

# Portable Document Format Publishing with GNU Troff

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A GNU MANUAL

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# 1. Introduction

It might appear that it is a fairly simple matter to produce documents in Adobe® “Portable Document Format”, commonly known as PDF, using GNU Troff (`groff`) as the document formatter. Indeed, `groff`’s default output format is the native Adobe® PostScript® format, which PDF producers such as Adobe® Acrobat® Distiller®, or GhostScript, expect as their input format. Thus, the PDF production process would seem to entail simply formatting the document source with `groff`, to produce a PostScript® version of the document, which can subsequently be processed by Acrobat® Distiller® or GhostScript, to generate the final PDF document.

For many PDF production requirements, the production cycle described above may be sufficient. However, this is a limited PDF production method, in which the resultant PDF document represents no more than an on screen image of the printed form of the document, if `groff`’s PostScript® output were printed directly.

The Portable Document Format provides a number of features, which significantly enhance the experience of reading a document on screen, but which are of little or no value to a document which is merely printed. It *is* possible to exploit these PDF features, which are described in the Adobe® “[pdfmark Reference Manual](#)”, with some refinement of the simple PDF production method, provided appropriate “feature implementing” instructions can be embedded into `groff`’s PostScript® rendering of the document. This, of course, implies that the original document source, which `groff` will process to generate the PostScript® description of the document, must include appropriate markup to exploit the desired PDF features. It is this preparation of the `groff` document source to exploit a number of these features, which provides the principal focus of this document.

The markup techniques to be described have been utilized in the production of the PDF version of this document itself. This has been formatted using `groff`’s `ms` macro package; thus, usage examples may be found in the document source file, `pdfmark.ms`, to which copious comments have been added, to help identify appropriate markup examples for implementing PDF features, such as:-

- Selecting a default document view, which defines how the document will appear when opened in the reader application; for example, when this document is opened in Acrobat® Reader, it should display the top of the cover sheet, in the document view pane, while a document outline should appear to the left, in the “Bookmarks” pane.
- Adding document identification “meta-data”, which can be accessed, in Acrobat® Reader, by inspecting the “File/Document Properties/Summary”.
- Creating a document outline, which will be displayed in the “Bookmarks” pane of Acrobat® Reader, such that readers may quickly navigate to any section of the document, simply by clicking on the associated heading in the outline view.
- Embedding active links in the body of the document, such that readers may quickly navigate to related material at another location within the same document, or in another PDF document, or even to a related Internet resource, specified by its URI.
- Adding annotations, in the form of “sticky notes”, at strategic points within the PDF document.

All of the techniques described have been tested on *both* GNU/Linux, and on Microsoft® Windows™2000 operating platforms, using `groff` 1.19.1,<sup>1</sup> in association with AFPL GhostScript 8.14.<sup>2</sup> Other tools employed, which should be readily available on *any* Unix™ or GNU/Linux system, are `sed`, `awk` and `make`, together with an appropriate text editor, for creating and marking up the `groff` input files. These additional utilities are not provided, as standard, on the Microsoft® Windows™ platform, but several third party implementations are available. Some worth considering include the MKS® Toolkit,<sup>3</sup> Cygwin,<sup>4</sup> or MSYS.<sup>5</sup> This list is by no means exhaustive, and should in no way be construed as an endorsement of any of these packages, nor to imply that other similar packages, which may be available, are in any way inferior to them.

---

1. Later versions should, and some earlier versions may, be equally suitable. See <http://www.gnu.org/software/groff> for information and availability of the latest version.

2. Again, other versions may be suitable. See <http://ghostscript.com> for information and availability.

3. A commercial offering; see <http://mkssoftware.com/products/tk/default.asp> for information.

4. A *free* but comprehensive POSIX emulation environment and Unix™ toolkit for 32-bit Microsoft® Windows™ platforms; see <http://cygwin.com> for information and download.

5. Another free, but minimal suite of common Unix™ tools for 32-bit Microsoft® Windows™, available for download from <https://mingw.osdn.io>; it *does* include those tools listed above, and is the package which was actually used when performing the Windows™2000 platform tests referred to in the text.

## 2. Exploiting PDF Document Features

To establish a consistent framework for adding PDF features, a `groff` macro package, named `pdfmark.tmac`, has been provided. Thus, to incorporate PDF features in a document, the appropriate macro calls, as described below, may be placed in the `groff` document source, which should then be processed with a `groff` command of the form<sup>6</sup>

```
groff [-Tps|-Tpdf] [-m name] -m pdfmark [-options ...] file ...
```

It may be noted that the `pdfmark` macros have no dependencies on, and no known conflicts with, any other `groff` macro package; thus, users are free to use any other macro package, of their choice, to format their documents, while also using the `pdfmark` macros to add PDF features.

### 2.1. The `pdfmark` Operator

All PDF features are implemented by embedding instances of the `pdfmark` operator, as described in the Adobe® “[pdfmark Reference Manual](#)”, into `groff`’s PostScript® output stream. To facilitate the use of this operator, the `pdfmark` macro package defines the primitive `pdfmark` macro; it simply emits its argument list, as arguments to a `pdfmark` operator, in the PostScript® output stream.

To illustrate the use of the `pdfmark` macro, the following is a much simplified example of how a bookmark may be added to a PDF document outline

```
.pdfmark \  
  /Count 2 \  
  /Title (An Example of a Bookmark with Two Children) \  
  /View [/FitH \n[PDFPAGE.Y]] \  
  /OUT
```

In general, users should rarely need to use the `pdfmark` macro directly. In particular, the above example is too simple for general use; it *will* create a bookmark, but it does *not* address the issues of setting the proper value for the `/Count` key, nor of computing the `PDFPAGE.Y` value used in the `/View` key. The `pdfmark` macro package includes a more robust mechanism for creating bookmarks, (see [section 2.4, “Creating a Document Outline”](#)), which addresses these issues automatically. Nevertheless, the `pdfmark` macro may be useful to users wishing to implement more advanced PDF features, than those currently supported directly by the `pdfmark` macro package.

### 2.2. Selecting an Initial Document View

By default, when a PDF document is opened, the first page will be displayed, at the default magnification set for the reader, and outline and thumbnail views will be hidden. When using a PDF reader, such as Acrobat® Reader, which supports the `/DOCVIEW` class of the `pdfmark` operator, these default initial view settings may be overridden, using the `pdfview` macro. For example

```
.pdfview /PageMode /UseOutlines
```

will cause Acrobat® Reader to open the document outline view, to the left of the normal page view, while

```
.pdfview /PageMode /UseThumbs
```

will open the thumbnail view instead.

Note that the two `/PageMode` examples, above, are mutually exclusive — it is not possible to have *both* outline and thumbnail views open simultaneously. However, it *is* permitted to add `/Page` and `/View` keys, to force the document to open at a page other than the first, or to change the magnification at which the document is initially displayed; see the “[pdfmark Reference Manual](#)” for more information.

It should be noted that the view controlling meta-data, defined by the `pdfview` macro, is not written immediately to the PostScript® output stream, but is stored in an internal meta-data “cache”, (simply implemented as a `groff` diversion). This “cached” meta-data must be written out later, by invoking the `pdfsync` macro, (see [section 2.7, “Synchronizing Output and pdfmark Contexts”](#)).

---

6. Note that, if any `-Tdev` option is specified, it should be either `-Tps`, or `-Tpdf`; any other explicit choice is unlikely to be compatible with `-m pdfmark`, and will have an unpredictable (possibly erroneous) effect on the output. If no `-Tdev` option is specified, (in which case `-Tps` is implicitly assumed), or if `-Tps` is explicitly specified, then the output will be produced in PostScript® format, and will require conversion to PDF, (e.g. by using GhostScript tools); explicit specification of `-Tpdf` will result in direct output in PDF format, thus obviating the need for conversion.

## 2.3. Adding Document Identification Meta-Data

In addition to the /DOCVIEW class of meta-data described above, (see section 2.2, “Selecting an Initial Document View”), we may also wish to include document identification meta-data, which belongs to the PDF /DOCINFO class.

To do this, we use the pdfinfo macro. As an example of how it is used, the identification meta-data attached to this document was specified using a macro sequence similar to:–

```
.pdfinfo /Title      PDF Document Publishing with GNU Troff
.pdfinfo /Author     Keith Marshall
.pdfinfo /Subject    How to Exploit PDF Features with GNU Troff
.pdfinfo /Keywords   groff troff PDF pdfmark
```

Notice that the pdfinfo macro is repeated, once for each /DOCINFO record to be placed in the document. In each case, the first argument is the name of the applicable /DOCINFO key, which *must* be named with an initial solidus character; all additional arguments are collected together, to define the value to be associated with the specified key.

As is the case with the pdfview macro, (see section 2.2, “Selecting an Initial Document View”), the /DOCINFO records specified with the pdfinfo macro are not immediately written to the PostScript<sup>®</sup> output stream; they are stored in the same meta-data cache as /DOCVIEW specifications, until this cache is explicitly flushed, by invoking the pdfsync macro, (see section 2.7, “Synchronizing Output and pdfmark Contexts”).

## 2.4. Creating a Document Outline

A PDF document outline comprises a table of references, to “bookmarked” locations within the document. When the document is viewed in an “outline aware” PDF document reader, such as Adobe<sup>®</sup> Acrobat<sup>®</sup> Reader, this table of “bookmarks” may be displayed in a document outline pane, or “Bookmarks” pane, to the left of the main document view. Individual references in the outline view may then be selected, by clicking with the mouse, to jump directly to the associated marked location in the document view.

The document outline may be considered as a collection of “hypertext” references to “bookmarked” locations within the document. The pdfmark macro package provides a single generalized macro, pdfhref, for creating and linking to “hypertext” reference marks. This macro will be described more comprehensively in a later section, (see section 2.5, “Adding Reference Marks and Links”); the description here is restricted to its use for defining document outline entries.

### 2.4.1. A Basic Document Outline

In its most basic form, the document outline comprises a structured list of headings, each associated with a marked location, or “bookmark”, in the document text, and a specification for how that marked location should be displayed, when this bookmark is selected.

To create a PDF bookmark, the pdfhref macro is used, at the point in the document where the bookmark is to be placed, in the form

```
.pdfhref O <level> descriptive text ...
```

in which the reference class “O” stipulates that this is an outline reference.

Alternatively, for those users who may prefer to think of a document outline simply as a collection of bookmarks, the pdfbookmark macro is also provided — indeed, pdfhref invokes it, when processing the “O” reference class operator. It may be invoked directly, in the form

```
.pdfbookmark <level> descriptive text ...
```

Irrespective of which of the above macro forms is employed, the <level> argument is required. It is a numeric argument, defining the nesting level of the “bookmark” in the outline hierarchy, with one being the topmost level. Its function may be considered analogous to the *heading level* of the document’s section headings, for example, as specified with the NH macro, if using the ms macros to format the document.

All further arguments, following the <level> argument, are collected together, to specify the heading text which will appear in the document’s outline view. Thus, the outline entry for this section of this document, which has a level three heading, might be specified as

```
.pdfhref O 3 2.4.1. A Basic Document Outline
```

or, in the alternative form using the pdfbookmark macro, as

```
.pdfbookmark 3 2.4.1. A Basic Document Outline
```

## 2.4.2. Hierarchical Structure in a Document Outline

When a document outline is created, using the `pdfhref` macro as described in [section 2.4.1](#), and any entry is added at a nesting level greater than one, then a hierarchical structure is automatically defined for the outline. However, as was noted in the simplified [example in section 2.1](#), the data required by the `pdfmark` operator to create the outline entry may not be fully defined, when the outline reference is defined in the `groff` document source. Specifically, when the outline entry is created, its `/Count` key must be assigned a value equal to the number of its subordinate entries, at the next inner level of the outline hierarchy; typically however, these subordinate entries will be defined *later* in the document source, and the appropriate `/Count` value will be unknown, when defining the parent entry.

To resolve this paradox, the `pdfhref` macro creates the outline entry in two distinct phases — a destination marker is placed in the PostScript<sup>®</sup> output stream immediately, when the outline reference is defined, but the actual outline entry is stored in an internal “outline cache”, until its subordinate hierarchy has been fully defined; it can then be inserted in the output stream, with its `/Count` value correctly assigned. Effectively, to ensure integrity of the document outline structure, this means that each top level outline entry, and *all* of its subordinates, are retained in the cache, until the *next* top level entry is defined.

One potential problem, which arises from the use of the “outline cache”, is that, at the end of any document formatting run, the last top level outline entry, and any subordinates defined after it, will remain in the cache, and will *not* be automatically written to the output stream. To avoid this problem, the user should follow the guidelines given in [section 2.7](#), to synchronize the output state with the cache state, (see [section 2.7](#), “Synchronizing Output and `pdfmark` Contexts”), at the end of the `groff` formatting run.

## 2.4.3. Associating a Document View with an Outline Reference

Each “bookmark” entry, in a PDF document outline, is associated with a specific document view. When the reader selects any outline entry, the document view changes to display the document context associated with that entry.

The document view specification, to be associated with any document outline entry, is established at the time when the outline entry is created. However, rather than requiring that each individual use of the `pdfhref` macro, to create an outline entry, should include its own view specification, the actual specification assigned to each entry is derived from a generalized specification defined in the string `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW`, together with the setting of the numeric register `PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING`, which determine the effective view specification as follows:–

### **PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW**

Establishes the magnification at which the document will be viewed, at the location of the “bookmark”; by default, it is defined by

```
.ds PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW /FitH \\\n[PDFPAGE.Y] u
```

which displays the associated document view, with the “bookmark” location positioned at the top of the display window, and with the magnification set to fit the page width to the width of the window.

### **PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING**

Specifies additional spacing, to be placed between the top of the display window and the actual location of the “bookmark” on the displayed page view. By default, it is set as

```
.nr PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING 5.0p
```

Note that `PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING` does not represent true “leading”, in the typographical sense, since any preceding text, set in the specified display space, will be visible at the top of the document viewing window, when the reference is selected.

Also note that the specification of `PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING` is shared by *all* reference views defined by the `pdfhref` macro; whereas `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW` is applied exclusively to outline references, there is no independent `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW.LEADING` specification.

If desired, the view specification may be changed, by redefining the string `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW`, and possibly also the numeric register `PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING`. Any alternative definition for `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW` *must* be specified in terms of valid view specification parameters, as described in the Adobe<sup>®</sup> “[pdfmark Reference Manual](#)”.

Note the use of the register `PDFPAGE.Y`, in the default definition of `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW` above. This register is computed by `pdfhref`, when creating an outline entry; it specifies the vertical position of the “bookmark”, in basic `groff` units, relative to the *bottom* edge of the document page on which it is defined, and is followed, in the `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW` definition, by the `grops` “u” operator, to convert it to PostScript<sup>®</sup> units on output. It may be used in any redefined specification for `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW`, (or in the analogous definition of `PDFHREF.VIEW`,



described in [section 2.5.2.2, “Associating a Document View with a Reference Mark”](#)), but *not* in any other context, since its value is undefined outside the scope of the `pdfhref` macro.

Since `PDFPAGE.Y` is computed relative to the *bottom* of the PDF output page, it is important to ensure that the page length specified to `troff` correctly matches the size of the logical PDF page. This is most effectively ensured, by providing *identical* page size specifications to `groff`, `grops` and to the PostScript® to PDF converter employed, and avoiding any page length changes within the document source.

Also note that `PDFPAGE.Y` is the only automatically computed “bookmark” location parameter; if the user redefines `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW`, and the modified view specification requires any other positional parameters, then the user *must* ensure that these are computed *before* invoking the `pdfhref` macro.

#### 2.4.4. Folding the Outline to Conceal Less Significant Headings

When a document incorporates many subheadings, at deeply nested levels, it may be desirable to “fold” the outline such that only the major heading levels are initially visible, yet making the inferior subheadings accessible, by allowing the reader to expand the view of any heading branch on demand.

The `pdfmark` macros support this capability, through the setting of the `PDFOUTLINE.FOLDLEVEL` register. This register should be set to the number of heading levels which it is desired to show in expanded form, in the *initial* document outline display; all subheadings at deeper levels will still be added to the outline, but will not become visible until the outline branch containing them is expanded. For example, the setting used in this document:

```
.\ " Initialize the outline view to show only three heading levels,  
\ " with additional subordinate level headings folded.  
\ "  
.nr PDFOUTLINE.FOLDLEVEL 3
```

results in only the first three levels of headings being displayed in the document outline, *until* the reader chooses to expand the view, and so reveal the lower level headings in any outline branch.

The initial default setting of `PDFOUTLINE.FOLDLEVEL`, if the document author does not choose to change it, is 10,000. This is orders of magnitude greater than the maximum heading level which is likely to be used in any document; thus the default behaviour will be to show document outlines fully expanded, to display all headings defined, at all levels within each document.

The setting of `PDFOUTLINE.FOLDLEVEL` may be changed at any time; however, the effect of each such change may be difficult to predict, since it is applied not only to outline entries which are defined *after* the setting is changed, but also to any entries which remain in the outline cache, *at* this time. Therefore, it is recommended that `PDFOUTLINE.FOLDLEVEL` should be set *once*, at the start of each document; if it *is* deemed necessary to change it at any other time, the outline cache should be flushed, ([see section 2.7, “Synchronizing Output and pdfmark Contexts”](#)), *immediately* before the change, which should immediately precede a level one heading.

#### 2.4.5. Outlines for Multipart Documents

When a document outline is created, using the `pdfhref` macro, each reference mark is automatically assigned a name, composed of a fixed stem followed by a serially generated numeric qualifier. This ensures that, for each single part document, every outline reference has a uniquely named destination.

As the overall size of the PDF document increases, it may become convenient to divide it into smaller, individually formatted PostScript® components, which are then assembled, in the appropriate order, to create a composite PDF document. While this strategy may simplify the overall process of creating and editing larger documents, it does introduce a problem in creating an overall document outline, since each individual PostScript® component will be assigned duplicated sequences of “bookmark” names, with each name ultimately referring to multiple locations in the composite document. To avoid such reference naming conflicts, the `pdfhref` macro allows the user to specify a “tag”, which is appended to the automatically generated “bookmark” name; this may be used as a discriminating mark, to distinguish otherwise similarly named destinations, in different sections of the composite document.

To create a “tagged” document outline, the syntax for invocation of the `pdfhref` macro is modified, by the inclusion of an optional “tag” specification, *before* the nesting level argument, i.e.

```
.pdfhref O [-T <tag>] <level> descriptive text ...
```

The optional `<tag>` argument may be composed of any characters of the user’s choice; however, its initial character *must not* be any decimal digit, and ideally it should be kept short — one or two characters at most.

