

The pict2e package*

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Abstract

This package was described in the 2nd edition of “LaTeX: A Document Preparation System”, but the LaTeX project team declined to produce the package. For a long time, LaTeX has included a “pict2e package” that merely produced an apologetic error message.

The new package extends the existing LaTeX `picture` environment, using the familiar technique (cf. the `graphics` and `color` packages) of driver files. In the user-level part of this documentation there is a fair number of examples of use, showing where things are improved by comparison with the Standard LaTeX `picture` environment.

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1 Introduction

Here's a quote from the obsolete original official version of the `pict2e` package (1993–2003):

The package `pict2e` that is mentioned in the 2nd edition of “LaTeX: A Document Preparation System” has not yet been produced. It is unlikely that the LaTeX3 Project Team will ever produce this package thus we would be very happy if someone else creates it.

: -) Finally, someone has produced a working implementation of the `pict2e` package.

This package redefines some of the drawing commands of the LaTeX picture environment. Like the `graphics` and `color` packages, it uses driver files.

Currently there are only back-ends for PostScript and PDF. (Other output formats may be added in the future.)

Note/Warning:

- Documentation has been written somewhat “hastily” and may be inaccurate.
- The status of this package is currently somewhere between “beta” and “release” ... Users and package programmers should *not* rely on *any* feature sported by the internal commands. (Especially, the internal control sequence names may change without notice in future versions of this package.)

2 Usage

To use the `pict2e` package, you put a `\usepackage[<optionlist>]{pict2e}` instruction in the preamble of your document. Likewise, class or package writers just say `\RequirePackage[<optionlist>]{pict2e}` in an appropriate place in their class or package file. (Nothing unusual here.)

Like the `graphics` and `color` packages, the `pict2e` package supports a configuration file (see Section 2.2).

2.1 Package options

2.1.1 Driver options

driver	notes	driver	notes
<code>dvips</code>	x	<code>dvipsone</code>	x?
<code>xdvi</code>	x	<code>dviwindo</code>	x?
<code>pdftex</code>	x	<code>dvipdf</code>	x?
<code>vtex</code>	x	<code>textures</code>	x?
<code>dvipdfm</code>	x	<code>pctexps</code>	x?
<code>oztex</code>	(x)	<code>pctex32</code>	x?

x = supported; (x) = supported but untested;

x? = not yet implemented

The driver options are (mostly) implemented by means of definition files (`p2e-<driver>.def`). For details, see file `p2e-drivers.dtx`.

Note: You should specify the same driver for `pict2e` you use with the `graphics/x` and `color` packages. Otherwise, things may go haywire.

2.1.2 Other options

Currently, there are two options that allow you to choose between variants of the arrows-heads generated by the `\vector` command. See Figure 3 in Section 2.3.2 for the difference.

option	meaning
<code>ltxarrows</code>	Draw LaTeX style vectors (default).
<code>pstarrows</code>	Draw PSTricks style vectors.

2.1.3 Debugging options

These options are (mainly) for development and testing purposes.

option	meaning
<code>original</code>	Suppresses the new definitions.
<code>debug</code>	Suppresses the compressing of pdfTeX output; marks the <code>pict2e</code> generated code in the output files.
<code>hide</code>	Suppresses all graphics output from <code>pict2e</code> .

2.2 Configuration file

Similar to the `graphics` and `color` packages, in most cases it is not necessary to give a driver option explicitly with the `\usepackage` (or `\RequirePackage`) command, if a suitable configuration file `pict2e.cfg` is present on your system (see the example file `pict2e-example.cfg`). On many systems it may be sufficient to copy `pict2e-example.cfg` to `pict2e.cfg`; on others you might need to modify your copy to suit your system.

2.3 Details: Changes to user-level commands

This section describes the improvements of the new implementation of (some of) the `picture` commands. For details, look up “`pict2e` package” in the index of the LaTeX manual [1].

Here’s a collection of quotes relevant to the `pict2e` package from the LaTeX manual [1].

From [1, p. 118]:

However, the `pict2e` package uses device-driver support to provide enhanced versions of these commands that remove some of their restrictions. The enhanced commands can draw straight lines and arrows of any slope, circles of any size, and lines (straight and curved) of any thickness.

