SCRIBE: HOW TO USE IT FOR DOCUMENT PRODUCTION

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Scribe is a document production system that makes it easier to produce and maintain large complex technical documentation. Although its primary purpose is high-quality text formatting, Scribe also performs cross-reference tabulations, indexing, automatic generation of text such as tables of contents, figure integration.

Many text formatting programs exist, and many can do some or all of what Scribe can do. But Scribe has proven through the years to be much easier to learn and use than most other systems, and documents produced in Scribe have proven to be much easier to edit and maintain than documents produced other ways.

In most document production systems, the user gives the formatter specific instructions for how to format the document, and the formatter obeys them. In Scribe one gives essentially no formatting instructions at all. Rather, one identifies the components of a document, names the format in which the document is supposed to be produced, and lets Scribe do all of the work.

I will not talk so much about how Scribe works, but about how to use it. I will give simple examples, then some more complex examples, and then some unbelievably complex examples. Since Scribe implements a philosophy for document production as much as a technology, I will talk some about that philosophy and how it impacts the document production process.

I will conclude with a brief summary of the implementations of Scribe that are available on various kinds of computers, and the various laser printers, phototypesetters, and the daisy-wheel printers for which it can prepare output.