The gcard package for greeting cards

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August 21, 2007

1 Introduction

The gcard package provides a means of producing simple greeting cards. The user puts the card text into four environments for front and back covers and inside left and right pages. The package formats the text into four "panels" and arranges them on the sheet so that they are correctly oriented when the sheet is folded twice to make a card. Either portrait or landscape orientation is possible. The graphicx package provides the necessary rotation, and the textpos package arranges the four panels on the sheet.

Since cards vary widely, no attempt is made to provide a default design. Each of the four panels is set, vertically centered, in a minipage environment; the user is free to format the contents of the minipage as desired.

2 Installation

Place gcard.sty where LaTeX can find it. Usually an appropriate location will be something like /texmf/tex/latex/gcard. Refresh the file name database by the usual method for your system. This documentation file and the two example files may be placed anywhere.

You will also need to have the textpos, graphicx, and calc packages installed. All are available at CTAN, and graphicx and calc are part of most LaTeX distributions. For landscape cards it is best to also have the geometry package installed.

3 Usage

Load the package with
`\usepackage{gcard}`

Before `\begin{document}`, if you want to use margins different from the defaults (0.2 in for all), set four lengths to values of your choice:

```
\setlength{\gcguttermargin}{8 mm} % inside edge of textblock
\setlength{\gcedgemargin}{\gcguttermargin}  % outside edge
\setlength{\gctopmargin}{6 mm}        % top
\setlength{\gcbottommargin}{\gctopmargin}  % bottom
```

These margins determine the distances between the edges of the minipage containing a single panel and the edges of the folded card. They are used, along with `\paperwidth` and `\paperheight`, to compute the width and height of each panel and the placement of each panel on the page.

Then, after `\begin{document}`, specify the contents of each panel with the `frontcover`, `backcover`, `insideleft`, and `insideright` environments. Each environment sets its contents in a minipage of width `\panelwidth` and height `\panelheight`. Those two lengths may be referenced, but not changed, anywhere after `\begin{document}`. The material is vertically centered in the panel by default; to move it, use vertical spacing commands such as `\vspace{}` and `\vfill`.

For example, you could specify the material for the front cover of the card with

```
\begin{frontcover}
\Large
We heard you had a little trouble with the law\ldots
\end{frontcover}
```

The text will appear vertically centered on the front cover, with normal justification.

You do not need to supply all four environments; panels corresponding to missing environments will be left blank.

3.1 Minimal example

A very simple card can be produced by the following file:

```
\documentclass[12 pt]{article}
\usepackage{gcard}
\begin{document}

\begin{frontcover}
Dear Sir,\\
I am sending two sardine tins.
Please make me a motor-bicycle and a telescope.
\end{frontcover}

\begin{insideright}
Happy Father's Day!
\end{insideright}

\end{document}
```

4 Package options

The only option handled directly by the package is `showboxes`, which is passed to the `textpos` package. It produces a narrow frame around each of the four panels. This frame is usually not desirable as part of the finished card since it is set tight against the enclosed `minipage` environment and therefore collides with any text that extends to the margins. It can be useful during the design phase since it shows clearly where the margins are.

The `gcard` package loads the `textpos`, `graphicx`, and `calc` packages. Global options specified in the `documentclass` command will be passed to those packages according to the default LaTeX mechanism. If you want to use those packages with specific options, you can explicitly load any of them before you load `gcard`. If you load `textpos` explicitly, you *must* use its `absolute` option.

To make a landscape-orientation card, you should use the `landscape` global option, and also call the `geometry` package to specify your output driver. For example, if you use `dvips`:

```
\documentclass[landscape]{article}
\usepackage{gcard}
\usepackage[dvips]{geometry}
```

5 Examples

The file `gcardminexample.tex` contains the minimal example shown above. The file `gcardex.tex` shows a slightly more involved example that demonstrates control of vertical and horizontal placement of the text.

6 Interaction with other packages

`gcard.sty` tries to be nice. It uses only straightforward LaTeX commands and should not limit your use of other packages so long as they do not collide with `textpos`.

`gcard` loads the `graphicx` package, so its commands are already available; in particular, you can use `\includegraphics` to insert graphics into any of the panels. To fill the panel across its width, you would use

```
\includegrapics[width=\panelwidth]{picture}
```

to insert `picture.eps`, `picture.pdf`, `picture.jpg`, etc., depending on your output driver.

7 Important changes

The names of lengths `edgemargin` and `guttermargin` changed to `gcedgemargin` and `gcguttermargin` in August 2007, to make them more consistent with top and bottom margin names and avoid likely conflicts with other packages. Input files from the earlier version need to be changed to use the new names.

8 License, support, and acknowledgements

`gcard` is free software. Specifically, it is subject to the LaTeX Project Public License (lppl), available at `http://www.latex-project.org/lppl.txt`, version 1.3c or later.

I wrote `gcard` for fun. There is nothing sophisticated in it, but I will try to provide bug fixes to the extent I am able. If you find bugs, feel free to send me email. Also, if you produce a nice card with gcard, I'd enjoy seeing a `.pdf` copy. My address is `mcbaneg@gvsu.edu`.

I am grateful to Jim Mehl for constructive questions and for proofreading this manual.