Welcome to *Formatting Information*

This is the print version of *Formatting Information*, a book about how to use the LaTeX document preparation system. LaTeX takes over where wordprocessors and desktop publishing systems leave off, making it possible to automate your formatting consistently, accurately, and reusably, without the tedious and repetitive manual formatting required by other systems.

This book has helped thousands of users get started. It's now in its eighth edition (2024), but this is also a production release: everything has been tested but some details had to be rewritten and this was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic until the release of of TeX Live (2023). The only things you need are a computer and a copy of LaTeX...and a document that you want to typeset. LaTeX works on almost any computer, and you can download it from the TUG web site or use one of the online in-browser versions like Overleaf.

In the web and eBook editions, this page doubles as the index, but in the print (PDF) edition, the index is at the end (p. 271). If you haven't done any typesetting before, I recommend that you start at the beginning. If you're itching to get started, and you feel you know enough about computers and text-editing already, you can try the Quick Start instead.

Either way, welcome to LaTeX. Take it gently for a while, and get used to being able to spend more time actually *writing* than formatting. If you find mistakes, please let me know so that I can correct them.

Some font conventions are used in the text and the index to distinguish between different meanings. These are listed in 'Symbols and conventions' on page xxxiv. The entries in the index are all hyperlinked to their source. In the web and eBook editions, subsequent multiple occurrences give the section number or name. Page or section numbers in **bold type** indicate a canonical location where the entry is explained.