README for the NICETEXT bundle

Minimal Markup for Documenting, Text Filtering, ...

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== General Idea ==

The NICETEXT bundle supports "minimal" markup syntax for rather
simple kinds of text. The code you type should show little more
characters than are printed, though you get LaTeX quality. We
try to do away with backslashes, technical terms, and curly
braces (clumsy to type ... - "syntactic sugar").

Main focus is easy documentation of LaTeX packages.
Preprocessing by Perl or so is replaced by TeX macros
(reviving/generalizing the 'docstrip' idea), including
expandable, safe, correct string substitution and typographical
enhancements of plain text for LaTeX input.

== Packages ==

'wiki.sty' addresses general kinds of texts. 'niceverb.sty' is
made for documenting LaTeX packages. 'niceverb.sty' especially
offers [almost-]WYSIWIG for meta-variables (macro arguments)
and for referring to commands (and their syntax) in footnotes,
section titles etc. E.g., to get the syntax description

                    \foo[<opt-arg>]{<mand-arg>}
you just type
                    \foo[<opt-arg>]{<mand-arg>}
!-)

'fifinddo.sty' provides basic setup for text filtering,
especially string substitution. 'makedoc.sty' extends it to
provide a simple script language for transforming plain text
package files into LaTeX input files [manual!?]. One LaTeX run
can perform preprocessing and typesetting.

== Comparisons ==

One source of inspiration is the markup syntax of editing
Wikipedia pages. `wiki.sty` of the bundle offers something
similar as a LaTeX front-end for italics, boldface, sectioning,
and certain list-like environments. This is also similar to
`easylatex`,

http://www.ctan.org/pkg/easylatex

which is more powerful and uses Perl. NICETEXT, by contrast,
consists just of LaTeX packages, working on any TeX
installation [!? note restrictions in `fifinddo.pdf`].
Cf. also preprocessor packages `txt2tex` and `txt2latex`.

Regarding "self-documentation," there is a difference to
current `\DocInput`, similar ideas are in `gmdoc` and
`lineno.sty`, see `niceverb.pdf` and `makedoc.pdf`. Standard
`doc.sty` and `contrib` extensions of it are rather avoided.

There are several *LaTeX macro* packages for processing text or
databases or for editing TeX's input stream while typesetting
-- see `fifinddo.pdf`. What seems to be new here is
expandable string substitution and safe, correct detection of
substrings -- discussed in `fifinddo.pdf`.

== Documentation ==

`fifinddo.pdf` describes `fifinddo.sty`, typeset from
`fifinddo.tex`. `makedoc.pdf` describes `makedoc.sty`, typeset
from `makedoc.tex`. `mdoccheat.pdf` is a list of script
commands, typeset from `mdocchea.tex`. `niceverb.pdf` describes
`niceverb.sty`, typeset from `niceverb.tex`. Typesetting them
anew (for customizing printout) requires `makedoc.cfg`,
`mdoccorr.cfg`, and the *.sty files.

'wikicheat.pdf' is a one-page manual of 'wiki.sty'. The file
'wiki.sty' contains additional documentation as plain text.
Note that certain features must be activated by commands in the
document environment.

'FILEs.txt' describes all the files contained in the bundle in one
line for each. Some descriptions too much for a line:

  * SrcFILEs.txt describes TeX source files (macros, documentation)
    together with their most recent version strings and revision
    dates.

  * nicetext.RLS summarizes each upload/release in a line or a
    little more. With the 'typeoutfileinfo' package, the command
    line

        typeoutfileinfo nicetext.RLS

    produces a display of the most recent release that has been
    installed on your system. 'latexfileversion' and 'ltxfileinfo'
    probably provide a similar feature.

                    == Templates/Dialogue ==

txt to TeX functionality through \MakeDocCorrectHook can be
tried and applied with templates 'fdtxttex.tpl' and
'makedoc.tpl' and in a dialogue started by running
'fdtxttex.tex'. Running 'copyfile.tex', you get a dialogue
for "compressing" blank lines or text encoding conversion.

'substr.tex' should typeset the version of Harald Harders'
'substr.sty' next at your TeX installation. 'arseneau.tex'
should typeset documentation of a few packages by Donald
Arseneau. MY results are 'substr.pdf' and 'arseneau.pdf'.

== Installing/Required ==

'makedoc.sty' requires the 'moreverb' package from

    CTAN:/macros/latex/contrib/moreverb

You find the latest public version of the NICETEXT bundle at

    http://mirror.ctan.org/macros/latex/contrib/nicetext/

A TDS version 'nictext.tds.zip' is available at

    http://mirror.ctan.org/install/macros/latex/contrib/

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