

The Spread of T_EX in India

The Role of Outsourced Typesetting

Ajit Ranade

ABN AMRO Bank, India

`ajit.ranade@abnamro.com`

10 January 2003

Abstract Unlike many other countries, the spread of T_EX in India was strongly catalysed by the increasing outsourcing of typesetting, especially by publishers of scientific journals and books. Users from Indian academic institutions played a marginal role in the initial push of T_EX in India. Indeed the Indian T_EX Users Group, which is now five years old was the result of the initiative of a commercial typesetting outfit. The outsourcing momentum continues to be strong, fuelled by newer standards and technologies such as XML, and the demand for documents that can be disseminated across different media, such as e-books and internet. There is now a critical mass of T_EX users across different vendors, who depend on T_EX for their *livelihood*. But there are significant challenges to harness this critical mass for T_EX becoming more wide-spread. Skills spillover outside of typesetting vendors seems to be inhibited by commercial considerations. Training remains an underdeveloped area, especially since the user base in academic institutions is still small. However the exciting development of Indic TEX with a simultaneous increase in literacy and readership of vernacular press offers an opportunity for a much bigger scope for T_EX in India, given the low cost that T_EX implies for publishing. In this paper we analyse these trends, and identify the challenges and opportunities for the greater deployment of T_EX in India.