The tabularx package*

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Abstract

A new environment, tabularx, is defined, which takes the same arguments as tabular*, but modifies the widths of certain columns, rather than the inter column space, to set a table with the requested total width. The columns that may stretch are marked with the new token X in the preamble argument.

This package requires the **array** package.

1 Introduction

This package implements a version of the tabular environment in which the widths of certain columns are calculated so that the table is is a specified width. Requests for such an environment seem to occur quite regularly in comp.text.tex.

tabularx

\begin{tabularx}{{width}}{{preamble}}
The arguments of tabularx are essentially the same as those of the standard
tabular* environment. However rather than adding space between the columns
to achieve the desired width, it adjusts the widths of some of the columns. The
columns which are affected by the tabularx environment should be denoted with
the letter X in the preamble argument. The X column specification will be con-

verted to p{(some value)} once the correct column width has been calculated.

2 Examples

The following table is set with $\bgin{tabularx}{250pt}{|c|X|c|X|} \dots$

	Multicolumn entry!		THREE	FOUR
Γ	one	The width of	three	Column four will
		this column		act in the same
		depends on the		way as column
		width of the		two, with the
		$table.^1$		same width.

If we change the first line to \begin{tabularx}{300pt}{|c|X|c|X|} we get:

Multicolumn entry!		THREE	FOUR
one	The width of this	three	Column four will act
	column depends on		in the same way as
	the width of the table.		column two, with the
			same width.

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¹You can now use \footnote inside tabularx!

3 Differences between tabularx and tabular*

These two environments take the same arguments, to produce a table of a specified width. The main differences between them are:

- tabularx modifies the widths of the *columns*, whereas tabular* modifies the widths of the inter-column *spaces*.
- tabular and tabular* environments may be nested with no restriction, however if one tabularx environment occurs inside another, then the inner one *must* be enclosed by { }.
- The body of the tabularx environment is in fact the argument to a command, and so certain constructions which are not allowed in command arguments (like \verb) may not be used.²
- tabular* uses a primitive capability of T_EX to modify the inter column space of an alignment. tabularx has to set the table several times as it searches for the best column widths, and is therefore much slower. Also the fact that the body is expanded several times may break certain T_EX constructs.

4 Customising the behaviour of tabularx

4.1 Terminal output

\tracingtabularx If this declaration is made, say in the document preamble, then all following tabularx environments will print information about column widths as they repeatedly re-set the tables to find the correct widths.

As an alternative to using the \tracingtabularx declaration, either of the options infoshow or debugshow may be given, either in the \usepackage command that loads tabularx, or as a global option in the \documentclass command.

4.2 The environment used to typeset the X columns

By default the X specification is turned into $p\{\langle some \ value \rangle\}$. Such narrow columns often require a special format, this may be achieved using the > syntax of array.sty. So for example you may give a specification of >{\small}X. Another format which is useful in narrow columns is ragged right, however LATEX's \raggedright macro redefines \\ in a way which conflicts with its use in a tabular or array environments. For this reason this package introduces the command \arraybackslash, this may be used after a \raggedright, \raggedleft or \centering declaration. Thus a tabularx preamble may specify

>{\raggedright\arraybackslash}X.

These preamble specifications may of course be saved using the command, \newcolumntype, defined in array.sty. Thus we may say

\newcolumntype{Y}{>{\small\raggedright\arraybackslash}X}

and then use ${\tt Y}$ in the ${\tt tabularx}$ preamble argument.

\tabularxcolumn

\arraybackslash

\newcolumntvpe

The X columns are set using the p column which corresponds to parbox[t]. You may want them set using, say, the m column, which corresponds to parbox[c]. It is not possible to change the column type using the > syntax, so another system is provided. tabularxcolumn should be defined to be a macro with one argument, which expands to the tabular preamble specification that you want to correspond to X. The argument will be replaced by the calculated width of a column.

The default is $\mbox{newcommand}\tabularxcolumn}[1]{p{#1}}.$ So we may change this with a command such as:

\renewcommand{\tabularxcolumn}[1]{>{\small}m{#1}}

²Since Version 1.02, \verb and \verb* may be used, but they may treat spaces incorrectly, and the argument can not contain an unmatched $\{ \text{ or } \}$, or a % character.

