Get the File/Package Date

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Abstract

This package is useful for just a small group of developers who write documentation. Its purpose is to get the date of a file or a package as specified in the \ProvidesFile or \ProvidesPackage, respectively.

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1 Motivation

File identification is a fundamental problem. If something does not work in your computer but works elsewhere, it usually means that you have a different version of some file(s). LaTeX enables checking the correct release date of a file or package using an optional argument. You can easily display the list as well as dates of files used in your document by the \listfiles command. The date thus seems to be more important than the file's version number.

Once we can identify the date of the file or package, we want to be sure that we read the correct documentation. The developer usually creates a private packaging script which takes the right files from his/her repository. The file to be documented is the one that is currently installed. It seems thus natural if the date is taken automatically from the file.

The package serves this very purpose. It intercepts the standard LaTeX macros \ProvidesFile and \ProvidesPackage and remembers their dates. These dates can be later queried.

2 Usage

The package is loaded by the following command:

```
\usepackage{zwgetfdate}
```

The package then stores the dates of files and packages loaded *after* itself including its own date.

The package defines two commands. They try to find the date of the specified file or package and output it. If the date is not found (the file/package was not loaded or does not contain identification), warning is written both to the terminal and the log file but nothing is printed. Remember that this is not a diagnostic package, you should know what you use in your document.

2.1 Command \DateOfPackage

This command returns the date of a package. It was used in the title of the document, command `\DateOfPackage{zwgetfdate}` showed the date of the package being documented. This document also makes use of the HYPERREF package. Using `\DateOfPackage{hyperref}` we can see that the package used for typesetting this manual was of 2007/02/07.

2.2 Command \DateOfFile

This command returns the date of the file. Remember that `\DateOfFile{zwgetfdate.sty}` will display nothing because ZWGETFDATE is loaded and identified as a package, not as an ordinary file. However, this document is typeset in the T1 encoding and thus file `t1enc.def` is loaded. Command `\DateOfFile{t1enc.def}` will show that its date is 2005/09/27.

3 License

The package can be used and distributed according to the LaTeX Project Public License version 1.3 or later the text of which can be found at the `License.txt` file in the `doc` directory or at `http://www.latex-project.org/lppl.txt`