

Plane degrees, minutes and seconds should have no space between the number and the symbol, or after; I can't find an English-language style manual that suggests otherwise, but I can't speak (or speak for) any other languages.

Likewise, percent and permille (which seems to be called 'promille' in `phys-unit.lua`). `arcminute` and `arcsecond` need to be added to the list of units in `phys-unit.lua`, with prime and double-prime symbols as shown. These follow the same no-space rule as the degree symbol.

<code>\unit</code> argument	desired	<code>\unit</code> output
<code>37°</code>	37°	37 °
<code>37 °</code>	37°	37 °
<code>37 deg</code>	37°	37 deg
<code>37 degree</code>	37°	37 degree
<code>37 degrees</code>	37°	37 degrees
<code>48 arcminute</code>	48'	48 arcminute
<code>49 arcsecond</code>	49''	49 arcsecond
<code>360 deg per second</code>	360°/s	360 deg per second
<code>360 degree per second</code>	360°/s	360 degree per second
<code>360 degrees per second</code>	360°/s	360 degrees per second
<code>360 degree / second</code>	360°/s	360 degree / second
<code>99 percent</code>	99%	99 %

There seems to be some problem parsing the `per` syntax, too, in the above examples.

`metre` and `meter` should be accepted as synonyms; likewise `litre` and `liter`.

SI has approved alternate symbols `l` and `L` for litre, not favouring one or the other (but in Australia, the AGSM prefers `L`). Some people use italic *l* or math script *ℓ* although it is not approved SI usage. But perhaps we need a key to `\setupunits` called `litresym=L|l|italic|script` (default `L`).

<code>\unit</code> argument	desired	<code>\unit</code> output
<code>1 metre per second</code>	1 m/s	1 m
<code>1 metre / second</code>	1 m/s	1 m
<code>1 meter per second</code>	1 m/s	1 mpers
<code>1 meter / second</code>	1 m/s	1 m/s
<code>1 liter / second</code>	1 L/s	1 l/s
<code>1 litre / second</code>	1 L/s	1 l

Temperature symbols should be “C” and “°” (Unicode 2103 and 2109; the latter for Fahrenheit does not seem to print in this setup). Note that the actual unit symbol for Celsius is °C, not a ° qualified with a C.

Some English style guides suggest no space between the number and the symbol (logical given the treatment of plane degrees), others (notably BIPM) insist on space (since it's a unit like any other). A key to `\setupunits` perhaps called `spacetemp=yes|no` (default `yes`) is called for.

The syntax like `degree celsius` should be accepted (it is since the latest beta) but see below for other multi-word examples).

<code>\unit</code> argument	desired	<code>\unit</code> output
<code>0 celsius</code>	0 °C	0 C
<code>32 fahrenheit</code>	32 °F	32 F
<code>0.123 ohm per celsius</code>	Ω/°C	0.123 ΩperC
<code>5 watt per meter celsius</code>	5 W/m·°C	5 Wperm·C
<code>100 degree celsius</code>	100 °C	100 °C
<code>212 deg fahrenheit</code>	212 °F	212 °F

The following seem to be errors in the names of or symbols for units in `phys-unit.lua`:

<code>\unit</code> argument	desired	<code>\unit</code> output
<code>101.3 megahertz</code>	101.3 MHz	101.3 Mhz
<code>-3 decibel</code>	-3 dB	-3 decibel
<code>200 lux</code>	0.34 lx	200 lux
<code>99 permille</code>	99‰	99 permille

The following seem to be omissions from `phys-unit.lua`:

<code>\unit</code> argument	desired	<code>\unit</code> output
<code>3 tonne</code>	3 t	3 tonne
<code>0.34 katal</code>	0.34 kat	0.34 kat·al
<code>12 kilo dalton</code>	12 kDa	12 kilo dalton

The following multi-word sequences and exceptions are probably in the ‘too hard basket’ (although the surd or root operator can probably be added easily).

<code>\unit</code> argument	desired	<code>\unit</code> output
<code>3.67 electron volt</code>	3.67 eV	3.67 electron volt
<code>3 metric ton</code>	3 t	3 m
<code>1.234 micron</code>	1.234 μm	1.234 μN
<code>1 milli volt per root hertz</code>	1 mV/√Hz	1 mV

Some further notes:

1. There is no hope of supporting all the scientific units used in obscure and specialised fields. So `\unit` should do its best to handle units it can't parse.
2. Scientists and engineers will generally enter SI symbols directly, but `\unit` should still provide consistent spacing between number and unit. At present it seems to slip in some extra space (see `electron volt`) above.
3. `1234\unit{m}` should print equivalently to `\unit{1234m}` and `\unit{1234 m}`. (I have a lot of text that uses a `\unit` macro like that.)
4. Within `phys-dim.lua` all the units and all the prefixes seem to have capitalised names; in fact, they should be all lowercase (even when they are named after some person). The exception is Celsius.
5. Imperial (US 'customary units') are not well supported. (Personally I don't care, Australia ditched the imperial system in 1970.)
6. I wonder whether `\unit` should only parse and format units, and have another macro `\quan` or `\quantity` to handle number+unit combinations (obviously using `\digit` and `\unit`).

Possible extensions:

7. Some texts have a List of Units (in frontmatter or somewhere) listing all units used in the document. Someone might want that capability.
8. Automatic selection/normalisation of multiplier prefixes: so an argument of (say) `1234 kilo joule` prints as 1.234 MJ.
9. The L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X `siunitx` package could be dredged for useful features not supported by `\unit`. It does seem to have a mechanism to *add* unit symbols; that alone might be a good extension (`\defineunit{unit}{symbol}`?).

CONTEXT MKIV 2011.11.23 18:58