4.3 Column widths

Normally all X columns in a single table are set to the same width, however it is possible to make tabularx set them to different widths. A preamble argument of {>{\hsize=.5\hsize}X>{\hsize=1.5\hsize}X} specifies two columns, the second will be three times as wide as the first. However if you want to play games like this you should follow the following two rules.

- Make sure that the sum of the widths of all the X columns is unchanged. (In the above example, the new widths still add up to twice the default width, the same as two standard X columns.)
- Do not use \multicolumn entries which cross any X column.

As with most rules, these may be broken if you know what you are doing.

4.4 If the algorithm fails...

It may be that the widths of the 'normal' columns of the table already total more than the requested total width. tabularx refuses to set the X columns to a negative width, so in this case you get a warning "X Columns too narrow (table too wide)".

The X columns will in this case be set to a width of 1em and so the table itself will be wider than the requested total width given in the argument to the environment. This behaviour of the package can be customised slightly as noted in the documentation of the code section.

5 The Macros

- $1 \langle * package \rangle$
- 2 \DeclareOption{infoshow}{\AtEndOfPackage\tracingtabularx}
- 3 \DeclareOption{debugshow}{\AtEndOfPackage\tracingtabularx}
- $4 \ ProcessOptions$
- This requires array.sty.
- 5 \RequirePackage{array}[1994/02/03]

First some registers etc. that we need.

- 6 \newdimen\TX@col@width
- 7 \newdimen\TX@old@table
- 8 \newdimen\TXColdCcol
- 9 \newdimen\TX@target
- 10 \newdimen\TX@delta
- 11 \newcount\TX@cols
- 12 $\ ifTX@$

Now a trick to get the body of an environment into a token register, without doing any expansion. This does not do any real checking of nested environments, so if you should need to nest one tabularx inside another, the inner one must be surrounded by { }.

\tabularx

: Prior to v1.06, this macro took two arguments, which were saved in separate registers before the table body was saved by \TX@get@body. Unfortunatly this disables the [t] optional argument. Now just save the width specification separately, then clear the token register \toks@. Finally call \TX@get@body to begin saving the body of the table. The {\ifnum0=`}\fi was added at v1.03, to allow tabularx to appear inside a \halign.³

This mechanism of grabbing an environment body does have the disadvantage (shared with the AMS alignment environments) that you can not make extension environments by code such as

³This adds an extra level of grouping, which is not really needed. Instead, I could use here, and <code>\ifnumO=`{}fi</code> below, however the code here would then have to be moved after the first line, because of the footnote to page 386 of the T_EXBook, and I do not think I should be writing code that is so obscure as to be documented in a footnote in an appendix called "Dirty Tricks"!

\newenvironment{foo}{\begin{tabularx}{XX}}{\end{tabularx}}

as the code is looking for a literal string \end{tabularx} to stop scanning. Since version 2.02, one may avoid this problem by using \tabularx and \endtabularx directly in the definition:

\newenvironment{foo}{\tabularx{XX}}{\endtabularx}

The scanner now looks for the end of the current environment (foo in this example.) There are some restrictions on this usage, the principal one being that \endtabularx must not be inside any { } pairs ao that the code before \endtabularx may be extracted and added to the table body (prior to version 2.09 \endtabularx had to be the *first* token of the 'end code' of the environment). 13 \def\tabularx#1{%

Allow \tabularx \endtabularx (but not \begin{tabularx} \end{tabularx}) to be used in \newenvironment definitions.

14 \edef\TX@{\@currenvir}%

15 {\ifnum0=`}\fi

\relax added at v1.05 so that non-expandable length tokens, like \textwidth do not generate an extra space, and an overfull box. \relax removed again at v4.09 in favour of \setlength so if you use the calc package you can use a width of (\textwidth-12pt)/2.

16	\setlength\TX@target{#1}%
17	<pre>\TX@typeout{Target width: #1 = \the\TX@target.}%</pre>
18	<pre>\toks@{}\TX@get@body}</pre>

\endtabularx This does not do very much...

19 \let\endtabularx\relax

\TX@get@body Place all tokens as far as the first \end into a token register. Then call
 \TX@find@end to see if we are at \end{tabularx}.

