

12 Formatting and margins

12.1 Protecting text

Formatting is done in blocks, which frequently correspond to paragraphs of text. Once VIEW starts to format a block it goes on until it comes to any one of the following:

- A blank line.
- A line beginning with a space.
- A line beginning with a TAB.
- A line with a stored command on it.

These 'stops' can be used deliberately to limit the effect of formatting and so prevent VIEW from formatting tables and lists which you have designed in a particular form and wish to keep that way.

Another method of prevent formatting which is particularly valuable for tables is to set a ruler above the table with the right margin stop removed. For example:

PE 12

..

.....*.....*.....*.....*.....

NAME	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
DAVIES, M	56	9	25	43
EVANS, G	20	35	13	26
HUGHES, T	18	32	6	45
JENKINS, P	32	34	53	9
JONES, D	16	45	23	8
REES, H	12	22	54	32
THOMAS, J	37	22	19	32
WILLIAMS, K	23	25	18	28

This could be a standard layout for tables in a report. The stored command PE 12 makes sure that there is room for the table on the page, and the absence of the right margin on the ruler protects the table against disturbance by formatting.

A stored command which is particularly convenient for protecting such items as addresses is LJ (left justify):

12.2 The use of TABs

TABs should be used in much the same way as on a typewriter, ie they should be the first character(s) in a line and have the effect of placing the text to the right. It is of course possible to use TABs *within* a line of text, but if you reformat such text with a different line length this is bound to cause confusion.

The length of a TAB character depends on the setting of the TAB stops in the current ruler. As the text moves between lines during reformatting, the alignments originally created by the TABs must become distorted and the text thrown into disorder.

When VIEW is in justify mode it attempts to cope with this problem by replacing the TABs with spaces before justifying the text, but in general it is best to avoid TABs within the text altogether.

12.3 The left margin

We mentioned earlier that the default left margin stop is the left edge of the default ruler, but that you can set your own left margin stop (>) anywhere on the ruler you like, provided that it is to the left of the right margin stop.

Setting a left margin stop in this way creates a left margin, in which it is possible to place side headings, as described in chapter 5. This is done by releasing margins, typing in the text, and restoring margins again.

In fact it is possible to operate within the left margin with much greater freedom than might at first appear. Most commands including TAB, INSERT CHARACTER, DELETE CHARACTER and HIGHLIGHTs function normally in this area. The use of TABs allows you to build up a series of headings and references like this.

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.. .....>.....*.....*.....*.....*.....*.....<
1.      The first paragraph is typed as usual, with the
        paragraph number placed to the left with the
        margins released.
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..*.....>.....*.....*.....*.....*.....<

- a) The second paragraph number is aligned by replacing the left margin stop with a TAB stop. Again, margins are released to type in the number.

..*.....*.....>.....*.....*.....*.....*.....<

- (i) And so the process continues. One advantage of doing things this way is that the text is fully protected when formatting, ie the paragraphs are formatted but the layout is preserved.

In text such as this, the left margin is in fact a left margin TAB character, which you can prove by deleting it and so causing the text to move left. What happens in effect is that when you type the first character on a line, VIEW checks for a left margin stop. If you have not set one, VIEW places the cursor in the first character position on the line. If you have, VIEW inserts a left margin TAB character filling the space between the leftmost position on the line and the left margin stop.

The length of a heading in the left margin is obviously limited by the margin width; in fact VIEW limits it to one character less than this. If you type a longer heading than this the text between the margin stops will move right, preserving one space between heading and text.

If you type a piece of text with a left margin set and then remove the left margin, the text will align to the left, but with one space between the text and the left edge. This is because the left margin TAB is still there, but reduced to one character space now that the margin stop has been removed.

When you reformat the text, the space to the left disappears. Similar if you define a left margin for a piece of text which had none before, you will need to reformat the text. In fact you should make it a rule always to reformat the text after adjusting the margin stops.