

April 30, 2007

Question: How do I put an index into my \LaTeX file and what do I do to process that file?

Thanks for the info,

Dr. Doolittle “Quack! Quack!”

Hey Dr. D.,

You can index items in a \LaTeX document with the `\index` command. For example in the \LaTeX file `paper.tex` to index the word `parrot` you would enter:

```
to induce the parrot\index{parrot} to communicate more effectively
```

The next step you will then need to do is to place the `\usepackage{makeidx}` and `\makeindex` commands in the preamble of your \LaTeX document. (The preamble area is that area after your `\documentclass` line and before your `\begin{document}` line in any \LaTeX document).

This will produce for you an `.idx` file or in the above example a file called `paper.idx` when you compile your document with `PDFLatex`. You can then process the `.idx` file with the `makeindex` compiler. Look for a different compiler option in the top menu of your \LaTeX front end then simply compile your `.idx` document with `makeindex`.

The `makeindex` command produces a `.ind` file or in the above example a file named `paper.ind`.

The last step would then be to inform \LaTeX where in your document you would like to place your index. You can do this with either the `\input` or `\include` commands such as:

```
\input{paper.ind}          (or)  
\include{paper.ind}
```

or a more preferred method would be to place the `\printindex` command in your document where you would like your index to be placed:

```
\documentclass{article}
\usepackage{makeidx}
\makeindex
\begin{document}
```

```
\printindex
\end{document}
```

Remember to re-process your document with `makeindex` and then `re-pdfplatex` your file whenever you make changes in your document that would effect your index.

For more information on making an index in \LaTeX , I would suggest looking in the “ \LaTeX : User’s Guide and Reference Manual” by Leslie Lamport. Look `\makeindex` up in the index of that volume to find just the right place.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Struss
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