20 $\long\def\TX@get@body#1\end$

- 21 {\toks@\expandafter{\the\toks@#1}\TX@find@end}
- \TX@find@end If we are at \end{tabularx}, call \TX@endtabularx, otherwise add \end{...} to the register, and call \TX@get@body again.
 - 22 $defTX@find@end#1{%}$
 - 23 $def\0 {\#1}\%$
 - 24 \ifx\@tempa\TX@\expandafter\TX@endtabularx
 - 25 \else\toks@\expandafter
 - 26 {\the\toks@\end{#1}}\expandafter\TX@get@body\fi}

\TX@find@endtabularxa split up the end code, and extract the part that lives in the table body.

27 \long\def\TX@find@endtabularxa#1\endtabularx#2\TX@find@endtabularxa{%
28 \toks@\expandafter{\the\toks@#1}}

\TX@find@endtabularxa split up the end code, and extract the part that lives outside the table body. 29 \long\def\TX@find@endtabularxb#1\endtabularx#2\TX@find@endtabularxb{#2}

> \TX@ The string tabularx as a macro for testing with \ifx. 30 \def\TX@{tabularx}

> > Now that all the parts of the table specification are stored in registers, we can begin the work of setting the table.

> > The algorithm for finding the correct column widths is as follows. Firstly set the table with each X column the width of the final table. Assuming that there is at least one X column, this will produce a table that is too wide. Divide the excess width by the number of X columns, and reduce the column width by this amount. Reset the table. If the table is not now the correct width, a <code>\multicolumn</code> entry must be 'hiding' one of the X columns, and so there is one less X column affecting the width of the table. So we reduce by 1 the number of X columns and repeat the process.

\TXCendtabularx Although I have tried to make **tabularx** look like an environment, it is in fact a command, all the work is done by this macro.

31 \def\TX@endtabularx{%

```
    32 \expandafter\expandafter
    33 \TX@find@endtabularxa\csname end\TX@\endcsname\TX@find@endtabularxa
```

Define the X column, with an internal version of the \newcolumntype command. The \expandafter commands enable \NC@newcol to get the *expansion* of \tabularxcolumn{\TX@col@width} as its argument. This will be the definition

of an X column, as discussed in section 4.

```
34 \expandafter\TX@newcol\expandafter{\tabularxcolumn{\TX@col@width}}%
```

Initialise the column width, and the number of X columns. The number of X columns is set to one, which means that the initial count will be one too high, but this value is decremented before it is used in the main loop.

Since v1.02, switch the definition of \verb .

35 \let\verb\TX@verb

Since v1.05, save the values of all IAT_EX counters, the list \cl@@ckpt contains the names of all the IAT_EX counters that have been defined so far. We expand \setcounter at this point, as it results in fewer tokens being stored in \TX@ckpt, but the actual resetting of the counters occurs when \TX@ckpt is expanded after each trial run. Actually since v1.07, use something equivalent to the expansion of the original definition of \setcounter, so that tabularx works in conjunction with calc.sty.

```
36 \def\@elt##1{\global\value{##1}\the\value{##1}\relax}%
```

- 37 \edef\TX@ckpt{\cl@@ckpt}%
- 38 \let\@elt\relax
- 39 \TXColdCtable\maxdimen
- 40 \TX@col@width\TX@target
- 41 \global\TX@cols\@ne

Typeout some headings (unless this is disabled).

42 \TX@typeout@

```
43 {\@spaces Table Width\@spaces Column Width\@spaces X Columns}%
```

First attempt. Modify the X definition to count X columns.

```
44 \TX@trial{\def\NC@rewrite@X{%
```

```
45 \global\advance\TX@cols\@ne\NC@find p{\TX@col@width}}}%
```

Repeatedly decrease column width until table is the correct width, or stops shrinking, or the columns become two narrow. If there are no multicolumn entries, this will only take one attempt.

- 46 \loop
- 47 \TX@arith
- 48 \ifTX0
- 49 $TX@trial{}%$
- 50 \repeat

One last time, with warnings back on (see appendix D) use **tabular*** to put it in a box of the right size, in case the algorithm failed to find the correct size.

