Typesetting

reStructuredText

with ConTEXt

A Manual for rstConTEXt
1 FEATURES NOT IMPLEMENTED

1.1 Nesting

Proper nesting. So far only lists support real nested structures. There’s no way you could have real paragraphs or bulleted lists inside table cells. The problem is that with true nesting some jobs like the dissection of tables would have to be moved from the formatter to the parser. If you feel you need thoroughly nested structures – e.g. grid tables in footnotes or bullet lists inside simple tables inside enumerations inside quotations inside footnotes – you should consider including ConTeXt code as substitution directives. (OTOH docutils’ new and old LaTeX formatter seems to have problems with tables in footnotes as well. Not to mention its preference for enclosing random nested structures in quote-environments.)

Should you find yourself in desperate need of tables or whatever structures inside footnotes then I might agree to find a solution if you ask.

1.2 Hyperlinks

The hyperlink implementation should be fine in general use if you avoid certain situations.

- Never ever call your hyperlink targets anon_#, where # stands for any integer. Just don’t do it, OK? Great.

- Referencing a structure element like a section heading by means of an empty link block does work. However, if the element in question requests a page break (e.g. the vanilla chapter{#1} command),
the reference will link to the previous page instead and become useless. You can avoid this behaviour by referencing the section directly or by targetting the first paragraph in the section instead.

- Link chaining does not work with internal references. This is considered a low-priority bug and will be addressed during the next big hyperlink overhaul.
2 Usage

2.1 Invocation from the Command Line

rstCon\TeX\ is integrated into the \texttt{mtxrun} command as a script, which relies, naturally, on the Lua interpreter of Lua\TeX. Therefore, rstCon\TeX\ might not run at all on other Lua installations, at least not without modification of the source. Fortunately, every Con\TeX\ user is equipped with Lua\TeX\ nowadays so this dependency should be trivial.

To generate Con\TeX\ code from a reStructuredText document named \texttt{infile.rst}, call \texttt{mtxrun}:

\begin{verbatim}
$mtxrun --script rst --if=infile.rst --of=outfile.tex
\end{verbatim}

You should now have a file \texttt{outfile.tex} that is ready to be run by Con\TeX\. With some exceptions the generated code is downward compatible with MkII, thus it does not matter for a start whether you decide to test it with \texttt{texexec} or \texttt{context}.

The resulting \TeX\ file has rather a basic layout, if at all. This is intentional as you are expected to include it in a document after specifying your own setups. An example for prepended setups can be found in the environment for this manual (\texttt{mod/doc/context/third/rst/manual.tex}).

The output of \texttt{rstCon\TeX} automatically inserts necessary setups for the components found in the input. Therefore, the \texttt{starttext} and \texttt{stop\texttt{context}} commands are part of the output and may not be specified in your setups file. For now you have to use the Con\TeX\ command \texttt{appendtoks \textless\texttt{token}\textgreater} to \texttt{starttext} to add content like
title pages and indices to the result. This mechanism works reliable as long as you have an eye on the order in which the tokens are given. Again, have a look at \texttt{manual.tex} to get an impression how useful this can be. User hooks for these and other common constructs are thought of but have yet to be implemented.

To build the documentation, first create a temporary directory somewhere safe. Then copy or symlink the Lua files from \texttt{mod/tex/context/third/rst/} and the manual source there as well:

\begin{verbatim}
 mkdir tmp; cd tmp
 ln -s ../mod/doc/context/third/rst/documentation.rst .
\end{verbatim}

Now run \texttt{rstConTeXt} on the main documentation file as follows:

\begin{verbatim}
 mtxrun --script rst --if=documentation.rst --of=doc.tex
\end{verbatim}

Now run \texttt{ConTeXt} on the layout file:

\begin{verbatim}
 context ../mod/doc/context/third/rst/manual.tex
\end{verbatim}

This will include the generated code after a couple of setups – voilà, you have successfully built \texttt{manual.pdf}. (Note that the commands you have to issue in each of the steps vary across different OS. In the literal form the example might only work on Linux or POSIX compliant systems.)

\section*{2.2 Module}

A provisional module for MkIV is included (\texttt{t-rst.mkiv}). Actually, the converter was thought of as a module for direct rendering of \texttt{reStructuredText} input initially, but certain objections diverted me from this path.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Typography}. It’s all about the details. No matter how good your converter is, auto-generated code will not reach \TeX’s omnipo-
tence and flexibility. \texttt{rstCon\TeX}t is a tool to generate raw material for your typesetting job, not a typesetting system in itself.

- \textit{Testing}. Never underestimate the insights gained from reading the resulting \texttt{Con\TeX}t file. Quite some effort has been undertaken to make it human-readable, especially the setups.

