The \texttt{spacingtricks} package\footnote{This document corresponds to \texttt{spacingtricks} v1.4, dated 2021/09/20.}

Antoine Missier
antoine.missier@ac-toulouse.fr
September 20, 2021

1 Introduction

This package offers some macros to deal with spacing issues. Thus:

- \texttt{\centered} yields good horizontal centering without vertical spacing;
- \texttt{\footnote} has been redefined to avoid unsuitable spacing;
- \texttt{\vstrut} produces a strut with variable height or depth;
- \texttt{\indent} has been redefined to indent a line at the beginning of a particular paragraph even if \texttt{\parindent} has been set to 0;
- the \texttt{\indentblock} environment produces indentation of all its content;
- the \texttt{\compactlist} environment yields a compact list, without vertical spacing between the items, like here; several aliases are provided to type some list symbols shorter: \texttt{\bul}, \texttt{\dash}, \texttt{\ddash}, \texttt{\aster}, \texttt{\hand}, \texttt{\checksymb}, \texttt{\arrowsymb};
- the macros \texttt{\ie} and \texttt{\eg} attends to typeset common abbreviations i.e. and e.g. with correct spacing;
- the \texttt{\dualboxes} command attends to place two boxes (figures, tables, text) side by side by adjusting the vertical positioning.

Two other common packages are loaded by \texttt{spacingtricks}: \texttt{setspace} (natively in \LaTeX\ 2\epsilon), for setting line spacing in a piece of text (with the \texttt{spacing} environment), and \texttt{xspace} \cite{1}, which adds an inter-word space unless the macro is followed by a punctuation character.

Otherwise, we provide the package \texttt{arraycols} \cite{6}, which allows a good management of spacing in \texttt{tabular} and \texttt{array} environments, and \texttt{mismath} \cite{7} of which several macros tends to improve spacing in mathematical formulas.

2 Usage

\begin{quote}
\texttt{\centered} The \texttt{\centered\{text\}} command yields a centered line without vertical spacing. It acts like \texttt{\centerline} except in lists or tables where its behavior is much better (see the following examples). Moreover, the line break before (but not after) the macro is automatic.
\end{quote}
Here is a comparative example of the centering commands inside a list:

1. Here a centered line with \texttt{\textbackslash centered}:
   Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit.

2. Here another centered line with \texttt{\textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash \textbackslash centerline}:
   Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit.

3. Here another centered line with \texttt{par\textbackslash centerline}:
   Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit.

4. Here a centered line with the \texttt{center} environment:

   \begin{center}
   Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit.
   \end{center}

In tables, \texttt{\textbackslash centered} allows to center a particular cell independently of the (general) column alignment\(^1\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>left aligned column</th>
<th>right aligned column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>another cell</td>
<td>centered cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>centered line</td>
<td>the last cell right aligned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\texttt{\footnote} \quad The \texttt{\footnote} command doesn’t have a good management of spacing issues, in particular when the \texttt{hyperref} package has been loaded. In English tradition, there is no space before numbers (or symbols) of note calls, and likewise at the beginning of footnotes, text begins immediately after the note number\(^2\). To avoid undesirable spaces, we don’t have to put some space before or after writing \texttt{\footnote}, for instance:

\begin{itemize}
  \item this is a note\footnote{good spacing} which works fine,
\end{itemize}

but sometimes, it is convenient to place the \texttt{\footnote} command on a new line. To achieve this, \texttt{\footnote} has been redefined to completely eliminate unwanted spaces\(^3\).

---

\(^1\)In tables, we can also use the powerful \texttt{\textbackslash makecell} command of the \texttt{makecell} package [2], on the other hand the \texttt{\textbackslash centerline} command doesn’t work for a single line in a cell. Let us also mention the \texttt{\textbackslash centeredline} command, from the package \texttt{centeredline} [3], which allows to use \texttt{\textbackslash verb} commands inside the text to center; but it doesn’t work in tables either.

\(^2\)The typesetting of footnotes and note calls depends on national typographic rules which are, in principle, managed by \texttt{babel}. For instance, by activating the \texttt{french} option of \texttt{babel}, a thin space is added before the note calls, and the new \texttt{\footnote} macro does not alter this behavior.

\(^3\)Probably it would have been enough to recommend the use of the \texttt{\%} symbol at the end of line; its effect is to cancel the space produced by a line break, but we do not always think of using it.
This a note with the old command.

\footnote{Bad spacing example.}

This a note \footnote{Good spacing example.} with the new command.

