Heirloom Documentation Tools: Quickstart Guide

So you want to explore Heirloom troff and know troff to some extent since you have used groff or traditional troff before? Getting started is easy then:

- Heirloom troff supports names with more than two characters for requests, strings, number registers, and fonts like groff does. However, it operates in a compatibility mode by default and needs to be explicitly told to activate extensions. Thus unless you are processing legacy documents, the first line in a Heirloom troff document should read

  .do xflag 3

- troff produces an intermediate language that needs further processing in order to produce PostScript output. With preprocessors and –mm macros, a typical command line is

  pic input.tr | tbl | eqn | troff –mm | dpost > output.ps

  It is most convenient to have the make utility let this execute for you. See the source directory for this quickstart guide ("doc/quickstart" in the distribution) for an example.

- You can adapt troff to local language conventions by setting the paper size, the hyphenation language, and the input locale. For example, a document in German that is using UTF-8 as input character encoding would usually configure these as

  .mediasize a4
  .hylang de_DE
  .lc_ctype de_DE .utf8

- Fonts are “plug-and-play”: troff can directly access PostScript Type 1, TrueType, and OpenType fonts without any need for conversion. The font of this document is mounted by

  .fp 1 R MyriadPro-Regular otf

  The document Font Handling in Troff With PostScript Devices explains additional features.

- Further extensions you might like to explore are paragraph-based justification, “micropyography”, hanging punctuation, PDF bookmarks and links, floating-point registers, and local variables per macro instance. These are documented in Justification in Heirloom Troff and in the Nroff/Troff User’s Manual.

- Heirloom troff provides a groff compatibility mode and macro set. A command line like

  gtbl input.tr | troff –mg /usr/share/groff/current/tmac/s.tmac – | dpost > output.ps

  lets you process groff macro sets and preprocessor output.