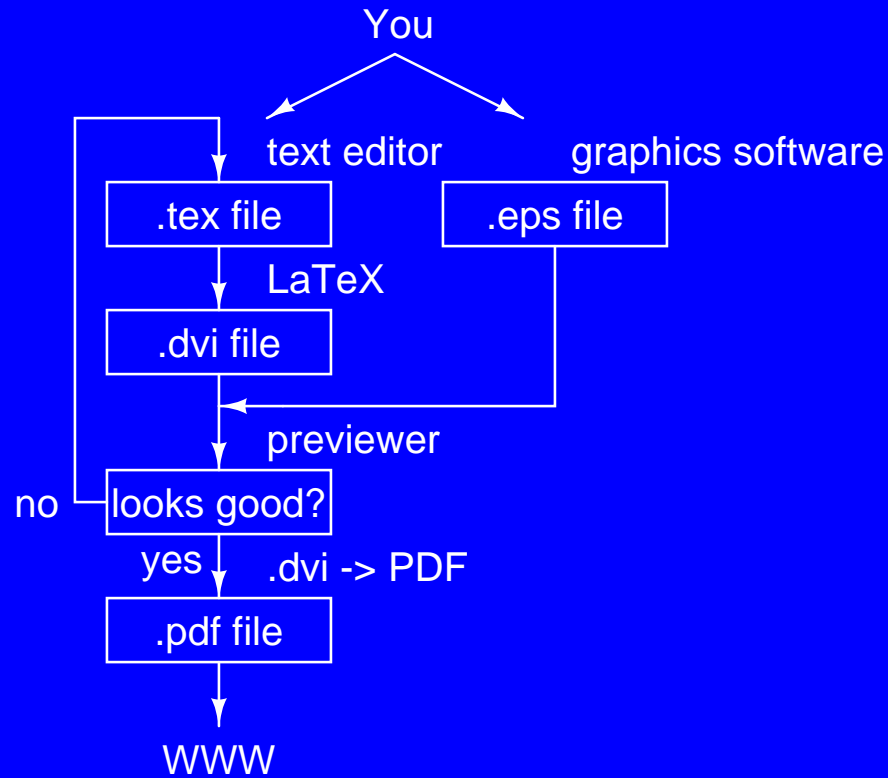


What is \LaTeX ?

- like HTML, \LaTeX is a markup language: you create text with embedded high-level typesetting commands (section, equation, etc)
- you create the text file with a text editor
- a program, \LaTeX , converts your text to a format that can be printed or made available on the Web (usually PDF)



Why use \LaTeX ?

- it's portable: it works on almost any computer
- it preserves your investment of time: it's been widely used for > 20 years, it won't become obsolete or unsupported
- it's efficient: you can concentrate on refining the content rather than the formatting details (\LaTeX takes care of this)

What's wrong with L^AT_EX?

- a very steep learning curve: you'll need to refer to printed references for a while
- indecipherable error messages: very frustrating for beginners
- it has very little control over formatting details: not for page layout

What is \LaTeX good for?

- documents that need to be formatted without manual intervention (large documents, automatically-generated ones)

- documents with lots of text and math

Where to Start?

- <http://www.tug.org>: T_EX User's Group
- read *Essential L_AT_EX* (26 pages, **free!**)
- try it out (versions for most computers: DOS, Windows, Mac, Amiga, Unix, ... **free!**)
- read *The Not So Short Introduction to L_AT_EX2_ε* (70 pages, **free!**)
- read *A Guide to L_AT_EX2_ε* (555 pages, \$)