The \texttt{withargs} package

Michiel Helvensteijn
mhelvens+latex@gmail.com

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Development of this package is organized at github.com/mhelvens/latex-withargs.
I am happy to receive feedback there!

1 Introduction

An example is worth a thousand words:

\verbatim
\withargs{}{Hello}{world}{#2 #3 #1}
Hello world!
\endverbatim

A quick explanation: we’re passing three pieces of \LaTeX code in the form of optional arguments to the final argument, which forms the output. We’re defining a new anonymous macro and invoking it right away. Up to seven optional arguments are supported.

1.1 Why is this useful?

One of the main use-cases for this package is to insert the expanded result of a computation into the middle of a big blob of code that \textit{shouldn’t} be expanded. This is possible because argument substitution bypasses the expansion process:

\verbatim
\def\expectedResult{\bar}\def\actualResult{\bas}
\withargs{(oo)}{\actualResult}{\expectedResult}{
\texttt{\detokenize{
The \texttt{\foo} variable resulted in ‘‘#1’’ instead of ‘‘#2’’!}}
}
\endverbatim

The \texttt{\foo} variable resulted in ‘\bas’ instead of ‘\bar’!

‘(oo)’ indicates that both arguments should be expanded ‘once’. Any optional \LaTeX{} style argument specification between parentheses may be specified to control expansion.

\texttt{*This document corresponds to withargs v0.3.1, dated 2019/11/04.*}
You can define your own commands accepting ‘templates’ with \TeX-style parameters:

\newcommand{\NewPost}{
  \NewPost{#1}{#2}{#3}{#4}
}

\def\MyPost{\NewPost{Author}{Title}
  (Boy, do I have some important stuff to say!)}

\begin{tabular}{p{3.5cm}p{3.5cm}p{3.5cm}}
  Title & Author & \textbf{Author: “Title”}
  \textit{Boy, do I have some important stuff to say!} \\
  \textit{Bo}
\end{tabular}

Generally, if speed is not a concern, \withargs can be used to make \LaTeX code more readable in a variety of situations.

2 Document Level Commands

\withargs (⟨argument specification⟩) [{⟨1⟩}] [{⟨2⟩}] [{⟨3⟩}] [{⟨4⟩}] [{⟨5⟩}] [{⟨6⟩}] [{⟨7⟩}] {⟨body⟩}

Leaves ⟨body⟩ in the output with #1...#7 replaced by optional arguments (1)...(7).

An optional \LaTeX3 style ⟨argument specification⟩ between parentheses can be provided, in which case the arguments undergo expansion as specified before being placed in the ⟨body⟩. Here is an example demonstrating the possible expansion types:

\def\foo{\bar}
\def\s{s}
\def\bar{ba\s}
\def\bas{FOO-BAR-BAS}
\withargs n o f x c v \{\begin{tabular}{llllll}
  \texttt{\detokenize{#1}} & \% no expansion \\
  \texttt{\detokenize{#2}} \% \% expand once \\
  \texttt{\detokenize{#3}} \% \% expand until unexpandable \\
  \texttt{\detokenize{#4}} \% \% exhaustive expansion \\
  \texttt{\csname conversion\end{tabular}} {\% ‘c’, then ‘o’}
\end{tabular}\}

n: \foo o: \bar
f: ba\s x: \bas
c: \bas v: FOO-BAR-BAS
Note that all spaces in the ⟨argument specification⟩ are ignored. For details about \LaTeX3 argument specifications, have a look at the following documentation:

http://www.ctan.org/pkg/expl3

\uniquecsname Perhaps a bit misleading, \uniquecsname is not actually defined as a command, but \withargs recognizes it as a special marker. If an optional \withargs argument consists entirely of \uniquecsname, it is replaced by a command sequence name which is guaranteed to be unique...unless you look at the source code (Section 4) and intentionally replicate the naming scheme.

```
\withargs {ccc} \[ \uniquecsname \] \[ \uniquecsname \] \[ \uniquecsname \] \{
  \def\#1{A}
  \let\A\#1
  \def\#2{B}
  \def\#3{C}
  #3#2#1
}\%
\( \A \)
CBA(A)
```

### 3 \LaTeX3 Functions

The \LaTeX3 functions underlying the functionality of \withargs are also available as is.

\[ \withargs:nnnnnnnn \{ (1) \} \{ (2) \} \{ (3) \} \{ (4) \} \{ (5) \} \{ (6) \} \{ (7) \} \{ (8) \} \{ (body) \} \]

These functions do pretty much the same thing as the main \withargs macro, except that the argument specification is embedded in the function name as per \LaTeX3 coding convention, so a parameter slot is freed up for custom use. They are slightly faster than \withargs, as there is no need to gather optional arguments or do any error checking. The downside is that the \uniquecsname marker doesn’t work for these.

To use a specific expansion scheme, you have to define a variant:

```
\ExplSyntaxOn
\cs_generate_variant:Nn \withargs:nn { cn }
\withargs:cn \LaTeX \{ #1 \}
\ExplSyntaxOff
\LaTeX
```

Read the \LaTeX3 documentation for details.
4 Implementation

We now show and explain the entire implementation from `withargs.sty`.

