currvita.sty

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Abstract

currvita.sty is a package for typesetting a curriculum vitae.
See the files README and COPYING for additional information.

Contents

1 Introduction

Quite regularly in the LaTeX newsgroups someone is asking for a package or document class to typeset a curriculum vitae. Normally, the following answers are given:

- A curriculum vitae is highly individual and so you should not rely on solutions provided by others but rather think about it on your own and create it in *your* style following *your* taste.
- Use `vita.cls`.
- Use `resume.sty`.
- Use `tabularx.sty`.

In my opinion all answers are unsatisfactory. To create an "individual style" with LaTeX is not at all easy, especially if you consider the bunch of questions in the LaTeX newsgroups about list and tabular environments, which seem to be the obvious choice the for use within a curriculum vitae.

The layout produced by `vita.cls` is a little bit crowded, the customization has to be done by class option files (definitely not something for a beginner) and the documentation is sparse.

`resume.sty` is a totally out-dated (December 1989) LaTeX 2.09 style file, in my opinion it gives a crowded layout as well, the documentation can be found in the style file. Those days did not have the neat system of `ins`/`dtx` files.

`tabularx.sty` is quite good, but to typeset a curriculum vitae spanning more than one page[1], interspersed with section-like headings and various `\multicolumn` commands is surely not an easy task.

So I finally decided to write this package, replacing the macros that I used earlier for my applications[2]. In fact, there was not much to replace, as that time I made heavy use of `\textbf`, `\large`, `\\` and other LaTeXnically incorrect commands. `(-;`

I made it a package because a curriculum vitae can make sense not only on its own, but also within a Ph. D. thesis or a letter. This package (hopefully) has few requirements, (hopefully) produces a clearly arranged layout (also known as puristic or plain and even explained in

[1] David, I know that there is `ltxtable.sty`. Surely this great package was once a hack of 5 minutes on a rainy Sunday as are your other packages. `(-;`

[2] Typeset with `longtable.sty` written (again) by David Carlisle.

its own section later), is (hopefully) well documented by this (hopefully) nice `dvi` file, (hopefully) easy to use and can (hopefully) easily be customized. There is even a (hopefully) interesting example file, my curriculum vitae, so you can see what sick brains program (and even document) such packages. If you can understand German. `(-;`

2 What You Need

1. LaTeX 2$_\varepsilon$ (at least the 1995/12/01 release)
2. The `ifthen` package, part of the standard LaTeX tools
3. The `babel` package, nowadays a "required" part of LaTeX, if you want to typeset the example file

3 Loading

Load the package with:

```
\usepackage{currvita}
```

4 Usage

`cv` A curriculum vitae is written inside a `cv` environment, which takes one mandatory argument, the heading:

```
\begin{cv}{<heading of the curriculum vitae>}
  <text of the curriculum vitae>
\end{cv}
```

If you not want a heading (perhaps because you think the addressee might have read "Curriculum Vitae" too often), you can specify an empty argument by leaving the braces empty.

`cvlist` The text of the curriculum vitae is normally divided into several sections, which are typeset as lists, taking the list heading as a mandatory argument:

```
\begin{cvlist}{<heading of the list>}
  <list items>
\end{cvlist}
```

As usual, the list items can take a label as an optional argument:

```
\item <item text>
\item[<label>] <item text>
```

The typesetting of the list depends on the length of the heading and the use of an optional argument in the first item: If the heading is less wide than the width reserved for the label and no optional argument was used, the item is typeset in the same line as the heading. In all other cases the text of the item itself starts a new line.

`\cvplace` Normally, a curriculum vitae ends with the date when and the place where you wrote it. You can specify the location as follows:

```
\cvplace{<location>}
```

If you do not use this command, the printing of a location will be omitted.