From [1, p. 179]:

`pict2e` Defines enhanced versions of the `picture` environment commands that remove restrictions on the line slope, circle radius, and line thickness.

From [1, pp. 221–223]:

`\qbezier`
(With the `pict2e` package, there is no limit to the number of points plotted.)

`\line` **and** `\vector` *Slopes $|x|, |y| \leq 6$ or 4, with no common divisor except ± 1 :
(These restrictions are eliminated by the `pict2e` package.)*

`\line` **and** `\vector` *Smallest horizontal extent of sloped lines and vectors that can be drawn:
(This does not apply when the `pict2e` package is loaded.)*

`\circle` **and** `\circle*` *Largest circles and disks that can be drawn:
(With the `pict2e` package, any size circle or disk can be drawn.)*

`\oval [rad]`:

An explicit rad argument can be used only with the pict2e package; the default value is the radius of the largest quarter-circle LaTeX can draw without the pict2e package.

2.3.1 Line

`\line` `\line(X,Y){\i>LEN}`

In the Standard LaTeX implementation the slope arguments (*X,Y*) are restricted to integers in the range $-6 \leq X, Y \leq +6$, with no common divisors except ± 1 . (I.e., *X* and *Y* must be relatively prime.) Furthermore, only horizontal and vertical lines can assume arbitrary thickness; sloped lines are restricted to the widths given by the `\thinlines` and `\thicklines` declarations (i.e., 0.4pt and 0.8pt, respectively).

From [1, p. 222]:

These restrictions are eliminated by the pict2e package.

However, to avoid overflow of TeX’s integer (dimen) arithmetic, the current implementation restricts the slope arguments to integers in the range $-1000 \leq X, Y \leq +1000$, which should be enough.

Furthermore, unlike the Standard LaTeX implementation, which silently converts the “impossible” slope to a vertical line extending in the upward direction ($(0,0) \mapsto (0,1)$), the `pict2e` package now treats this as an error.

In the Standard LaTeX implementation the horizontal extent of sloped lines must be at least 10 pt.

From [1, p. 222]:

This does not apply when the pict2e package is loaded.

Figure 1 shows the difference between the old and new implementations: The black lines in the left half of each picture all have slopes that conform to the restrictions of Standard LaTeX. However, with the new implementation of `pict2e` sloped lines may assume any arbitrary width given by the `\linethickness` declaration. The right half demonstrates that now arbitrary slopes are possible.

The blue lines represent “illegal” slopes specifications, i.e., with common divisors. Note the funny effect Standard LaTeX produces in such cases. (In LaTeX releases prior to 2003/12/01, some such “illegal” slopes might even lead to infinite loops! Cf. problem report latex/3570.)

The new implementation imposes no restriction with respect to line thickness, minimal horizontal extent, and slope.

The red lines correspond to angles of $15^\circ, 30^\circ, 45^\circ, 60^\circ, \text{and } 75^\circ$, respectively. This was achieved by multiplying the sine and cosine of each angle by 1000 and rounding to the nearest integer.

```
\put(50,0){\line(966,259){25}}
\put(50,0){\line(866,500){25}}
\put(50,0){\line(707,707){25}}
\put(50,0){\line(500,866){25}}
\put(50,0){\line(259,966){25}}
```

2.3.2 Vector

`\vector` `\vector(X,Y){\i>LEN}`

In the Standard LaTeX implementation the slope arguments (*X,Y*) are restricted to integers