Since v1.04, locally make \footnotetext save its argument in a token register. Since v1.06, \toks@ contains the preamble specification, and possible optional argument, as well as the table body.

51 { $let\Cfootnotetext\TXQftntext\let\Qxfootnotenext\TXQxftntext$

- 52 \csname tabular*\expandafter\endcsname\expandafter\TX@target
- 53 \the\toks@
- 54 \csname endtabular*\endcsname}%

Now the alignment is finished, and the } has restored the original meaning of \Ofootnotetext expand the register TXOftn which will execute a series of $\footnotetext[(num)]{(note)}$

commands. We need to be careful about clearing the register as we may be inside a nested tabularx.

55 \global\TX@ftn\expandafter{\expandafter}\the\TX@ftn

Now finish off the tabularx environment. Note that we need \end{tabularx} here as the \end{tabularx} in the user's file is never expanded. Now use \TXC rather than tabularx.

We also need to finish off the group started by {\ifnum0=`}\fi in the macro \tabularx.

- 56 $\ifnum0=\{\fi}\$
- 57 \expandafter\TX@find@endtabularxb\romannumeral-`X%
- 58 \expandafter\end\expandafter{\TX@}\TX@find@endtabularxb}

\TX@arith Calculate the column width for the next try, setting the flag **\ifTX@** to false if the loop should be aborted.

59 \def\TX@arith{%
60 \TX@false
61 \@tempdimb\maxdimen
62 \divide\@tempdimb\TX@cols
63 \ifdim\TX@col@width>\@tempdimb
64 \TX@typeout@{Don't exceed \maxdimen}%
65 \wd\@tempboxa\maxdimen

66 \fi

67 \ifdim\TX@old@table=\wd\@tempboxa

If we have reduced the column width, but the table width has not changed, we stop the loop, and output the table (which will cause an over-full alignment) with the previous value of \TX@col@width.

```
68 \TX@col@width\TX@old@col
69 \TX@typeout@{Reached minimum width, backing up.}%
70 \else
```

Otherwise calculate the amount by which the current table is too wide.

```
71 \dimen@\wd\@tempboxa
```

```
72 \advance\dimen0 -\TX0target
```

```
73 \ifdim\dimen@<\TX@delta
```

If this amount is less than \TX@delta, stop. (\TX@delta should be non-zero otherwise we may miss the target due to rounding error.)

74 \TX@typeout@{Reached target.}%
75 \else

10 (6196

Reduce the number of effective X columns by one. (Checking that we do not get 0, as this would produce an error later.) Then divide excess width by the number of effective columns, and calculate the new column width. Temporarily store this value (times -1) in \dimen0.

76 \ifnum\TX@cols>\@ne
77 \advance\TX@cols\m@ne
78 \fi
79 \divide\dimen@\TX@cols
80 \advance\dimen@ -\TX@col@width
81 \ifdim \dimen@ >\z@

If the new width would be too narrow, abort the loop. At the moment too narrow, means less than 0 pt!

Prior to v2.03, if the loop was aborted here, the X columns were left with the width of the previous run, but this may make the table far too wide as initial guesses are always too big. Now force to \TX@error@width which defaults to be 1em. If you want to get the old behaviour stick

\renewcommand\TX@error@width{\TX@col@width}

in a package file loaded after tabularx.