`\date` To specify the date, just use the command provided by the standard LaTeX document classes `article.cls`, `report.cls` and `book.cls`. I took special care that it works also if you are using an other class. If you do not call this macro at all, `\today` will be used by default.

```
\date{<date>}
```

5 Customization

`\cvheadingfont` Normally, the heading of the curriculum vitae is typeset in bold face and `\Large` size (see [4] for details). You can change this e. g. with:

```
\renewcommand*{\cvheadingfont}{\scshape}
```

`\cvlistheadingfont` Corresponding to the font of the heading, the heading of the `cvlist` environments is typeset in bold face and `\large` size. This can be changed e. g. with the following code:

```
\renewcommand*{\cvlistheadingfont}{\itshape}
```

`\cvlabelwidth` The default width of the labels of the `cvlist` environments is equal to the width of "88/8888–88/8888", because normally in the left hand column dates are typeset (and, at least in Germany, should be formatted in this way).

If you are using the optional argument of the `\item` command for further sectioning (as I did for my curriculum vitae in the example file), you perhaps need to adjust this length by means of

```
\setlength{\cvlabelwidth}{50mm}
```

or

```
\settowidth{\cvlabelwidth}{%
  \cvlistheadingfont This is my longest label%
}
```

\cvlabelsep The default width of the distance between the labels and the items itself is equal to `1em`. You can customize it e. g. with

```
\setlength{\cvlabelsep}{1mm}
```

or

```
\settowidth{\cvlabelsep}{~}
```

I strongly recommend to use relative measures like `1em` (i. e. dependent on the font size), if you need to customize these lengths at all.

Please keep in mind: All the customizations mentioned above are *optional* and in my opinion not necessary (not even the change of `\cvlabelwidth`, better use more suggestive label texts). See the section "Typography" for some remarks.

6 Example

Run the example file `cvtest.tex` through LaTeX. You will get my curriculum vitae. Sorry, it is written in German. Sorry, it is not an original version used for an application (though the data is correct, but I omitted the marks[3]), because for this I need some fonts and packages not available to every user and I wanted to use as much standard LaTeX as possible.

7 Typography

A curriculum vitae is an exam. The addressee gets a proof of your skills concerning collecting, discarding, ordering and presenting information. He also gets an impression of some of your qualities that are not even mentioned in the text: Accuracy (consistency and correctness of the micro-typographic things), stinginess (extremely narrow margins) and your taste in questions of aesthetics (font overload as against clear and evident font usage). Even more things are revealed

[3]It would have been too embarrassing for me. `(-;`

by subtle hints given by the typography of the curriculum vitae and they can be noticed by all professional readers of applications,[4] not only by typographers.

Therefore you definitely should do your best not only when thinking about the content but also when thinking about the form of the curriculum vitae. This package tries to help you in this task.

The overall appearance of a curriculum vitae is determined mainly by three factors:

Layout Organization and arrangement of the information e. g. into lists or tabulars, usage of headings, size of the typearea, width of columns, horizontal and vertical spacing

Font Family, sizes, usage of fonts for emphasized in-line text or text serving as an eye-catcher, creation of an atmosphere appropriate to the candidate and the job in question

Micro-typography Formatting of various numbers, avoidance of bad linebreaks, distinction between small and normal spaces, typesetting of company names, usage of quotation marks

7.1 Layout

You generally should organize the necessary information (and *only* the necessary information) as clearly as possible, because the addressee is annoyed anyway by the pile of applications that he has to wade, and you definitely should not annoy him any further by not structuring your curriculum vitae.

Use generous margins, a not too small font and moderate vertical spacing. I recommend something around `DIV12` for users of `typearea.sty` (part of KOMA-Script), an 11 point font for A4 paper (highly dependent on the font family) and a left hand column as narrow as possible (it will make the linebreaking in the right hand column easier). For the distance between the columns `1em` creates a sufficient separation. A normal word space would not be enough, whereas something around `1cm` would weaken the coherence of the layout, especially if you have some shorter labels.

If you ever heard a curriculum vitae should not be longer than one page, forget it, unless you are required (by whom, if I may ask?) to stay below this limit. I made some tries with increased typearea and

[4] Very often subconsciously.

reduced font size and vertical spacing. I finally managed to arrange my test file on one page by usage of a very narrow newspaper font, but it looked horrible. The normal version, though about half a page longer, was much easier (and quicker!) to read.

