

Re: Bringing out-of-print math books into print

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On Apr 17, 10:17 am, irvanellis <ianel...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Apr 15, 12:24 pm, tc...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:

An alternative, or perhaps supplementary, route to creation of a "want" list web site would be for those willing and able to participate to put together something like the Gutenberg e-book project. This would require a core of volunteers who would be willing to check on the copyright status of proposed titles, to scan books into an electronic data base, serve as proofreaders and editors to ensure that the electronic texts produced were accurate in respect to typography, etc., to organize the volunteers who would work on these projects, to establish, organize, and maintain a host site for storage and retrieval of the titles so produced.

In case it's of interest, Project Gutenberg Distributed Proofreaders ("DP", at <http://www.pgdp.net/c/>) already has this infrastructure set up. Because of US copyright law, DP normally only processes books published prior to 1923. There are sister sites in Europe and Canada, subject to corresponding copyright laws.

Several LaTeX projects are slowly wending their way through DP. Most are late-19th/early-20th Century school books on arithmetic and algebra, but occasionally one sees titles possibly of some interest to this group, "Le calcul des r?sidus et ses applications ? la th?orie des fonctions" by Lindel?f and "Theorie der Abel'schen Functionen" by Weierstrass, for example. The selection is governed entirely by the content providers, who most likely are not mathematicians, but bibliophiles. Many of DP's "interesting" mathematical projects come from page scans of university libraries. There's an unfilled content-provision niche for mathematics, with a lot of low-hanging fruit.

The OCR problem Irving mentions is completely correct in my experience, by the way; math turns to ASCII hash, and usually must be typed in from scratch. Unfortunately, LaTeX-knowledgeable volunteers are in short supply at DP.

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A bit more information about volunteering: Setting up a DP account takes only a few minutes, costs nothing, and has no commercial entanglements. There's a small learning curve, since the work is separated into proofreading and formatting stages, with consistency conventions governing the tasks done at each stage. The work itself is done in a web browser one page at a time, so the time commitment can be as little as a few minutes a day.

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