The **tabs** package

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The package modifies \LaTeX's **array** and **tabular** environments to keep text from touching other text or hlines above or below.

## 1 New parameters, etc.

The behaviour of the package is controlled by a small set of parameters, which are all \TeX \texttt{dimen} registers (and so may be adjusted using \TeX \texttt{setlength} commands.

- **\tablinesep** (or **tablelineskip**): the minimum space between text on successive lines in a tabular environment. Negative distances are treated as zero. The default value is 1pt. A value of 0pt turns off checking for touching text. Text given in an \texttt{@} specification (cf. the \texttt{array} package) is never checked for overlap.

- **\arraylinesep** (or **arraylineskip**): like **\tablinesep**, but for arrays.

- **\extrarulesep**: extra space to add above and below each \texttt{\hline} and \texttt{\cline}. There will be at least \texttt{\extrarulesep} + 0.5\texttt{\tablinesep} between an \texttt{\hline} and a line of text. Negative values can be used, but only until some text touches the line. The default value is 3pt. To ensure interline separations in tables but not arrays, declare

  \begin{verbatim}
  \setlength\arraylinesep{0pt}
  \end{verbatim}

The appearance of normal \LaTeX tables can be had with

\begin{verbatim}
\setlength\tablinesep{0pt}
\setlength\arraylinesep{0pt}
\setlength\extrarulesep{0pt}
\end{verbatim}

but it would be better to not use **tabs** in this situation.

The command \texttt{\hline[extra]} has gained an optional length argument (just like \texttt{\\}), which gives the space to insert below the line. This space is in addition to the \texttt{\extrarulesep} and \texttt{linesep}. A negative value will reduce the space until the line touches some text below, and will then have no further effect. For example, \texttt{\hline[-9cm]} draws a horizontal line while suppressing all the extra spacing.

(This \texttt{\hline} also fixes the notches that used to appear at the junction between horizontal and vertical lines.)

*Documentation derived from the package file by Robin Fairbairns*
2 How it works

There are no struts in the preamble entries\footnote{The comments in the package say this is a lie...}, rather, there are tests to measure the maximum height and depth of all entries on a line. The maximum values start at the size of LaTeX’s \@arstrut minus the appropriate linesep. At the \, a strut is inserted (in its own column) which is that maximum size plus the linesep plus any additional space for separation from \hline.

3 The Downside

Building a table will be slower than before because the entries have to be boxed twice (by the package’s \@seesize and by \halign itself) instead of just once. \setlength\tablinesep{0pt} will recover most of this speed, with \extrarulesep still partially in effect — extra space will still be added around \hlines, but it may be taken up by very tall or very deep table entries; thus text may still touch the lines. Because of the speed penalty, if your computer is slow, it is probably best to omit \tabs until producing a final copy.