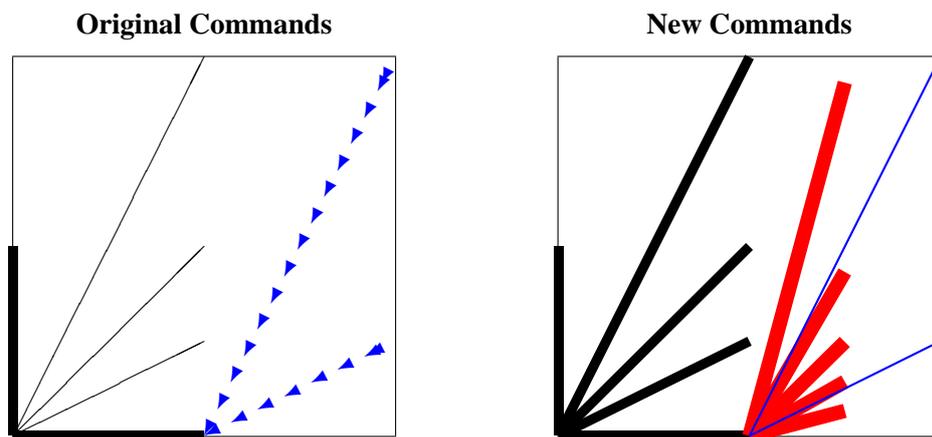


Figure 1: Lines

in the range $-4 \leq X, Y \leq +4$, with no common divisors except ± 1 . (I.e., X and Y must be relatively prime.) Furthermore, arrow heads come only in two shapes, corresponding to the `\thinlines` and `\thicklines` declarations. (There’s also a flaw: the lines will be printed over the arrow heads. See vertical vector in Figure 2.)

From [1, p. 222]:

These restrictions are eliminated by the `pict2e` package.

However, to avoid overflow of TeX’s integer (dimen) arithmetic, the current implementation restricts the slope arguments to integers in the range $-1000 \leq X, Y \leq +1000$, which should be enough.

Furthermore, unlike the Standard LaTeX implementation, which silently converts the “impossible” slope to a vertical vector extending in the upward direction ($(0,0) \mapsto (0,1)$), the `pict2e` package now treats this as an error.

In the Standard LaTeX implementation the horizontal extent of sloped vectors must be at least 10 pt.

From [1, p. 222]:

This does not apply when the `pict2e` package is loaded.

Figure 2 shows the difference between the old and new implementations: The black arrows all have “legal” slopes. The red arrows have slope arguments out of the range permitted by Standard LaTeX. Slope arguments that are “illegal” in Standard LaTeX produce results similar to those with the `\line` command (this has not been demonstrated here).

The new implementation imposes no restriction with respect to line thickness, minimal horizontal extent, and slope.

As with Standard LaTeX, the arrow head will always be drawn. In particular, only the arrow head will be drawn, if the total length of the arrow is less than the length of the arrow head. See right hand side of Figure 3.

The current version of the `pict2e` package offers two variants for the shape of the arrow heads, controlled by package options. One variant tries to mimic the fonts used in the Standard LaTeX implementation (package option `ltxarrows`, the default; see Figure 3, top row), though it is difficult to extrapolate from just two design sizes. The other one is implemented like the arrows of the PSTricks package [2] (package option `pstarrows`; see Figure 3, bottom row).