82 \PackageWarning{tabularx}%

{X Columns too narrow (table too wide)\MessageBreak}% 83 84 \TX@col@width\TX@error@width\relax 85 \else Otherwise save the old settings, and set the new column width. Set the flag to true so that the table will be set, and the loop will be executed again. \TX@old@col\TX@col@width 86 \TX@old@table\wd\@tempboxa 87 \TX@col@width-\dimen@ 88 \TX@true 89 90 \fi \fi 91 fi92\TX@error@width If the calculated width is negative, use this instead. 93 \def\TX@error@width{1em} \TX@delta Accept a table that is within \hfuzz of the correct width. 94 \TX@delta\hfuzz Initialise the X column. The definition can be empty here, as it is set for each tabularx environment. 95 \newcolumntype{X}{} \tabularxcolumn The default definition of X is p{#1}. 96 \def\tabularxcolumn#1{p{#1}} \TX@newcol A little macro just used to cut down the number of \expandafter commands needed. 97 \def\TX@newcol{\newcol@{X}[0]} \TXCtrial Make a test run. 98 \def\TX@trial#1{% 99 \setbox\@tempboxa\hbox{% Any extra commands. This is used on the first run to count the number of X columns. 100 #1\relax Since v1.04, make \footnotetext gobble its arguments. Also locally clear \TX@vwarn so that the warning is generated by the final run, and does not appear in the middle of the table if \tracingtabularx. \let\@footnotetext\TX@trial@ftn 101 102\let\TX@vwarn\@empty Do not nest tabularx environments during trial runs. This would waste time, and the global setting of \TX@cols would break the algorithm. \expandafter\let\expandafter\tabularx\csname tabular*\endcsname 103 \expandafter\let\expandafter\endtabularx\csname endtabular*\endcsname 104Added at v1.05: dissable \writes during a trial run. This trick is from the T_FXBook.⁴ 105 \def\write{\begingroup 106 \def\let{\afterassignment\endgroup\toks@}% 107 \afterassignment\let\count@}% Turn off warnings (see appendix D). Also prevent them being turned back on by setting the parameter names to be registers. 108 \hbadness\@M 109 \hfuzz\maxdimen 110 \let\hbadness\@tempcnta \let\hfuzz\@tempdima 111

 $^{^{4}}$ Actually the T_EXBook trick does not work correctly, so changed for v2.05.

Make the table, and finish the hbox. Since v1.06, \toks@ contains the preamble specification, and possible optional argument, as well as the table body. 112 \expandafter\tabular\the\toks@ \endtabular}% 113 Since v1.05 reset all LATEX counters, by executing \TX@ckpt. 114\TX@ckpt Print some statistics. Added \TXCalign in v1.05, to line up the columns. \TX@typeout@{\@spaces 115 \expandafter\TX@align 116 117\the\wd\@tempboxa\space\space\space\space\@@ 118 \expandafter\TX@align \the\TX@col@width\space\space\space\space\space\@@ 119 \@spaces\the\TX@cols}} 120Macro added at v1.05, to improve the printing of the tracing info. \TX@align 121 \def\TX@align#1.#2#3#4#5#6#7#8#9\@@{% \ifnum#1<10 \space\fi 122123\ifnum#1<100 \space\fi 124\ifnum#1<\@m\space\fi \ifnum#1<\@M\space\fi 125#1.#2#3#4#5#6#7#8\space\space} 126 \arraybackslash $\ \ hack.$ 127 \ifx\arraybackslash\@undefined 128 \def\arraybackslash{\let\\\tabularnewline} 129 \fi Print statistics on column and table widths. \tracingtabularx 130 \def\tracingtabularx{% \def\TX@typeout{\PackageWarningNoLine{tabularx}}% 131 \def\TX@typeout@##1{\typeout{(tabularx) ##1}}} 132\TX@typeout The default is to be to be quiet 133 \let\TX@typeout\@gobble 134 \let\TX@typeout@\@gobble \TX@ftn A token register for saving footnote texts. 135 \newtoks\TX@ftn \TX@ftntext Inside the alignment just save up the footnote text in a token register. \TX@xftntext 136 \long\def\TX@ftntext#1{% \edef\@tempa{\the\TX@ftn\noexpand\footnotetext 137 [\the\csname c@\@mpfn\endcsname]}% 138 \global\TX@ftn\expandafter{\@tempa{#1}}}% 139140 \long\def\TX@xftntext[#1]#2{% \global\TX@ftn\expandafter{\the\TX@ftn\footnotetext[#1]{#2}}} 141 \TX@trial@ftn On trial runs, gobble footnote texts. 142 \long\def\TX@trial@ftn#1{}

This last section was added at Version 1.02. Previous versions documentented the fact that \verb did not work inside tabularx, but that did not stop people using it! This usually put IATEX into an irrecoverable error position, with error messages that did not mention the cause of the error. The 'poor man's \verb' (and \verb*) defined here is based on page 382 of the TEXBook. As explained there, doing verbatim this way means that spaces are not treated correctly, and so \verb* may well be useless, however I consider this section of code to be error-recovery, rather than a real implementation of verbatim.

