The \texttt{fwlw} package

First Word, Last Word

Donald Arseneau

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The \texttt{fwlw} package provides a mechanism to determine the first and last words on the current page, plus the first word on the next page. (So perhaps it should have been named ‘\texttt{fwlwnw}’). These words can be used in head-lines or foot-lines. The ‘words’ you see may not be real words, but any unbreakable object.

Two pagestyles are defined to print these words: \texttt{\pagestyle{NextWordFoot}} which helps you read ahead to the word on the next page; and \texttt{\pagestyle{fwlwhead}} which is like the headers in a lexicon. Or you can use the words in your own page-style. The words are made available in the box registers:

\begin{itemize}
\item \texttt{\FirstWordBox} – first word on this page
\item \texttt{\NextWordBox} – first word on next page
\item \texttt{\LastWordBox} – last word on this page
\end{itemize}

Use them in your header lines like: \texttt{\usebox{\LastWordBox}}.

Such labelling does not make sense when \texttt{\chapter} generates a page break, so the last page before a \texttt{\chapter} (or any \texttt{\clearpage}) gets a blank “next word”, and the first page of the chapter gets a blank “first word”. The \texttt{fwlwhead} page style produces blank headers on float pages.

Note that ‘words’ are any unsplittable unit and may be things like:

\begin{itemize}
\item two\texttt{-}words (\texttt{two\texttwonwords}) with unbreakable space between them
\item ___Word (where ___ represents a paragraph indent)
\item a whole displayed equation
\item the first column of an aligned equation
\item a list item label
\item anomalously blank, if there are \texttt{\writes} or split footnotes etc.
\item blank for the first word of the document (because of a \texttt{\write})
\item partial words like ‘par-’ or ‘-tial’ due to hyphenation.
\end{itemize}

In short, a wide range of irregularities will cause non-words to be captured, or nothing at all.