By employing a different tag in each section, the user can ensure that “bookmark” names remain unique, throughout all the sections of a composite document. For example, when using the `spdf.tmac` macro package, which adds

pdfmark capabilities to the standard ms package, (see section 3.1, “Using pdfmark Macros with the ms Macro Package”), the table of contents is collected into a separate PostScript<sup>®</sup> section from the main body of the document. In the “body” section, the document outline is “untagged”, but in the “Table of Contents” section, a modified version of the TC macro adds an outline entry for the start of the “Table of Contents”, invoking the pdfhref macro as

```
.pdfhref O -T T 1 \\\*[TOC]
```

to tag the associated outline destination name with the single character suffix, “T”. Alternatively, as in the case of the basic outline, (see section 2.4.1, “A Basic Document Outline”), this may equally well be specified as

```
.pdfbookmark -T T 1 \\\*[TOC]
```

#### 2.4.6. Delegation of the Outline Definition

Since the most common use of a document outline is to provide a quick method of navigating through a document, using active “hypertext” links to chapter and section headings, it may be convenient to delegate the responsibility of creating the outline to a higher level macro, which is itself used to define and format the section headings. This approach has been adopted in the spdf.tmac package, to be described later, (see section 3.1, “Using pdfmark Macros with the ms Macro Package”).

When such an approach is adopted, the user will rarely, if ever, invoke the pdfhref macro directly, to create a document outline. For example, the structure and content of the outline for this document has been exclusively defined, using a combination of the NH macro, from the ms package, to establish the structure, and the XN macro from spdf.tmac, to define the content. In this case, the responsibility for invoking the pdfhref macro, to create the document outline, is delegated to the XN macro.

### 2.5. Adding Reference Marks and Links

Section 2.4 has shown how the pdfhref macro may be used to create a PDF document outline. While this is undoubtedly a powerful capability, it is by no means the only trick in the repertoire of this versatile macro.

The macro name, pdfhref, which is a contraction of “PDF HyperText Reference”, indicates that the general purpose of this macro is to define *any* type of dynamic reference mark, within a PDF document. Its generalized usage syntax takes the form

```
.pdfhref <class> [-options ...] [--] [descriptive text ...]
```

where <class> represents a required single character argument, which defines the specific reference operation to be performed, and may be selected from:–

- O** Add an entry to the document outline. This operation has been described earlier, (see section 2.4, “Creating a Document Outline”).
- M** Place a “named destination” reference mark at the current output position, in the current PDF document, (see section 2.5.2, “Marking a Reference Destination”).
- D** Specify the content of a PDF document reference dictionary entry; typically, such entries are generated automatically, by transformation of the intermediate output resulting from the use of pdfhref “**M**”, with the “**-X**” modifier, (see section 4.3.1, “Creating a Document Reference Map”); however, it is also possible to specify such entries manually, (see section 2.5.5.2, “Specifying Reference Text Explicitly”).
- L** Insert an active link to a named destination, (see section 2.5.3, “Linking to a Marked Reference Destination”), at the current output position in the current PDF document, such that when the reader clicks on the link text, the document view changes to show the location of the named destination.
- W** Insert an active link to a “web” resource, (see section 2.5.4, “Linking to Internet Resources”), at the current output position in the current PDF document. This is effectively the same as using the “**L**” operator to establish a link to a named destination in another PDF document, (see section 2.5.3.2, “References to Destinations in Other PDF Documents”), except that in this case, the destination is specified by a “uniform resource identifier”, or URI; this may represent any Internet or local resource which can be specified in this manner.
- F** Specify a user defined macro, to be called by pdfhref, when formatting the text in the active region of a link, (see section 2.5.5, “Establishing a Format for References”).
- K** Define one or more location keywords, and associated format-string names, which should be interpreted by the pdfhref reference text formatting routine, (see section 2.5.5.4, “Customizing Automatically Formatted Reference Text”).

- Z** Define the absolute position on the physical PDF output page, where the “hot-spot” associated with an active link is to be placed. Invoked in pairs, marking the starting and ending PDF page co-ordinates for each link “hot-spot”, this operator is rarely, if ever, specified directly by the user; rather, appropriate pdfhref “**Z**” specifications are inserted automatically into the document reference map during the PDF document formatting process, (see section 4.3.1, “Creating a Document Reference Map”).
- I** Initialize support for pdfhref features. The current pdfhref implementation provides only one such feature which requires initialization — a helper macro which must be attached to a user supplied page trap handler, in order to support mapping of reference “hot-spots” which extend through a page transition; (see section 2.5.6.1, “Links with a Page Transition in the Active Region”).

### 2.5.1. Optional Features of the pdfhref Macro

The behaviour of a number of the pdfhref macro operations can be modified, by including “*option specifiers*” after the operation specifying argument, but *before* any other arguments normally associated with the operation. In *all* cases, an option is specified by an “*option flag*”, comprising an initial hyphen, followed by one or two option identifying characters. Additionally, *some* options require *exactly one* option argument; for these options, the argument *must* be specified, and it *must* be separated from the preceding option flag by one or more *spaces*, (tabs *must not* be used). It may be noted that this paradigm for specifying options is reminiscent of most Unix™ shells; however, in the case of the pdfhref macro, omission of the space separating an option flag from its argument is *never* permitted.

A list of *all* general purpose options supported by the pdfhref macro is given below. Note that not all options are supported for all pdfhref operations; the operations affected by each option are noted in the list. For *most* operations, if an unsupported option is specified, it will be silently ignored; however, this behaviour should not be relied upon.

The general purpose options, supported by the pdfhref macro, are:–

**-N** <*name*>

Allows the <*name*> associated with a PDF reference destination to be defined independently from the following text, which describes the reference. This option affects only the “**M**” operation of the pdfhref macro, (see section 2.5.2, “Marking a Reference Destination”).

- E** Also used exclusively with the “**M**” operator, the **-E** option causes any specified *descriptive text* arguments, (see section 2.5.2, “Marking a Reference Destination”), to be copied, or *echoed*, in the body text of the document, at the point where the reference mark is defined; (without the **-E** option, such *descriptive text* will appear *only* at points where links to the reference mark are placed, and where the standard reference display format, (see section 2.5.5, “Establishing a Format for References”), is used).

**-D** <*dest*>

Specifies the URI, or the destination name associated with a PDF active link, independently of the following text, which describes the link and demarcates the link “hot-spot”. This option affects the behaviour of the pdfhref macro’s “**L**” and “**W**” operations.

When used with the “**L**” operator, the <*dest*> argument must specify a PDF “named destination”, as defined using pdfhref with the “**M**” operator.

When used with the “**W**” operator, <*dest*> must specify a link destination in the form of a “uniform resource identifier”, or URI, (see section 2.5.4, “Linking to Internet Resources”).

**-F** <*file*>

When used with the “**L**” pdfhref operator, <*file*> specifies an external PDF file in which the named destination for the link reference is defined. This option *must* be specified with the “**L**” operator, to create a link to a destination in a different PDF document; when the “**L**” operator is used *without* this option, the link destination is assumed to be defined within the same document.

**-P** <*"prefix-text"*>

Specifies <*"prefix-text"*> to be attached to the *start* of the text describing an active PDF document link, with no intervening space, but without itself being included in the active area of the link “hot-spot”; it is effective with the “**L**” and “**W**” pdfhref operators.

Typically, this option would be used to insert punctuation before the link “hot-spot”. Thus, there is little reason for the inclusion of spaces in <*"prefix-text"*>; however, if such space is required, then the enclosing double quotes *must* be specified, as indicated.

**-A** <*"affixed-text"*>

Specifies `<"affixed-text">` to be attached to the *end* of the text describing an active PDF document link, with no intervening space, but without itself being included in the active area of the link “hot-spot”; it is effective with the “**L**” and “**W**” `pdfhref` operators.

Typically, this option would be used to insert punctuation after the link “hot-spot”. Thus, there is little reason for the inclusion of spaces in `<"affixed-text">`; however, if such space is required, then the enclosing double quotes *must* be specified, as indicated.

**-T** `<tag>`

When specified with the “**O**” operator, `<tag>` is appended to the “bookmark” name assigned to the generated outline entry. This option is *required*, to distinguish between the series of “bookmark” names generated in individual passes of the `groff` formatter, when the final PDF document is to be assembled from a number of separately formatted components; (see section 2.4.5, “[Outlines for Multipart Documents](#)”).

**-X** This `pdfhref` option is used with either the “**M**” operator, or with the “**L**” operator.

When used with the “**M**” operator, (see section 2.5.2, “[Marking a Reference Destination](#)”), it ensures that a cross reference record for the marked destination will be included in the document reference map, (see section 2.5.2.1, “[Mapping a Destination for Cross Referencing](#)”).

When used with the “**L**” operator, (see section 2.5.3, “[Linking to a Marked Reference Destination](#)”), it causes the reference to be displayed in the standard cross reference format, (see section 2.5.5, “[Establishing a Format for References](#)”), but substituting the *descriptive text* specified in the “`pdfhref L`” argument list, for the description specified in the document reference map.

-- Marks the end of the option specifiers. This may be used with all `pdfhref` operations which accept options, to prevent `pdfhref` from interpreting any following arguments as option specifiers, even if they would otherwise be interpreted as such. It is also useful when the argument list to `pdfhref` contains special characters — any special character, which is not valid in a `groff` macro name, will cause a parsing error, if `pdfhref` attempts to match it as a possible option flag; using the “--” flag prevents this, so suppressing the `groff` warning message, which would otherwise ensue.

Using this flag after *all* sequences of macro options is recommended, even when it is not strictly necessary, if only for the entirely cosmetic benefit of visually separating the main argument list from the sequence of preceding options.

In addition to the `pdfhref` options listed above, a supplementary set of two character options are defined. These supplementary options, listed below, are intended for use with the “**L**” operator, in conjunction with the **-F** `<file>` option, to specify alternate file names, in formats compatible with the file naming conventions of alternate operating systems; they will be silently ignored, if used in any other context.

The supported alternate file name options, which are ignored if the **-F** `<file>` option is not specified, are:–

**-DF** `<dos-file>`

Specifies the name of the file in which a link destination is defined, using the file naming semantics of the MS-DOS<sup>®</sup> operating system. When the PDF document is read on a machine where the operating system uses the MS-DOS<sup>®</sup> file system, then `<dos-file>` is used as the name of the file containing the reference destination, overriding the `<file>` argument specified with the **-F** option.

**-MF** `<mac-file>`

Specifies the name of the file in which a link destination is defined, using the file naming semantics of the Apple<sup>®</sup> Macintosh<sup>®</sup> operating system. When the PDF document is read on a machine where the operating system uses the Macintosh<sup>®</sup> file system, then `<mac-file>` is used as the name of the file containing the reference destination, overriding the `<file>` argument specified with the **-F** option.

**-UF** `<unix-file>`

Specifies the name of the file in which a link destination is defined, using the file naming semantics of the Unix<sup>™</sup> operating system. When the PDF document is read on a machine where the operating system uses POSIX file naming semantics, then `<unix-file>` is used as the name of the file containing the reference destination, overriding the `<file>` argument specified with the **-F** option.

**-WF** `<win-file>`

Specifies the name of the file in which a link destination is defined, using the file naming semantics of the MS-Windows<sup>®</sup> 32-bit operating system. When the PDF document is read on a machine where the operating system uses any of the MS-Windows<sup>®</sup> file systems, with long file name support, then `<win-file>` is used as the name of the file containing the reference destination, overriding the `<file>` argument specified with the **-F** option.

## 2.5.2. Marking a Reference Destination

The `pdfhref` macro may be used to create active links to any Internet resource, specified by its URI, or to any “named destination”, either within the same document, or in another PDF document. Although the PDF specification allows link destinations to be defined in terms of a page number, and an associated view specification, this style of reference is not currently supported by the `pdfhref` macro, because it is not possible to adequately bind the specification for the destination with the intended reference context.

References to Internet resources are interpreted in accordance with the W3C standard for defining a URI; hence the only prerequisite, for creating a link to any Internet resource, is that the URI be properly specified, when declaring the reference; (see section 2.5.4, “Linking to Internet Resources”). In the case of references to “named destinations” in PDF documents, however, it is necessary to provide a mechanism for creating such “named destinations”. This may be accomplished, by invoking the `pdfhref` macro in the form

```
.pdfhref M [-N <name>] [-X] [-E] [descriptive text ...]
```

This creates a “named destination” reference mark, with its name specified by <name>, or, if the `-N` option is not specified, by the first word of *descriptive text*; (note that this imposes the restriction that, if the `-N` option is omitted, then *at least* one word of *descriptive text* must be specified). Additionally, a reference view will be automatically defined, and associated with the reference mark, (see section 2.5.2.2, “Associating a Document View with a Reference Mark”), and, if the `-X` option is specified, and no document cross reference map has been imported, (see section 4.3.2, “Deploying a Document Reference Map”), then a cross reference mapping record, (see section 2.5.2.1, “Mapping a Destination for Cross Referencing”), will be written to the `stdout` stream; this may be captured, and subsequently used to generate a cross reference map for the document, (see section 4.3.1, “Creating a Document Reference Map”).

When a “named destination” reference mark is created, using the `pdfhref` macro’s “**M**” operator, there is normally no visible effect in the formatted document; any *descriptive text* which is specified will simply be stored in the cross reference map, for use when a link to the reference mark is created. This default behaviour may be changed, by specifying the `-E` option, which causes any specified *descriptive text* to be “echoed” in the document text, at the point where the reference mark is placed, in addition to its inclusion in the cross reference map.

### 2.5.2.1. Mapping a Destination for Cross Referencing

Effective cross referencing of *any* document formatted by `groff` requires multiple pass formatting. Details of how this multiple pass formatting may be accomplished, when working with the `pdfmark` macros, will be discussed later, (see section 4.3, “Further Considerations for Using Document References”); at this stage, the discussion will be restricted to the initial preparation, which is required at the time when the cross reference destinations are defined.

The first stage, in the process of cross referencing a document, is the generation of a cross reference map. Again, the details of *how* the cross reference map is generated will be discussed in section 4.3; however, it is important to recognize that *what* content is included in the cross reference map is established when the reference destination is defined — it is derived from the reference data exported on the `stderr` stream by the `pdfhref` macro, when it is invoked with the “**M**” operator, and is controlled by whatever definition of the string `PDFHREF.INFO` is in effect, when the `pdfhref` macro is invoked.

The initial default setting of `PDFHREF.INFO` is

```
.ds PDFHREF.INFO page \\n% \\$*
```

which ensures that the cross reference map will contain at least a page number reference, supplemented by any *descriptive text* which is specified for the reference mark, as defined by the `pdfhref` macro, with its “**M**” operator; this may be redefined by the user, to export additional cross reference information, or to modify the default format for cross reference links, (see section 2.5.5, “Establishing a Format for References”).

### 2.5.2.2. Associating a Document View with a Reference Mark

In the same manner as each document outline reference, defined by the `pdfhref` macro with the “**O**” operator, (see section 2.4, “Creating a Document Outline”), has a specific document view associated with it, each reference destination marked by `pdfhref` with the “**M**” operator, requires an associated document view specification.

The mechanism whereby a document view is associated with a reference mark is entirely analogous to that employed for outline references, (see section 2.4.3, “Associating a Document View with an Outline Reference”), except that the `PDFHREF.VIEW` string specification is used, in place of the `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW` specification. Thus, the reference view is defined in terms of:–

#### **PDFHREF.VIEW**

A string, establishing the position of the reference mark within the viewing window, and the magnification at

which the document will be viewed, at the location of the marked reference destination; by default, it is defined by

```
.ds PDFHREF.VIEW /FitH \n[PDFPAGE.Y] u
```

which displays the reference destination at the top of the viewing window, with the magnification set to fit the page width to the width of the window.

#### **PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING**

A numeric register, specifying additional spacing, to be placed between the top of the display window and the actual position at which the location of the reference destination appears within the window. This register is shared with the view specification for outline references, and thus has the same default initial setting,

```
.nr PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING 5.0p
```

as in the case of outline reference views.

Again, notice that `PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING` does not represent true typographic “leading”, since any preceding text, set in the specified display space, will be visible at the top of the viewing window, when the reference is selected.

Just as the view associated with outline references may be changed, by redefining `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW`, so the view associated with marked reference destinations may be changed, by redefining `PDFHREF.VIEW`, and, if desired, `PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING`; such changes will become effective for all reference destinations marked *after* these definitions are changed. (Notice that, since the specification of `PDFHREF.VIEW.LEADING` is shared by both outline reference views and marked reference views, if it is changed, then the views for *both* reference types are changed accordingly).

It may again be noted, that the `PDFPAGE.Y` register is used in the definition of `PDFHREF.VIEW`, just as it is in the definition of `PDFBOOKMARK.VIEW`; all comments in [section 2.4.3](#) relating to its use, and indeed to page position computations in general, apply equally to marked reference views and to outline reference views.

### **2.5.3. Linking to a Marked Reference Destination**

Any named destination, such as those marked by the `pdfhref` macro, using its “**M**” operator, may be referred to from any point in *any* PDF document, using an *active link*; such active links are created by again using the `pdfhref` macro, but in this case, with the “**L**” operator. This operator provides support for two distinct cases, depending on whether the reference destination is defined in the same document as the link, ([see section 2.5.3.1, “References within a Single PDF Document”](#)), or is defined as a named destination in a different PDF document, ([see section 2.5.3.2, “References to Destinations in Other PDF Documents”](#)).

#### **2.5.3.1. References within a Single PDF Document**

The general syntactic form for invoking the `pdfhref` macro, when creating a link to a named destination within the same PDF document is

```
.pdfhref L [-D <dest-name>] [-P <prefix-text>] [-A <affixed-text>] \  
[-X] [--] [descriptive text ...]
```

where `<dest-name>` specifies the name of the link destination, as specified using the `pdfhref` “**M**” operation; (it may be defined either earlier in the document, to create a backward reference, or later, to create a forward reference).

If any *descriptive text* arguments are specified, then they will be inserted into the `groff` output stream, to define the text appearing in the “hot-spot” region of the link; this will be printed in the link colour specified by the string, `PDFHREF.TEXT.COLOUR`, which is described in [section 2.5.5.1, “Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions”](#). If the `-X` option is also specified, then the *descriptive text* will be augmented, by prefacing it with page and section number indicators, in accordance with the reference formatting rules which are in effect, ([see section 2.5.5, “Establishing a Format for References”](#)); such indicators will be included within the active link region, and will also be printed in the link colour.

