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## *“Hey — it works!”*

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Welcome once again to *“Hey — it works!”*, a column devoted to tips and tricks for (L<sup>A</sup>)T<sub>E</sub>X. I am always on the lookout for interesting such articles (especially short ones). If you have solved a (L<sup>A</sup>)T<sub>E</sub>X problem in a novel way, please write it up and send it in! No matter how trivial it seems to you, the chances are that it will be just what someone else needs.

In this issue we have two contributed pieces, and three responses to an item of mine from the last issue. The contributed pieces are from Michael Barr, on under- and over-brackets and -parentheses similar to the under- and over-braces in plain T<sub>E</sub>X, and from John Langer, on acronyms that automatically explain themselves on first use.

We start with the responses generated by my item in the last issue, on the macro that I use for generating the subsection headings in this column. Evidently this item was not as elegant as it might have been! Just for reference, here is my definition:

```
\def\squashedsubsection#1#2{%
  \subsection*{%
    \hbox to \linewidth{%
      #1%
      \hfil%
      \llap{\normalsize%
        \begin{tabular}[t]{r@{}}
          #2%
        \end{tabular}}}}}

```

a box as wide as the page  
subsection title  
stretchy space  
ignore width of tabular  
author's name and address

### Squashed heads

Kees van der Laan  
Hunzeweg 57, 9893PB  
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cgl@rc.service.rug.nl

Kees van der Laan suggested an approach based on Knuth's `\beginchapter` macro from Appendix E of the T<sub>E</sub>Xbook. He separates the author's name, affiliation and email address into three arguments, and defines (in effect)

```
\def\squashedsubsection#1#2#3#4{%
  \hbox to \linewidth{\large\bf#1\hfil#2}\let\\\cr
  \halign{\hbox to \linewidth{\hfil##}\cr#3\\\tt#4\}}

```

The title above was generated by

```
\squashedsubsection{Squashed heads}{Kees van der Laan}
  {Hunzeweg 57, 9893PB\\Garnwerd, The Netherlands}
  {cgl@rc.service.rug.nl}
```

### **This is a better solution to the problem of addresses in headings**

Michael Barr  
McGill University  
barr@math.mcgill.ca

Michael Barr observed that my approach did not allow the title to extend to more than one line. He suggested, in effect, placing argument #1 in a tabular, just as I did with #2; thus, the line containing #1 in my definition should be replaced by

```
\rlap{%
  \begin{tabular}[t]{@{}l}
    #1%                subsection title
  \end{tabular}}%
```

Then the first argument can contain occurrences of \\. The above title was generated by

```
\squashedsubsection{This is a better solution to the problem of\\
  addresses in headings}
  {Michael Barr\\McGill University\\tt barr@math.mcgill.ca}
```

It is not clear whether the author's name and address is better aligned with the *first* or the *last* line of the title; the latter takes more space, but avoids having different baselines on the left and right of the page. This latter behaviour can be obtained by replacing the [t] within the \rlap by [b].

### **This is a better solution to the problem of addresses in headings, linebreaking the title automatically**

Mike Piff  
University of Sheffield  
M.Piff@shef.ac.uk

Mike Piff suggested a third way, based on Knuth's \signed macro from Chapter 14 of the T<sub>E</sub>Xbook. He defines

```
\long\def\squashedsubsection#1#2{%
  \subsection*{%
    \raggedright
    #1%
```

```

\unskip\nobreak\hfill\penalty50 \hskip1em
\mbox{}\nobreak\hfill
{\normalsize
\begin{tabular}[t]{r@{}}#2\end{tabular}}%
\parfillskip=0pt \finalhyphendemerits=0}}

```

This has the advantage of letting T<sub>E</sub>X make the line breaks in the title, so the first argument need have no \s (but on the other hand, it does not allow the author's name to be aligned with the *first* line of the title). The above title was generated by

```

\squashedsubsection{This is a better solution to the problem of
addresses in headings, linebreaking the title automatically}
{Mike Piff\University of Sheffield\\tt M.Piff@shef.ac.uk}