2.3.3 Circle and Dot

```
\circle \circle{\DIAM}
\circle* \circle*{\DIAM}
```

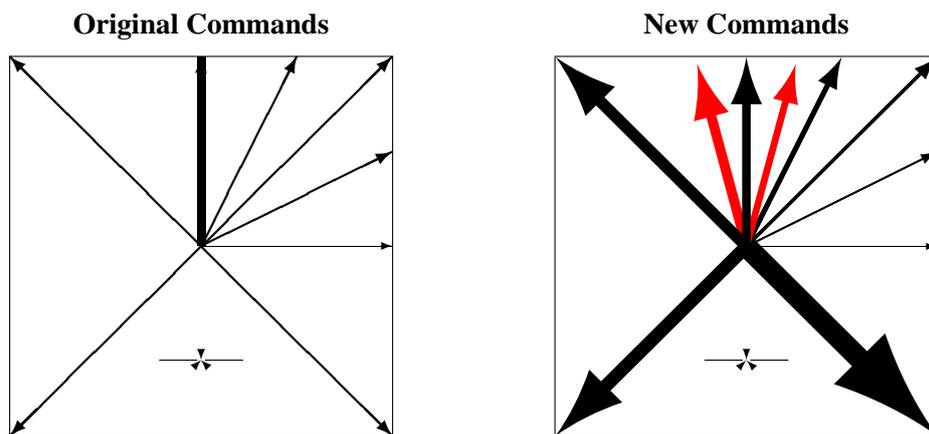


Figure 2: Vector

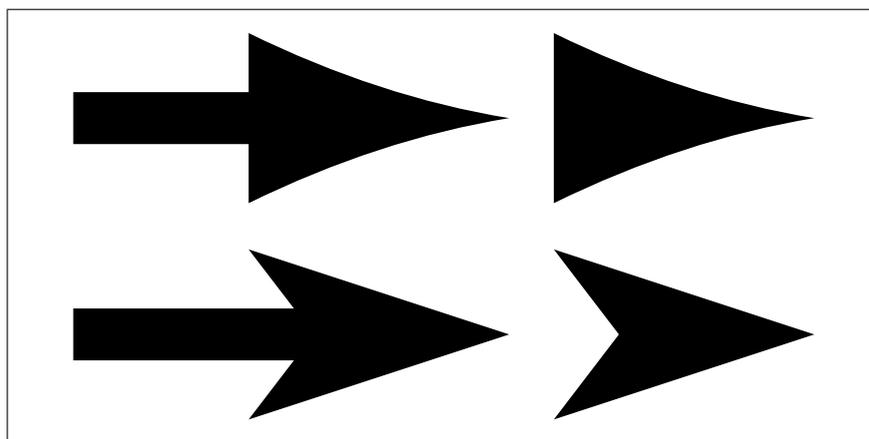


Figure 3: Vector: shape variants of the arrow-heads. Top: LaTeX style vectors. Bottom: PSTricks style vectors.

The (hollow) circles and disks (filled circles) of the Standard LaTeX implementation had severe restrictions on the number of different diameters and maximum diameters available.

From [1, p. 222]:

With the `pict2e` package, any size circle or disk can be drawn.

With the new implementation there are no more restrictions to the diameter argument. (However, negative diameters are now trapped as an error.)

Furthermore, hollow circles (like sloped lines) can now be drawn with any line thickness. Figure 4 shows the difference.

2.3.4 Oval

`\oval` `\oval[$\langle rad \rangle$]($\langle X,Y \rangle$)[$\langle POS \rangle$]`

In the Standard LaTeX implementation, the user has no control over the shape of an oval besides its size, since its corners would always consist of the “quarter circles of the largest possible radius less than or equal to *rad*” [1, p. 223].

From [1, p. 223]:

An explicit `rad` argument can be used only with the `pict2e` package; the default value is the radius of the largest quarter-circle LaTeX can draw without the `pict2e` package.

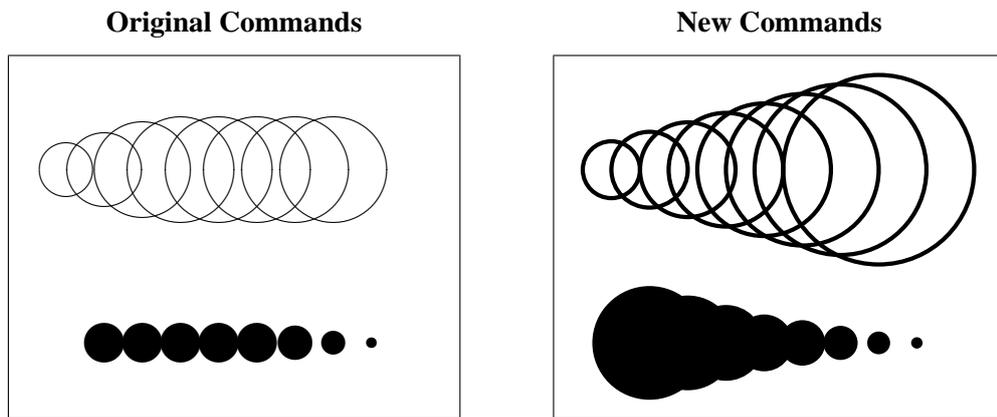


Figure 4: Circle and Dot

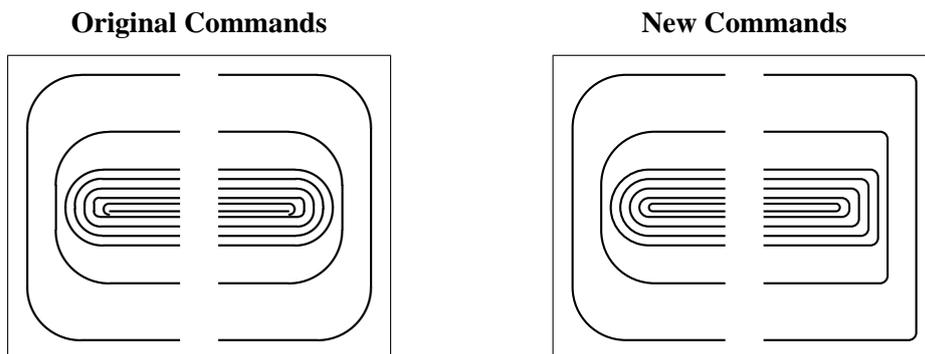


Figure 5: Oval: Radius argument for `\oval` vs. `\maxovalrad`

This default value is 20 pt, a length. However, in an early reimplementa-tion of the picture commands [3], there is such an optional argument too, but it is given as a mere number, to be multiplied by `\unitlength`.

