The import package

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Two new IAT_{EX} commands:

\import {\full-path\} {\file\}
\subimport {\path-extension\} {\file\}

are defined to input a file from another directory, allowing that file to find its own inputs (using \input, \includegraphics etc.) in that directory.

and

Alias command names are "\inputfrom" and "\subinputfrom". (If \import was defined previously, it will not be redefined.) Also provided are the similar commands "\includefrom" and "\subincludefrom", which are based on the \include command, rather than \input.

For example, if a remote file /user/friend/work/report.tex has contents:

My graph: \includegraphics{picture}
\input{explanation}

then you can input that file to a document with \import{/user/friend/ work/}{report} so that both the explanation and picture will be taken from the /user/friend/work/ directory.

The $\langle full-path \rangle$ argument for \import can be a full absolute path or a relative path starting from the main working directory for the document. The \subimport command facilitates nesting of file imports. It takes a relative $\langle path-extension \rangle$ based on the location of the current imported file. For example, if a file is imported (using either command) from directory abc/ and that file contains the command \subimport{lmn/}{xyz} then file abc/lmn/xyz.tex is

input, and any \input commands in that file will read files from directory abc/lmn/.¹

Depending on on how your TEX system is configured, if a file does not exist in the specified import directory, it will be looked for in previous import directories (when nesting \subimport files), then in any directory listed in the pre-existing \input@path, then in the current working directory, and finally in the TEXINPUTS path. Therefore, for \import and for other \input used within an imported file, a file found on the path of import(s) will be read in preference to others with the same name located elsewhere. So here is the real behavior of the previous example: Given the nested sequence:

\import{abc/}{one} (in main document);
\subimport{lmn/uvw/}{two} (in file abc/one.tex);
\input{three} (in file abc/lmn/uvw/two.tex);

LATEX first looks for abc/lmn/uvw/three (or abc/lmn/uvw/three.tex); if not found, it tries abc/three (or abc/three.tex); if still not found, it looks in the \input@path, if there was one defined; if \input@path was not defined, or if the file was not found on it, LATEX then tries to open three in the main document directory;

finally, if still not found, it searches the TEXINPUTS search path.

Historically, 'star' versions of the commands were defined (to avoid searching the TEXINPUTS path) but now the "*" is ignored.

A command "\import@path@fix" is provided to reformat the import path to fit the syntax of a particular operating system. It *could* be defined to convert unix-style path names to the local format. The default definition ensures paths end with a single "/" on most systems (unless the path is empty), but on VMS systems it removes "][" from within combined paths.

Note that the import package works by manipulating the internal 'commands' \input@path and \Ginput@path, so may behave badly if you redefine them manually, or via another package, within the document.

Presently, the paths are defined 'locally' (not globally) so input files must have balanced grouping.

¹ Note that the sub-import path is merely appended to the current import path. Syntactical mistakes from this method may be corrected by \import@path@fix.