7.2 Font

The most difficult thing is to choose a good font. For "normal" jobs like engineering, economics or similar, the font should look friendly and professional, just like you on the photo. Of course a typographical layman does not identify the font, but he too feels the atmosphere created by it.

I made some tries with about 50 fonts, with serifs or without, old-style, transitional and modern fonts and got surprisingly good agreement among the test persons[5]. Moreover, my analysis and theirs yielded the same result: Computer Modern, Charter, Utopia and Melior really do a good job. Except Melior, these fonts are freely available. Computer Modern looks elegant, dry, precise and reserved, Charter friendly, open, solid and likable and Utopia clear and technical. Also the last two are nowadays part of good LaTeX distributions, so you are not sticked to Computer Modern, just try them out:

```
\usepackage{charter}
```

or

```
\usepackage{utopia}
```

Generally, you should use bold face for the headings, to make them clearly distinct from the main text, italics are not enough. An important aspect of the font choice is the contrast between the normal and the bold face. It should be high enough, so that the headings can be identified at a glance, but neither the regular font nor the bold variant should look too "loud". This is the problem with New Century Schoolbook, apart from that as good as Computer Modern.

Many fonts typically used in novels have too low a contrast, e. g. Berling, Galliard, Palatino and Stempel Garamond. Although the contrast is good in Bembo, it looks too "nice", too familiar from books to create the correct atmosphere for a curriculum vitae, which normally is attached to a stupid letter. Plantin and Trump Medieval and

[5]Credits go to Melanie Frisch, Rüdiger Haardt, Steffen Meissner, Joachim Gnauk and Rainer Messerschmidt for doing this tedious work.

perhaps New Baskerville may be acceptable in some cases, but I think there are better choices. Not everybody's taste because a little unusual, but in my opinion quite good is Oranda, rather bold and small, but friendly and soft. Oh, I almost forgot: The obligatory Times is a good choice, too. Though it is completely over-used and overrated (I am not at all a fan of Times), its domain is the typesetting of (more or less) narrow columns and it does a good job looking both familiar and neutral.

My trials with sans-serif fonts were not very successful. Computer Modern Sans Serif, Franklin Gothic or Univers may be acceptable, Helvetica looks too boring (are *you* boring?), Frutiger has too low a contrast, Optima is "too nice", Gill Sans and Futura look too bold (and the latter perhaps too cold and technical, but that may be suitable for some jobs). Generally the problem is to achieve consistency with the accompanying letter, which normally is written with a serif font (and should be, because it is a longer text with less structure, the main text only divided into paragraphs. In these cases, so-called "linear reading", a serif font is considered more legible by many typographers).

7.3 Micro-typography

Sometimes the pile of applications is pre-sorted by a secretary. You should ensure that the micro-typography (also known as "pedantic stuff") is correct, because secretaries learn these things during their education. German users of this package definitely should consult the relevant part of the Duden [1] or have a look into [5] or the example file. Errors in the formatting of dates, spacing or grouping of telephone numbers, usage of quotation marks or ampersands and so on are too common. Trained secretaries will notice these mistakes and, if they already did not like your photo, will put your application onto stack W (wastebasket). `(-;`

Think about it, micro-typography is easy, and if you get used to it, you will typeset things correctly "by default" and your documents will require less proof-reading. It is awful if the reader stumbles (and falls) over a bad linebreak. Use ties (`~`) or other things influencing hyphenation from `babel.sty` or `german.sty` like `\,`, `"~` or `""` not after you have discovered such a mistake, but during entering the text.