Since both alternatives may make sense, we left the choice to the user. (See Figure 6 for the differences.) I.e., this implementation of `\oval` will “auto-detect” whether its [*rad*] argument is a length or a number. Furthermore, the default value is not hard-wired either; the user may access it under the moniker `\maxovalrad`, by the means of `\renewcommand*`. (Names or values of length and counter registers may be given as well, both as an explicit [*rad*] argument and when redefining `\maxovalrad`.)

(Both [*rad*] and the default value `\maxovalrad` are ignored in “standard LaTeX mode”).

The behaviour of `\oval` in the absence of the [*rad*] argument is shown in Figure 5, left half of each picture. Note that in the Standard LaTeX implementation there is a minimum radius as well (innermost “salami” is “broken”). In the right half of each picture, a [*rad*] argument has been used: it has no effect with the original `\oval` command.

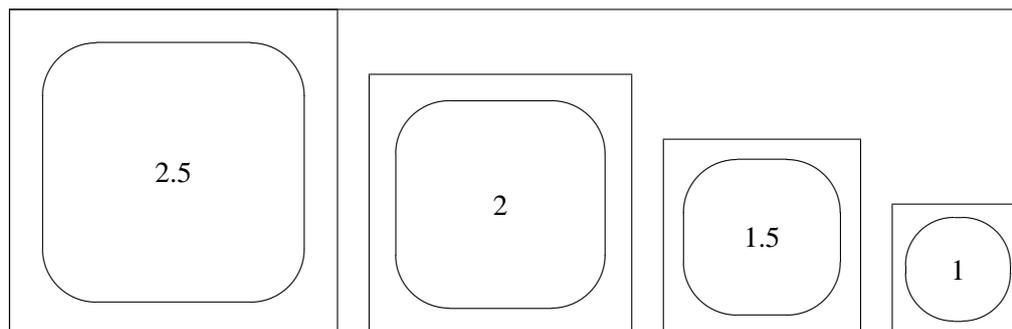
Both [*rad*] and `\maxovalrad` may be given as an explicit (rigid) length (i.e., with unit) or as a number. In the latter case the value is used as a factor to multiply by `\unitlength`. (A length or counter register will do as well, of course.)

If a number is given, the rounded corners of an oval will scale according to the current value of `\unitlength`. (See Figure 6, first row.)

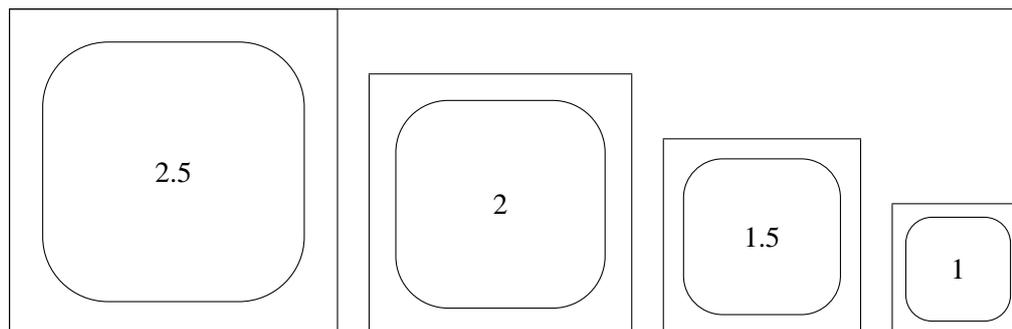
If a length is specified, the rounded corners of an oval will be the same regardless of the current value of `\unitlength`. (See Figure 6, second row.)