Note that *either* the `-D <dest-name>` option, *or* the *descriptive text* arguments, *but not both*, may be omitted. If the `-D <dest-name>` option is omitted, then the first word of *descriptive text*, i.e. all text up to but not including the first space, will be interpreted as the `<dest-name>` for the link; this text will also appear in the running text of the document, within the active region of the link. Alternatively, if the `-D <dest-name>` option *is* specified, and *descriptive text* is not, then the running text which defines the reference, and its active region, will be derived from the reference description which is specified when the named destination is marked, ([see section 2.5.2, “Marking a Reference Destination”](#)), and will be formatted according to the reference formatting rules which are in

effect, when the reference is placed, (see section 2.5.5, “Establishing a Format for References”); in this case, it is not necessary to specify the **-X** option to activate automatic formatting of the reference — it is implied, by the omission of all *descriptive text* arguments.

The **-P** *<prefix-text>* and **-A** *<affixed-text>* options may be used to specify additional text which will be placed before and after the linked text respectively, with no intervening space. Such prefixed and affixed text will be printed in the normal text colour, and will not be included within the active region of the link. This feature is mostly useful for creating parenthetical references, or for placing punctuation adjacent to, but not included within, the text which defines the active region of the link.

The operation of the `pdfhref` macro, when used with its “**L**” operator to place a link to a named PDF destination, may best be illustrated by an example. However, since the appearance of the link will be influenced by factors established when the named destination is marked, (see section 2.5.2, “Marking a Reference Destination”), and also by the formatting rules in effect when the link is placed, the presentation of a suitable example will be deferred, until the formatting mechanism has been explained, (see section 2.5.5, “Establishing a Format for References”).

### 2.5.3.2. References to Destinations in Other PDF Documents

The `pdfhref` macro’s “**L**” operator is not restricted to creating reference links within a single PDF document. When the link destination is defined in a different document, then the syntactic form for invoking `pdfhref` is modified, by the addition of options to specify the name and location of the PDF file in which the destination is defined. Thus, the extended `pdfhref` syntactic form becomes

```
.pdfhref L -F <file> [-D <dest-name>] \  
  [-DF <dos-file>] [-MF <mac-file>] [-UF <unix-file>] \  
  [-WF <win-file>] [-P <prefix-text>] [-A <affixed-text>] \  
  [-X] [--] [descriptive text ...]
```

where the **-F** *<file>* option serves *two* purposes: it both indicates to the `pdfhref` macro that the specified reference destination is defined in an external PDF file, and it also specifies the normal path name, which is to be used to locate this file, when a user selects the reference.

In addition to the **-F** *<file>* option, which *must* be specified when referring to a destination in an external PDF file, the **-DF** *<dos-file>*, **-MF** *<mac-file>*, **-UF** *<unix-file>* and **-WF** *<win-file>* options may be used to specify the location of the file containing the reference destination, in a variety of operating system dependent formats. These options assign their arguments to the `/DosFile`, `/MacFile`, `/UnixFile` and `/WinFile` keys of the generated `pdfmark` respectively; thus when any of these options are specified, *in addition to* the **-F** *<file>* option, and the document is read on the appropriate operating systems, then the path names specified by *<dos-file>*, *<mac-file>*, *<unix-file>* and *<win-file>* will be searched, *instead of* the path name specified by *<file>*, for each of the MS-DOS<sup>®</sup>, Apple<sup>®</sup> Macintosh<sup>®</sup>, Unix<sup>™</sup> and MS-Windows<sup>®</sup> operating systems, respectively; see the “`pdfmark Reference Manual`”, for further details.

Other than the use of these additional options, which specify that the reference destination is in an external PDF file, the behaviour of the `pdfhref` “**L**” operator, with the **-F** *<file>* option, remains identical to its behaviour *without* this option, (see section 2.5.3.1, “References within a Single PDF Document”), with respect to the interpretation of other options, the handling of the *descriptive text* arguments, and the formatting of the displayed reference.

Once again, since the appearance of the reference is determined by factors specified in the document reference map, and also by the formatting rules in effect when the reference is placed, the presentation of an example of the placing of a reference to an external destination will be deferred, until the formatting mechanism has been explained, (see section 2.5.5, “Establishing a Format for References”).

### 2.5.4. Linking to Internet Resources

In addition to supporting the creation of cross references to named destinations in PDF documents, the `pdfhref` macro also has the capability to create active links to Internet resources, or indeed to *any* resource which may be specified by a Uniform Resource Identifier, (which is usually abbreviated to the acronym “URI”, and sometimes also referred to as a Uniform Resource Locator, or “URL”).

Since the mechanism for creating a link to a URI differs somewhat from that for creating PDF references, the `pdfhref` macro is invoked with the “**W**” (for “web-link”) operator, rather than the “**L**” operator; nevertheless, the invocation syntax is similar, having the form

```
.pdfhref W [-D <URI>] [-P <prefix-text>] [-A <affixed-text>] \  
  [--] descriptive text ...
```

where the optional `-D <URI>` modifier specifies the address for the target Internet resource, in any appropriate *Uniform Resource Identifier* format, while the *descriptive text* argument specifies the text which is to appear in the “hot-spot” region, and the `-P <prefix-text>` and `-A <affixed-text>` options have the same effect as in the case of local document links, (see section 2.5.3.1, “References within a Single PDF Document”).

Notice that it is not mandatory to include the `-D <URI>` in the link specification; if it *is* specified, then it is not necessary for the URI to appear, in the running text of the document — the *descriptive text* argument exactly defines the text which will appear within the “hot-spot” region, and this need not include the URI. However, if the `-D <URI>` specification is omitted, then the *descriptive text* argument *must* be an *exact* representation of the URI, which *will*, therefore, appear as the entire content of the “hot-spot”. For example, we could introduce a reference to [the groff web site](http://www.gnu.org/software/groff/), in which the actual URI is concealed, by using mark up such as:–

```
For example, we could introduce a reference to  
.pdfhref W -D http://www.gnu.org/software/groff -A , the groff web site  
in which the actual URI is concealed,
```

Alternatively, to refer the reader to the groff web site, making it obvious that the appropriate URI is <http://www.gnu.org/software/groff/>, the requisite mark up might be:–

```
to refer the reader to the groff web site,  
making it obvious that the appropriate URI is  
.pdfhref W -A , http://www.gnu.org/software/groff  
the requisite mark up might be:\(en
```

## 2.5.5. Establishing a Format for References

There are two principal aspects to be addressed, when defining the format to be used when displaying references. Firstly, it is desirable to provide a visual cue, to indicate that the text describing the reference is imbued with special properties — it is dynamically linked to the reference destination — and secondly, the textual content should describe where the link leads, and ideally, it should also describe the content of the reference destination.

The visual cue, that a text region defines a dynamically linked reference, is most commonly provided by printing the text within the active region in a distinctive colour. This technique will be employed automatically by the `pdfhref` macro — see section 2.5.5.1, “Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions” — unless the user specifically chooses to adopt, and implement, some alternative strategy.

### 2.5.5.1. Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions

Typically, when a PDF document contains *active* references to other locations, either within the same document, or even in other documents, or on the World Wide Web, it is usually desirable to make the regions where these active links are placed stand out from the surrounding text.

The mechanism, which is apparently advocated by Adobe<sup>®</sup>, as the default for indicating any active link region, is to draw a coloured border around the region. This is a most unfortunate default choice: not only does it look hideously ugly, but it also seems very distracting to the reader! Consequently, while it does support this mechanism for link visualization, `groff`’s `pdfmark` macros disable it, by default; it is controlled by a pair of strings:–

#### **PDFHREF . BORDER**

This string comprises a space-separated triplet of numeric values, optionally followed by a further space-separated `pdfmark` array, (see the Adobe<sup>®</sup> “[pdfmark Reference Manual](#)” for details), which together specify the link border style, in terms of its elliptical corner horizontal radius, vertical radius, line thickness, and line style mark-to-space ratio array; by default, it is defined as

```
.ds PDFHREF.BORDER 0 0 0
```

which has the effect of specifying an invisible link border, (a solid zero-width line, with rectangular corners),



thus appearing to disable the use of borders for link visualization. This differs from the Adobe® default, which represents a solid (visible) line, one pixel in width, and with rectangular corners; this Adobe® default may be reinstated, by explicitly defining

```
.ds PDFHREF.BORDER 0 0 1
```

before specifying any link references, which it is desired to have rendered in the Adobe® style.

#### **PDFHREF . COLOUR**

This string<sup>7</sup> comprises a triplet of space-separated decimal numeric values, each in the range 0.0..1.0; together, they represent, in RGB colour space, the colour in which link borders should be rendered, in the event that the PDFHREF . BORDER property is specified to make them visible; by default, it is defined as

```
.ds PDFHREF.COLOUR 0.35 0.00 0.60
```

which represents a deep lilac colour.

While the foregoing discussion of PDFHREF . BORDER, and PDFHREF . COLOUR, may seem sufficient for those users who are willing to adopt the Adobe® convention of drawing a border to offset links from the surrounding text, it is *not* the preferred way of doing so, in groff's pdfmark implementation. Given the perceived ugliness of the Adobe® convention, the preferred technique for visualizing links is to disable the rendition of the link border, (by making it invisible, as groff's pdfmark implementation does by default), and to simply print the text, within the link "hot-spot" region, in a colour which contrasts with that of the surrounding text.

It may be noted that, whereas the preceding PDFHREF . BORDER, and PDFHREF . COLOUR properties exert their influence within the Adobe® pdfmark infrastructure, that infrastructure provides no mechanism for control of the text colour within a link "hot-spot" region; however, the desired effect may be readily achieved, simply by assignment of groff colour properties. In groff's pdfmark implementation, the text colour, for use within link "hot-spot" regions, is established by a further string assignment, viz.:-

#### **PDFHREF . TEXT . COLOUR**

Specifies the text colour, for rendition of PDF reference links.

Unlike PDFHREF . COLOUR, this string<sup>8</sup> must be assigned a value which represents a groff colour name, rather than an RGB colour-space triplet; by default, it is assigned the name of a custom colour, which is internally derived from, and is thus chromatically identical to the deep lilac colour,<sup>9</sup> as represented by the default RGB colour-space triplet which is specified as the default value of PDFHREF . COLOUR.

### **2.5.5.2. Specifying Reference Text Explicitly**

Although the *use of colour* within, and/or borders around, pdfhref link "hot-spot" regions may be considered to be a necessary visual indication of the location of such "hot-spots", for users of on-screen PDF readers, such visual indicators alone are insufficient to convey any necessary information regarding the context to which the link refers; neither do they offer any particular benefit to readers of documents in printed hard-copy formats. To address these limitations, it is necessary to specify appropriate text within each "hot-spot" region, to identify the link context.

Depending on the type of contextual information, which it is desired to include within any link "hot-spot" region, groff's pdfmark macro suite provides a variety of mechanisms to specify it; the simplest of these is to simply specify the desired text *explicitly*, at the point of insertion of the reference. For example, given that the "use of colour" reference, in the initial paragraph of [this section](#), points to a destination named by mark up similar to:-

```
.pdfhref M -X -N set-colour -- ...
```

the reference text was specified explicitly, (ignoring recorded location information), using the mark up:-

```
.pdfhref L -D set-colour -- use of colour
```

---

7. For authors who may prefer American English spelling, PDFHREF . COLOR will be recognized as an alias for PDFHREF . COLOUR. However, should the alias be broken, (by deletion of either of the alternative names, prior to redefining it), it is the World English spelling, PDFHREF . COLOUR, which will be honoured when rendering links.

8. Just as PDFHREF . COLOR is defined as an alias for PDFHREF . COLOUR, the alias PDFHREF . TEXT . COLOR may be used as an American English spelling alternative to World English PDFHREF . TEXT . COLOUR; once again, should the alias be broken, the World English spelling will prevail.

9. This deep lilac colour has been chosen on the basis that it will provide sufficient contrast, when the PDF document is viewed on a colour display screen, to be discernable by readers with normal colour perception, but not so much contrast as to be distracting; conversely, if the document is printed on a monochrome hard-copy device, since links cannot then be clicked, it is anticipated that the contrast will be barely discernable, if at all.

### 2.5.5.3. Using Automatically Formatted Reference Text

When the text within a link “hot-spot” is specified explicitly, using a `pdfhref` macro call of the form

```
.pdfhref L -D <dest-name> -- <explicit-text>
```

as described in [the preceding section](#), then `<explicit-text>` will appear in the formatted document, *exactly* as specified. This may be the author’s intent, but it does suffer from the disadvantage that, in spite of location information having been recorded when `<dest-name>` was marked, none is included in `<explicit-text>`, *unless* the author *explicitly* includes it; this places the onus on the author, if inclusion of such location information is desired, to track it *manually*, and to specify it within `<explicit-text>`, in the desired format.

To mitigate this limitation, of *explicitly* specified reference text, `groff`’s `pdfmark` macro suite provides a capability for *automatic* formatting of reference text, based on the content of a “PDFHREF.INFO record”,<sup>10</sup> which is generated by, and is specific to any named link-destination marked by a `pdfhref` macro request of the form

```
.pdfhref M -X -N <dest-name> [[--] <default-text>]
```

When a `pdfhref` link destination has been marked by a macro request of this form,<sup>11</sup> a subsequent request of the simplified form

```
.pdfhref L -D <dest-name>
```

(excluding *any* `<explicit-text>` specification), then the reference text will be generated *automatically*, by passing the content of the “PDFHREF.INFO record” associated with `<dest-name>`, as arguments to a designated<sup>12</sup> `pdfhref` reference text formatting macro.

To illustrate this capability, if we revisit the example offered in [section 2.5.5.2, “Specifying Reference Text Explicitly”](#), but instead of specifying the reference as

```
.pdfhref L -D set-colour -- use of colour
```

we simply specify it, *without* the explicit reference text arguments, as

```
.pdfhref L -D set-colour
```

and if neither `PDFHREF.INFO`, nor the designated `pdfhref` reference text formatting macro, have been changed from their original default settings, then we should see a reference formatted as

[see page 16, “Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions”](#)

Alternatively, location data from the “PDFHREF.INFO record” may be combined with explicitly specified text, by adding the `-X` option to the explicit form of the `pdfhref` macro request, e.g.

```
.pdfhref L -X -D set-colour -- Using Colour ...
```

will cause the reference to be displayed as

[see page 16, Using Colour ...](#)

Notice that, when the displayed form of the reference incorporates the assigned `<default-text>`, as derived from the “PDFHREF.INFO record”, this is enclosed in double quotation marks, but explicitly specified text is not; if quotation of explicitly specified text is desired, then appropriate quotation marks should simply be included within the `<explicit-text>` arguments specification.

Finally, to conclude this introduction to the automatic reference text formatting capabilities of `groff`’s `pdfmark` macro suite, it may be noted that, while the default provisions may be adequate, in many cases, this will not always be so. In the event of these default provisions being inadequate, customization is readily supported, as explained in [the following section](#).

---

10. The conceptual nomenclature “PDFHREF.INFO record” has been adopted here, since the content of the record is dictated by the definition of the `PDFHREF.INFO` string, as described in [section 2.5.2.1, “Mapping a Destination for Cross Referencing”](#).

11. The specification of the `-X` option is imperative, within this `pdfhref` macro request; without it, no “PDFHREF.INFO record” will be generated.

12. A suitable `pdfhref` reference text formatting macro is provided, within `groff`’s `pdfmark` macro suite; it will be used by default, unless the author has designated an alternative, as described in [section 2.5.5.4, “Customizing Automatically Formatted Reference Text”](#).

#### 2.5.5.4. Customizing Automatically Formatted Reference Text

“Automatically formatted” reference text is interpolated, within the running text of a published PDF document, when the `pdfhref` macro is invoked with its “**L**” operator, to refer to a destination named by the “**-D**” option, and either:–

- no explicit reference text is specified, (in which case, specification of the “**-X**” option is implied), or,
- the “**-X**” option is specified, in conjunction with explicit reference text.

In each of these cases, the reference text is derived, (in its entirety, in the first case, or partially, in the second), from a reference dictionary record for the named destination.

The reference dictionary, itself, comprises a collection of `PDFHREF.INFO` records, one per destination, indexed by destination name. While it is possible to create a reference dictionary record manually, using a macro call of the form:–

```
.pdfhref D -N <dest-name> [<keyword> <value>] ... <text> ...
```

(in which the in-order aggregate of all specified `<keyword> <value>` pairs, and all following `<text>` arguments, comprises the `PDFHREF.INFO` record, and `<dest-name>` represents the destination name on which it is indexed), it is generally more convenient to have the dictionary compiled automatically, by specifying the “**-X**” option, when using a macro call of the form:–

```
.pdfhref M -X -N <dest-name> -- <text> ...
```

to mark the location of each named destination; the procedure is described, in detail, in [section 4.3.1, “Creating a Document Reference Map”](#).

Interpolation of automatically formatted reference text is delegated to a specialized formatting macro, which assumes responsibility for storing the formatted representation of the reference text, into the `PDFHREF.TEXT` string; this formatting macro may be defined by the user, (if specialized formatting is required), or, in most cases, a standardized default macro, provided by `pdfmark.tmac`, may be used. In either case, the content of the `PDFHREF.INFO` record, which is associated with the named reference destination, will be passed to the formatting macro as a sequence of macro arguments, while any explicit reference text, which has been specified in the initiating “`.pdfhref L ...`” call, will be passed in the `PDFHREF.DESC` string; (if no reference text is explicitly specified, then any pre-existing definition of `PDFHREF.DESC` is explicitly deleted, prior to calling the formatting macro).

