

Markdown FTW

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Markdown is my new favorite tool.

It all started while looking for alternatives to LaTeX to write documents and booklets, because since the release of the iPad last year, I wanted to publish in PDF *and* in EPUB format at the same time, and LaTeX does not offer that option off the box.

And, besides, I **really** found that LaTeX was a great system, but reading LaTeX code was not always enjoyable. It's a bit of a messy markup language.

So that's how I learnt about Pandoc; it is an incredible tool written in Haskell that pretty much transforms any kind of markup into another: RTF, MediaWiki syntax, HTML, LaTeX, Textile, you name it. However, it extends and gives a special status to Markdown, as one of its primary formats, and it provides support to create PDF and EPUB files out of the box; bingo, that's exactly what I needed. Even better, it uses LaTeX to generate PDF files, which means that I can reuse my LaTeX knowledge to generate beautiful documents.

But then, learning more about Markdown (the syntax is not very far away from Textile, which I knew better), I remembered that StackOverflow uses it; that GitHub uses it; and then I found an excellent Markdown plugin for WordPress and another great Markdown Redmine plugin. Then I updated Elements recently on my iPad (an excellent Dropbox-powered text editor for the iPad), and found out that it had native Markdown support. And of course, both MacVim and TextMate have an excellent Markdown support, including syntax highlighting and preview. And finally, even better, I discovered that MarsEdit supports Markdown natively.

So that's it, I'm sold. I'm writing almost everything these days with Markdown. And it's a simple, pure joy.

PS: I'm even considering buying Marked by Brett Terpstra, or even Macchiato (although this last one seems to me a bit pricey).