Like the old one, the new \footnote command can take an optional argument to force the number of the note. Likewise, we have always the customization macros \footnotesize, \footnotesection, \footnoterule, but two new macros have been added to manage spacing: \footnotespace produces the space before the note call symbol and \footnoteindent produces the space at the beginning of the footnote text. For instance, with \renewcommand{\footnotespace}{,} and \renewcommand{\footnoteindent}{\enskip} we get:

\[ \frac{\sqrt{0.5p}}{10} = \frac{\sqrt{\vstrut{1.7ex} 0.5p}}{10} \]

\fbox{\vstrut{2ex}$\sigma(X) = 1$} gives $\sigma(X) = 1$ better than $\sigma(X) = 1$

The height adjustment is done by trial and error. We could also have used a vertical phantom box; for example in the previous square root, we get a good result with \vphantom{\bar{t}}}, but it’s not obvious to know what to put in the phantom box, moreover, \vstrut allows a finer tuning.

In a table, \renewcommand{\arraystretch}{\langle \text{stretch} \rangle} allows to increase the height of the rows but this command has a global effect, whereas \vstrut allows to adjust properly the height of each row, as in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bad</th>
<th>good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\lim_{x \to 1} \ln \left( \frac{x^2}{x - 1} \right)$</td>
<td>$\lim_{x \to 1} \ln \left( \frac{x^2}{x - 1} \right)$ obtained with \vstrut{3.8ex}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\int_{1}^{x} \frac{1}{t} , dt$</td>
<td>$\int_{1}^{x} \frac{1}{t} , dt$ \vstrut{3ex}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\vstrut{3.8ex} is equivalent to \hspace{0.5em}.

\footnotespace \footnoteindent

\footnotespace

\footnoteindent

\footnotespace

\footnoteindent

\footnotespace

\footnoteindent
However, for tables, we have the `arraycols` package [6], based on `cellspace` [4], which allows to adjust row heights automatically. Nevertheless, `\vstrut` can be useful for fine adjustments.

In a text line, `\vstrut` can be used in place of `vspace`.

\indent
The command `\setlength{\parindent}{0cm}` allow to eliminate any indentation of lines at the beginning of every paragraph. But in this case, the `\indent` command does not work anymore if we want exceptional indentation of a particular paragraph. So, the initial length of `\parindent` has been saved in `\parindentlength` and the command `\indent` has been redefined to still allow indentation of length `\parindentlength`.

\indentblock
The `indentblock` environment allows indentation of a whole block of lines. It has an optional argument which is the length of indentation (set by default to `\parindentlength`). The following lyrics have been indented (and typeset in italic shape) with `\begin{indentblock}\itshape` and stanzas 2 and 4 have been affected by an additional indentation with `\begin{indentblock}[3em]`.

Overhead the albatross hangs motionless upon the air
And deep beneath the rolling waves in labyrinths of coral caves
The echo of a distant time comes willowing across the sand
And everything is green and submarine

And no one showed us to the land
And no one knows the where’s or why’s
But something stirs and something tries
Starts to climb towards the light

Strangers passing in the street
By chance two separate glances meet
And I am you and what I see is me
And do I take you by the hand
And lead you through the land
And help me understand the best I can?

And no one calls us to move on
And no one forces down our eyes
No one speaks and no one tries
No one flies around the sun

\compactlist
As its name tells it, the `compactlist` environment allows to create a “compact” list, i.e. without vertical space neither above nor between items. As for lists in `\LaTeX`, items are generated by the `\item` command. The environment has an optional argument: `\begin{compactlist}[\textbullet]`.

\bul
Default item symbol is `\textbullet` but it can be changed. We provide aliases for several symbols commonly used in lists: `\bul` • (alias for `\textbullet`), `\dash` — (`\textendash`), `\ddash` — (`\textemdash`), `\aster` ∗ (`\textasteriskcentered`), as well as `\hand` ☞ (`\ding{43}`), `\checksymb` ✓ (`\ding{51}`) and `\arrowsymb` ➢ (`\ding{226}`) which need to load the
\checksymb pifont package in the preamble. The following example is obtained with
\arrowsymb \begin{compactlist}\\(\mathsf{\check{symb}}\\):
✓ First item.
✓ Second item.
✓ Third item.
☞ These aliases can be used directly in text mode, of course. For \hand,
\checksymb and \arrowsymb, the symbol is followed by a space if there is no
punctuation character just after it (thanks to the macro xspace from the xspace
package [1]).

\compactlistindent This length (fixed at 0.5 em by default) can be modified with \setlength
to increase or decrease the indentation of the compactlist environment. Notice
that there are several other ways to construct a compact list in particular with
the noitemsep key of the enumitem package [5].