When the `pdfmark.tmac` default formatting macro is used, formatting progresses as follows:–

1. `PDFHREF.TEXT` is initialized to the content of the `PDFHREF.PREFIX` string; this has a default value of “see”, but may be redefined by the user, to any suitable alternative content, (including the empty string, if desired).
2. The `PDFHREF.INFO` record, as passed in the argument list, is inspected to determine whether the first argument (`\$1`) matches any of the known formatting keywords, or otherwise it, and any additional arguments which follow it, will be interpreted as representing the text of an implicit reference description.
3. If `\$1` *does* match any of the known formatting keywords, the argument which follows (`\$2`) is interpreted as the `<value>`, (which completes a `<keyword> <value>` pair); `\$2` is interpolated into the format string which is associated with keyword `\$1`, and the result is appended to `PDFHREF.TEXT`. The matched `\$1`, and accompanying `\$2`, are then shifted out of the argument list, promoting `\$3`, (if any further arguments are present), to the `\$1` position, and the keyword matching process is repeated, from step 2.
4. If, during *any* execution cycle of step 2, `\$1` is found *not* to match any known formatting keyword, *and* `PDFHREF.DESC` has *not* been assigned any explicit content, then any remaining arguments are assigned to `PDFHREF.DESC`; thus, `PDFHREF.DESC` becomes the descriptive component of the reference text, either as explicitly specified by the originating “`.pdfhref L ...`” call, or implicitly deduced from the reference dictionary `PDFHREF.INFO` record for the named link destination.
5. Finally, an interpolating reference to `PDFHREF.DESC` is appended to `PDFHREF.TEXT`, from which any accumulated initial spaces are then removed, and the resultant `PDFHREF.TEXT` string is handed back to the originating “`.pdfhref L ...`” call, for interpolation as the formatted content within, and which defines the extent of, the link “hot-spot” region.

From the foregoing, it may be deduced that reference text, formatted by the default formatting macro, will commence with the content of the `PDFHREF.PREFIX` string, followed by the result of interpolation of any `keyword/value` pairs found in the `PDFHREF.INFO` record component of the relevant reference dictionary entry, and ends with a `PDFHREF.DESC` component, either as implicitly defined within that same `PDFHREF.INFO` record, or as explicitly specified as final arguments to “`.pdfhref L ...`”. Within the formatted text, the `keyword/value` pair interpolations

appear in the order in which “known” keywords are found, while parsing the PDFHREF . INFO record; the default set of known formatting keywords comprises:–

Keyword	Format Name	Default Format
page	PDFHREF.PAGEREF	page \\\$1,
section	PDFHREF.SECTREF	section \\\$1,
file	PDFHREF.FILEREF	\\\$1

The format of any of these known keyword interpolations may be customized, by redefinition of their corresponding “Format Name” strings; each may incorporate any text of the user’s choice — inclusion of the keyword itself is *not* necessary, however, inclusion of the \\\$1 placeholder, while not mandatory, *is* a necessary prerequisite for interpolation of the value component of the keyword/value pair, from the PDFHREF . INFO record.

In the case of any PDFHREF . INFO record which originates from a “.pdfhref M -X ...” call, the precise gamut of keyword interpolations which do, and the order in which they will, appear within automatically formatted reference text, may be manipulated by redefinition of the PDFHREF.INFO string itself. For example, with the default PDFHREF.PREFIX, PDFHREF.PAGEREF, PDFHREF.SECTREF, and PDFHREF.INFO definitions:–

```
.ds PDFHREF.PREFIX see
.ds PDFHREF.PAGEREF page \\$1,
.ds PDFHREF.SECTREF section \\$1,
.ds PDFHREF.INFO page \\n% \\$*
```

a request such as

```
.pdfhref L -D set-colour
```

may, (as indicated in [section 2.5.5.3, “Using Automatically Formatted Reference Text”](#)), result in formatted reference text similar to:–

[see page 16, “Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions”](#)

whereas, a simple redefinition of PDFHREF . INFO, *before* the “set-colour” destination is marked:–

```
.ds PDFHREF.INFO section \\*[SN-NO-DOT] \\$*
```

may<sup>13</sup> result in alternative formatting similar to:–

[see section 2.5.5.1, “Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions”](#)

(as is used in this document itself).

In addition to these default formatting capabilities, pdfmark.tmac also offers support<sup>14</sup> for interpolation of user-defined keyword/value pairs; these may be defined, using a macro call of the form:–

```
.pdfhref K <keyword> <format-name> [<keyword> <format-name>] ...
```

accompanied by string definitions, similar to that for PDFHREF.PAGEREF, for each format-name argument specified; keyword/value pairs, corresponding to such user-defined keywords, may be incorporated into the PDFHREF . INFO record definition, and they will be interpreted by the default formatting macro, in the same manner as the default set of keywords. For example, we might wish to add a chapter reference capability. *We could* accomplish this by subverting the effect of one the default keywords;<sup>15</sup> however, as a (possibly undesirable) side effect of such a customization, we would lose the normal behaviour of the selected default keyword, while also introducing an element of obfuscation around the use of that keyword; we may prefer not to do this.

If we wish to avoid subversion of any default keyword, with the attendant obfuscation of intent for the chosen keyword, (and we have a sufficiently recent version of pdfmark.tmac), then the preferred method for implementing a custom

13. Assuming that the SN-NO-DOT string represents the effective section number, at the point where the link destination is marked, as it does when formatting with the ms macros provided with groff-1.19.2 and later.

14. Available only in versions of pdfmark.tmac as distributed with groff-pdfmark from groff-pdfmark-20230317.1 onwards.

15. We might choose to implement the effect of a chapter keyword by subverting the default behaviour of, e.g. the section keyword; we could achieve this by redefining the associated PDFHREF . SECTREF format string, in conjunction with a modified PDFHREF . INFO template:–

```
.ds PDFHREF.SECTREF chapter \\$1,
.ds PDFHREF.INFO section \\n[chapter] page \\n% \\$*
```

and, (assuming for the purpose of this example, that the chapter number matches the current top-level section heading number),

```
.pdfhref L -D set-colour
```

would be expected to yield a reference similar to:–

[see chapter 2, page 16, “Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions”](#)

keyword feature, such as automatic interpretation of a `chapter` reference keyword, would be to make use of the “.pdfhref K ...” capability; e.g.:-

```
.pdfhref K chapter PDFHREF.CHAPTER
.ds PDFHREF.CHAPTER chapter \\$1,
```

With these definitions in place, and assuming that, at the point where the named destination is marked, the effective chapter number is made available in the `\n[CH]` numeric register, and also that the effective `PDFHREF.INFO` definition has been preset to:-

```
.ds PDFHREF.INFO chapter \\n[CH] page \\n% section \\*[SN-NO-DOT] \\$*
```

(assuming that `SN-NO-DOT` represents a section number, as it does when the `-ms` macros are used for document formatting), the example from the preceding section, viz.:-

```
.pdfhref L -D set-colour
```

will now produce a reference similar to

see chapter 2, page 16, section 2.5.5.1, “Using Colour to Demarcate Link Regions”

Finally, in the event that the default reference text formatting macro, combined with any user-defined `PDFHREF.INFO` specification, user-defined keyword-specific format strings, and combination of default or user-defined keywords, is insufficient to achieve a required formatting effect, the “.pdfhref F [*macro-name*]” facility allows the user to define an alternative formatting macro, and substitute it in place of the default. For example, within this document itself, some internal references are displayed as a section number reference alone; such references are derived from the associated `PDFHREF.INFO` record, but are formatted by the document-local `SECREF` macro:-

```
.de SECREF
.  while \\n(. $ \\{
.    ie '\\$1'section' \\{
.      if !dSECREF.BEGIN .ds SECREF.BEGIN \\$1
.      ds PDFHREF.TEXT \\*[SECREF.BEGIN]~\\$2
.      rm SECREF.BEGIN
.      shift \\n(. $
.    }
.  el \\{
.    shift
.    if \\n(. $ shift
.  }
. }
..
```

to filter all but the “section” reference out of the `PDFHREF.INFO` record, which is then displayed as the reference text; used thus:-

```
.pdfhref F SECREF
.pdfhref L -D <reference-name>
.pdfhref F
```

it will emit reference text similar to:-

section 2.5.5.4

while, when used with the additional qualifying definition of `SECREF.BEGIN`:-

```
.pdfhref F SECREF
.ds SECREF.BEGIN Section
.pdfhref L -D <reference-name>
.pdfhref F
```

it will capitalize the emitted reference text, such that it becomes suitable for use at the beginning of a sentence:-

Section 2.5.5.4

Notice that the preceding `SECREF` macro exhibits *identical* semantics to those of the default reference formatting macro, as described above, (and as *any* user-defined reference formatting macro *must*), insofar as it expects to be passed the content of a `PDFHREF.INFO` record as its arguments, and it returns the formatted reference text as the definition of

the PDFHREF.TEXT string; however, while the PDFHREF.DESC, PDFHREF.PREFIX, PDFHREF.PAGEREF, PDFHREF.SECTREF, and PDFHREF.FILEREf strings (and any other custom format strings which the user may have defined) remain available, the SECREf macro simply ignores them.

Further note that the effect of invoking “.pdfhref F <macro-name>” is persistent; if it is desired to revert to use of the default reference formatting macro, after temporary use of a user-defined alternative, this may be accomplished by invoking “.pdfhref F” *without* specifying any “<macro-name>” argument, as shown in each of the two preceding usage examples.

## 2.5.6. Problematic Links

Irrespective of whether a pdfhref reference is placed using the “L” operator, or the “W” operator, there may be occasions when the resulting link does not function as expected. A number of scenarios, which are known to be troublesome, are described below.

### 2.5.6.1. Links with a Page Transition in the Active Region

When a link is placed near the bottom of a page, it is possible that its active region, or “hot-spot”, may extend on to the next page. In this situation, a page trap macro is required to intercept the page transition, and to restart the mapping of the “hot-spot” boundary on the new page.

The pdfmark macro package includes a suitable page trap macro, to satisfy this requirement. However, to avoid pre-empting any other requirement the user may have for a page transition trap, this is *not* installed as an active page trap, unless explicitly requested by the user.

To enable proper handling of page transitions, which occur within the active regions of reference links, the user should:–

1. Define a page transition macro, to provide whatever features may be required, when a page transition occurs — e.g. printing footnotes, adding page footers and headers, etc. This macro should end by setting the output position at the correct vertical page offset, where the printing of running text is to restart, following the page transition.
2. Plant a trap to invoke this macro, at the appropriate vertical position marking the end of normal running text on each page.
3. Initialize the pdfhref hook into this page transition trap, by invoking

```
.pdfhref I -PT <macro-name>
```

where <macro-name> is the name of the user supplied page trap macro, to ensure that pdfhref will correctly restart mapping of active link regions, at the start of each new page.

It may be observed that this initialization of the pdfhref page transition hook is, typically, required only once *before* document formatting begins. Users of document formatting macro packages may reasonably expect that this initialization should be performed by the macro package itself. Thus, writers of such macro packages which include pdfmark bindings, should provide appropriate initialization, so relieving the end user of this responsibility. The following example, abstracted from the sample ms binding package, spdf.tmac, illustrates how this may be accomplished:–


```
.\ " groff "ms" provides the "pg@bottom" macro, which has already
.\ " been installed as a page transition trap. To ensure proper
.\ " mapping of "pdfhref" links which overflow the bottom of any
.\ " page, we need to install the "pdfhref" page transition hook,
.\ " as an addendum to this macro.
.
.pdfhref I -PT pg@bottom
```

## 2.6. Annotating a PDF Document using Pop-Up Notes

The Adobe® PDF specification defines several types of annotation, which may be associated with a PDF document; of these defined annotation types, *two* are *explicitly* supported by groff’s pdfmark macros. Of these, although it is not explicitly identified as such, in the preceding discussion, it is the “Link” annotation type which underpins the operation of the pdfhref macro, as it is extensively described in [section 2.5, “Adding Reference Marks and Links”](#).

In addition to supporting the “Link” annotation type, through the use of the pdfhref macro, (see [section 2.5, “Adding Reference Marks and Links”](#)), the pdfmark macros offer support for the “Text” annotation type; primarily

useful as a means of adding editorial comments, this creates an annotation similar to a “sticky note”, attached to the document page, and represented by an icon, at the attachment point, which, when clicked, opens the annotation itself, in a pop-up window.

It may be noted that some — but not all<sup>16</sup> — PDF viewer applications may provide support for adding, and editing “Text” annotations. While such support, within a viewer application, may be convenient for 3rd-party editorial annotation, it may not be the most convenient method for the document author, should he, or she, wish to insert such annotations at the point of document origin. Thus, the pdfmark macros provide the pdfnote macro, for direct insertion of “Text” annotations, such as this,  created as in the following example:<sup>17</sup>

```

Thus, the
.CW pdfmark
macros provide the
.CW pdfnote
macro, for direct insertion of
.CW Text \{rq \{lq
annotations,
such as this,
.pdfnote -T "An Example Text Annotation" -PD 1 \# continued/...
Please do not move, modify, or remove this note; doing \#
so may invalidate the example to which it refers.\#
\[PDFNOTE.PILCROW]\#
This is an illustration of an editorial comment, \#
placed directly by the document author, \#
using the exact markup as specified in \#
the example of the usage of the pdfnote macro, \# .../continuation ends
which immediately follows the note's icon.\"          here.
\h'5n'created as in the following example:

```

In addition to illustrating the technique for spreading the pdfnote text content over several *input* lines, this example of pdfnote usage gratuitously introduces some of the available options for setting pdfnote attributes, and the \\*[PDFNOTE.PILCROW] control, for manipulation of text layout within the pdfnote pop-up window; further discussion of these may be found below, in [section 2.6.2, “Options for Manipulating pdfnote Annotation Attributes”](#), and [section 2.6.3, “Controlling pdfnote Text Layout”](#), respectively.

### 2.6.1. Controlling pdfnote Icon Placement

The placement of each pdfnote annotation, on its respective document page, is determined from its Rect attribute; (this is a *required* attribute, comprising an array of *four* numeric values, representing, in order, the *lower left x*, *lower left y*, *upper right x*, and *upper right y* co-ordinates of the page region in which the pdfnote annotation is to be placed). The pdfnote macro computes these four co-ordinate values, relative to the current text *output* position on the page, and specifies the required Rect attribute accordingly, in terms of the following numeric register, and string assignments:

#### PDFNOTE.OFFSET

A string, defined such that it may be evaluated as a numeric expression; its evaluation is interpreted as the *lower left x* ordinate, (and hence, implicitly, the *upper left x* ordinate), of the pdfnote placement region. By default, it is defined as

```
.ds PDFNOTE.OFFSET "\n[.k]+\n[.o]+\n[.in]"
```

which, when evaluated, will result in placement of the *left edge* of the pdfnote region *immediately* to the *right* of the last running text glyph written to the output stream.

16. Indeed, Adobe’s own Acrobat Reader™ application may be found wanting, in this respect.


17. It may be noted that the *entire* content of any pdfnote *must* be entered as a *single logical* input line; this may be achieved, most effectively, and *without* necessitating an excessively long, and unwieldy, *physical* input line, by folding the .pdfnote call over multiple input lines, with each, *excluding* the last, terminated by a line continuation escape, (either a single “\” escape at the bitter end of each line, or a escape, followed by an optional comment).

Furthermore, note that the continuation of the running text, following interpolation of the .pdfnote in this example, commences with an “\h'5n'” escape; this to leave sufficient space for the placement of the icon, associated with the pdfnote, *without* occlusion of the initial few glyphs of this continued running text.

Users may redefine `PDFNOTE.OFFSET`, to achieve a different left edge placement for any `pdfnote` annotations which follow; for example, the definition

```
.ds PDFNOTE.OFFSET "\n[.o]-\n[PDFNOTE.WIDTH]-1m
```

will place `pdfnote` annotations into the left hand page margin, with 1em separation from the running text, as in this example:



```
.pdfnote -T "Marginal Placement Example" \  
This note illustrates placement of pdfnote annotations \  
in the left hand page margin, following redefinition of \  
the PDFNOTE.OFFSET string.\ \  
\*[PDFNOTE.PILCROW]\ \  
As in the case of the previous pdfnote example, \  
moving, modifying, or removing this annotation may \  
invalidate the example to which it refers; please \  
do not do this!
```

### **PDFNOTE.LEADING**

The value of this numeric register is added to the value retrieved by invocation of the `.mk` request, to establish the vertical distance, from the top of the current document page, at which the top edge of each `pdfnote` icon is to be placed. By default, it is defined with a value of `0.3v`, which will result in placement of `pdfnote` icons at 30% of the line spacing, below the *top* of the output line which is currently being composed, at the insertion point of each `pdfnote` annotation. This may be redefined by the user; positive values will push the icons further down the page, while negative values will pull them upwards, towards the top of the page.

### **PDFNOTE.HEIGHT**

Combination of the effects of `PDFNOTE.OFFSET` and `PDFNOTE.LEADING` serves to specify the  $(x, y)$  page co-ordinates of the *upper left* vertex of the placement region for a `pdfnote` annotation; the value of the `PDFNOTE.HEIGHT` numeric register is added to the  $y$  ordinate of this upper left co-ordinate pair, to determine the corresponding *lower left*  $(x, y)$  co-ordinate pair, which is *required* for the specification of the `Rect` attribute of the `pdfnote` annotation `pdfmark`.

The default value specified for `PDFNOTE.HEIGHT` is 9 millimetres; this corresponds, approximately, to the height of “Text” annotation icons in many PDF viewer applications. The user *may* choose to define an alternative value; however, the usefulness of doing so may be questionable.

### **PDFNOTE.WIDTH**

As in the case of addition of the value of `PDFNOTE.HEIGHT` to the  $y$  ordinate of the upper left `pdfnote` placement co-ordinate pair, to compute the *lower left* co-ordinate pair, the value of the `PDFNOTE.WIDTH` numeric register is added to the upper left  $x$  ordinate, to compute the corresponding *upper right*  $(x, y)$  co-ordinate pair; this is *required* to complete the `Rect` attribute specification for the annotation `pdfmark`.

The default value specified for `PDFNOTE.WIDTH` is 8 millimetres; this corresponds, approximately, to the width of “Text” annotation icons in many PDF viewer applications. The user *may* choose to define an alternative value; however, as in the case of `PDFNOTE.HEIGHT`, the usefulness of such an alternative definition may be questionable.

It may be worthy of note that the Adobe® PDF Specification is rather vague, with respect to how the `Rect` attribute of “Text” annotations should be interpreted, (simply stating that this attribute specifies the placement of such annotations on their respective pages), and there is substantial inconsistency among PDF viewer applications, in their respective interpretations. Whereas the Adobe® “[pdfmark Reference Manual](#)” states that the `Rect` attribute specifies the vertex co-ordinates “of the rectangle defining the open note window”, (which might be construed as referring to the pop-up window in its open state), it appears that few — if indeed any — of the currently available PDF viewer applications have adopted this interpretation. All *do* appear to agree that the *upper left corner* of the annotation *icon* should be placed at the page co-ordinates which are derived by combination of the *lower left*  $x$  ordinate, and the *upper right*  $y$  ordinate, as specified for the `Rect` attribute; there is significantly less agreement on what effect, if any, the width, and height of the rectangle, which may be deduced from the `Rect` attribute specification, should have. All viewers appear to use a fixed size icon, and an arbitrarily chosen size, and placement, for the associated pop-up window; at least one viewer *does* appear to interpret the derived annotation width, and height, as a specification of the extent to which the effective clickable region covers, or extends beyond, the region occupied by the icon itself, but most appear to ignore them altogether,



## 2.6.2. Options for Manipulating pdfnote Annotation Attributes

To the extent to which various PDF viewing applications may support them, the pdfnote macro will interpret the following optional arguments, (which *must* be placed *before* any text specifying the content of the annotation), to affect the style of pdfnote annotations:

- O Select “open” as the preferred initial state for the associated pdfnote pop-up window; no additional arguments are parsed, beyond -O itself, when interpreting this option.