The default value is 20 pt as specified for the [*rad*] argument of `\oval` by the LaTeX manual [1, p. 223]. (See Figure 6, third row.)

Original Commands, [$\langle rad \rangle$] or `\maxovalrad` ignored



New Commands, [$\langle rad \rangle$] or `\maxovalrad` depends on `\unitlength`



New Commands, [$\langle rad \rangle$] or `\maxovalrad` a fixed length

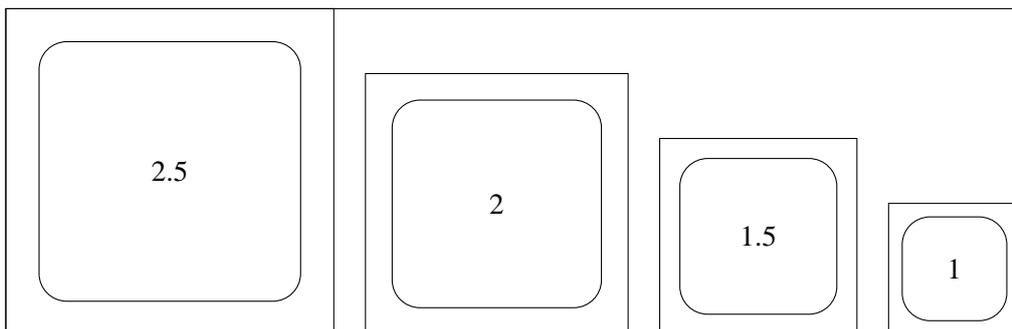


Figure 6: Oval: Radius argument for `\oval`: length vs. number. The number at the centre of each oval gives the relative value of `\unitlength`.

2.3.5 Bezier Curves

```

\bezier \bezier{ $\langle N \rangle$ }( $\langle AX,AY \rangle$ )( $\langle BX,BY \rangle$ )( $\langle CX,CY \rangle$ )
\qbezier \qbezier[ $\langle N \rangle$ ]( $\langle AX,AY \rangle$ )( $\langle BX,BY \rangle$ )( $\langle CX,CY \rangle$ )
\cbezier \cbezier[ $\langle N \rangle$ ]( $\langle AX,AY \rangle$ )( $\langle BX,BY \rangle$ )( $\langle CX,CY \rangle$ )( $\langle DX,DY \rangle$ )
\qbeziermax

```

In Standard LaTeX, the N argument specifies the number of points to plot, with the maximum defined by `\qbeziermax`. With LaTeX versions prior to 2003/12/01, the quadratic Bezier curves plotted by this package will not match those of the Standard LaTeX implementation exactly, due to a bug in positioning the dots used to produce a curve (cf. latex/3566).

`\bezier` is the obsolescent variant from the old `bezier` package of vintage LaTeX2.09.

The `\cbezier` command draws a cubic Bezier curve; see [4]. (This is not mentioned in [1] and has been added to the package deliberately.)

From [1, p. 221–223]:

With the `pic2e` package, there is no limit to the number of points plotted.

