's for "software engineers," not scholars.

It's used much more widely than you seem to realize, and certainly not just by software engineers (or even 'software engineers'). There is, for instance, a LaTeX class, sffms, for typesetting science fiction and fantasy manuscripts, and I know several writers who use it, as well as others who use LaTeX but not sffms. It is of course used by a great many scholars; it's standard now in mathematics (though I've

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managed to avoid learning it so far) and in physics, a lot of linguists use it, and it (and variants) are slowly spreading even into the humanities, though Word remains much more common there.

More relevant to Peter, it has reasonable Arabic support– and most importantly, automatic transliteration into encyclopedia Islam style (and one other style) (this is probably extensible if you're a tex wizard, also). I just wrote my senior thesis on 'i3raab in Latex, and while the initial learning curve was steep, it paid off and looked much more professional(and was much easier) than if I'd used microsoft word. I used the transliteration method of inputting Arabic (i.e. for the bismallah, it looks like: bism-i al-llah-i ar-ra.hm\_an-i ar-ra