\ie In English, at the end of a sentence, the point is followed by an em space
which is larger than an inter-word space. We provide the \ie (id est) and \eg
(exempli gratia) macros, suggested in The \LaTeX\ Companion [9], to get correct
spacing after these abbreviations e.g. here. In American typography, a comma is
often placed after these abbreviations, what we can get with \ie, on the other
hand, some authors prefer to typeset \textit{\ie} in italic shape, which is always possible
with \textit{\ie}.

\dualboxes Several packages intend to set the text around a figure or a table, but in gen-
eral we have to give the width of the box containing the figure or the table. Let
us mention however the picins package [8], cited in The \LaTeX\ Companion [9],
which do not ask for the box width and it can also be used with lists. Nev-
ertheless vertical positioning can be tricky. For this purpose, we have written
the \dualboxes[\langle pos\rangle]{\langle left\rangle}{\langle right\rangle} macro, which places two boxes, \langle left\rangle and
\langle right\rangle, side by side. These boxes can contain figures, tables, text, \minipage
environments (for several paragraphs and lists), etc. The optional \langle pos\rangle parameter sets
the vertical level on which the boxes are aligned: a number between 0 (bottom)
and 1 (top, default value). Here is a first example with \dualboxes[0.65].

\begin{verbatim}
x  | -2  | -1  | 0   | 1   | 2   | 3   
f(x)| -0.96| -0.71| 0.59| 0.38| 0.18|
\end{verbatim}

The horizontal space is equally shared between left margin, inter-box space and
right margin.

In the following example the right box has been shifted back to make an over-
lapping with the left one, what picins cannot do.
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
x & -2 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 \\
\hline
f(x) & -0.96 & -0.71 & 0 & 0.59 & 0.38 & 0.18 \\
\end{array}

This command has a starred version which eliminates spaces at the beginning and at the end of the line, the only remaining space is between the boxes: \dualboxes*[\pos]{\left}{\right}.

Here the left part consist of a paragraph box obtained with \parbox{7cm}{...}. If we want several paragraphs, a list or a mathematical displayed formula, in one of the boxes, then we have to put them in a minipage environment.

Let us indicate that it’s unfortunately not possible to use \verbatim environments (nor the in-line \verb command) within \dualboxes arguments, just as it’s not possible for footnotes or margin notes.

3 Implementation

1 \RequirePackage{ifthen}
2 \RequirePackage{calc}
3 \RequirePackage{setspace}
4 \RequirePackage{xspace}
5 \newcommand*{\centered}[1]{\setlength{\parskip}{0pt}\par
\noindent\hfill #1\hfill\mbox{}}

The double braces are necessary here to ensure that the \parskip modification applies locally within the command and not globally to the rest of the document.
\newcommand{\footnotespaces}{\unskip\footnt{\footnoteindent\ignorespaces #2}}
\newcommand{\footnoteindent}{\unskip\footnt}
\renewcommand{\footnote}[2]{\unskip\footnt{\footnoteindent\ignorespaces #2}}
\unskip eliminates undesirable spaces before and \ignorespaces after.
\newlength{\strutheight}
\newcommand*{\vstrut}[2]{\setlength{\strutheight}{#1}\addtolength{\strutheight}{#2}}
\ensuremath{\rule[{-#1}]{0pt}{\strutheight}}
\newlength{\parindentlength}
\setlength{\parindentlength}{\parindent}
\renewcommand{\indent}{\hspace{\parindentlength}}
\newenvironment*{indentblock}[1]{\par \begin{list}{\unskip}{\setlength{\itemsep}{0pt}\setlength{\parsep}{0pt}\setlength{\topsep}{0ex}\setlength{\partopsep}{0pt}\setlength{\labelwidth}{1em}\setlength{\leftmargin}{\labelwidth}\addtolength{\leftmargin}{\labelsep}\addtolength{\leftmargin}{\compactlistindent}}}{{\end{list}}}
\newlength{\compactlistindent}
\setlength{\compactlistindent}{0.5em}
\newenvironment*{compactlist}[1]{\par \begin{list}{\unskip}{\setlength{\itemsep}{0pt}\setlength{\parsep}{0pt}\setlength{\topsep}{0ex}\setlength{\labelwidth}{1em}\setlength{\leftmargin}{\labelwidth}\addtolength{\leftmargin}{\labelsep}\addtolength{\leftmargin}{\compactlistindent}}}{\end{list}}
The command \asterisk already exists in the mathabx package.
The following macros need the pifont package.

References

[2] The \texttt{makecell} package, Olga Lapko, CTAN, v0.1e 2009/08/03.
[3] \texttt{centeredline} – A macro for centering lines, Jean-François Burnol, CTAN, v1.1 2019/05/03.