

April 5, 2007

Question: My tables and figures never stay where I put them. What am I doing wrong?

Hi,

This is a common L^AT_EX problem especially when you are using the isuthesis package. The problem here is that normally most people leave off the placement options on their tables and figures. When you do this, this option defaults to [tbp]. This means that by default the first place L^AT_EX will look to place your figure or table will be the top of the next page (t), then the bottom of that page (b) and then on a page by itself (p). So you probably will want to set this placement option yourself to something more reasonable like [htp] or [h!tp] or [htbp] which makes here (h) the first place that L^AT_EX will look to place your figure or table with the (!) item allowing L^AT_EX to cheat the page a little bit so as to more easily make the table or figure fit (h)ere.

Here are a few L^AT_EX table and figure examples just to show you what this looks like in real use (change the \isucaption commands to \caption if you are not using the isuthesis package):

As can be seen in Table~\ref{nothing}
it is truly obvious what I am saying is true.

```
\begin{table}[h!tb]      \centering
\isucaption{This table shows a standard empty table}
\label{nothing}

\vspace{2 in}
\end{table}
```

This can also be seen in Figure~\ref{moon} that
the rest is obvious.

```
\begin{figure}[h!tb]    \centering

\vspace{2 in}
\isucaption{This figure is a standard empty figure}
\label{moon}
\end{figure}
```

Of course, data on this as seen in Table~\ref{data}
is few and far between.

```
\begin{table}[h!tb] \centering
```

```

\isucaption{Moon Data}
\label{data}
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\textbf{Element} & \textbf{Control} & \textbf{Experimental} \\
\\
Moon Rings & 1.23 & 3.38 \\
Moon Tides & 2.26 & 3.12 \\
Moon Walk & 3.33 & 9.29 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

```

Or graphically as seen in Figure~\ref{mgraph}
it is certain that my hypothesis is true.

```

\begin{figure}[htb] \centering

\includegraphics{dc5.ps}

\isucaption{Durham Centre}
\label{mgraph}
\end{figure}

```

If your tables and figures continue to float on to where you don't want them to be, you can always use the `\clearpage` command in your document. `\clearpage` stops any additional text from being placed on the page until after all your previously defined tables and figures, that are floating waiting for a spot, have been printed. Overuse of the `\clearpage` command however will create a large amount of white space in your document which is unacceptable to most editors.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Struss
Creative Services, ITS, Iowa State