Spacing in ConTEXt

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Introduction

In this document I will collext some remarks about spacing (related) commands but it will happen stepwise. Feel free to contribute.

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1 Line correction

We really do out best to make the spacing look as good as possible (or at least consistent) but sometimes TEX needs a bit of help. An example of a helper is the following:

```
\startlinecorrection
    \input ward
\stoplinecorrection
```

The Earth, as a habitat for animal life, is in old age and has a fatal illness. Several, in fact. It would be happening whether humans had ever evolved or not. But our presence is like the effect of an old-age patient who smokes many packs of cigarettes per day — and we humans are the cigarettes.

When we use the same command with some left and/or right margins set, we get this:

```
\startnarrower
    \startlinecorrection
        \input ward
    \stoplinecorrection
\stopnarrower
```

The Earth, as a habitat for animal life, is in old age and has a fatal illness. Several, in fact. It would be happening whether humans had ever evolved or not. But our presence is like the effect of an old-age patient who smokes many packs of cigarettes per day — and we humans are the cigarettes.

Here we do obey the margins inside the correction box but the box itself is still as wide as the current width. A typical case where this happens is:

```
\startitemize
    \startitem an item:
        \startlinecorrection
            \input ward
        \stoplinecorrection
    \stopitem
\stopitemize
```

- an item:

The Earth, as a habitat for animal life, is in old age and has a fatal illness. Several, in fact. It would be happening whether humans had ever evolved or not. But our presence is like the effect of an old-age patient who smokes many packs of cigarettes per day — and we humans are the cigarettes.

Here is a variant:

```
\startitemize
```

```
    \startitem a local linecorrection:
        \startlocallinecorrection
            \input ward
        \stoplocallinecorrection
    \stopitem
\stopitemize
```

- a local linecorrection:

  The Earth, as a habitat for animal life, is in old age and has a fatal illness. Several, in fact. It would be happening whether humans had ever evolved or not. But our presence is like the effect of an old-age patient who smokes many packs of cigarettes per day — and we humans are the cigarettes.

Both types of correction wrap their content in a box and make sure that the spacing around it is visually as good as possible. The local variant uses a box fitting the available width taking margins into account and but resetting them inside the box. The normal variant applies the margins inside the box. Which one you use depends on the situation and content.

You can pass an optional argument that indicates the amount of spacing to be added before and after the correction.

```
\startlinecorrection[3*line]
    \input ward
\stoplinecorrection
```

The Earth, as a habitat for animal life, is in old age and has a fatal illness. Several, in fact. It would be happening whether humans had ever evolved or not. But our presence is like the effect of an old-age patient who smokes many packs of cigarettes per day — and we humans are the cigarettes.

Normally you don't need this correction. It is mainly used for correcting spacing around boxed material, like `\framed`:

```
before
\startlinecorrection
    \framed{something inbetween}
\stoplinecorrection
after
```

before

something inbetween

after

Because in this document we have set the whitespace this also gets added around the box. So, in case your spacing around some special content looks bad, consider using these commands.

2 Periods in abbreviations

When you use so called non french spacing you get more spacing after punctuation (as determined by the `sfcode` of the punctuation character) . However, when you use periods as delimiters for abbreviations, that period is not the end of a sentence and you want normal interword spacing instead. One way to achieve this is to add a backslash after the period but in an automated workflow where the source is not coming from TₑX but for instance in XML format, you can't do that. The `\setupspacing` command can be used to set one of:
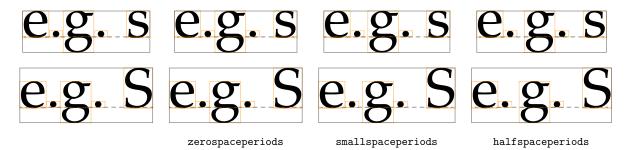
`fixed`	bla bla e.g. some more
`packed`	bla bla e.g. some more
`broad`	bla bla e.g. some more

The `packed` case is similar to `fixed` but has slightly larger (some 5%) spacing after punctuation which (at least historically) avoids some side effects with hyphenation and dashes. We default to `broad` anyway.

The next examples demonstrate what the `\setperiodkerning` does when it gets an option passed. Its counterpart is `\resetperiodkerning`.

		bla bla e.g. some more
		bla bla e.g. Some more
`zerospaceperiods`	0	bla bla e.g. some more
		bla bla e.g. Some more
`smallspaceperiods`	.25	bla bla e.g. some more
		bla bla e.g. Some more
`halfspaceperiods`	.50	bla bla e.g. some more
		bla bla e.g. Some more

Next we enlarge the affected bit of text so that you can see that the last two options also affects the space after the periods that bind the characters.

| zerospaceperiods | smallspaceperiods | halfspaceperiods |

Defining more options is easy, we only specify the factor that determines mid periods. When `factor` is zero, only the final period is looked at.

```
\defineperiodkerning [zerospaceperiods]  [factor=0]
\defineperiodkerning [smallspaceperiods] [factor=.25]
```

```
\defineperiodkerning  [halfspaceperiods]   [factor=.5]
```

This mechanism has been present for a while but I forgot about it. When cleaning up code it was decided to add it to the core. Maybe more options and features are needed but so far there has never been demand for this so . . .