This option sets the Open attribute for the associated pdfnote annotation to true; some PDF viewer applications may not reliably interpret this attribute. The example to the left is specified thus:

```
.pdfnote -O -T "A Pop-Up Note in Initially Open State" \  
This note should be displayed in the open state, when the \  
document itself is opened, if the PDF viewer supports \  
this capability.
```

it should be displayed in the initially open state, when this document is opened in a PDF viewer application which *does* correctly interpret the attribute.

- T "**Title Bar Text . . .**"

Define text to be displayed within the title bar of the pop-up window which is associated with a pdfnote annotation; requires *exactly one* following argument, in addition to the -T itself; this argument should be a text string, and should be enclosed in programming quotes (ASCII 34), if spaces are to be included. Any of the preceding pdfnote annotation examples illustrate how this option is used.

This option causes its text string argument to be passed as the value of the Title attribute, when invoking the pdfmark macro to create the associated pdfnote annotation; this appears to enjoy better support than the Open attribute, among PDF viewer applications, but support is by no means universal.

- C <red-value> <green-value> <blue-value>

Specifies the background colour, which is to be used for the pdfnote annotation’s icon, and also, if supported by the PDF viewer application, for the frame, and title bar, of the associated pdfnote pop-up window. This option requires *exactly three* additional arguments, following the -C itself; each of these *must* be a decimal number, in the range 0.0 . . . 1.0, representing the intensity, in RGB colour space, for each of the red, green, and blue components of the desired colour, respectively.

If this option is not specified, the PDF viewer application will assign a default colour, for both the pdfnote icon background, and, if supported, for the pop-up window’s frame.

Specification of this option causes a Color attribute assignment to be included within the pdfmark invocation, which is used to place the associated pdfnote annotation. Differing PDF viewer applications vary in the extent to which they support this attribute. The example to the left has been specified thus:

```
.pdfnote -C 0.7 1.0 0.7 \  
-T "Icon Background Colour Example" \  
This example specifies a pale green colour, for the icon \  
background and pop-up window frame, and serves to illustrate \  
the extent to which text annotation colours are supported by \  
the current PDF viewer application.
```

which may serve as an illustration of the current PDF viewer application’s level of support for colour attributes, when applied to “Text” annotations defined using the pdfnote macro.

- I <icon-name>

Assigns an alternative icon, to indicate placement of a pdfnote annotation; requires one additional argument following the -I, indicating the style of icon which is to be assigned; the selected style is assigned, via the pdfmark macro, to the Name attribute of the annotation.

Icon styles are identified by name. The particular set of named icons, which are available, depends on the PDF viewer application which is in use; however, regardless of any non-standard choices, which a particular viewer might support, the Adobe® PDF Specification requires, as minimum, that icons named Note, Comment, Help, Insert, Key, NewParagraph, and Paragraph should be available. If no explicit icon style is selected, the Note style is used, by default.



As an example of how an alternative icon style might be used,<sup>18</sup> a keynote annotation may be placed thus:

```
.als "" PDFNOTE.QUOTED
...
.pdfnote -I Key -T "An Example Keynote Annotation" \
This is an example of a \*["" keynote annotation], which has been \
defined using the pdfnote macro, using its optional \*["" Key] \
icon selection.
```

**-PD <line-count>**

Set the number of blank lines which should be inserted, to serve as paragraph separators within pdfnote content, following an end-of-paragraph PDFNOTE.PILCROW mark, (see section 2.6.3, “Controlling pdfnote Text Layout”), within the content of pdfnote annotations. Requires *exactly one* additional argument, following -PD itself; this should be an *integer numeric* value, indicating the number of *additional* newlines which should be inserted, *following* the one which is normally placed at the end-of-paragraph mark.

Unlike each of the preceding pdfnote options, (each of which assigns annotation attributes, and applies only to the individual pdfnote instance for which it is specified), the -PD option — so named by analogy with the similarly named ms macro, which has a similar effect — *does not* assign annotation attributes; rather, it sets a count initializer, which is internal to the pdfnote macro itself. Its effect is “sticky”: that is, it applies not only to the pdfnote instance which specifies it, but also to any pdfnote instances which follow it, unless it is specified again, with a different — or even (albeit redundantly) with the same — line-count value, for any such following instance.

- Suppresses interpretation of any further pdfnote macro arguments as options. This is *not*, strictly, an option *per se*, but may be required in any case where the following argument is intended to begin the annotation content, when it could be mistaken for an optional feature specification.

### 2.6.3. Controlling pdfnote Text Layout

The Adobe® PDF and pdfmark specifications make very little provision for control of the layout of the content of pop-up windows which are associated with “Text” annotations, stipulating only that the size and font should be chosen by the PDF viewer application, which usually offers little, or no opportunity for user participation in these choices.

Generally, PDF viewer applications will open annotation pop-up windows when required, each with default width and height as specified by the viewer application itself. The annotation content is displayed in a font which is also specified by the viewer application; this is usually a proportionally spaced font, and there is no mechanism for choosing an alternative. The content is nominally interpreted as a single-line of text, which flows to fit the width of the window; text flow is facilitated by insertion of “soft” line breaks, coincident with white space, resulting in a flush left, ragged right layout. The extent to which the author of the annotation may influence this layout is limited to insertion of “hard” line breaks; these will always be rendered as such, when the text is displayed in the pop-up window, producing the effect of a paragraph break.

When placing an annotation, using the pdfnote macro, if the author wishes to affect the text layout by inserting a hard line break, this *must* be represented by the literal “\n” character sequence. Unfortunately, simply specifying this character sequence within any argument to the pdfnote macro, (as is necessary to include it within the annotation content), presents a non-trivial challenge to the author: the “\” character introduces a troff escape, and when it is followed by the “n” character, the escape is interpreted as a reference to a numeric register, which is resolved according to whatever follows. Simply escaping the “\” character itself, at the point of the pdfnote macro call, does *not* present a satisfactory solution to this challenge, since *multiple levels* of escaping are required, to survive interpretation through an indeterminate number of internal macro call levels. Thus, to circumvent this challenge, and to robustly facilitate inclusion of the literal “\n” character sequence within the pdfmark output stream, the pdfmark macros define the following named strings:

**PDFNOTE.NEWLINE**

A string representation of the “\n” character sequence, which is encoded in a manner which, when interpreted within the immediate arguments to the pdfnote macro, re-encodes the sequence such that its ultimate interpretation is deferred, until it is eventually written, as a literal representation of a *single* “\n” character sequence, to the pdfmark output stream. Use of PDFNOTE.NEWLINE is analogous to that of

18. While this example serves, primarily, to illustrate the the selection of the “Key” icon style, for the associated pdfnote annotation, it also illustrates the use of PDFNOTE.QUOTED interpolation, (with aliasing to \\*[“” ...text...] as document-local shorthand), to introduce double quoted text within the content of the annotation.

PDFNOTE.PILCROW, which is described below, and is illustrated in previous examples within [section 2.6](#), “Annotating a PDF Document using Pop-Up Notes”.

#### PDFNOTE.PILCROW

So named for its association with the typographer’s pilcrow mark, when interpreted within the immediate arguments to the pdfnote macro, this marks the end of a logical paragraph, and is re-encoded as a (possibly recurring) sequence of `\*[PDFNOTE.NEWLINE]` re-encodings. At least one such re-encoding is *always* inserted; this is then repeated as many times as specified by the `<line-count>` argument to the last-specified, if any, `-PD` option — see [section 2.6.2](#), “Options for Manipulating pdfnote Annotation Attributes” — to the immediate, or any preceding, instance of pdfnote macro use. The effect is to introduce a new logical paragraph, within the content of the pdfnote annotation, separated from the preceding paragraph, of which the end is indicated by the `\*[PDFNOTE.PILCROW]` mark, by `<line-count>` blank lines.

In the absence of any preceding `-PD` option specification, the effect of `\*[PDFNOTE.PILCROW]` becomes *identical* to that of a single instance of `\*[PDFNOTE.NEWLINE]`.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.7. Synchronizing Output and pdfmark Contexts

It has been noted previously, that the pdfview macro, (see [section 2.2](#), “Selecting an Initial Document View”), the pdfinfo macro, (see [section 2.3](#), “Adding Document Identification Meta-Data”), and the pdfhref macro, when used to create a document outline, (see [section 2.4](#), “Creating a Document Outline”), do not immediately write their pdfmark output to the PostScript® data stream; instead, they cache their output, in a groff diversion, in the case of the pdfview and pdfinfo macros, or in an ordered collection of strings and numeric registers, in the case of the document outline, until a more appropriate time for copying it out. In the case of pdfview and pdfinfo “meta-data”, this “more appropriate time” is explicitly chosen by the user; in the case of document outline data, *some* cached data may be implicitly written out as the document outline is compiled, but there will *always* be some remaining data, which must be explicitly flushed out, before the groff formatting process is allowed to complete.

To allow the user to choose when cached pdfmark data is to be flushed to the output stream, the pdfmark macro package provides the pdfsync macro, (to synchronize the cache and output states). In its simplest form, it is invoked without arguments, i.e.

#### **.pdfsync**

This form of invocation ensures that *both* the “meta-data cache”, containing pdfview and pdfinfo data, *and* the “outline cache”, containing any previously uncommitted document outline data, are flushed; ideally, this should be included in a groff “end macro”, to ensure that *both* caches are flushed, before groff terminates.

Occasionally, it may be desirable to flush either the “meta-data cache”, without affecting the “outline cache”, or vice-versa, at a user specified time, prior to reaching the end of the document. This may be accomplished, by invoking the pdfsync macro with an argument, i.e.

#### **.pdfsync M**

to flush only the “meta-data cache”, or

#### **.pdfsync O**

to flush only the “outline cache”.

The “meta-data cache” can normally be safely flushed in this manner, at any time *after* output of the first page has started; (it may cause formatting problems, most notably the appearance of unwanted white space, if flushed earlier, or indeed, if flushed immediately after a page transition, but before the output of the content on the new page has commenced). Caution is required, however, when explicitly flushing the “outline cache”, since if the outline is to be subsequently extended, then the first outline entry after flushing *must* be specified at level 1. Nevertheless, such explicit flushing may occasionally be necessary; for example, the TC macro in the spdf.tmac package, (see [section 3.1](#), “Using pdfmark Macros with the ms Macro Package”), invokes “.pdfsync O” to ensure that the outline for the “body” section of the document is terminated, *before* it commences the formatting of the table of contents section.

---

19. Neither PDFNOTE.NEWLINE, nor PDFNOTE.PILCROW were provided in any version of the pdfmark macros, which was published before Feb-2023. Earlier versions provided PDFLB, (for PDF line-break), as an alternative; it offered a similar capability to PDFNOTE.NEWLINE, but its implementation was flawed, and was not robust. The flawed implementation of PDFLB is still supported, but it is now considered to be deprecated, and using it is not recommended; either PDFNOTE.NEWLINE, or PDFNOTE.PILCROW should be used instead.

### 3. PDF Document Layout

The `pdfmark` macros described in the preceding section, (see section 2, “Exploiting PDF Document Features”), provide no inherent document formatting capability of their own. However, they may be used in conjunction with any other `groff` macro package of the user’s choice,<sup>20</sup> to add such capability.

In preparing this document, the standard `ms` macro package, supplied as a component of the GNU Troff distribution, has been employed. To facilitate the use of the `pdfmark` macros with the `ms` macros, a binding macro package, `spdf.tmac`, has been created. The use of this binding macro package is described in the following section, (see section 3.1, “Using `pdfmark` Macros with the `ms` Macro Package”); it may also serve as an example to users of other standard `groff` macro packages, as to how the `pdfmark` macros may be employed with their chosen primary macro package.

#### 3.1. Using `pdfmark` Macros with the `ms` Macro Package

The use of the binding macro package, `spdf.tmac`, allows for the use of the `pdfmark` macros in conjunction with the `ms` macros, simply by issuing a `groff` command of the form<sup>21</sup>

```
groff [-Tps|-Tpdf] -mspdf [-options ...] file ...
```

When using the `spdf.tmac` package, the `groff` input files may be marked up using any of the standard `ms` macros to specify document formatting, while PDF features may be added, using any of the `pdfmark` macros described previously, (see section 2, “Exploiting PDF Document Features”). Additionally, `spdf.tmac` defines a number of convenient extensions to the `ms` macro set, to better accommodate the use of PDF features within the `ms` formatting framework, and to address a number of `ms` document layout issues, which require special handling when producing PDF documents. These additional macros, and the issues they are intended to address, are described below.

##### 3.1.1. Document Structuring Considerations when using `ms` Macros

Every published document *must* incorporate, as a minimum, a document body; additionally, many documents may include *front-matter*, which precedes the body, and *end-matter*, which follows the body. Additionally, when publishing as a PDF document, it may be desired to incorporate a document outline, referring to chapter, or section headings, within the document body.

Conventionally, when a document is to include a *table of contents*, this should be placed at the end of the *front-matter*.

Traditional AT&T implementations of `ms` provide a number of macros to control front-matter style, (of which only the “released paper” style, selected by use of the `RP` macro, is supported by `groff ms`), accompanied by several macros to specify front-matter content, (also supported by `groff ms`). Both traditional, and `groff ms` implementations also provide a small set of macros to facilitate compilation of a table of contents; they do not, however, offer any standard facilities for creation of a corresponding document outline.

Unfortunately, the traditional `ms` method of compiling the table of contents results in it being printed at the end of the document, rather than in its normal position, at the end of the front-matter. Traditionally, this unusual placement of the table of contents would be corrected, by manual collation, after printing; emulation of this mechanical collation technique presents a challenge, when the document is to be published in PDF format.

Taking up the challenge of collating the various document sections into the correct order, when producing any PDF document, will necessitate special consideration during the PDF publication process; this will be discussed in greater depth, in section 4, “The PDF Publishing Process”. To accommodate any specialized processing which may be required, `spdf.tmac` provides:–

- Macros to isolate the *front-matter*, (excluding the *table of contents*), from the body of the document.
- Further macros to compile a table of contents, and a corresponding PDF document outline, deriving both from section headings, (see section 3.1.2.1, “The `XH` and `XN` Macros”).
- A redefined implementation of the `TC` macro, (to be invoked at the end of the document, as in traditional `ms` usage); this isolates the table of contents from its preceding front-matter (if any), and from the document body, to facilitate the collation process.

---

20. Any of the standard `groff` “full-service” macro packages, `me`, `mm`, `mom`, or `ms`, or indeed, any “home-brew” macro package provided by the user, should be suitable for the purpose; regardless of the chosen “full-service” macro package, it is likely that a binding package, specific to this choice, will be required.

21. Once again, as noted in footnote<sup>6</sup> to section 2, “Exploiting PDF Document Features”, do not specify any `-Tdev` option, other than `-Tps`, or `-Tpdf`; specify `-Tpdf`, if you wish to avoid the conversion of PostScript<sup>®</sup> output to PDF, which will be required if you specify `-Tps`, or if you omit the `-Tdev` option entirely.

### 3.1.2. Using `ms` Section Headings in PDF Documents

Traditionally, `ms` provides the `NH` and `SH` macros to introduce section headings. However, in traditional `ms` implementations, there is no standard mechanism for generating a table of contents entry based on the text of the section heading; neither is there any recognized standard method for establishing a cross reference link, or a document outline reference, to the section.

To address this limitation of traditional `ms` implementations, the `spdf.tmac` binding macro package provides the `XH` and `XN` macros;<sup>22</sup> (see section 3.1.2.1, “The `XH` and `XN` Macros”), to be used in conjunction with the `SH` and `NH` macros respectively; each of these identifies, by specification of appropriate arguments, text which is to be incorporated into the section heading, duplicated within the PDF document outline, and in the table of contents.

#### 3.1.2.1. The `XH` and `XN` Macros

Formalized from the release of `groff-1.23` onwards;<sup>23</sup> and nominally intended to be used following `SH` and `NH` respectively, the calling syntax for this pair of `spdf.tmac` macros is specified as:-

```
.SH
.XH [-N <name>] [-S] [-X] <outline-level> <heading-text> ...

.NH <outline-level>
.XN [-N <name>] [-S] [-X] <heading-text> ...
```

In either case, the `<heading-text>...` arguments are incorporated into the document body, formatted as section heading text. Additionally, these same `<heading-text>...` arguments, (prefixed by the content of the `SN` string, in the `XN` case), are incorporated into the PDF document outline, at the level specified by the `<outline-level>` argument, and they are made available to the user-definable `XH-UPDATE-TOC` call-back macro, (see section 3.1.2.3, “The `XH-UPDATE-TOC` Macro”), to support creation of a corresponding entry in the document’s table of contents.

In both cases, the supported macro options<sup>24</sup> are:-

- N** `<name>`  
Create a `pdfhref` destination, with the specified `<name>`, and associate it with the corresponding section heading, as designated by `<heading-text>`.
- S** Strip any font-family selection escape sequences, which may have been specified, from a copy of `<heading-text>`, before incorporating this into the document outline; (this is necessary when such escape sequences are present, to avoid verbatim rendition of the escape sequences themselves, within the text of the document outline).
- X** Ensure that any `pdfhref` destination name, specified by the **-N** `<name>` option, is included within the document’s cross-reference dictionary.

#### 3.1.2.2. The `XH-INIT` and `XN-INIT` Macros

This pair of macros serve as context initialization hooks; called by the default implementations of the `XH` and `XN` macros respectively, without arguments, *before* `XH-UPDATE-TOC` is called. By default, both return immediately, *without* performing *any* action. However, users may override either, or both, to perform any desired activity ... e.g. to save context for subsequent use by any user-defined macro, which may have been provided to override the default implementation of `XH-UPDATE-TOC`.