The mechanism is quite general, and any macro which wants to allow a form of \verb to be used within its argument may \let\verb=\TX@verb. (Making sure to restore the real definition later!)

\verb and \verb* are subject to the following restictions:

- 1. Spaces in the argument are not read verbatim, but may be skipped according to T_EX 's usual rules.
- 2. Spaces will be added to the output after control words, even if they were not present in the input.
- 3. Unless the argument is a single space, any trailing space, whether in the original argument, or added as in (2), will be omitted.
- 4. The argument must not end with $\$, so $\verb|\|$ is not allowed, however, because of (3), $\verb|\|$ produces $\$.
- 5. The argument must be balanced with respect to { and }. So \verb|{| is not allowed.
- 6. A comment character like % will not appear verbatim. It will act as usual, commenting out the rest of the input line!
- 7. The combinations ?` and !` will appear as ?` and !` if the cmtt font is being used.
- \TX@verb The internal definition of \verb. Spaces will be replaced by ~, so for the star-form, \let ~ be _, which we obtain as \uppercase{*}. Use {\ifnum0=`}\fi rather than \bgroup to allow & to appear in the argument.
 - 143 {\uccode`*=`\ %
 - 144 \uppercase{\gdef\TX@verb{%
 - 145 \leavevmode\null\TX@vwarn
 - 146 {\ifnumO=`}\fi\ttfamily\let\\\ignorespaces
 - 147 \@ifstar{\let~*\TX@vb}{\TX@vb}}}
 - \TX@vb Get the 'almost verbatim' text using \meaning. The '!' is added to the front of the user supplied text, to ensure that the whole argument does not consist of a single { } group. TEX would strip the outer braces from such a group. The '!' will be removed later.

Originally I followed Knuth, and had \def\@tempa{##1}, however this did not allow # to appear in the argument. So in v1.04, I changed this to to use a token register, and \edef. This allows # appear, but makes each one appear twice!, so later we loop through, replacing ## by #.

```
148 \def\TX@vb#1{\def\@tempa##1#1{\toks@{##1}\edef\@tempa{\the\toks@}%
149 \expandafter\TX@v\meaning\@tempa\\ \\ifnum0=`{\fi}}\@tempa!}
```

\TX@v Strip the initial segment of the \meaning, including the '!' added earlier. 150 \def\TX@v#1!{\afterassignment\TX@vfirst\let\@tempa= }

As explained above we are going to replace **##** pairs by **#**. To do this we need non-special **#** tokens. Make ***** into a parameter token so that we can define macros

with arguments. The normal meanings will be restored by the \endgroup later. 151 \begingroup 152 \catcode`*=\catcode`\#

153 \catcode`**#=12**

\TX@vfirst As a special case, prevent the first character from being dropped. This makes \verb*| | produce ∟. Then call \TX@v@. This is slightly tricky since v1.04, as I have to ensure that an actual # rather than a command \let to # is passed on if the first character is #.

154 \gdef\TX@vfirst{%

- 155 \if\@tempa#%
 156 \def\@tempb{\TX@v@#}%
 157 \else
 158 \let\@tempb\TX@v@
 159 \if\@tempa\space~\else\@tempa\fi
 160 \fi
 161 \@tempb}
- \TX@v@ Loop through the \meaning, replacing all spaces by ~. If the last charcter is a space it is dropped, so that \verb*|\LaTeX| produces \LaTeX not \LaTeX_. The rewritten tokens are then further processed to replace ## pairs. 162 \gdef\TX@v@*1 *2{%

163 \TX@v@hash*1##\relax\if*2\\\else~\expandafter\TX@v@\fi*2}

\TX@v@hash The inner loop, replacing ## by #.
164 \gdef\TX@v@hash*1##*2{*1\ifx*2\relax\else#\expandafter\TX@v@hash\fi*2}
As promised, we now restore the normal meanings of # and *.
165 \endgroup

\TX@vwarn Warn the user the first time this **\verb** is used.

- 166 \def\TX@vwarn{%
- 167 \@warning{\noexpand\verb may be unreliable inside tabularx}%
- 168 \global\let\TX@vwarn\@empty}

169 $\langle / package \rangle$