

Consistent typography

When working with large documents, or even across multiple (smaller) documents, I often find that I forget which typographical consistencies I should stick to.

With TeX being inherently consistent in the way it does things, most things are kept organized without the user even knowing about it. Additionally, using a customized documentclass (like `memoir`, for example) or packages (like `xspace` and `titlesec`, to name two) improves on this consistency by user's choice. Sometimes, however, you are left to your own devices and have to do things manually. Of course, the latter could also stem from not knowing that a package exists to do the job for you, or because you'd rather have more control over the placement/use of a certain things without having it automated or globally set.

To this extent, I thought this would be a good place to ask the question: "Which tools/techniques do you use to maintain consistency within your document?"

Sure, the question sounds broad. Many answers are scattered across this site and elsewhere (like the [Chicago Manual of Style](#) or Brighurst's [Elements of Typographic Style](#)). I was hoping to contain this diverse knowledge base in one location on TeX.SX (similar to what was done for [Showcase of beautiful typography done in TeX & friends](#) and [LaTeX IDEs](#)).

Here are some examples of useful (manual) tips/tricks:

- The TeX Book mentions (p 25) the use of *ties* (~) in the context of Thor's "A SHORT STORY" when typesetting
Mr.~Drofnats :

A good typist will use ties within names...

- `\emph` or `\textit` provides a good example of when/why to use either `\emph` or `\textit`.
- The contents of [DO's and DON'Ts when typesetting a document](#) has some very relevant manual application of consistencies, including:
 - Put a tilde before references or citations, e.g., Jie~\cite{habit06}.
 - Differentiate between text comma and math comma, e.g., type for $x=a$, b, or~c instead of for $x=a,b$, or c.$$$$

- Write ellipsis using `\ldots` instead of three dots.
- The [12tabu documentation](#) also provides an interesting list of "do's and dont's".

Any more?

{formatting} {typography} {big-list}

asked Sep 28 '11 at 22:10



Werner

92.6k 5 153 33

85% accept rate

11 Define commands for common structures; even if keywords will be typeset with `\textsf`, better define `\newcommand\keyword{\textsf}`. Similarly, define environments for common logical units that *might* deserve particular typographical treatment. – [egreg](#) Sep 28 '11 at 22:16

4 @egreg: I would suggest turning this into an answer. – [Werner](#) Sep 28 '11 at 22:41

I'm assuming that the note about citations only applies if you are not using footnote citations, which you want to come right after the word? Or am I missing something? – [Canageek](#) Sep 28 '11 at 22:45

@Canageek: I would think so, otherwise it would probably have used `\footcite`. – [Werner](#) Sep 29 '11 at 5:02

A somewhat related question: [Best practices references](#) – [Werner](#) Oct 7 '11 at 23:30

feedback

3 Answers

Define commands for common structures; for instance, even if keywords will be typeset with

`\textsf` , it's better to define

`\newcommand\keyword{\textsf}`

and use `\keyword{mykey}` . This not only adds visual clues when writing and reading the TeX document, but makes possible to change the typographical aspect at once everywhere.

Similarly, define environments for common logical units that *might* deserve particular typographical treatment.

Put structured comments around things like `\enlargethispage` or `\pagebreak` used during the final revision (which often turns out not to be really definitive). Make liberal use of comments in general.

answered Sep 28 '11 at 22:51



egreg

138k

10

280

63

1 +1 for suggesting making "liberal use of comments in general". :-)) – Mico Oct 4 '11 at 10:59

3 Thanks @egreg for "consistently" delivering valuable answers! – Werner Dec 23 '11 at 6:10

feedback

For ellipses, do not only use `\ldots` , but also load the [ellipsis](#) package. Package description:

This is a simple package that fixes a problem in the way LaTeX handles ellipses: it always puts a tiny bit more space after `\dots` in text mode than before it, which results in the ellipsis being off-center when used between two words.

`\documentclass{article}`

```
% \usepackage{ellipsis}% Remove comment sign and compare
```

```
\begin{document}
```

```
\Huge
```

```
Some text \ldots\ and some more.
```

```
\end{document}
```

Note that `ellipsis` must be loaded *after* `hyperref`. (The `ellipsis` documentation doesn't mention this, but the [hyperref README](#) does.)

edited [Sep 29 '11 at 18:48](#)

answered [Sep 28 '11 at 22:38](#)



[lockstep](#)

85.9k 11 197 36

Also if you use the `ellipsis` package and want square brackets around the dots you should load the package with the `m1a` option as in `\usepackage[m1a]{ellipsis}`. – [N.N.](#) [Sep 29 '11 at 7:15](#)

2 I prefer another way: use the Unicode ellipsis character '...' (but not in math mode). This ellipsis is just as the font designer wanted, not artificially generated, and this makes text look a bit more consistent. One also can set up a proper `scode` for this character, if using `\nonfrenchspacing`. – [Andrey Vihrov](#) [Sep 29 '11 at 7:32](#)

Why do you need to force a space with `\` after `\ldots`? Can you elaborate on that? – [adn](#) [Dec 8 '11 at 4:43](#)

I know this is a bit old, but: doesn't the `ellipsis` package provide (or redefine) the `\dots` command? Why are you then talking about `\ldots`? Are they somehow related? – [mSSM](#) [May 17 at 16:39](#)

@mSSM From the LaTeX kernel: `\let\ldots\dots`. Perhaps I'll include a hint about this in my answer. – [lockstep](#) [May 17 at 16:44](#)

feedback

There are some situations in spacing, where the author has to make `TeX` / `LaTeX` aware of an exception. Make a difference between 'full stop' and 'full stop after an abbreviation' as in this example:

I like BASIC\@. What about you?

The `\@` enforces end-of-sentence period even if the precedent character was a capital letter, it is not part of an acronym. Also, I usually set a fixed space between the number and the unit, when a quantity is given, e.g.:

switching frequency of 1\ MHz

`\` inserts a space that cannot be stretched.

edited Dec 7 '11 at 22:07



lockstep

85.9k

11

197

36

answered Sep 30 '11 at 12:37



Count Zero

6,169

2

12

43

13 I prefer using `siunitx` for typesetting numbers, eg. `\SI{1}{\mega\hertz}`. That makes it easier to change the style global and consistent. – [Tobi](#) Sep 30 '11 at 12:51

@Tobi: wasn't aware of that package... good idea! :) – [Count Zero](#) Sep 30 '11 at 12:55

6 @CountZero: Note that a space inserted with `\` *can* be stretched and shrunk. – [mhp](#) Sep 30 '11 at 18:38

@mhp: That's really a surprise for me... I'm quoting from [The Not So Short Introduction to LATEX2e](#): 'A backslash in front of a space generates a space that will not be enlarged' – [Count Zero](#) Oct 1 '11 at 9:05

2 @mhp: Thanks, you're right about that one --- still, I don't really understand this. I'll rather post it as a

question, so this page will not be cluttered with comments. – [Count Zero](#) Oct 1 '11 at 21:45

feedback