#### 3.1.2.3. The `XH-UPDATE-TOC` Macro

This macro is called by both `XH` and `XN`, (there is no corresponding `XN-UPDATE-TOC` equivalent, since none is required to support the default `XH` and `XN` implementations), to propagate content from the specified section heading arguments to the document’s table of contents. From `groff-1.23` onwards, a rudimentary default implementation of

22. On a technical note, since `groff-1.23`, the `groff` implementation of `ms` itself has incorporated basic infrastructure providing `XH` and `XN` macros, to facilitate duplication of section heading text into the table of contents; `spdf.tmac` builds on top of this infrastructure, *indirectly* redefining `XH` and `XN`, by provision of macros `XH-REPLACEMENT` and `XN-REPLACEMENT` respectively, to accommodate the duplication of section heading text into the PDF document outline, in addition to the table of contents. Use of this indirect technique is recommended, whenever redefinition of `XH`, or `XN`, is desired.

23. Prior to the release of `groff-1.23`, a prototypical implementation of `spdf.tmac` was introduced with `groff-1.19.2`; this prototype included an implementation of the `XN` macro, but it did *not* provide `XH`, nor did it support the `XH-INIT`, `XN-INIT`, and `XH-UPDATE-TOC` call-back features, nor the `XH-REPLACEMENT`, and `XN-REPLACEMENT` capabilities.

24. *None* of these options are supported by the underlying `ms` implementations of `XH` or `XN`, as implemented from `groff-1.23` onwards. Prior to `groff-1.23`, only the `-N <name>` and `-X` options are supported by the prototypical `spdf.tmac` implementation of `XN`, as provided from `groff-1.19.2` onwards.

XH-UPDATE-TOC is provided within the standard ms macro suite; however, it is anticipated that the user will override this default implementation, in order to achieve more effective control of table of contents formatting.

When writing a replacement for the XH-UPDATE-TOC macro, it should be implemented such that it will interpret arguments as specified in the prototype

```
.XH-UPDATE-TOC <outline-level> [<section-number>] <heading-text> ...
```

in which the <outline-level> and <heading-text> arguments are the same as those specified for the XH, or the NH/XN call sequence, from which XH-UPDATE-TOC itself is called; the <section-number> argument is *always* specified, when XH-UPDATE-TOC is called by XN, (and *never* when called by XH); when present, it represents the value of the SN string, which prevails at the time of the invoking XN call, and is simply processed as a prefix to the <heading-text> argument.

The default implementation of XH-UPDATE-TOC offers only rudimentary formatting of the resultant table of contents entry; the <outline-level> argument is simply ignored, and the remaining arguments are passed to the standard ms table of contents generating capability, in a form which is equivalent to

```
.XS  
\&[<section-number> ]<heading-text> ...  
.XE
```

As an example (with abridged comments) of how XH-UPDATE-TOC may be redefined, to achieve more creative formatting of a table of contents, this publication substitutes the following document-local implementation:

```
.ds XNVS1 0.50v  \" leading for top level  
.ds XNVS2 0.15v  \" leading at nesting level increment  
.ds XNVS3 0.30v  \" leading following nested group  
. .  
.de XH-UPDATE-TOC  
.  XS  
.    if r tc*hl {\ \  
.      \" Compute additional leading at <outline-level> change  
.      \"  
.      ie \\$1>1 {\ \  
.          ie \\$1>\\n[tc*hl] .sp \\*[XNVS2]  
.          el .if \\n[tc*hl]>\\$1 .sp \\*[XNVS3]  
.      } \  
.      el .sp \\*[XNVS1]  
.    } \  
. .  
.    \" Record <outline-level> of this entry, to compare with next  
.    \"  
.    ie \\$1 .nr tc*hl \\$1  
.    el .nr tc*hl 1  
. .  
.    \" Set indentation, and insert <section-number> for this entry  
.    \"  
.    nop \\h'\\n[tc*hl]-1m'\\$2\  
. .  
.    \" Append <heading-text> for this entry  
.    \"  
.    shift 2  
.    nop \\h'1.5n'\\$*\\h'0.5n'  
.  XE  
. .
```

Used in conjunction with NH and XN, this uses document-local register `tc*hl` to track, group, and indent the table of contents entries for this document, on the basis of their specified <outline-level> specifications, separating <outline-level> groups by additional line spacing, (having an effect similar to that of increased leading), as controlled by the XNVS1, XNVS2, and XNVS3 document-local strings, at each change in <outline-level>.

### 3.1.2.4. The XH-REPLACEMENT and XN-REPLACEMENT Macros

The default XH and XN macro implementations *reserve* this pair of macro names, to facilitate *redefinition* of XH and XN behaviour respectively, while retaining the ability to take advantage of first-time-of-use infrastructure initialization logic, which is incorporated within the respective default implementations.

It is important to understand that, in conventional usage, neither of these macros should ever be called directly. Rather, either one, or both, should be defined, *after* loading `s.tmac`, and *before* calling either XH, or XN for the first time; the defined implementations are then invoked when XH, or XN are called, respectively.

User-written XH-REPLACEMENT and XN-REPLACEMENT macros may implement *any* desired functionality. They are not constrained to emulation of the default XH and XN capabilities; however, it is *strongly* recommended that they do so, while adding any required extended features. For example, `spdf.tmac` defines both replacement macros thus:<sup>25</sup>

```
.de XH-REPLACEMENT als
.als XN-REPLACEMENT XH-REPLACEMENT
.am XH-REPLACEMENT
.  \\$0-INIT
.  rm spdf:refname
.  als spdf:bm.define spdf:bm.basic
.  while d spdf:XH\\$1 \\{\\
.      spdf:XH\\$1 \\$*
.      shift \\n[spdf:argc]
.  \\}
.  rr spdf:argc
.  if '\\$1'--' .shift
.  spdf:\\$0.format \\$@
..
```

with macros XH-N, XH-S, and XH-X defined locally, extending the default behaviour, such that the non-default -N, -S, and -X option flags are interpreted, (and register `spdf:argc` is set, to control the `while` loop which does so); it further extends the default behaviour, by using locally defined macros, `spdf:XH.format`, and `spdf:XN.format`, (dynamically modified by `spdf:bm.basic`, `spdf:bm.define`, and `spdf:refname`), to propagate the specified section heading text to the PDF document outline, in addition to reproducing the default propagation to the document's table of contents, by calling XH-UPDATE-TOC.

### 3.1.3. Layout Adjustment to Support Duplex Printing

When formatting a PDF document for on-screen viewing, there is no particular need to distinguish between the layouts for even-numbered and odd-numbered pages; thus, it is common to set the page offset and line length to establish equal width margins to left and right of the displayed text; for example, in `ms`:

```
.nr PO 2.0c
.nr LL 17.0c
```

will create two centimetre wide margins on both sides of the page, when formatting for display on the equivalent of A4 paper, in portrait orientation.

Conversely, if preparing output for a hard-copy device, which supports duplex printing, it may be desirable to reduce the effective page width by a “binding allowance”, which should then be added to the left-hand page margin width, when formatting odd-numbered pages, and to the right-hand page margin width, when formatting even-numbered pages. Although `ms` does not provide any standard settings, for specification of alternating page offsets for odd-numbered and even-numbered pages, it *does* implement a bottom-of-page trap-invoked macro, BT, which may be exploited to achieve the desired effect. To illustrate this, the preceding example, which set equal width left-hand and right-hand page margins, of two centimetres each, when formatting for the twenty one centimetre width of A4 paper, may be extended to accommodate the addition of an optional specification on the formatter command line:

```
groff [-Tps|-Tpdf] -mspdf [-options ...] -duplex=<width> file ...
```

This additional option might then be interpreted, within the document source, such that, if unspecified, it leaves the original layout unchanged, but when specified, it changes the initial page offset setting to the value of its `<width>` argument, while leaving the line length unchanged; this modified page offset is then propagated, through the augmented BT macro, to become effective on odd-numbered pages, while an alternative page offset is calculated, (as the effective

25. An important consideration, in the design of such replacement macros, is that they will ultimately be invoked as XH, and XN respectively; thus, they *must* interpret their arguments *exactly* as they would be passed to XH and XN, and within the macro bodies, `\\$0` will be interpreted as XH or XN, as appropriate.

value of the residual right-hand page margin, as it will become on odd-numbered pages, deduced by subtraction of the modified initial page offset, and the specified line length, from the inferred page width), for use on even-numbered pages; a possible implementation, for `ms`, might look like this:

```
.if duplex {\
.\" Prepare to format for duplex printing; first reset the initial
.\" value of the page offset, to specify the effective value which
.\" is to be used on odd-numbered pages.
.\"
.   if \B'\*[uplex]' .nr PO \*[uplex]
.\"
.\" Next, augment the bottom-of-page trap macro, to swap widths of
.\" left-hand and right-hand page margins, on each transition from
.\" odd-numbered to even-numbered page, and vice versa.
.\"
.   am BT
.   \" When advancing from an odd-numbered page, compute the value
.   \" of the original right-hand page margin width, which will be
.   \" used as the PO value on the following even-numbered page.
.   \"
.       ie o .nr PO 2i+\n[.1]u-\n[PO]u-\n[LL]u
.
.   \" Conversely, when advancing from an even-numbered page to an
.   \" odd-numbered page, we simply revert PO to its initial value.
.   \"
.       el .nr PO \n[PO]u
.
.
.\}
```

With code, such as the foregoing, in place *before* `ms` output begins, a `groff` invocation similar to:

```
groff [-Tps|-Tpdf] -mspdf [-options ...] -dpaper=a4 -duplex=2.5c file ...
```

will set the initial `PO` value to 2.5 cm, which, in conjunction with the initial `LL` setting of 17.0 cm, accounts for 19.5 cm of the 21.0 cm page width, leaving an effective right-hand page margin of 1.5 cm, implying that 1.0 cm of the initial 2.5 cm left-hand page margin represents the “binding allowance”; this will then alternate between left-hand and right-hand page margins, on odd-numbered and even-numbered pages, respectively.

To assist in understanding the foregoing duplex printing initialization code, some further explanation may be useful:

- This code is intended to be interpreted at `groff`'s outer processing level; it *must* be defined, within the input stream, to ensure that is interpreted *before* any output is generated.
- Although it may appear to be a specially defined option, `-duplex` is nothing more than an exploitation of `groff`'s standard “`-d`” option, used to define a string named “`uplex`”. Similarly, “.if duplex” is `groff`'s “`d`” logical operator, used to determine whether, or not, this “`uplex`” register has been defined; if it has, its content is expected to represent a numeric expression, which is evaluated either as a new absolute value for assignment as, or an increment to be added to, or subtracted from the initial `PO` register value.
- Within this code, all string and numeric references, as they are used in `PO` register assignments, are evaluated *immediately*; this is particularly important within the augmentation of the `BT` macro, where evaluation of initial values is required, and thus this evaluation is *deliberately not* deferred until this bottom-of-page trap macro is executed, (as may be more commonly expected within macro definitions).
- The derivation of the expression, used to set the new value of the `PO` register, when the trap is sprung at the bottom of an odd-numbered page, (so that it takes effect on the following even-numbered page), may not be obvious. The total page width is *not* represented *directly*, in any `groff` register; however, at start up, `groff` initializes the line length, as represented by the “.1” register, to a value which is two inches less than the page width, as defined in `groff`'s `papersize.tmac` file; thus, “`2i+\n[.1]u`” yields the value of the actual page width, and subsequent subtraction of both the user specified initial `PO` and `LL` values yields the effective initial width of the right-hand page margin; when this is subsequently assigned as a new `PO` value, it has the effect of interchanging the left-hand and right-hand margin widths, and thus, moves the binding allowance alternately to the left-hand side of odd-numbered pages, and to the right-hand side of even-numbered pages.



## 4. The PDF Publishing Process

GNU `troff`, in common with other `troff` implementations, is a *single pass* document formatter; while this may support a high level of operational performance, it does impose certain restrictions on formatting capability. In particular, when any computed content is to be interpolated into the formatted output stream, that content *must* have been computed *before* the point at which interpolation is to occur. Some examples of such computed content, which *cannot* be interpolated with only a single formatting pass, include:–

- Interpolation of “Page *n* of *nm*” annotations within page headers, or footers; the value of the *last* page number, *m*, is unknown until the final page has been formatted, yet it is required *before* the first such annotation is to be interpolated, (typically, when formatting the *first* page). At least *two* formatting passes are required, to interpolate such annotations.
- Placement of a “Table of Contents” in its traditional location, *without* the need for manual collation, (or other post-processing operation), *after* completion of `troff` formatting. In-place formatting of a table of contents requires knowledge of the page numbers, to which the table of contents entries refer, at the point of interpolation; this requires an initial formatting pass, to collect the references into an auxiliary file, which can then be included at the appropriate location, during a further formatting pass.
- Interpolation of intra-document cross references, (especially in the case of forward references), in which the references include page numbers, or a section numbers; as in the case of in-place table of contents interpolation, this requires one (or more) initial formatting passes, in which reference data is collected into an auxiliary file, for inclusion in subsequent passes. Furthermore, when publishing a PDF document, in which cross references are to be represented as dynamic `pdfhref` links, the bounding box co-ordinates for such links *must* be computed *before* the link text is interpolated; this computation is most conveniently performed during preliminary formatting passes, captured in an auxiliary file, and subsequently reinterpreted during a final publication formatting pass.

These single pass formatting limitations *can* be mitigated, by adoption of a *multiple pass* formatting stratagem. To facilitate this, for publication of PDF documents, the `groff` program suite includes the `pdfroff` program<sup>26</sup> (see section 4.1, “The `pdfroff` Program”). This provides a wrapper around `groff` itself; it performs multiple preliminary formatting passes, capturing reference data by filtering it from the `stderr` output stream, and storing it to a temporary intermediate file. This intermediate file is then reinterpreted; along with the original document source, during each successive pass, either until its content stabilizes, or it becomes apparent that stability is unlikely to be achieved, before ultimate reinterpretation to produce the finished PDF document.

It may be noted that, in the absence of a mechanism for passing collected reference data from one formatting pass to the next, multiple pass processing would serve no useful purpose. Fortunately, this is not a problem, because `groff` supports two possible mechanisms for collection, and passing of reference data between passes:–

- The data may be recorded, using `groff`’s `write` request, in an intermediate file which has been *explicitly* initialized by the `open`, (or `opena`), request. This technique requires `groff` to be run in its “unsafe” mode, (enabled by the “-U” option), and is not supported by traditional `troff` implementations. Neither `groff`’s `pdfmark` macros, nor the `pdfroff` command, depend on the use of this mechanism; however, users may choose to adopt it for their own purposes, (e.g. in-line interpolation of a table of contents).
- The data may be written — either by use of the `tm` request, or a construct such as `groff`’s `\O` escape — to, and filtered from, the `stderr` data stream. This technique *is* used by `groff`’s `pdfmark` macros, to report `pdfhref` data, and by `pdfroff`, to make this available in subsequent formatting passes.

### 4.1. The `pdfroff` Program

Implemented as a Bourne shell script, and thus suitable for deployment on POSIX platforms such as GNU/Linux and contemporary Unix systems;<sup>27</sup> `pdfroff` serves as a multi-pass front-end driver for `groff` itself; as such, it offers mitigation of those limitations of single-pass processing which have been identified in [the preceding introduction](#).

---

26. The `pdfroff` program was developed in tandem with the `pdfmark` macros themselves, and is the tool which has been used to format this document itself. Unavailable at the publication time of early releases of this document, later releases of `groff` include support for the `-Tpdf` post-processor, which provides similar mitigating features. Unlike `pdfroff`, which requires only a Bourne shell operating environment, the `-Tpdf` back-end is written in Perl, and thus requires an operating environment with a functional Perl interpreter; this may limit its suitability for use on some host platforms.

27. As a Bourne shell script, `pdfroff` is not *natively* supported on MS-Windows; on this platform, it may be supported by use of a third party application suite, such as Cygwin or MSYS, (or other alternative), which provides a Bourne shell command line interpreter.

Besides external dependencies on some standard POSIX utilities, including `cat`, `grep`, `sed`, `awk`, and `diff`, together with `groff`, and the GhostScript interpreter, for final production of PDF output, the implementation of `pdfroff` assumes only standard Bourne shell interpreter syntax, (subject to a requirement that the shell itself *must* support shell functions, expressed in terms of the original *standard* Bourne shell function syntax — i.e. support for interpretation of the `function` keyword, as introduced by the Korn shell, and subsequently adopted by the GNU Bourne Again Shell, is *not* required).

Formal documentation for `pdfroff` is provided in its accompanying [pdfroff\(1\) Unix manual page](#)<sup>28</sup>. In common with the majority of Unix manual pages, this documentation may be found to be rather terse; thus, a more informal discussion, supported by examples relating to the publication of this document itself, may be found below.

#### 4.1.1. Principles of pdfroff Operation

The operation of `pdfroff` may be characterized as a sequence of *six* distinct processing phases:–

1. Initialization: on commencement of `pdfroff` processing, the script sets up its shell environment, checks for availability of each of the required `cat`, `grep`, `sed`, `awk`, `groff`, `diff`, and GhostScript helper programs, and then parses the command line with which it was invoked. Options which are documented, within the `pdfroff(1)` manual page, as being specific to `pdfroff`, are interpreted in place, recording their effects within the shell environment; other options, and non-option arguments are collected into a deferred options list, and an input files list, respectively, to be passed on for repeated processing by `groff`.

In the event that standard input is *explicitly* enumerated within the list of input files, or the input files list is empty, (in which case standard input is considered to have been *implicitly* enumerated), then standard input is read by `cat`, and redirected to a temporary file, whence it may be replayed, as required, into the input stream for each subsequent `groff` processing pass.

2. Reference analysis: following initialization, and provided the `--no-reference-dictionary` option has *not* been specified, `pdfroff` enters a loop in which `groff` is executed at least twice, and at most three times, (a fourth cycle of the loop may be initiated, but `groff` will not be executed within it), to compile a reference map for the PDF document, which is to become the ultimate `pdfroff` output. During each of these reference analysis passes, the ultimate `groff` output is discarded, while the standard error stream is captured in a temporary file, whence reference data is filtered, to produce a reference map which is specific to the discarded `groff` output; this will eventually become a reference map which reflects the final state of the ultimate `pdfroff` output document.

A further, more comprehensive, description of this phase of `pdfroff` operation may be found in the later [section 4.1.2, “How pdfroff Resolves Cross References”](#).

3. Front-matter layout: executed *only* when the `--stylesheet=<filename>` option *has* been specified, and the `--no-pdf-output` option *has not* been specified, within the list of arguments passed to the `pdfroff` command, in this processing phase the specified stylesheet file, optionally augmented by additional information which is embedded within the document input file stream, is processed by `groff`, to produce a PostScript® rendition of an optional cover sheet, and additional (optional) front-matter, which is to be placed at the beginning of the eventual PDF output document.