- \textit{MkII}. I’m not an MkII user at all, and compatibility with it is not a primary objective for \texttt{rstCon\TeX}t. However, an effort has been made to keep the output essentially MkII clean. Do not expect Unicode to work without precautions.

During the development readability of the generated code was always one of the main goals of \texttt{rstCon\TeX}t. Quite some computing effort is made to reflow even simple things as paragraphs into a shape understandable by more than only the \TeX{} machine. If you should at one point decide that your project is ripe for the typographical finish and you want to add local changes in form of \TeX{} code only, you should be able to use the output of \texttt{rstCon\TeX}t as starting point.

However, using the module may have advantages when testing. There is a usage example in \texttt{moduletest.tex}, introducing the macro \texttt{\textbackslash typesetRSTfile}. Another example in \texttt{hybridtest.tex} demonstrates the \texttt{Con\TeX}t command \texttt{\textbackslash RST} as well as the corresponding environment.

To install the module simply copy the files into your local \TeX{} tree, i.e. if the minimals reside in \texttt{~/context/}, you would issue the following line:

\begin{verbatim}
$cp -r ./mod/* ~/context/tex/texmf-local/
\end{verbatim}

Then rebuild the filename database running \texttt{context --generate}. The module should be ready for use now.
2.3 *RST* projects

In addition to the simple command `\typesetRSTfile` the module also provides means for handling multiple reStructuredText input files. This is achieved by so-called *inclusions*. An inclusion has to be defined first, using the macro `\defineRSTinclusion`, which receives up to three arguments in brackets. The first one specifies the *identifier* by which the inclusion will be referred to afterwards (cf. ConTeXt’s `\useURL` command). The second argument, which is mandatory as well, takes the file to be associated with an inclusion. Finally, optional setups can be passed to the parser via the third argument (cf. the section on *Tabs*). E.g.:

```
\usemodule[rst]
\defineRSTinclusion [first][inc-first.rst]
\defineRSTinclusion[second][inc-second.rst][expandtab=true,shiftwidth=8]
\defineRSTinclusion [third][inc-third.rst]
```

Those inclusions are afterwards accessible *within* the `\[start|stop\]project` environment, and can be dereferenced by `\RSTinclusion`, which takes the identifier as a single argument in brackets:

```
\startRSTproject
\RSTinclusion [first]
\RSTinclusion[second]
\RSTinclusion [third]
\stopRSTproject
```

Within the project environment, *rst*ConTeXt allows for arbitrary ConTeXt markup.
**Examples**

`rstConText` was developed for the largest part by going through the `reStructuredText` specification step by step and tested against the examples given both in the spec and in the quick reference. Therefore you should refer to those examples first (and drop me a note immediately if any of them stopped working). All kinds of text blocks and inline markup have been implemented with the exception of anything mentioned in the section on Features Not Implemented. Some of them that I have not found a real-world usage for (such as definition lists) do not yet have a presentable output – there is room for improvements that should be supplied by somebody who actually uses those features.

### 3.1 Block Quotes

The *block quote* syntax is fully supported, including attributions. For instance, the next snippet:

Some people have made the mistake of seeing Shunt’s work as a load of rubbish about railway timetables, but clever people like me, who talk loudly in restaurants, see this as a deliberate ambiguity, a plea for understanding in a mechanized world.

--- Gavin Millarrrrrrrrrrr on Neville Shunt

gets you a neatly indented quotation, typeset in a slightly smaller font magnitude.
Some people have made the mistake of seeing Shunt’s work as a load of rubbish about railway timetables, but clever people like me, who talk loudly in restaurants, see this as a deliberate ambiguity, a plea for understanding in a mechanized world.

_Gavin Millarrrrrrrrrrr on Neville Shunt_

Don’t forget proper indentation.

### 3.2 Numbered List

Save for nesting lists are fully implemented in _rstConTeXt_. The following code typesets a triple-nested list with different kinds of bulleted / numbering:

i. First order list, first entry.

ii. First order list, second entry.

iii. First order list, third entry.

- Second order list, first entry.

  #. Third order list, first entry.
  #. Third order list, second entry.
  #. Third order list, third entry.

  Real nesting rules!

- Second order list, second entry.

iv. First order list, fourth entry.

v. First order list, fifth entry.

The result looks like this:
i. First order list, first entry.

ii. First order list, second entry.

iii. First order list, third entry.

   —Second order list, first entry.

     1. Third order list, first entry.

     2. Third order list, second entry.

     3. Third order list, third entry. Real nesting rules!

   —Second order list, second entry.

iv. First order list, fourth entry.

v. First order list, fifth entry.

