easyformat

the manual for the 2017/06/03 version (v1.4.0)

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Abstract
easyformat is a package that allows the use of _ to begin/end italics or \textit{italic}, \textbf{bold} and ^ to begin/end smallcaps. As an alternative to the standard \texttt{\LaTeX} \texttt{\textit{italic}}, \texttt{\textbf{bold}} and \texttt{\textsc{smallcaps}}.

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1 Introduction

Usually when you want to make something italic or bold in \textit{\LaTeX} you insert \textit{italic} or \textbf{bold} respectively.

However when writing a book or another text where this formatting is common, this quickly becomes annoying to type.

Quick disclaimer:
I’m not saying that the \LaTeX way is bad. I just want to explain that it’s not ideal under all circumstances.

Simple markup languages (eg. Markdown) have a more elegant solution. If you, for example, wanted to write:

\textbf{Stop!} You \textit{have} to wait!

In Markdown, you’d type:

**Stop!** You *have* to wait!

As you can see it’s a matter of wanting italic or bold formatting, adding *’s where needed and done; no (long) macros to type.

With the help of easyformat we can do something similar, here we get the same result with:

__Stop!__ You _have_ to wait!

(Why underscores? See: 5.1)

And since it is good practice to add abbreviations using SMALLCAPS, easyformat gives you "smallcaps".

So:

"nasa" and "esa" are probably the best known space agencies.

Results in:

NASA and ESA are probably the best known space agencies.

2 Usage, syntax and examples

Like usual you import the package with: \usepackage{easyformat}

easyformat makes _ an active character, however it was already ‘special’ before so you still have to type \_ if you want to insert an underscore.

The same can be said of ^, however since this one is difficult to add in ordinary \LaTeX, the easyformat package gives you \cir to get ^.
As already said, easyformat uses a Markdown-like syntax, so:

_italic, _ _bold, _ _ _bolditalic_ _ _ and `smallcaps!`

Gives:

italic, bold, bolditalic and SMALLCAPS!

However we can also do more complex stuff, eg.:

_Lorem __ipsum_ totalem__ ^da^ __givea _zin_ doram__

_Becomes:

Lorem ipsum totalem da givea zin doram

Those with a good eye might have noticed that easyformat adds italics correction when needed. Just like \textit{zet}tim would have.

3 Troubleshooting

easyformat tends to conflict with the loading of other packages, therefore you should probably load easyformat last.

“For some or other reason I get some weird formatting…”

It could be a bug—in which case I’d love to hear from you (see 6)—however, you probably forgot to close your formatting somewhere and because of how easyformat works you can get weird results.
4 Macros

4.1 Special characters

\texttt{\ce{c}} \texttt{\cir}

Insert a circumflex (') character.

4.2 \texttt{easyformat-syntax}

\texttt{\enableeasyformat}

Enables the \texttt{easyformat}-syntax.

\texttt{\disableeasyformat}

Disables the \texttt{easyformat}-syntax.

5 Technical details

5.1 Why \_ and not *?

To make * work we would have to make it an active character, however this would break things like \texttt{\section*{Art}}. The \_ is already protected by TeX because of it’s meaning in mathmode. However, it has little to no use in textmode. This is why we can use \_ for this purpose and not *.

5.2 Does this break mathmode?

No it doesn’t. \_ and \^ keep behaving like before in mathmode, their meaning only changes in textmode. (We first check whether we are in mathmode or not and then behave accordingly.)

6 Contact

If you want to make suggestions or have any questions whose answer could be included in a future version of this document, you can email to this address: mailto:evert.provoost@gmail.com
7 Changelog

We only include important changes from v1.0.0 onwards, since earlier versions barely worked.

2017/06/03 v1.4.0

Improved code readability. We now fully use expl3, which eliminates most of the possible future issues with L\TeX3. Fixed a kerning issue with \texttt{\textbackslash cir} in mathmode. Removed: \texttt{\textbackslash setundact}, \texttt{\textbackslash setundsub}, \texttt{\textbackslash setciract}, \texttt{\textbackslash setcirsub}, \texttt{\textbackslash nrfamily}, \texttt{\textbackslash nrshape}, \texttt{\textbackslash nrseries}, \texttt{\textbackslash setffamily}, \texttt{\textbackslash setfshape} and \texttt{\textbackslash setfseries} as these do not add any value to the package.

2017/05/28 v1.3.0

Removed forced re-enabling of the \texttt{easyformat}-syntax at the start of the document. Rewritten to use expl3, this makes the code shorter and a future move to L\TeX3 easier. Fixed an error that could occur with \texttt{\textbackslash cir}. \texttt{\textbackslash easyformat} now also behaves correctly when a fontpackage is loaded.

2017/04/17 v1.2.0

Improved handling of mixed styles. Added \texttt{\textasciitilde smallcaps} for SMALLCAPS.

2017/04/09 v1.1.0

Made usage of syntax in \texttt{\textbackslash section{}}, and similar macros, possible. Changed the behaviour so it works more like \texttt{\textbackslash emph{}} (this also simplifies the code).

2017/04/07 v1.0.0

First stable version.

Made with ♡ in Berlaar, Belgium.