Once again, this phase of operation will be explored further, in the later [section 4.1.4, “Using a pdfroff Style-Sheet to Specify Document Front-Matter”](#).

4. Table of contents generation: this phase is *always* executed, *unless* either the `--no-pdf-output` option, or the `--no-toc-relocation` option is specified, on the `pdfroff` command line, or as a result of evaluation of hints within the document input file stream, this phase of operation implements a rudimentary mechanism for collation of the final PDF output document, emulating the traditional `groff` technique, whereby table of contents entries are collected into a diversion, printed at the end of the document, and subsequently relocated manually, to their normal position between the front-matter, (if any), and the body of the document. Methods for controlling this phase of operation are further developed, and explained in [section 4.1.5, “How pdfroff Collates Tables of Contents”](#).

5. Document body formatting: this phase is also *always* executed, *unless* the `--no-pdf-output` option is specified; it is responsible for formatting the body of the document, compiling it to PostScript® code, in preparation for combination with the front-matter, and table of contents components from the preceding two phases, to produce the final output document. Further details of this phase of `pdfroff` operation may be found in [section 4.1.6, “How pdfroff Formats a Document Body”](#).

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28. See <https://osdn.net/users/keith/pt/groff-pdfmark/wiki/pdfroff%281%29manpage> for a PDF rendition of this manual page.

6. Final PDF document production: unless suppressed, by specification of the `--no-pdf-output` option, completion of phases 3, 4, and 5 results in the production of between one and three intermediate output files, each of which is in PostScript<sup>®</sup> format. Regardless of whether the final output is desired in PostScript<sup>®</sup> format, or is to be converted to PDF, this final processing phase uses the GhostScript post-processor to combine<sup>29</sup> the intermediate files, creating a single output document file, as described in [section 4.1.7, “How pdfroff Assembles a Finished Document”](#).

On completion of this processing phase, *unless* the `--keep-temporary-files` option is in effect, all intermediate files,<sup>30</sup> created during the earlier phases of operation, are deleted, and pdfroff terminates.

#### 4.1.2. How pdfroff Resolves Cross References

As has already been noted, in [section 4.1.1, “Principles of pdfroff Operation”](#), (with the proviso that this entire phase of operation will be suppressed, if the `--no-reference-dictionary` option has been specified), pdfroff performs iterative resolution of cross references during the second phase of its operation; a maximum of four iterations are performed, in accordance with the following procedure:

- *Before* entering the first cycle of the iterative loop, the three internal shell variables, WRKFILE, REFCOPY, and REFFILE, are defined to represent the names of three working files; the first two of these represent temporary files, which will be named, and created using the best practicable mechanism afforded by the operating system, to support secure read/write access for files created, and used, by shell script processes. The third may also represent a similarly created temporary file; however, it may equally well become a permanent output file, if the `--reference-dictionary=<filename>` option is specified, in which case it will be named accordingly.
- Having specified appropriate working file names, the file identified by the REFFILE variable is created with no content, and that identified by REFCOPY is created with arbitrary (non-empty) content; the pdfroff process then enters the iterative reference resolving loop.
- At the start of each cycle of the reference resolving loop, the content of the two files identified by REFCOPY, and REFFILE is compared; if the two compare as *identical*, all references are deemed to have been resolved, and the loop is terminated. (Note that this loop termination condition *cannot* be satisfied at commencement of the first cycle of the loop, because the two files were initialized with non-identical content; thus, the first cycle *must always* be completed, and loop termination *cannot* occur before the file comparison is performed at the start of the *second* cycle).
- On commencement of a new loop cycle, when the preceding loop termination condition has *not* been satisfied, if loop execution has entered its *fourth* cycle, a warning message is written to the `stderr` stream, and the loop is terminated *without* complete resolution of references; (this is a safety measure, to prevent pdfroff becoming stuck in an interminable loop).
- When loop execution is allowed to continue into a new cycle, the content of the file represented by the REFCOPY variable, whether defined by initialization, or as carried forward from the immediately preceding cycle, is discarded, and the content of the corresponding file represented by the REFFILE variable is moved into its place; thus, at commencement of each new reference resolution cycle, the REFCOPY file represents the content of the REFFILE file, as it stood at the end of the *immediately preceding* cycle, (or as initialized, if executing the *first* cycle).
- Following the update of the REFCOPY file content, loop execution continues by running groff, processing all specified input files, in their specified order, to collect analytical data relating to the eventual structure of the finished document. The required analytical data is written to groff's `stderr` output stream, as directed by the pdfhref macro, either via `tm` requests, or by exploitation of groff's extended ‘\O’ capability, as originally developed for use by the grohtml processors, to map the page co-ordinates for pdfhref link bounding boxes; `stderr` output is captured in the file designated by the WRKFILE variable, simply overwriting any content which was collected during preceding loop execution cycles; groff's intermediate `stdout` stream data is discarded, *without* further processing by the groffs post-processor.
- Still within the loop execution cycle, the file designated as WRKFILE is reprocessed, using a simple awk filter to extract pertinent reference dictionary content, redirecting it into the file named by the REFFILE variable.

---

29. Strictly, if there is *only one* intermediate output file, and the `--emit-ps` option is in effect, no combination is actually required; however, the single intermediate output file is reprocessed through GhostScript, regardless.

30. If the `--reference-dictionary=<filename>` option has been specified, the reference dictionary ceases to be classified as an intermediate file, and is not deleted when pdfroff terminates.

- Although *not* strictly necessary for reference resolution,<sup>31</sup> if executing the *first* cycle — and *not* repeated in any subsequent cycle — of the reference resolving loop, the working file designated by `WRKFILE` is further reprocessed, to facilitate extraction, and evaluation, of optional `pdfroff` processing hints, as described in section 4.1.3, “Using In-Document Hints to Control `pdfroff` Processing Options”.
- As the final step, within each execution cycle of the reference resolving loop, the content of the `WRKFILE` is reprocessed one final time,<sup>32</sup> extracting dynamically propagated document content, and redirecting it into designated files, as identified by hints from the preceding step. On completion of this final step, execution of the reference resolving loop continues with the commencement of a new cycle.

On normal termination of the preceding loop, one further processing step is required to complete the resolution of *internal* cross references, and to compile the final reference dictionary:

- The `WRKFILE` is processed one final time, using a further `awk` filter to extract any `grohtml` records, which have been generated due to the placement of zero-width markers, inserted by the `pdfhref` macro, to mark the position of link “hot-spots”, within the document; the `awk` filter extracts the page number, and page co-ordinate references from these records, and reformats them as ‘`pdfhref Z`’ records, which are then appended to the `REFCOPY` file, for subsequent use during the later phases of final document production.

Of the three working files, created during this phase of `pdfroff` processing, the `WRKFILE` is not required in any later processing phase; the `REFFILE` *may* be exported as a permanent *external* reference dictionary, otherwise it too is of no further use; only the `REFCOPY` file, which incorporates *both* the *external*, and the *internal* constituents of the reference dictionary, is reused in later phases of the publishing process. Nonetheless, all three remain in place until the `pdfroff` process itself terminates, when *all* temporary files, which the process has created, are normally<sup>33</sup> deleted.

### 4.1.3. Using In-Document Hints to Control `pdfroff` Processing Options

Although it has been informally supported since the release of `groff-1.22.3`, when the `spdf.tmac` binding macros for `ms` added the request:

```
.tm pdfroff-option:set toc_relocation=enabled
```

within the implementation of their `TC` macro, and `pdfroff` added code to retrieve the resultant output from the reference resolving `WRKFILE`, to interpret the implied hint, such that the effect of the `--no-toc-relocation` option is assumed, *unless* the associated hint is actually present in the `WRKFILE` data stream, this feature was not formally implemented until the `groff-pdfmark-20230317.1` release of `pdfroff`.

The formal implementation, of this feature now depends on the use of the new `pdfroff` macro,<sup>34</sup> with the hint in `spdf.tmac` now being specified as:

```
.if d pdfroff .pdfroff option toc_relocation=enabled
```

More generally, usage of the `pdfroff` macro, to specify optional processing hints, takes the form:

```
.pdfroff option <variable-name>=<value>
```

with `<variable-name>` (currently) being restricted<sup>35</sup> to either of `toc_file`, or `toc_relocation`, the effects of which will be considered further, in section 4.1.5, “How `pdfroff` Collates Tables of Contents”, or alternatively, the variable `preserve_blank_pages`, which accepts a value of `toc`, `body`, or `all`, to control how *entirely* blank pages are processed during collation of tables of contents, within the body of the document, or in both of these contexts, respectively, thus providing an in-document alternative to the use of the `--no-kill-null-pages` option; (see section 4.1.7, “How `pdfroff` Assembles a Finished Document”).

31. Releases of `pdfroff`, pre-dating `groff-pdfmark-20230317.1`, performed this hint evaluation *after* completion of the reference resolution loop; however, to the extent that such hints *may* result in propagation of dynamically generated document content through the `WRKFILE`, which *may* impact the reference resolution process, (e.g. due to references embedded in a dynamically generated table of contents), the effect of this early evaluation may become significant.

32. This final step, within the reference resolution loop, was not performed in any release of `pdfroff` pre-dating `groff-pdfmark-20230317.1`; in earlier releases, a new cycle of the loop was initiated *immediately* following the update of `REFFILE` content.

33. Temporary files, created by `pdfroff`, are normally deleted on process termination, *unless* the `--keep-temporary-files` option has been specified.

34. The `pdfroff` macro is defined in the new macro file, `pdfroff.tmac`; this is loaded each time `pdfroff` invokes `groff`, and is not intended to be used in any other context; doing so may produce unpredictable results.

35. The `pdfroff` implementations, released with `groff-1.22.3` (and later), and in `groff-pdfmark` up to, and including, `groff-pdfmark-20230317.1`, did *not* impose this restriction; consequently, these earlier `pdfroff` releases may be vulnerable to an arbitrary code execution attack, when processing untrusted document mark-up.

#### 4.1.4. Using a `pdfroff` Style-Sheet to Specify Document Front-Matter

Of the six `pdfroff` processing phases, identified in [section 4.1.1, “Principles of `pdfroff` Operation”](#), *three* perform document formatting, producing three separate output document components in PostScript® format, in preparation for collation, and final assembly of the finished document, either as a finished PostScript® document, or, more commonly, as a finished PDF document. In the first of these, which [section 4.1.1](#) identifies as phase no. 3 in the enumeration of processing phases, `pdfroff` applies a specified style-sheet, in conjunction with meta-data abstracted from the primary document source file, or files;<sup>36</sup> to format the document front-matter; this is saved, in its own individual (temporary) PostScript® component file, to be collated, and subsequently assembled into the finished document, becoming the *first* component of the finished document output file.

As already noted, in [section 4.1.1](#), style-sheet processing is performed only if `pdfroff` is invoked with a command, such as that which may have been used to format this document itself, which includes an *explicit* formal specification for the “`--stylesheet=<filename>`” option, in the form:

```
pdfroff -msof --stylesheet=cover.ms pdfmark.ms > pdfmark.pdf
```

This causes `pdfroff` to perform a *single groff* formatting pass, in which the input file “`cover.ms`” is read, in its *entirety*, followed by front-matter specific meta-data extracted from “`pdfmark.ms`”, to produce an intermediate PostScript® front-matter component file, which is saved only until it has been collated into the finished document, as described in [section 4.1.7, “How `pdfroff` Assembles a Finished Document”](#).

The input file, which is nominated as the “`<filename>`” argument of the “`--stylesheet=<filename>`” option, (“`cover.ms`” in the example above), *must* be provided by the document author. In the simplest practicable scenario, this could be a basic `groff` input file specifying the content for the front-matter section of the single document, which is the designated output of a single particular invocation of `pdfroff`; such a “style-sheet” file is simple, and requires no additional meta-data input from the primary document source files, (“`pdfmark.ms`” in the preceding example), but it does suffer from the disadvantage that it is specific to just *one* document, (and thus, barely merits description as a front-matter “style-sheet”).

Although the simple front-matter formatting technique, alluded to in the previous paragraph, is compatible with the operation of `pdfroff`, a more sophisticated, generic style-sheet handling capability is also supported, and may be preferred; its principal advantage is that a single, generic front-matter style-sheet, may be suitable for use with more than one document, with document-specific content being specified within, and conveyed from, a meta-data section within the primary document source files. This generic style-sheet technique has been adopted for formatting of the front-matter of this document, and usage examples may be drawn from its accompanying `cover.ms` style-sheet file, and the meta-data specification within its primary `pdfmark.ms` source files.

When designing a generic front-matter style-sheet, careful consideration should be given to the interaction between the style-sheet itself, and the meta-data section, or sections, which are extracted from the primary input files; in particular, it should be noted that the style-sheet will have been read, in its entirety, before *any* meta-data is encountered. Thus, while it is reasonable that the style-sheet should specify any “boiler-plate” text, which is to be reproduced within the front-matter of any dependent document, within the style-sheet itself, such “boiler-plate” text should normally be encapsulated within macro, or string definitions, so that its eventual output may be deferred until called out, on request from within the document meta-data.

The meta-data, which specifies the document-specific variant content of the front-matter, and directs the formatting activity of the style-sheet, is *always* read from the primary document source files; it is identified by its placement between a pair of macro calls, to the nominally named<sup>37</sup> macros, CS at the start of each meta-data section,<sup>38</sup> and CE at the end, thus:

```
.CS
.\ " ... document-specific meta-data appears here ...
.CE
```

36. In this context, “primary document source files” refers to the aggregate of all input files, which are *explicitly* specified on the `pdfroff` command line, read in the order in which they are so specified.

37. The macro names, CS and CE, are the defaults assumed by `pdfroff`, to mark the start, and the end of a meta-data section, respectively. These defaults may be overridden, by assignment of alternative macro names to the CS\_MACRO and CE\_MACRO environment variables respectively; however, unless there is some particularly compelling reason for it, such reassignment of the macro names is strongly discouraged.

38. It is permissible for the primary document source files to specify more than one meta-data section, and `pdfroff` will interpret them all; however, the processing of multiple meta-data sections, and in particular the execution of more than one instance of the CE macro, introduces additional complexity to the design of the style-sheet, so it is recommended that *no more than one* such section should be specified.

It may be observed that CS and CE are not defined as standard `groff` macros; thus the onus is placed on the document author, and the front-matter style-sheet designer, to ensure that appropriate definitions are provided;<sup>39</sup> furthermore, *different* definitions of each macro will normally be required, when processing a style-sheet for formatting front-matter, and when formatting normal document content.

From the foregoing, it may be inferred that the style-sheet should be implemented as a collection of macro, string, and possibly numeric register definitions, including, as a bare minimum, implementations of the CS and CE macros, which will drive the formatting of the document front-matter, while the document source should arrange for provision of alternative definitions for this pair of macros, to handle embedded meta-data sections appropriately, while formatting the remainder of the document.

In the case of normal document formatting, other than within the front-matter context, appropriate handling of meta-data may be as simple as ignoring it. For users of `groff`'s "ms" macros, when these are used in conjunction with `groff-pdfmark`'s `pdf.tmac` binding macros, as previously noted in footnote,<sup>39</sup> suitable definitions for CS and CE, to achieve this behaviour, are provided, *without* the need for any specific provision by the document author; for those who do not wish to, or simply cannot, use `pdf.tmac`, equivalent behaviour — without error handling — may be achieved by providing macro definitions similar to:

```
.de CS
.  ig CE
..
.de CE
..
```

Conversely, the front-matter style-sheet *must* implement alternative definitions for *both* CS and CE, together with definitions for any other macros which are intended to be called out from the document's meta-data section, (or sections); the aggregate effect of calling such style-sheet macros, from the document's meta-data sections, beginning with the first CS call, and ending with the *last*<sup>40</sup> CE call, and ignoring all other content of the document source files, should result in formatting, and output of the front-matter component of the finished document. Typically, the style-sheet should define the CS macro, initially, to set up the page layout controls for formatting the cover sheet, (if any), and any such controls which may also apply throughout the document's front-matter; for example, a style-sheet for use in conjunction with `groff`'s ms macros — based on the implementation of the style-sheet for this document itself — might define the CS macro to be something like:

```
.de CS
.  nr HM  0
.  nr PO  2.1c
.  nr LL 17.1c
.  nr HY  0
.  nr PS 24
.  nr VS 30
.  nop
.  sp |5.9c
.  CD
.  fam T
..
```

anticipating that the first meta-data section encountered will commence with a specification of text, which is to be set as a centred 24pt title block, in Times-Roman font, and which is to be placed 5.9cm below the top edge of the first page of the front-matter, (which will take the form of a cover sheet).

To complement the CS macro definition, a definition for the CE macro is also required. Continuing the preceding example, and again with reference to the usage within this document itself, (which uses only one embedded meta-data

---

39. The `pdf.tmac` macro package *does* provide definitions of CS and CE, with CS having an effect equivalent to that of ".ig CE", and CE serving as a do-nothing macro, (albeit with the addition of diagnostic checks in both, to ensure that CS and CE are correctly paired at point of use), for marking the end of the ignored block. The effect of these definitions is that meta-data sections will not be interpreted, in any way, during normal document processing, which may be suitable for many documents; however, alternative definitions *will* surely be required, within any front-matter style-sheet.

40. While the first CS call is trivially easy to identify, it is the difficulty of recognizing the last CE call which complicates the handling multiple meta-data sections, and hence, why use of multiple such sections is not recommended.

section), the CE macro picks up the front-matter formatting towards the bottom of the cover sheet, adding an image, the stipulated front-cover text, and ultimately, proceeding to incorporate a copyright assignment page:

```
.de CE
. DE
. sp |17.5c
. PSPIC gnu.eps
. nr PS 19
. CD
. fam H
. tkf HR 10z 2p 20z 4p
. nop \H'-4z'A GNU MANUAL\H'0'
. DE
. \" ... additional macro code follows here ...
. \" ... this may, for example, add a copyright assignment page ...
. \" ... or any other appropriate front-matter content ...
..
```

Notice that, in this particular example, the CS macro ends, leaving an open CD display block, (i.e. a standard ms centred display); the complementary CE macro assumes that this will have remained open, and immediately closes it, *before* proceeding with the image output. Any meta-data content, which has been specified between the opening CS call, and its corresponding CE, will be processed *after* completion of the CS call, and *before* commencement of the CE. This may include directly specified text, to be formatted within the open display block, or other macro calls, which will be executed as encountered; if any of this meta-data content causes the initial centred display block to be closed, then it is assumed that a new display block — not necessarily centred — will have been opened, *before* control passes to CE; any meta-data content, which is to be formatted *after* control has been passed to CE, *must* be saved — in string space, for example — so that it may be reinterpreted *during* execution of CE.

