

1. Introduction

1.1. What is Laurel?

Laurel is an Alto-based, display-oriented, computer mail system interface. It provides facilities to retrieve mail and present it for delivery, and to display, forward, classify, file, and print messages. Additional features include facilities to read, write and copy files, run programs, and a whole lot more. Laurel is a component of a distributed message system that has been in operation for several years in the Xerox Research Internet. Laurel executes on an Alto (or Dolphin or Dorado emulating an Alto) and uses the display, keyboard and mouse in a fashion befitting Alto-based software.

1.2. What is this manual?

This manual is a reference document for Laurel. The Laurel team believes that most of the basic facilities of Laurel are self-explanatory, and that you can use Laurel quite competently after reading only this introductory section and taking the interactive tutorial using Laurel itself (see *How to obtain Laurel* below). Laurel also has features that are not immediately obvious, and after becoming acquainted with the system, you will want to read about those facilities in this manual.

Sections 3, 4, and 5 describe features of Laurel in detail. On first reading, you may read the introductory portion of each of these sections, quickly skim the rest, and return to them later to gain understanding of their finer points. Section 6 describes proper message system behavior, and should be read by every message system user, new or old. Section 7 contains advice that is useful after gaining some familiarity with Laurel through the earlier sections. Sections 8 and 9 may be skipped on first reading as their titles imply. Appendices A, B, and C give detailed information on a variety of topics, and may be read later as their information becomes relevant to your usage of Laurel. Appendix D has important information if you currently use MSG. Appendix E is a short summary of the differences between Laurel 6 and previous versions of Laurel.

If you have the time, it is perfectly all right to read this manual from beginning to end. Many of the functions provided by Laurel are interdependent; extensive cross-indexing is used throughout this manual to avoid repeating information in several places.

The Laurel team will be very happy to hear any suggestions you may have, and is particularly interested in your experiences in using the system. Comments should be sent to LaurelSupport.PA (using the facilities provided by Laurel!)

The version of Laurel described in this manual is Laurel 6. It replaces all previous versions of Laurel (those with smaller numbers and LaurelX). Previous versions of Laurel are no longer supported. It is in your best interest to update now to Laurel 6, as previous versions may stop working in the future due to changes in the message transport system.

1.3. How to obtain Laurel

We strongly recommend that new users obtain a Non-Programmer's disk to be used primarily for processing and managing messages (see section 7 for the reasons behind this recommendation).

Two Alto command files are available on most file servers for obtaining Laurel. If you are a new user, you should issue the following commands to the Alto Executive:

```
>Ftp FileServer Retrieve <Laurel>LaurelNewUser.cm CR
>@LaurelNewUser CR
```

where *FileServer* should be replaced by your local file server's name. This obtains Laurel and starts it up in a tutorial mode. If you are a new user, you should do this now, before reading the rest of this manual. What follows will be much easier to assimilate once you have a passing acquaintance with Laurel. After you have finished the tutorial, please do read the rest of this manual, especially section 6.

If you are already familiar with Laurel, you should issue the following commands to the Alto Executive:

```
>Ftp FileServer Retrieve <Laurel>Laurel.cm CR
>@Laurel CR
```

which merely retrieves the files necessary to run Laurel.

Fine point: Laurel 6 is a Mesa 6 program set up as a run file. It requires no other parts of the Mesa environment on the local disk. This one version of Laurel 6 adapts itself to your machine; no special extended memory version is necessary.

1.4. How to run Laurel

To invoke Laurel, type

```
>Laurel CR
```

to the Alto Executive. This is the default method of invoking Laurel. Command line options are discussed in Appendix A.

To invoke the Laurel tutorial (after obtaining it with @LaurelNewUser), type

```
>Laurel Tutorial CR
```

1.5. Acknowledgments

The Laurel program and its associated mail transport facilities are the product of the combined efforts of many individuals. The members of the Laurel team have included at various times (in alphabetical order): Richard M. Barth, Douglas K. Brotz, James J. Horning, Robert Kierr, J. Timothy Korb, Roy Levin, Roger Needham, Michael D. Schroeder, Jay Spitzen, and Ben Wegbreit. Persons who have provided supporting facilities included in Laurel include Hal G. Murray, James E. White, and the entire Mesa Group. The mail transport facilities are due to Andrew D. Birrell, David R. Boggs, Stephen C. Butterfield, Roy Levin, Michael D. Schroeder, and Edward A. Taft. Inspiration and managerial support were provided by Jerome I. Elkind, Robert M. Metcalfe, and Robert W. Taylor.

For an interactive program to become polished and meet the needs of its user population, extensive testing and accumulation of user experience are all important. Special thanks are due to the dedicated Alpha-testers of Laurel throughout its development, whose collective suggestions and patient error tracking have helped to shape this system into its present form.

Last, but not least, none of this would have been possible without the existence of the Alto, the Ethernet, and, of course, the Xerox Corporation.