   Don’t forget the blank lines between list items.

3.3 Line Blocks

Line blocks are a convenient environment for parts of the text that need to preserve line breaks and indentation. This makes it the first choice for most kinds of poems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When does a dream begin?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does it start with a goodnight kiss?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it conceived or simply achieved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When does a dream begin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When does a dream begin?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is it born in a moment of bliss?
Or is it begun when two hearts are one?
When does a dream exist?

The vision of you appears somehow
   Impossible to resist
But I'm not imagining seeing you
   For who could have dreamed of this?

When does a dream begin?
   When reality is dismissed?
   Or does it commence when we lose all pretence?
When does a dream begin?

Indentation, continued lines, etc. should work out without problems:
When does a dream begin?
   Does it start with a goodnight kiss?
      Is it conceived or simply achieved?
When does a dream begin?

When does a dream begin?
   Is it born in a moment of bliss?
      Or is it begun when two hearts are one?
When does a dream exist?

The vision of you appears somehow Impossible to resist
But I'm not imagining seeing you For who could have dreamed of this?

When does a dream begin?
   When reality is dismissed?
      Or does it commence when we lose all pretence?
When does a dream begin?
4 Directives

4.1 Admonitions

The following admonition directives have been implemented:

4.1.1 Caution

The caution directive results in the text being prefixed by one “dangerous bend” symbol in order to resemble the “wizards only” passages of the TeXbook. For example, the directive:

.. caution:: White mice do worse in experiments than grey mice.

will result in the following:

White mice do worse in experiments than grey mice.

4.1.2 Danger

Similar to the caution directive, the danger directive prefixes the given text with two “dangerous bends” giving it the look of Knuths’s “esoteric” annotations.

Don’t forget to align paragraphs that end a literal block!

4.2 Images

Including pictures is easy using the image directive: simply supply it the name of the image file as in .. image:: cow. If the format is supported by ConTeXt the suffix can be neglected.
The placement of images can be controlled via a set of optional arguments, each of which has to be specified on single line in key: value style:

```
.. image:: cow
    width: hsize
    caption: A generic Dutch cow.
```

This will place your image somewhere close to the spot where you defined it. (The placement parameter to `placefigure` will be set to `here` by default.)

**Figure 4.1** A generic Dutch cow (*bos primigenius taurus*).

The supported parameters are `width` (alias: `size`), `caption` and `scale`. The `width` parameter accepts the values `hs`
broad) or normal. Alternatively, the scale parameter allows for arbitrary manipulation of the desired magnification; it defaults to 1 (unscaled). The value passed as caption parameter will be used in as the caption text of the image.

4.3 Containers

Upon request rstConTExt now supports another kind of directive, namely containers. Due to their being defined explicitly in terms of HTML, containers lack a corresponding construct in ConTExt (or TEx for that matter). Some parts of ConTExt (e. g. \framed) come quite close with respect to functionality as well as generality. However, none of the candidates alone covers the entire spectrum of functionality that containers are supposed to. For that reason the implementation leaves them essentially undefined.

If an explicit name is specified, then the container directive maps to the environment of that name. Anonymous containers are interpreted as a TEx group. Any text block inside the element is treated as ordinary paragraph. In below example the content will be handled as if between \startxyzzy and \stopxyzzy, where it is up to the user to define the xyzzy environment:

This is a paragraph.

.. container:: xyzzy

    whatever

    foo **bar** baz

This is another paragraph.

The middle part translates to ConTExt as follows:

\start[xyzzy]%
Note that the \texttt{\startfoo/\stopfoo} environment is equivalent to \texttt{\start[foo]/\stop}, except that the environment doesn’t actually need to be defined.

Support for the \textit{container} directive is considered experimental. Suggestions for improving or extending the current implementation are always welcome.
There are substitution directives for simple *replacing* and for insertion of Lua\TeX’s three languages: MetaPost, Lua and, of course, \TeX.

Ordinary text replacement is done via the `replace` substitution directive. E.g. in the main text you consistently use `|replaceme|` and have all its occurrences substituted by *I wasn’t in the mood to write out this long sentence.* like in the next snippet:

```
.. |replaceme| replace::
    I wasn’t in the mood to write out this long sentence.
```

The code insertions work similarly. You have to specify some phrase that gets substituted by the code you supply. E.g. this document accesses the fancy logos predefined in the ConT\TeXt core via substitutions:

```
.. |CONTEXT| ctx:: \CONTEXT
.. |LUATEX| ctx:: \LUATEX
```

Etc. pp. The respective directive names are `ctx`, `mp` and `lua`. In order to get a \bullet drawn on spot, you would define a Metapost substitution:

```
.. |circle| mp::
    fill fullcircle scaled(8) withcolor blue;
```
6 Special Features

6.1 Text Roles

The default role for interpreted text is emphasis. The role marker provides explicit access to formatting commands. The formatting routine for inline literals can be called with the role marker literal, strong emphasis likewise is achieved via the role marker strong_emphasis.

