LaTeX
Beamer
explained

Jean-Etienne
Poirrier

Outline

Introduction
Introduction to
the LaTeX
Beamer class
Competition

Examples
Common
elements
Themes

About

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November 22, 2005

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Outline

Introduction
Introduction to
the LaTeX
Beamer class
Competition

Examples
Common
elements
Themes

About

What is LaTeX Beamer?

The beamer class is a LaTeX class that allows you to create a beamer presentation. It can also be used to create slides. It behaves similarly to other packages like Prosper, but has the advantage that it works together directly with pdflatex, but also with dvips. Text describing the class in this presentation is taken from their website: http://latex-beamer.sourceforge.net/.

Basic steps to use it

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Outline

Introduction
Introduction to
the LaTeX
Beamer class
Competition

Examples
Common
elements
Themes

About

Once you have installed the beamer class [1], the basic steps to create a beamer presentation are the following:

1. Specify beamer as document class instead of article.
2. Structure your LaTeX text using section and subsection commands.
3. Place the text of the individual slides inside frame commands.
4. Run pdflatex on the text (or latex and dvips).

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[1]It is already installed in my Fedora Core 4

Useful features

The beamer class has several useful features:

- You don't need any external programs to use it other than pdflatex, but it works also with dvips.
- You can easily and intuitively create sophisticated overlays.
- Finally, you can easily change the whole slide theme or only parts of it.

Advantages

LaTeX
Beamer
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Outline

Introduction
the LaTeX
Beamer class
Competition

Examples

Common
elements
Themes

About

The beamer class has several useful advantages:

- You only need a text editor and LaTeX to create a slideshow
- You only need a PDF reader to show it [2]
- Your presentation is in a light text file ($+$ media if present)
- There are plenty of themes readily available
- Big letters [3] $=$ less text $=$ more easy to read / understand

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[2]they are nearly everywhere

[3]you can of course apply any LaTeX cosmetic modification to your text

Competitors

Other solutions are competitors:

- magicpoint
- LaTeX slide class
- OpenOffice.org Impress

Is MagicPoint better than LaTeX Beamer?

This is a personal opinion. But, if you are fluent in LaTeX, you don't need to learn another markup language (like in MagicPoint). Direct export to HTML is an advantage for MagicPoint. Direct export to PDF is an advantage for LaTeX Beamer.

Is LaTeX slide class better than the Beamer one?

Again, it is a personal opinion. I don't know much about the slide class. Anyone here have an experience?

Is OpenOffice.org Impress better than LaTeX Beamer?

As usual, it is a personal opinion. If you need a WYSIWYG software, don't use LaTeX Beamer. If you computer isn't powerfull enough to handle OpenOffice.org, welcome to LaTeX Beamer!

Some examples

In the next few slides, you'll find some examples showing that everything you can do with LaTeX, you can also do it with LaTeX Beamer.
I am not a specialist: I discovered Beamer a few hours ago. Other good example are available on the LaTeX Beamer homepage [4].

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[4]as you can already see, you can easily add hyperlinks

Include a table in your slideshow

LaTeX
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Outline

Introduction
Introduction to
the LaTeX
Beamer class
Competition

Examples
Common
elements
Themes

About

Restrained	Swivel	Telemetry
$\sim$ 400bpm	$\sim$ 380bpm	$\sim$ 310 bpm
$\sim$ 140mmHg	$\sim$ 120mmHg	$\sim$ 100mmHg

Table: Heart beat and blood pressure using different monitoring methods

Include a picture in your slideshow

LaTeX
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Outline

Introduction
Introduction to
the LaTeX
Beamer class
Competition

Examples

Common
elements
Themes
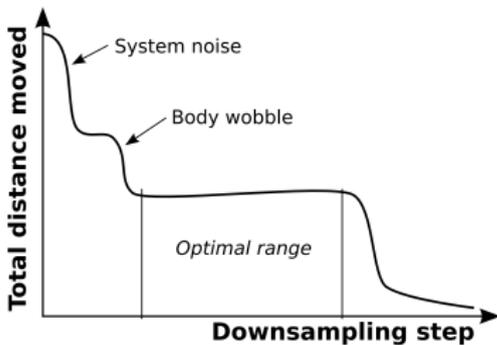
About

Figure: Our own test of downsampling

$$8/4 = \frac{8}{4} = 8 \cdot \frac{1}{4} = 8 \cdot 4^{-1}$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} 2 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$$

Themes

You can use *a lot* of themes already included in Beamer (see in /usr/share/texmf/tex/latex/beamer/beamertheme*.sty).
You've already seen the Berkeley theme. Some other examples will follow (even the first page is changing but it's up to you to try by yourself).

Theme: Antibes

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└─Introduction
  └─Introduction to the LaTeX Beamer class

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Figure: Theme Antibes

Theme: bars

Figure: Theme bars

Theme: Bergen

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Figure: Theme Bergen

Theme: Berlin

Figure: Theme Berlin

Theme: JuanLesPins

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Outline

Introduction
Introduction to
the LaTeX
Beamer class
Competition

Examples
Common
elements
Themes

About
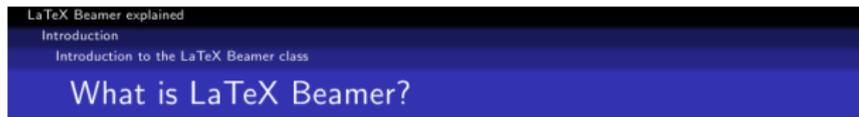
Figure: Theme JuanLesPins

Theme: Madrid

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Competition

Examples
Common elements
Themes

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Jean-Etienne Poirrier ()   LaTeX Beamer explained   November 22, 2005   3 / 20

Figure: Theme Madrid

Theme: PaloAlto

Figure: Theme PaloAlto

Theme: Singapore

Figure: Theme Singapore

About the author of this slideshow

Jean-Etienne Poirrier is a Ph.D. student in neuroscience at the University of Liege, in Belgium. Here is my website (where you can find these slides and much more):
http://www.poirrier.be/ jean-etienne.
For the "About" section, you can obviously use the thanks-thing in the author field, in the beginning of the presentation. But I personaly don't find it pretty.