



numbers, or quotation marks. On top of this, a number of long-standing microtypographic techniques have been introduced to the TeX world relatively recently with pdfTeX, and have since also propagated to LuaTeX and XeTeX. These features make them the tool of choice not only for the creation of electronic documents but also of works of outstanding time-honoured typography: most prominently, *character protrusion* (also known as margin kerning) and *font expansion*. Quoting Hàn Thế Thành, the author of pdfTeX, who writes in his thesis:

After you have read the text on the right, you can view the effect of the features it describes by clicking on the links:

Protrusion off

Expansion off

Both features are enabled throughout this document.

‘Margin kerning is the adjustments of the characters at the margins of a typeset text. A simplified employment of margin kerning is hanging punctuation. Margin kerning is needed for optical alignment of the margins of a typeset text, because mechanical justification of the margins makes them look rather ragged. Some characters can make a line appear shorter to the human eye than others. Shifting such characters by an appropriate amount into the margins would greatly improve the appearance of a typeset text.

Composing with font expansion is the method to use a wider or narrower variant of a font to make interword spacing more even. A font in a loose line can be substituted by a wider variant so the interword spaces are stretched by a smaller amount. Similarly, a font in a tight line can be replaced by a narrower variant to reduce the amount that the interword spaces are shrunk by. There is certainly a potential danger of font distortion when using such manipulations, thus they must be used with extreme care. The potentiality to adjust a line width by font expansion can be taken into consideration while a paragraph is being broken into lines, in order to choose better breakpoints.’ [Thành 2000, p. 323]

Another micro-typographic technique, which has always been extremely difficult to achieve in TeX, is robust and hyphenatable *letterspacing (tracking)*.¹ Whereas letterspacing can easily be, and often is, abused when applying it to lowercase letters, readability may be increased by slightly letterspacing (small) capitals or by decreasing the tracking of very large uppercase type.

Setting *additional kerning* for characters of a font is especially useful for languages whose typographical tradition requires certain characters to be separated by a space. For example, it is customary in French typography to add a small space