Other roles that lack an equivalent among inline markup are bold, ss (alias sans_serif), uppercase, lowercase and colors. Color roles begin with the string color_ (the underscore is compulsive), followed by either the string rgb_ or a valid color name. An rgb vector is specified in decimal. Its values can be separated by either dashes or underscores. Thus, color_rgb_.3_.5_.8 is a valid rgb expression, as is color_rgb_0-1-0. Unfortunately, the colon character : has to be escaped in color expressions, e.g. color_gray:5.

For example, to give Mr. Neville Shunt's work an apt typographic representation you can use these roles instead of the standard inline markup:


which yields when passed through \texttt{rstConTeXt}:

\texttt{Chuff, chuff, chuffwoooooch, woooooch! Sssssssss, sssssssss!}
\texttt{DIDDELODUM, diddledum, diddledum. Toot, toot. The train now}
\texttt{standing at platform \texttt{eight}, \texttt{tch}, \texttt{tch, tch}, \texttt{diddledum}, \texttt{diddledum.}}
\texttt{chuffff, CHUFFFFITFF eeeeeeaaaaaaaaaa Voooooommmmm.}

1 Bibliography and Citations

Not much for now concerning the usage of Taco’s bib system. It’s just that I use my own bibliography system and never became sufficiently familiar with the standard \texttt{ConTEXt} approach. \textit{If you feel that the current support should be improved then feel free to contact me!} I will need somebody for testing.

When \texttt{rstConTeXt} first encounters a citation ([\texttt{texbook}]) it automatically looks up a bibliography in the working directory by the name of \texttt{jobname}. E.g. with a main file \texttt{manual.tex} bibtex will use the database called \texttt{manual.bib}. Symlinking your bibliography file in the local tree should suffice and you can keep whatever directory structure you prefer. (Speaking for myself, bib data usually resides in its own subdirectory, so I’d use symlinks, too.)

2 Tabs

The \texttt{reStructuredText} specification requests that tabs (ASCII no 9) be treated as \texttt{spaces}. Converting your tabs to spaces might be a good preparation for an \texttt{rstConTeXt} run. However, as of version 123 \texttt{rstConTeXt} comes with built-in tab expansion. It can be enabled by supplying an optional argument to the \texttt{typesetRSTfile} command:

\begin{verbatim}
\usemodule[rst]
\typesetRSTfile[expandtab=true,shiftwidth=4]{myfile.rst}
\end{verbatim}

The argument \texttt{expandtab} triggers a preprocessing step which expands all tabulation characters (t and v) into the correct amount of
spaces. Optionally, the tab stop distance can be configured using the `shiftwidth` parameter, which defaults to 4.
The docutils provide means to translate the extra-convenient markup language reStructuredText into various formats like PDF, HTML and \LaTeX, unfortunately omitting the One True Macro System: Con\TeXt.

As far as I am aware of it, there is some support for reStructured-Text in Pandoc but as it relies on a rather large set of dependencies it proved very difficult (too difficult for me) to install on my favourite distribution. From the interactive demo I gather that support for reStructuredText’s language features is not very extensive and the result did not even come with proper setups. Additionally, it’s written in a language I am not familiar with and that does not make use of one the most awesome features of all the the extended capabilities \LaTeX provides: the Lua interpreter.

For quite some time I was thinking about how to implement an reStructuredText parser in \LaTeX, until some discussion emerged on the Con\TeXt mailing list that indicates a broader interest in convenient markup languages across the community. As the alternatives mentioned above don’t meet the expectations of a normal Con\TeXt user, the initial step to write rstCon\TeXt was done. Handling most of the corner cases and usability features of reStructuredText proved in the end not nearly as easy as I imagined.

rstCon\TeXt is experimental software and neither feature complete nor thoroughly commented. Keep this in mind before you start using it. Anything might still be subject to change, so expect breakage in case you start relying on exceptional behaviour (read: bugs) that does not conform to the reStructuredText specification. Consider filing a bug report instead and wait for me (the maintainer) to fix it,
because regardless of how much testing I do myself I alway run into the weirdest issues only during the actual deployment of the software. Thus, if you notice that \texttt{rstConTEXT} does not adhere to the \texttt{outline} of \texttt{reStructuredText} according to the Docutils documentation, very likely you have discovered a corner case I was not aware of.
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