

MACTEX WEB PAGES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The url for the MacTeX web pages is <http://tug.org/mactex>. The source files serving up these pages are on the TUG server in `/home/httpd/html/mactex`. People editing the pages are given an account on the server.

The MacTeX web pages were originally constructed and maintained by Wendy McKay.

It was Wendy who conceived the idea of a Macintosh install package which would provide everything needed to use TeX on a Macintosh. After advocating the idea at a couple of earlier TUG conferences, she organized a lunch meeting for Macintosh users at the TUG Practical TeX Meeting, 2005, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. At that lunch, she pointed to Jonathan Kew and assigned the construction of the installer to him. Jonathan stayed up all night and had a package the next morning. Over breakfast, he willed maintenance of it to me.

Starting at that time and for many years afterward, the MacTeX web pages were entirely under Wendy's control. Their basic look and feel is all Wendy.

2. REWRITING THE PAGES

But as Wendy moved on to other things, Herbert Schulz and I took on the task of revising the pages. At first we asked Wendy for specific changes in the web pages. Later we did the editing and asked Wendy to take charge in the end and activate the new pages. Finally in 2015 Wendy wrote very careful instructions explaining how to do that and since then Herb and I have been able to activate pages on our own.

The web pages are on the TUG server in `/home/httpd/html/mactex`. This folder used to be a mess, with inactive web pages, backups from previous years, and pages with slightly different names also used for backup. In 2019, Karl Berry asked us to clean up the folder and remove backups, since the entire server is routinely backed up. The folder was cleaner after that operation, but mysterious elements remained. Toward the end of 2020, Karl asked for another cleanup, and we did so. Since the site is backed up to another disk, it is not necessary to back up old pages, so Karl asks that we avoid zipping material and leaving the zip file there.

Date: December 25, 2023.

In 2023, I completely rewrote all the web pages and removed every trace of dead pages. A major goal of this rewrite was to make the site trivial to edit in future years. No complicated html is used and a rank amateur (like me) can keep the pages up to date.

This revision was very controversial and complaints flowed in from all directions. I ignored most of these because I was laser-focused on the goal of simplicity. Now that the redesign is finished and unchanged for several months, it is time to take a second look. I like some features. The bottom half of the home page is terrible.

The top level of the site is a series of links to pages explaining various features of MacTeX. These pages were copied without much editing from the earlier site, and seem fine to me. So let us turn to the troublesome home page. I like the first three sections of this page and wouldn't change a word. The first section is short and says "If you just want to download and install MacTeX, go here." The second is a brief description of TeX and MacTeX, partly for new users. It explains that we provide universal binaries, that we have a small distribution called BasicTeX and a major one called MacTeX, and it gives advice about which to install. The third section states that we provide four ways to install TeX and gives links to the pages activating these four methods.

After this, the trouble begins. The final section is called "Links to Additional Information." These links do not lead to information, but instead to pages of more detailed links. Users who glance at our page don't see those detailed link pages.

That whole last section should be redesigned, and the extra linked pages with more links should be eliminated. But if this exercise has taught me anything, it taught me that I have no talent for web page design. Therefore, I have no intention of fixing the pages. Perhaps a design expert will take over.

3. WEB ORGANIZATION FOR EASY EDITING

Earlier in 2013, as Herb and I were doing more work, Wendy brought order to the pages by creating a folder named 2013, which had copies of most of the important and active web pages. These were not the active pages, which remained in the top level of `/home/httpd/html/mactex`, but instead exact copies. That year, whenever Wendy made a change in an active file on the site, she made the same change in the copy of that file in the 2013 folder.

This organization made revising the pages for 2014 very easy. We began by creating `2013.tar.gz` from the 2013 folder on the TUG server. We then downloaded this gzip to our personal Macs, and renamed the folder 2014. Viewing the MacTeX pages on the web provided the same experience as viewing pages in the 2014 folder with Safari and editing these pages with, say, TeXShop. (Any editor would do. We do not use fancy html editors.)

After revision was finished, we compressed the 2014 folder to give `2014.tar.gz` and uploaded this back to the TUG server. It was placed in `/home/httpd/html/mactex` and

uncompressed to give a new folder named 2014. These new pages could be viewed by trusted members of the MacTeX group. To release the new pages, Wendy copied the contents of the 2014 folder to /home/httpd/html/mactex, overwriting the old files there. After that, the active files were an exact copy of those in 2014.

Wendy, Herbert, and I repeated this process until Wendy turned the whole process over to us, and Herbert and I continue to use it to the current day. The great advantage is that no editing is required directly on the server, and thus no knowledge of Unix editors is required.

4. UPDATING OVER THE YEAR

This document is being edited for 2024, so from now on I'll refer to the 2023 and 2024 folders. To make our update technique work, it is necessary to keep the active pages and the pages in the 2023 folder in sync over the year. Suppose I edit a page named *newpage.html* on my personal computer. I then move it back to my directory on the TUG machine. Then

```
mv -f newpage.html /home/httpd/html/mactex
cd /home/httpd/html/mactex
chgrp -R mactex newpage.html
chmod -R g+rwX newpage.html

cp -f newpage.html 2023
cd 2023
chgrp -R mactex newpage.html
chmod -R g+rwX newpage.html
```

Changing the group and permissions on these files allows others in the MacTeX group to also edit the files. In particular, Herbert can revise my edits and I can revise his.

I used to do all of these steps by hand, but recently I constructed a script which does it automatically. In my home directory on the TUG machine, there is a folder named Web. The folder contains a script named “movetoweb2023.sh”. After moving newpage.html to the TUG machine, I would execute the following commands:

```
mv newpage.html Web
cd Web
sh movetoweb2023 newpage.html
```

This automatically does all the tasks listed earlier. The year is hardcoded in the movetoweb2023 script, so the script must be edited once a year.

Here is the current 2023 script:

```
mv -f "$1" /home/httpd/html/mactex
cd /home/httpd/html/mactex
chgrp -R mactex "$1"
chmod -R g+rwX "$1"
cp -f "$1" 2023
cd 2023
chgrp -R mactex "$1"
chmod -R g+rwX "$1"
```

5. DETAILS

Below is the exact code for several important tasks.

To create an archive for the folder 2023 in /home/httpd/html/mactex:

```
cd /home/httpd/html/mactex
tar -czvf 2023.tar.gz 2023
mv 2023.tar.gz ~
```

When this file is uncompressed, it will create a folder named 2023 with the correct contents inside. Change the name to 2024 on your home computer. The link `index2023test.html` will start up the web page. I prefer to name the folder `MacTeXWeb-2024` on my home computer.

Similarly, given `MacTeXWeb-2024` on my home folder, I move it to TUG as follows:

```
cd
mv MacTeXWeb-2024 2024
tar -czvf 2024.tar.gz 2024
mv 2024 MacTeXWeb-2024

scp 2024.tar.gz tug.org:
ssh tug.org
mv 2024.tar.gz /home/httpd/html/mactex
cd /home/httpd/html/mactex
gunzip 2024.tar.gz
tar -xf 2024.tar
chmod 755 2024
cd 2024
chgrp -R mactex *
chmod -R g+rwX *
```

To activate navigation for testing 2024 by members of the Mactex group:

```
cd 2024
rm navigation.hrml
ln -s navigation2024.html navigation.html
cd ..
```

To do the final activation of 2024 when MacTeX-2024 is released:

```
cd /home/httpd/html/mactex
cp -r 2024/* .
rm navigation.html
ln -s navigation_mactex.html navigation.html
rm index.html
ln -s index2024test.html index.html
```