

# BibTeX

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## Description

BibTeX is a program and file format designed by Oren Patashnik and Leslie Lamport in 1985 for the LaTeX document preparation system. The format is entirely character based, so it can be used by any program (although the standard character set for accents is TeX). It is field (tag) based and the BibTeX program will ignore unknown fields, so it is expandable. It is probably the most common format for bibliographies on the Internet.

## References

- *LaTeX: A Document Preparation System* by Leslie Lamport, 1986, Addison-Wesley.
- *BibTeXing* ([bibtexing.tex](#)), by Oren Patashnik, February 1988, (BibTeX distribution).
- [Help file for BibTeX format](#)
- [Hypatia's Guide to BibTeX](#). A very nice document that serves the same function of this one.

## Software Support

The BibTeX program uses [style files](#), a list of citations from LaTeX, and a BibTeX database to create a LaTeX file listing the cited references.

Dana Jacobsen maintains a [list of some BibTeX tools](#).

If you're looking for BibTeX for the Mac, Vince Darley has done a [port of BibTeX to the Mac](#).

[lg](#) and BibDB both fully support BibTeX.

## Examples

```
@article{Gettys90,  
  author = {Jim Gettys and Phil Karlton and Scott McGregor},  
  title = {The (X) Window System, Version 11},  
  journal = {Software Practice and Experience},  
  volume = {20},  
  number = {52},  
  year = {1990},  
  abstract = {A technical overview of the X11 functionality. This is an update  
of the X10 TOG paper by Scheifler \& Gettys.}  
}
```

## Common problems

- The original documents specified a large number of field names, but there are many common items that are not listed. A list of some of the ones people have added are below.
- When using BibTeX, the interaction between names and accenting is somewhat tricky. You should use 'G{\v{o}}del' or 'G{\v{ö}}del', and not '{G{\v{o}}del}' or '{G{\v{ö}}del}'.
- The BibTeX program is written, as is all TeX, using static data structures, and the maximum length of any one string is by default 1000 characters. It is not uncommon for fields like abstract and contents to overflow this buffer. Solutions to this include