```

With this solution, enough space is left for the whole width of the author's address, even if the first line (the author's name) is relatively short. An alternative might be to give the name as an argument by itself, defining

```

\long\def\squashedsubsection#1#2#3{%
\subsection*{%
\raggedright
#1%
\unskip\nobreak\hfill\penalty50 \hskip1em
\mbox{}\nobreak\hfill
{\normalsize
\begin{tabular}[t]{r@{}}
#2\\\llap{\begin{tabular}{r@{}}#3\end{tabular}}
\end{tabular}}}%
\parfillskip=0pt \finalhyphendemerits=0}}

```

This produces, for example,

**This is a better solution to the problem of addresses in  
headings, linebreaking the title automatically** Mike Piff  
University of Sheffield  
M.Piff@shef.ac.uk

Are there any more solutions to the problem out there?

## Michael Barr

barr@triples.Math.McGill.CA

The code

generates the following output:

$$\overbrace{x + \cdots + x}^{k \text{ times}} \quad \underbrace{x + y + z}_{> 0} \quad \overbrace{x + \cdots + x}^{k \text{ times}} \quad \underbrace{x + y + z}_{> 0}$$

```

\catcode'\@=11
\def\downparenfill{${\m@th\braced\leaders\vrule\hfill\bracerd$}
\def\upparenfill{${\m@th\bracelu\leaders\vrule\hfill\braceru$}
\def\overparen#1{\mathop{\vbox{\ialign{##\crrc\noalign{\kern3\p@}\
\downparenfill\crrc\noalign{\kern3\p@\nointerlineskip}
$\hfil\displaystyle{#1}\hfil$\crrc}}}\limits}
\def\underparen#1{\mathop{\vtop{\ialign{##\crrc
$\hfil\displaystyle{#1}\hfil$\crrc
\noalign{\kern3\p@\nointerlineskip}
\upparenfill\crrc\noalign{\kern3\p@}}}}}\limits}

\newbox\brackd \newbox\bracku
\setbox\brackd=\hbox {\vrule height 0pt depth
3pt width 1pt}\ht\brackd=0pt\dp\brackd=1pt
\setbox\bracku=\hbox {\vrule height 3pt depth
0pt width 1pt}\ht\bracku=1pt\dp\bracku=0pt
\def\downbrackfill
{${\m@th\copy\brackd\leaders\vrule\hfill\copy\brackd$}
\def\upbrackfill
{${\m@th\copy\bracku\leaders\vrule\hfill\copy\bracku$}

```

```

\def\overbrack#1{\mathop{\vbox{\ialign{##\crcr\noalign{\kern3\p@}
\downbrackfill\crcr\noalign{\kern3\p@\nointerlineskip}
$\hfil\displaystyle{\kern1pt#1\kern1pt}\hfil$\crcr}}}\limits}
\def\underbrack#1{\mathop{\vtop{\ialign{##\crcr
$\hfil\displaystyle{\kern1pt#1\kern1pt}\hfil$\crcr\noalign
{\kern3\p@\nointerlineskip}
\upbrackfill\crcr\noalign{\kern3\p@}}}\limits}
\catcode'\@=12

```

## Self-expanding acronyms

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We compose technical documents that employ a large number of acronyms. It is considered good form to explain the meaning of a given acronym the first time it is used, then use the acronym without explanation thereafter. With the marvels of electronic editing, paragraphs and sections get moved around quickly making it easy to inadvertently have an acronym employed before its definition is provided. A secondary hazard is that one may, by accident or habit, wind up explaining the acronym every time it is used, causing considerable annoyance to the reader. To get around this, we came up with the following very simple L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X macro, best illustrated via example:

```

\newcommand{\gps}{
  {Global Positioning System (GPS)\renewcommand{\gps}{GPS}}

```

This creates a macro called `\gps` that will produce the lengthy explanation the first time it is used and the shorter acronym in every subsequent use. For example,

The `\gps` system is an extension of concepts first investigated in the late 1960's, when \ldots. By late 1979, four Block I `\gps` satellites had been deployed, and in 1993 a full `\gps` constellation was deployed.

produces

The Global Positioning System (GPS) system is an extension of concepts first investigated in the late 1960's, when . . . . By late 1979, four Block I GPS satellites had been deployed, and in 1993 a full GPS constellation was deployed.