O. K., and now I will turn preaching mode off and programming mode on. `(-;`

8 Implementation

8.1 Identification

As this package tries to define robust commands by means of `\newcommand*`, it does not work with older LaTeX 2_ε versions.

```
\NeedsTeXFormat{LaTeX2e}[1995/12/01]%
```

The package identifies itself with its release date, a version number, and a short description.

```
\ProvidesPackage{currvita}[%
  1999/08/06 v0.9b Curriculum vitae%
]%
```

8.2 Initialization

`\@cvplace` The string for the place of the curriculum vitae is initialized. It should be defined later by the user. `\@cvplace` is not declared by means of `\DeclareRobustCommand*`, because this adds a superfluous `\protect` (causing problems with the `ifthen` package) and `\newcommand*` generates robust commands too, at least with reasonable new LaTeX versions.

```
\newcommand*{\@cvplace}{\@empty}%
```

`\@cvlistheading` The box containing the heading of a `cvlist` environment is allocated.

```
\newsavebox{\@cvlistheading}%
```

`\cvlabelsep` `\cvlabelwidth` Two lengths are initialized. The maximum allowed width of the labels of the `cvlist` environments forming the curriculum vitae is set to the width of a typical entry. Also, the distance between labels and items is set to `1em`.

```
\newlength{\cvlabelsep}%
\newlength{\cvlabelwidth}%
\settowidth{\cvlabelwidth}{88/8888--88/8888}%
\setlength{\cvlabelsep}{1em}%
```

8.3 Loading Files

The `ifthen` package is used to make decisions easier.

```
\RequirePackage{ifthen}%
```

8.4 Defining Commands

\cvheadingfont Normally, the title of the curriculum vitae is typeset in larger bold face.

```
\DeclareRobustCommand*{\cvheadingfont}{\bfseries\Large}%
```

\cvplace This command is used to change the place to be typeset at the bottom of the curriculum vitae. It takes one mandatory argument, guess what: the place. (-;

```
\DeclareRobustCommand*{\cvplace}[1]{%
  \gdef\@cvplace{#1}%
}%
```

The \@cvplace command is changed globally, so that you can use it also inside environments other than cv environments.

\date This command is used to change the date that is printed below the curriculum vitae. It needs the date as a mandatory argument. Because the standard LaTeX classes article.cls, report.cls and book.cls already define such a command, it will only be defined if it is not provided by the class.

In contrast, the \@date command is part of the LaTeX kernel and thus available in every class. \@date is changed globally for the same reason as the \@cvplace command.

```
\providecommand*{\date}[1]{\gdef\@date{#1}}%
```

cv This environment takes the heading of the curriculum vitae as a mandatory argument which is typeset at the beginning of the curriculum vitae without indentation using the corresponding font, whose scope is limited by a separate group. If the argument is empty, no heading is used.

```
\newenvironment{cv}[1]{%
  \ifthenelse{\equal{#1}{\@empty}}{%
  }{%
    {%
      \noindent\cvheadingfont#1\par\nopagebreak
    }%
  }
}{%
```

The place (if given) followed by the date is typeset at the bottom of the curriculum vitae. The amount of vertical space seems quite strange but looks right, much better than the expected 1.5\baselineskip. Don't know why. (-;

```
  \vspace{1.333\baselineskip plus 3pt minus 3pt}%
  \ifthenelse{\equal{\@cvplace}{\@empty}}{%
  }{%
    \@cvplace,~%
  }%
  \@date
}%
```

\cvlistheadingfont The headings of the cvlist environments forming the curriculum vitae are typeset in large bold face.

```
\DeclareRobustCommand*{\cvlistheadingfont}{%
  \bfseries\large
}%
```

cvlist This is the list environment used for the parts of the curriculum vitae. It takes one mandatory argument, the heading of the list.

```
\newenvironment{cvlist}[1]{%
```

The heading of the list is put into a box, using the corresponding font.

```
  \sbox{\@cvlistheading}{\cvlistheadingfont#1}%
```

The cvlist environment is basically a list environment ...

```
  \begin{list}{}{%
```

... but with a "smart" \makelabel command which is given the optional argument of the \item command.

```
      \renewcommand*{\makelabel}[1]{%
```

The width of the heading of the list is measured. If it is positive (i. e. the box containing the argument of the cvlist environment is not empty), the width of the optional argument of the \item command is measured, too.

```
        \settowidth{\@tempdima}{\usebox{\@cvlistheading}}%
        \ifthenelse{\lengthtest{\@tempdima > 0pt}}{%
          \settowidth{\@tempdimb}{##1}%
```

If the heading of the list is less wide than the allowed label width and the optional argument of the \item command is empty, the \item can be typeset in the same line as the heading.

