@c Texinfo@c Setup

diction, print wordy and commonly misused phrase

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1 Introduction

`diction` finds all sentences in a document that contain phrases from a database of frequently misused, bad or wordy diction. It further checks for double words. If no files are given, the document is read from standard input. Each found phrase is enclosed in `[ ]` (brackets). Suggestions and advice, if any, are printed headed by a right arrow `->`. A sentence is a sequence of words, that starts with a capitalised word and ends with a full stop, double colon, question mark or exclaimation mark. A single letter followed by a dot is considered an abbreviation, so it does not terminate a sentence. Various multi-letter abbreviations are recognized, they do not terminate a sentence as well, neither do fractional numbers.

`diction` understands `cpp #line` lines for being able to give precise locations when printing sentences.

There has been a diction command on old UNIX systems, which is now part of the AT&T DWB package. The original version was bound to roff by enforcing a call to `deroff`. This version is a reimplementation and must run in a pipe with `deroff` if you want to process roff documents. Similarly, you can run it in a pipe with `dehtml` or `detex` to process HTML or TeX documents.

See also:

Cherry, L.L.; Vesterman, W.: Writing Tools-The STYLE and DICTION programs, Computer Science Technical Report 91, Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, N.J. (1981), republished as part of the 4.4BSD User's Supplementary Documents by O'Reilly.

Strunk, William: The elements of style, Ithaca, N.Y.: Priv. print., 1918, http://coba.shsu.edu/help/strunk/.

2 Invoking `diction`

'`-b`'
'`--beginner`'
: Complain about mistakes typically made by beginners.

'`-d`'
'`--ignore-double-words`'
: Ignore double words and do not complain about them.

'`-s`'
'`--suggest`'
: Suggest better wording, if any.

'`-f` *file*'
'`--file` *file*'
: Read the user specified database from the specified *file* in addition to the default database.

'`-n`'
'`--no-default-file`'
: Do not read the default database, so only the user-specified database is used.

'`-L` *language*'
'`--language` *language*'
: Set the phrase file language.

'`-h`'
'`--help`' Print a short usage message.
'`--version`'
: Print the version.

2.1 Environment Variables

Diction's behaviour is affected by the following environment variables.

`LC_MESSAGES`
: This variable specifies the `LC_MESSAGES` locale, which determines the language that `diction` uses for messages. American English is used if the environment variable is not set, or if the message catalog is not installed, or if `diction` was not compiled with national language support (NLS). The variable is further used as default for the phrase language.

2.2 Files

`$prefix/share/diction`
: This directory contains phrase databases for various languages.

3 Diagnostics

If no errors occur, exit status is 0. On usage errors, 1 is returned. Termination caused by lack of memory is signalled by exit code 2.

4 Reporting Bugs

If you find a bug in `diction`, please send electronic mail to `michael@moria.de`. Include the version number, which you can find by running `diction --version`. Also include the hardware and operating system, the compiler used to compile 'diction', a description of the bug behavior, and the input to 'diction' that triggered the bug.

This program is GNU software, copyright 1997-2005 Michael Haardt `michael@moria.de`.

The english phrase file contains contributions by Greg Lindahl `lindahl@pbm.com`, Wil Baden, Gary D. Kline, Kimberly Hanks and Beth Morris.

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Concept Index

This is a general index of all issues discussed in this manual, with the exception of the `diction` command-line options.

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