4.1 Package Info

\begin{verbatim}
\NeedsTeXFormat{LaTeX2e}
\RequirePackage{expl3}
\ProvidesExplPackage{withargs}{2019/11/04}{0.3.1}
\end{verbatim}

[an inline construct for passing token lists as TeX parameters]

4.2 Required Packages

We just need some expl3-ish packages.

\begin{verbatim}
\RequirePackage{xparse}
\end{verbatim}

4.3 \TeX{} Functions

\begin{verbatim}
\withargs:nn \withargs:nnn \withargs:nnnn \withargs:nnnnn \withargs:nnnnnn \withargs:nnnnnnn
\end{verbatim}

These are the expl3 API versions of the `withargs` command. The implementation
is quite straight-forward. This technique has to be used by any library command
that accepts \TeX{}-style parameters.

\begin{verbatim}
\cs_new_protected:Nn \withargs:nn { \_\_withargs:n ##1 {#2} }
\cs_set:Npn \_\_withargs:n ##1##2 {#3}
\_\_withargs:n {#1}{#2} }
\cs_new_protected:Nn \withargs:nnn { \_\_withargs:nnn ##1##2##3 {#4} }
\_\_withargs:nnn {#1}{#2}{#3} }
\_\_withargs:nnn {#1}{#2}{#3}
\cs_new_protected:Nn \withargs:nnnn { \_\_withargs:nnnn ##1##2##3##4 {#5} }
\_\_withargs:nnnn {#1}{#2}{#3}{#4} }
\_\_withargs:nnnn {#1}{#2}{#3} }
\_\_withargs:nnnn {#1}{#2} }
\cs_new_protected:Nn \withargs:nnnnn { \_\_withargs:nnnnn ##1##2##3##4##5 {#6} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnn {#1}{#2}{#3}{#4}{#5} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnn {#1}{#2}{#3} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnn {#1}{#2} }
\cs_new_protected:Nn \withargs:nnnnnn { \_\_withargs:nnnnnn ##1##2##3##4##5##6 {#7} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnnn {#1}{#2}{#3}{#4}{#5}{#6} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnnn {#1}{#2}{#3} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnnn {#1}{#2} }
\cs_new_protected:Nn \withargs:nnnnnnn { \_\_withargs:nnnnnnn ##1##2##3##4##5##6##7 {#8} }
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\cs_new_protected:Nn \withargs:nnnnnnnn { \_\_withargs:nnnnnnnn ##1##2##3##4##5##6##7##8 {#9} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnnnnn {#1}{#2}{#3}{#4}{#5}{#6}{#7}{#8} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnnnnn {#1}{#2}{#3} }
\_\_withargs:nnnnnnnn {#1}{#2} }
\end{verbatim}

4
4.4 Document Level Command

\__withargs_var:x \{\langle argument specifier\rangle\}

This is a convenience command for generating and using a \withargs: variant in one go. I only use it for the document-level command, since those users can’t roll their own.

#1 should be the number of optional \withargs arguments and #2 should be a \LaTeX3 argument specification not longer than #1 — a prefix.

\begin{verbatim}
\cs_new:Nn \__withargs_var:nn {
  \cs_generate_variant:cx { withargs : \prg_replicate:nn{#1}{n} n } {
    \use:c {
      withargs :
      \prg_replicate:nn{#1-\tl_count:n{#2}}{n} n
    }
  }
} \cs_generate_variant:Nn \__withargs_var:nn {nx}
\cs_generate_variant:Nn \cs_generate_variant:Nn {cx}
\__withargs_process_uniquecsname:n \{\langle argument\rangle\}
\end{verbatim}

An \texttt{xparse} processor function to pass a unique control sequence name if the argument given was ‘\texttt{\uniquecsname}’.

\begin{verbatim}
\cs_new_protected:Nn \__withargs_process_uniquecsname:n {
  \tl_if_eq:nnTF {#1} {\uniquecsname} {
    \int_gincr:N \g__with_unique_int
    \tl_set:Nx \ProcessedArgument
    { Unique-CS-Name-( \int_use:N\g__with_unique_int ) }
  }{
    \tl_set:Nn \ProcessedArgument {#1}
  }
}\int_new:N \g__with_unique_int
\__withargs_remove_spaces:n \{\langle argument\rangle\}
\end{verbatim}

An \texttt{xparse} processor function to remove all spaces from the argument.

\begin{verbatim}
\cs_new_protected:Nn \__withargs_remove_spaces:n {
  \tl_set:Nn \ProcessedArgument {#1}
  \tl_remove_all:Nn \ProcessedArgument {~}
}\__withargs_remove_spaces:n
\end{verbatim}
This is the document version of the `\withargs` command.

We first check if the argument specification is valid. It has to be between 0 and 7 characters long and each symbol has to be one of `nofxcv`. Otherwise: error! The variants 'N' and 'V' are not supported (yet) because they collect arguments differently than the others, and frankly, I didn’t want to bother.

The next bit counts the number of optional arguments provided using binary search. If #1 specifies more arguments than were provided: error!

We can then call the right variant of `\withargs`.
The following is the error message displayed if the argument specification is ill-formed:

```
\msg_new:nnnn{withargs}{invalid-parameter-specs}{
The-argument-specification-#'1'-is-not-valid.
}{
The-argument-specification-should-consist-of-between-one-
and-seven-of-the-letters-’n’,-’o’,-’f’,-’x’,-’c’,-’v’.
}
```

This is the error message displayed if the number of provided optional arguments is inconsistent with the provided argument specification.

```
\msg_new:nnnn{withargs}{invalid-parameter-number}{
You-specified-#1-arguments-but-provided-#2.
}{
Your-argument-specification-is-’#3’,-which-means-you-should-
provide-#1-optional-arguments.-However,-you-provided-#2.-
You-should-fix-that.
}
```

## Change History

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