The box containing the heading is then emptied, the heading is typeset flush to the left (to get the vertical alignment right was hard work, the \vspace command ensures equal distances between the various items for all cases).

```
          \ifthenelse{%
            \lengthtest{\@tempdima < \cvlabelwidth} \and
```

```
            \lengthtest{\@tempdimb = 0pt}}{%
            \parbox[b]{\cvlabelwidth}{%
              \vspace{%
                1.5\baselineskip plus 3pt minus 3pt%
              }%
              \makebox[\cvlabelwidth][l]{%
                \box\@cvlistheading
              }%
            }%
          }{%
```

If the heading is too wide or the `\item` command has an optional argument, the box containing the heading is emptied and the `\item` command starts a new line.

```
            \parbox[b]{0pt}{%
              \makebox[0pt][l]{\box\@cvlistheading}%
              \\*[0.5\baselineskip plus 1pt minus 1pt]%
            }%
          }%
```

If the box containing the argument of the `cvlist` environment is empty (its width is zero), nothing is done. This case holds for all `\item` commands of a `cvlist` environment except for the first or if no heading was specified (this does normally not make sense). You see that it is crucial to empty the box by a plain TEX command [3], otherwise the heading would be typeset for every `\item` command.

```
        }{}%
```

Now that the heading of the list is prepared, the optional argument of the `\item` command is typeset flush to the left and the `\makelabel` command has done its work. Sigh. `(-;`

```
        ##1\hfill
      }%
```

Now the spacing used in the `cvlist` environments is adjusted. Nothing special, but remember that `\itemsep` + `\parsep` is inserted between two items [2]. The label width and the separation between the labels and the items are set to `\cvlabelwidth` and `\cvlabelsep`, respectively, which are globally available and thus can be re-adjusted by the user (in contrast to the standard LATEX lists). If the `1` is omitted in the definition of `\topsep`, "plus 2pt minus 2pt" is written into your curriculum vitae. Strange. `(-;`

```
      \setlength{\itemsep}{0ex}%
      \setlength{\parsep}{%
```

```
64        0.5\baselineskip plus 1pt minus 1pt%
65      }%
66      \setlength{\topsep}{%
67        1\baselineskip plus 2pt minus 2pt%
68      }%
69      \setlength{\partopsep}{0ex}%
70      \setlength{\labelsep}{\cvlabelsep}%
71      \setlength{\labelwidth}{\cvlabelwidth}%
72      \setlength{\leftmargin}{\cvlabelwidth}%
73      \addtolength{\leftmargin}{\cvlabelsep}%
```

This is the end of the list initialization ...

```
74    }%
```

... and this is the end of the `cvlist` environment.

```
75 }{%
76   \end{list}%
77 }%
```

References

[1] Dudenredaktion (ed.): *Duden, Rechtschreibung der deutschen Sprache*, vol. 1 of *Der Duden in 12 Bänden; das Standardwerk zur deutschen Sprache*, chap. Richtlinien für den Schriftsatz, pp. 65–73. Dudenverlag, Mannheim, 21st edn., 1996.

[2] Goossens, M.; Mittelbach, F.; Samarin, A.: *Der LaTeX-Begleiter*. Addison-Wesley, Bonn, 1st edn., 1994.

[3] Kopka, H.: *Erweiterungen*, vol. 3 of *LaTeX*. Addison-Wesley-Longman, Bonn, 1997.

[4] LaTeX3 Project Team. *LaTeX 2ε font selection*, Jan. 1999.

[5] Willberg, H. P.; Forssman, F.: *Lesetypographie*. Schmidt, Mainz, 1997.