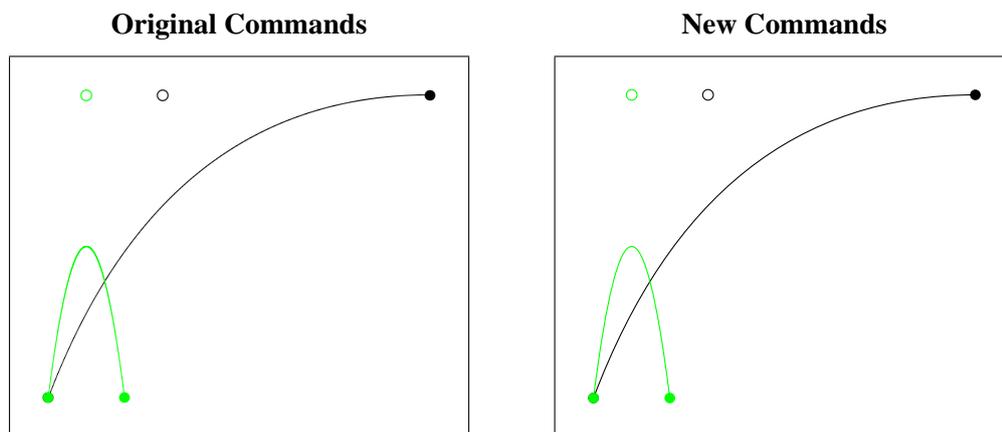
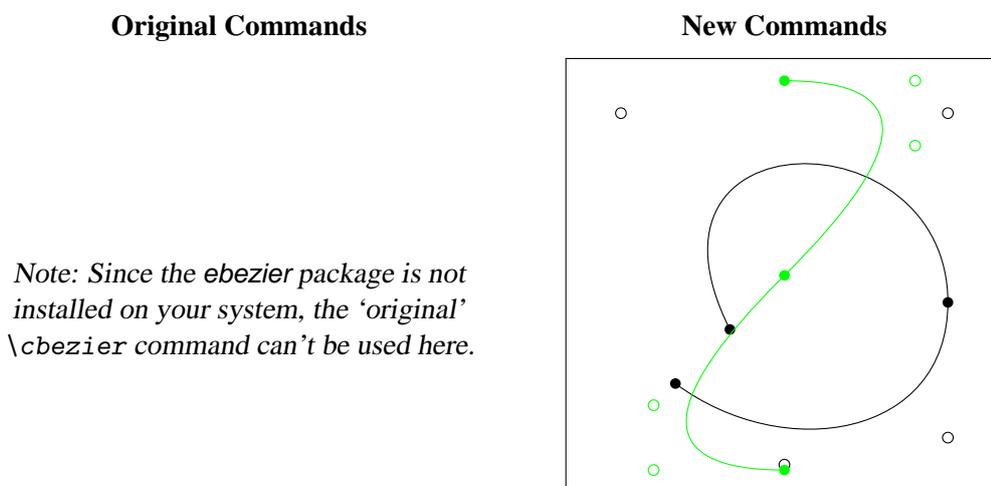


Figure 7: Quadratic Bezier curves



Note: Since the `ebezier` package is not installed on your system, the ‘original’ `\cbezier` command can’t be used here.

Figure 8: Cubic Bezier curves

More accurately, the argument specifying the maximum number of points to plot is simply ignored in this new implementation of `pict2e`, as is `\qbeziermax`, since the `pict2e` package uses primitive operators of the output (back-end) format, using only the given “control points”. (For details, see the implementation part.)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Michael Wichura for granting us permission to use his implementation of the algorithm for “pythagorean addition” from his `PiCTeX` package. Thanks go to Michael Vulis (MicroPress) for hints regarding a driver for the `VTeX` system. Walter Schmidt has reviewed the documentation and code, and has tested the `VTeX` driver. The members of the “TeX-Stammtisch” in Berlin, Germany, have been involved in the development of this package as our guinea pigs, i.e., alpha-testers; Jens-Uwe Morawski and Herbert Voss have also been helpful with many suggestions and discussions.

Finally we thank the members of The LaTeX Team for taking the time to evaluate our new implementation of the picture mode commands, and eventually accepting it as the “official” `pict2e` package, as well as providing the `README` file.

Original Commands

New Commands

Note: Since the `ebezier` package is not installed on your system, the ‘original’ `\cbezier` command can’t be used here.

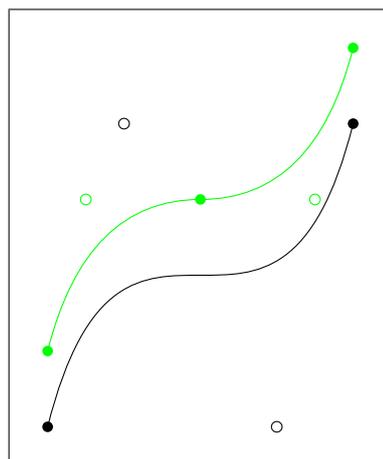


Figure 9: Quadratic (green) and Cubic Bezier curves

References

- [1] Leslie Lamport: *LaTeX – A Document Preparation System*, 2nd ed., 1994
- [2] Timothy Van Zandt: *The pstricks bundle*. CTAN: `graphics/pstricks/`, 1993, 1994, 2000
- [3] David Carlisle: *The pspicture package*. CTAN: `macros/latex/contrib/carlisle/`, 1992
- [4] Gerhard A. Bachmaier: *The ebezier package*. CTAN: `macros/latex/contrib/ebezier/`, 2002