

# Re: Product Announcements from Maplesoft

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.math.symbolic/2004-09/0225.html>

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**Date:** 09/28/04

Date: 28 Sep 2004 22:27:23 GMT

In article <e19e524b.0409281308.52b31452@posting.google.com>, Zork Adi <[zorkadi@yahoo.com](mailto:zorkadi@yahoo.com)> wrote:  
>Richard Fateman <[fateman@cs.berkeley.edu](mailto:fateman@cs.berkeley.edu)> wrote in message  
>news:<8Qe6d.3856\$nj.999@newssvr13.news.prodigy.com>...

>> *what does this entry from an integral table mean...*

>>  $(a+bx)/(c+dx) dx$ .

>*The interesting thing is of course that "it is obvious" that the lower  
>dx is  $d*x$  ; it is trivial to infer the semantics. The fact is that  
>all math I know can be put in a book or paper, from where I can make  
>perfect sense of it, so a presentational system like tex or troff is  
>perfectly ok to carry encoded content which I read, descipher or  
>translate or make sense given a certain context and conventions.*

Context is important. The point is that a piece of mathematical notation can have completely different meanings depending on the context. People (if they are knowledgeable about the particular field of mathematics involved) are usually good at figuring out the context, and they can guess the author's intent.

> *I would much prefer a smarter  
>computer that would understand math as good as the best mathematician,  
>so that I could read it aloud or draw it in a tablet, and add  
>clarifications if necessary.*

It will be some time before computers are smart enough to do this. When they are, human mathematicians might not be necessary...

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