

Preface to the Second Edition

In the five years since the first edition of this book was published I have received numerous email messages and letters from readers commenting on the book and suggesting how it could be improved. I have also built up a large file of ideas based on my own experiences in reading, writing, and editing and in examining and supervising theses. With the aid of all this information I have completely revised the book. The most obvious changes in this second edition are the new chapters.

- *Writing and Defending a Thesis.* Since many of the readers of the book are graduate students, advice on how to write a thesis and how to handle the thesis defence was a natural addition.
- *Giving a Talk.* The revised chapter “Writing a Talk” from the first edition gives advice on preparing slides for a talk. The new chapter explains how to deliver a talk in front of an audience.
- *Preparing a Poster.* The poster is growing in popularity as a medium of communication at conferences and elsewhere, yet many of us have little experience of preparing posters.
- *TEX and L^ATEX.* Since the first edition of this book was published, L^ATEX 2_ε has become the official version of L^ATEX, thereby solving many of the problems involving, for example, incompatible dialects of L^ATEX, font handling, and inclusion of PostScript figures in a L^ATEX document. I have moved the discussion of TEX, L^ATEX, and their associated tools to a new chapter. Many more tips on the use of TEX and L^ATEX for typesetting mathematics are now given, and the discussions of BIBTEX and indexing have been expanded. The many mathematical symbols in the AMS fonts have been added to Appendix B (“Summary of TEX and L^ATEX Symbols”).

Among the new material in existing chapters, the section “How to Referee” in the chapter “Publishing a Paper” offers advice on this important aspect of the publication process, and in the chapter “Writing a Paper” suggested formats are given for referencing items on the World Wide Web.

The renamed chapter “Aids and Resources for Writing and Research” contains a new section “Library Classification Schemes”, which should help readers to find their way around libraries. The material on the Internet in this chapter has been completely rewritten in the light of the World Wide Web (which was not mentioned in the first edition). I have minimized the number of URLs (Web addresses) given, for two reasons. First, URLs can and do change over time. Second, if you want to know more about almost any subject mentioned in the book, just choose appropriate key words (e.g., “mathematical writing”, “Roget’s Thesaurus”, or “Society of Indexers”) and invoke your favourite search engine from your Web browser. There is a good chance that you will find the information, or particular Web pages, that you are looking for.

The subject of mathematical writing can easily become dull and boring, so to liven it up I like to include anecdotes, unusual paper titles, humorous quotations, and so on. The new edition contains many more of these.

Separate author and subject indexes are now provided. The author index removes some clutter from the subject index, and you can use it to find where references in the bibliography are discussed.

The bibliography has been updated. Many new editions of books are referenced and over 70 new references have been added.

A Web page has been created for the book, at

<http://www.siam.org/books/ot63/>

It includes

- Updates relating to material in the book.
- Links to references in the bibliography that are available on the Web.
- Links to other Web pages related to mathematical writing, \LaTeX , \BibTeX , etc.
- Links to Web pages giving examples of posters.
- The bibliography for the book in \BibTeX form, which is also available from Bibnet as `han-wri-mat-sci.bib`.

Several people helped with the second edition by reading and commenting on drafts:

David Abrahams, Henri Casanova, Bobby Cheng, Tony Cox, Des Higham, Doris Higham, Nil Mackey, Alicia Roca, Françoise Tisseur, Nick Trefethen, Joan Walsh, Barry White.

Working with the SIAM staff was once again a pleasure. I thank, in particular, my copy editor Beth Gallagher, Vickie Kearns and Mary Rose Muccie.

This book was typeset in \LaTeX using the `book` document style and various \LaTeX packages. The references were prepared in \BIBTeX and the index with `MakeIndex`. I used software from the \emTeX distribution, running on a Pentium workstation. I used text editors `The Semware Editor` (Semware Corporation) and `GNU Emacs` (Free Software Foundation) and checked spelling with `PC-Write` (Quicksoft).

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