The \texttt{xspace} package*

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\textbf{Abstract}

\texttt{xspace} should be used at the end of a macro designed to be used mainly in text. It adds a space unless the macro is followed by certain punctuation characters.

\section{Introduction}

After \texttt{\newcommand\{gb\}\{Great Britain\xspace\}}
\texttt{gb is a very nice place to live.}
Great Britain is a very nice place to live.
\texttt{gb, a small island off the coast of France.}
Great Britain, a small island off the coast of France.

\texttt{xspace} saves the user from having to type $\backslash$ or \{} after most occurrences of a macro name in text. However if either of these constructions follows \texttt{xspace}, a space is not added by \texttt{xspace}. This means that it is safe to add \texttt{xspace} to the end of an existing macro without making too many changes in your document.

Sometimes \texttt{xspace} may make the wrong decision, and add a space when it is not required. In these cases follow the macro with \{}, as this has the effect of suppressing the space.

Note that this package must be loaded \textit{after} any language (or other) packages that make punctuation characters ‘active’.

\section{The Macros}

1 (\texttt{\package})
\texttt{xspace}\xspace j\textit{ust looks ahead, and then calls \texttt{\@xspace}.}
2 \texttt{\DeclareRobustCommand\xspace{\futurelet\@let@token\@xspace}}
\texttt{\@xspace} If the next token is one of a specified list of characters, do nothing, otherwise add a space. If you often use a different punctuation character, add the appropriate line (do not forget the $\backslash$\texttt{fi} at the end!)
3 \texttt{\def\@xspace{}}
4 \texttt{\ifx\@let@token\bgroup\else}
5 \texttt{\ifx\@let@token\egroup\else}
6 \texttt{\ifx\@let@token\slash\else}

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When I first wrote this there were about half a dozen \fi here, and I thought that was bad enough.