An examination of the source mark-up for this document, which is provided in the accompanying pdfmark.ms (primary source), and cover.ms (style-sheet) example files, will reveal that the embedded meta-data does, indeed, depend on additional macros, beyond the required CS and CE implementations. All of these additional macros, (including some which replace standard ms implementations), are defined within cover.ms; it may be observed that all, *both* in implementation *and* in usage, comply with the requirements laid out in the preceding paragraphs.

#### 4.1.5. How pdfroff Collates Tables of Contents

When formatting documents with troff, and directing output to a hard-copy typesetting device, a traditional method of generating tables of contents is to collect copies of the section headings, and their corresponding page numbers, in a diversion, which is printed at the *end* of the document, whence it is then physically separated, and *manually* moved to its natural position, immediately following the front-matter. This technique can be readily supported by groff, and remains useful for generation of tables of contents; although awkward to automate, and alternative techniques, such as those which will be described in [section 4.4, “Alternative Techniques for Generating Tables of Contents”](#), may offer better performance, it *does* serve as the default basis for table of contents collation, used by pdfroff.

To facilitate separation of the formatted table of contents from the formatted document body, pdfroff invokes groff *twice more*, after completion of the reference resolution phase, (see [section 4.1.2, “How pdfroff Resolves Cross References”](#)), to format, and temporarily save, *two* intermediate PostScript® copies of the complete document; the first of these will ultimately become the table of contents component, to be assembled together with, and preceding the second, which will become the main document body, with both preceded by the front-matter (if any), to create the finished document, (see [section 4.1.7, “How pdfroff Assembles a Finished Document”](#)).

As previously noted, in [section 4.1.1, “Principles of pdfroff Operation”](#), where it is enumerated as phase no. 4 in the sequence of operations, pdfroff’s default table of contents generation procedure is *automatically* executed, *unless* steps are taken to disable it. It may be disabled:

- *Explicitly*, by specifying the `--no-toc-relocation` option, when the pdfroff command is invoked.
- *Implicitly*,<sup>41</sup> if no `toc_relocation=enabled` hint is detected, when resolving references; (however, it is implicitly assumed that this hint is present, if the `--no-reference-dictionary` option is specified, in which case, no reference resolution is performed).

When pdfroff runs groff, to generate a separate table of contents component, which will eventually be combined with the front-matter component (if any), and the document body component, to assemble the document in its finished

41. Implicit control of `toc_relocation` was first introduced for the `groff-1.22.3` release; it is unsupported in earlier releases.

form, it indicates the intent of this phase of operation by passing a “-rPHASE=1” register assignment option. The effect of running `groff`, in the absence of any special consideration of this PHASE assignment, might be expected to be the production of a formatted copy of the complete document, with the table of contents placed *at the end*, whereas, what is required for final document assembly, is to discard the entire document body, which precedes the table of contents in this formatted component, leaving *only* the formatted table of contents, as its effective residual substance.

To facilitate the eventual removal of document body content, from the table of contents component, `pdfroff` expects the document author to make arrangements to place `groff` in its “pen-up” output state, (selected by placing a `\O[0]` escape in the input stream), *before* the body content, and to restore the “pen-down” state, (by complementary placement of a `\O[1]` escape), at the start of the table of contents, when the PHASE register is defined, with a value of one. Such arrangements may be made, conveniently, within a macro package which controls the overall document format, (for example, `spdf.tmac` handles the arrangements automatically, without any requirement for further intervention by the document author, when the table of contents entries are specified using the XS, XA, and XE macros, and the table of contents, itself, is eventually output using the TC macro).

Of course, `pdfroff` does *not* impose a requirement for the exclusive selection of `spdf.tmac` as the primary macro package for document formatting. It may be practicable to adapt *any* primary macro package, of the document author’s choice, to emulate `spdf.tmac`’s behaviour; alternatively, if the document author deems it impractical to adapt the chosen macro package, the required emulation may be achieved *directly* within any document’s input data stream. In either case, some basic ground rules *must* be respected:

- Neither any macro package, nor any document’s input data stream, is permitted to interfere with `pdfroff`’s assignment of the PHASE register; it should *never* be set, or modified in any way, other than as a result of direct assignment by `pdfroff` itself.
- Initialization of `groff`’s output state controls *must* be completed, *before* commencement of the output of the first page of the formatted document; this initialization may be achieved, most conveniently, by inclusion of mark-up<sup>42</sup> similar to:

```
.mso opmode.tmac
.
.nr PDF-TOC-ONLY 1
.nr PDF-BODY-TEXT 2
.
.OP \n[PDF-BODY-TEXT]
```

early in the document input data stream, or better still, within a macro package, such that it will be executed soon after the start of `groff` processing, and in particular, *before* any output is generated; this ensures that `groff` starts in the correct output state, with respect to `pdfroff`’s PHASE register, for collection of table of contents data, within its own diversion, based on mark-up within the body of the input data stream.

- When the input data stream has been fully processed, the table of contents diversion should be closed, and, in preparation for flushing it to the output, a new page should be started, and the output state should be adjusted, by execution of:

```
.OP \n[PDF-TOC-ONLY]
```

after which, the substance of the table of contents diversion should be written, together with any desired page headings, and footers, to the document output stream. For convenience, consideration should be given to encapsulation of this entire sequence of steps, which is required to prepare for, and to complete the output of the table of contents, in a macro which is analogous to `spdf.tmac`’s TC; this may then simply be invoked at the end of the input data stream. Such consideration is particularly recommended when writing a primary macro package, or a binding macro package, which is intended to be used in conjunction with `pdfroff`.

The effect of the OP macro, as used in the foregoing, is to insert a `\O[1]` escape into the input stream, when the value of its single argument is equal to the value of `pdfroff`’s PHASE register,<sup>43</sup> and a `\O[0]` escape otherwise, while recording the effective output state in a register called OPMODE. Thus, within `pdfroff`’s table of contents collation phase, the initial OP invocation, with an argument value which is equivalent to 2, generates the required `\O[0]` escape — which does not actually eliminate the document body, but causes `groff` to emit one *entirely* blank page for each page of body content — while the second invocation, with an argument value equivalent to 1, inserts a `\O[1]` escape, resulting in output of the formatted table of contents; the initial blank pages are subsequently removed during final document assembly, (see section 4.1.7, “How `pdfroff` Assembles a Finished Document”).

42. This example mark-up depends on the `opmode.tmac` helper macro package, which is distributed as an integral component of `groff-pdfmark-20230317.1`, and later releases; it is backwardly compatible with earlier `groff` releases of `pdfroff`.

43. If the PHASE register is not defined, the OP macro simply records an effective output state of 1, in OPMODE, but *does not* insert any `\O` escape sequence, into the input data stream, and thus, does not change `groff`’s actual output state.



#### 4.1.6. How `pdfroff` Formats a Document Body

To format the body of any document, `pdfroff` repeats the default `groff` process that it uses for collation of a table of contents, (as described in [section 4.1.5, “How `pdfroff` Collates Tables of Contents”](#)), *except* that the `PHASE` register is set to a value of two, (rather than the value of one, which is used when generating a table of contents), by the assignment “`-rPHASE=2`”, which is passed as a command line argument when `pdfroff` invokes `groff`, and the ensuing `groff` output is written to a differently named intermediate output file. The effect of changing the `PHASE` register assignment, assuming that the `OPMODE` controls are implemented, and managed as previously [described in section 4.1.5](#), is to place `groff` in its “pen-down” output state when formatting the document body, and then to switch to the “pen-up” state, only if processing ultimately progresses to the output of an appended table of contents.

An important consideration, for authors writing documents to be formatted by `pdfroff`, or for those implementing macro packages to facilitate this, is that the default formatting process expects a single input data stream, in which the document body will be processed *first*, and a table of contents will be appended, *at the end*. This input data stream will be read *twice*, to produce *two* separate intermediate output files, which will eventually be conjoined, (see [section 4.1.7, “How `pdfroff` Assembles a Finished Document”](#)), to produce *a single* final output document file.

If the document author, or the macro package implementor, neglects the interpretation of `pdfroff`’s `PHASE` register assignment, or the implementation of the associated `OPMODE` handling [described in section 4.1.5](#), the two intermediate output files will exhibit *identical* content, and their conjunction will result in a finished document which contains *two* copies of the formatted document body, each of which will be followed by a copy of the formatted table of contents.

Conversely, when `pdfroff`’s `PHASE` register interpretation, and `OPMODE` handling *have been* appropriately addressed, the intermediate output with `PHASE=1`, as already noted in [section 4.1.5](#), will comprise a sequence of entirely blank pages, followed by the formatted table contents, while that for `PHASE=2` will contain the desired formatted document body, which will then be followed by a further sequence of blank pages, with one corresponding to each and every non-blank page of the table of contents. Conjunction of this pair of intermediate files will result in the desired content, in the final document file, but it will be padded by a (possibly very large) number of blank pages; these blank pages are normally unwanted; they will be removed in the final document assembly process, (see [section 4.1.7, “How `pdfroff` Assembles a Finished Document”](#)).

An interesting possibility, when formatting a document body, is that, even when the input stream has been configured to generate the document body output, with appended table of contents, and a sequence of blank pages, corresponding to the pages of the document body, *is* required at the beginning of the table of contents intermediate file, it is *not* actually necessary to emit the sequence of appended blank pages which would correspond to the pages of the table of contents, when generating the document body intermediate file. In fact, it is fairly straightforward to test the effective value of the `PHASE` register, and to omit the formatting of the appended table of contents, when the register value is two, or greater. This optimization<sup>44</sup> may be performed, either within, and at the end of, the document source:

```
.ie d pdfroff \{\
.  ie \n[PHASE]>1 .nr DO-TOC 1
.  el .nr DO-TOC 0
.\}
.el .nr DO-TOC 1
.if \n[DO-TOC] \{\
.\" ... code to emit formatted table of contents goes here ...
.\}
```

or, perhaps more conveniently, within a table of contents formatting macro, such as, for example, in `spdf.tmac`’s implementation of its `TC` macro:

```
.de TC
.if d pdfroff .if \n[PHASE]>1 .return
.\" ... code to emit formatted table of contents goes here ...
..
```

which then requires only that the document source ends by calling this `TC` macro.

44. These examples assume that the table of contents should *always* be output, *except* within the scope of `pdfroff`’s document body formatting procedure, when they may be optimized out. Notice that there is no check for existence of the `PHASE` register, before testing its value, (as might be considered desirable to avoid `groff` warnings); no such check is necessary, because `pdfroff` *guarantees* that the register will have been defined, in *any context* in which a user-visible warning could be raised, so checking for `pdfroff` alone is sufficient.

### 4.1.7. How `pdfroff` Assembles a Finished Document

After `pdfroff` has completed each of the processing phases, enumerated as phase no. 1 to phase no. 5 in [section 4.1.1, “Principles of `pdfroff` Operation”](#), *at least one*, and *at most three* intermediate PostScript<sup>®</sup> output files will have been created, (in addition to the temporary files designated by the `WRKFILE`, `REFFILE`, and `REFCOPY` shell variables). If only one intermediate output file is created, it *must* be the document body component; if more than one such file is created, one *must* be the document body component, while any others may be *either one* of, or *both* of a front-matter component, and a table of contents component. In this final phase of `pdfroff` processing, the entire complement of created intermediate output files is conjoined, in the order:

- Front-matter component (if present);
- Table of contents component (if present);
- Document body component

to assemble the finished output document, either merging all component content into a single PostScript<sup>®</sup> document, (if the `--emit-ps` option has been specified), or normally, merging all content, and simultaneously converting to PDF.

Depending on the particular complement of intermediate output files which have been created, document assembly proceeds as follows:

- If a front-matter intermediate output file has been created, its content is simply copied, without change, to the beginning of the final output file.
- As has been noted previously, in [section 4.1.5, “How `pdfroff` Collates Tables of Contents”](#), if a table of contents intermediate output file has been created, it *will* contain the formatted table of contents, but this will be preceded by a sequence of blank pages, with one blank page for each page in the document body; these blank pages will (usually) not be wanted in the finished document, so, before merging this intermediate file content, it is passed through a `sed` filter, to remove them; the residual content is then copied into the final output file, either following the front-matter, if present, or otherwise, at its beginning.
- Finally, the content of the document body is read from its respective intermediate output file, and merged into the final output file, following any content which had previously been merged from front-matter and table of contents intermediate output files; as in the case of table of contents intermediate output, this document body output is also passed, by default, through the same blank page removal `sed` filter.

It may be observed that, by default, `pdfroff` will filter *both* the table of contents intermediate output, if any, and the document body intermediate output, to remove blank pages. While the intent of this is to discard *phantom* blank pages, which precede the actual table of contents, and which follow the document body, it must be understood that it will actually remove *all* blank pages — *both* those which promote this intent, *and* any others which may appear *within* the table of contents, and the document body. This may, or may not, be desirable behaviour — it probably *is*, within the table of contents, but is less so within the document body, especially if the trailing blank pages, resulting from “pen-up” formatting of an appended table of contents, have been optimized out, as suggested in [section 4.1.6, “How `pdfroff` Formats a Document Body”](#).

Some control of blank page removal may be achieved by specification of the `--no-kill-null-pages` option — or `--no-kill-null-pages[=<whence>]`, from the `groff-pdfmark-20230406.1` release onwards — on the `pdfroff` command line, or alternatively, and once again, only from the release of `groff-pdfmark-20230406.1` onwards, by use of the `preserve_blank_pages=<whence>` in-document hint. When supported, the `<whence>` argument may take a value of “`toc`”, “`body`”, or “`all`”, with “`all`” being the default, and equivalent to the original behaviour; its effect is to suppress removal of *all* blank pages originating from the table of contents intermediate output file, *and* from the document body intermediate output, which is probably not the desired effect. More useful behaviour may be to retain the default removal of blank pages originating from the table of contents intermediate output, while suppressing it for those originating within the document body; this may be achieved by invoking `pdfroff` with a command such as:

```
pdfroff --no-kill-blank-pages=body ...
```

or by including the equivalent in-document hint:

```
.pdfroff option preserve_blank_pages=body
```

within the document source file, (perhaps making it conditional on some appropriate condition, such as selection of a duplex printing configuration, for example).

## 4.2. Preparing Documents for On-Screen Reading versus Hard-Copy Printing

When preparing a PDF document, which is to be optimized for reading on a video display screen, it is reasonable to make formatting choices such as:

- Set up of the page layout, such that the left-hand and right-hand margins are of equal width, and remain unchanged between formatting of recto (odd-numbered) pages, and verso (even-numbered) pages; such a layout may be conveniently, and simply, achieved by assignment of suitable, and invariant, values for `groff`'s page offset, and line length settings.
- Elimination of *entirely* blank pages. These, (especially in the case of blank verso pages), may be inserted when formatting for printing on a duplex-capable hard-copy output device, to ensure that new chapters, or major sections, commence on a new recto page; however, they serve little purpose, and can be distracting, when reading a document on-screen. The elimination of such blank pages is performed *automatically*, by `pdfroff`, *unless* this capability is disabled *explicitly*, by the user.

Conversely, when preparing a PDF document which is suitable for subsequent printing on a hard-copy typesetting device, different formatting choices may be more appropriate; for example:

- A wider page margin may be desired, on whichever side of each page will lie adjacent to the spine, to provide a “binding allowance”, when the document is to be bound; any such “binding allowance” should be *added to* the nominal page offset, on recto pages, and *deducted from* it, on verso pages.
- When the typesetting device supports *duplex* printing, (i.e. printing on *both* recto and verso pages), *and* this mode of printing is to be used, then any blank (normally verso) pages which have been inserted, to force the following content to appear on a particular side of the printed page, *must* be preserved within the PDF document structure. When using `pdfroff`, to format the PDF document, such blank pages will normally be eliminated; the `--no-kill-null-pages` option, or its corresponding `preserve_blank_pages` in-document hint must be specified, to override `pdfroff`'s default behaviour.

### 4.2.1. Establishing a Page Layout for On-Screen Reading

When preparing a PDF document, which is ultimately intended for reading on a video display screen, the page layout will normally be characterized by arrangement of text between equal width margins, on *both* left-hand and right-hand sides of the page; these margins will, typically, be defined at the start of document processing, and, aside from local internal variations in indentation, will remain unchanged throughout the document, without regard to whether any individual page would be printed as a recto (odd-numbered) page, or a verso (even-numbered) page.

The mechanics of setting the left-hand and right-hand page margins depend on the user's choice, if any, of document formatting macro package. Fundamentally, the left-hand margin is equivalent to whatever page offset may have been set, by invocation of `troff`'s `“.po”` request, the text width is set by invocation of `troff`'s `“.ll”` request, (with an alternative width for three-part titles, set by the `“.lt”` request), and the right-hand margin is simply the remnant of the physical page width,<sup>45</sup> after deduction of the page offset and text width. Typically, users do not invoke these fundamental `troff` requests directly, but rely on the features of a higher level macro package to invoke them when appropriate, to apply user-defined settings, which are established in numeric registers; for example, the `ms` macro package will invoke the `“.po”` request, to achieve the effect of

```
.po \n (POu
```

at the start of every new page, thus setting the effective left-hand margin for the page, to whatever value the user has assigned to the `PO` register; similarly, it will invoke the `“.ll”` request, with the effect of

```
.ll \n (LLu
```

on each paragraph transition, (in conjunction with other local adjustments, based on the settings of other layout control registers),<sup>46</sup> to maintain the fundamental text width at whatever value the user has assigned to the `LL` register.

It may be observed, from the foregoing, that setting up an overall page layout, which is suitable for on-screen reading, is normally a one-time process; once established, at the start of the document formatting process, other than when making localized temporary indentation adjustments, there is usually no need to change it.

45. Traditional `troff` provides no user-visible indication of the physical page width. GNU `troff` *does* define a page width, at start-up, based on standard paper size specifications, but it does not make this *directly* visible to the user; it may be *indirectly* inferred, *immediately* after start-up, *before* any subsequent `“.ll”` request has been invoked, by adding two inches to the initial value stored in the `“.l”` register.

46. Details of all page layout control registers, as used by the `ms` macros, may be found in the `groff_ms(7)` manual page. Similar details, relating to other macro packages, should be available in their respective documentation.

## 4.2.2. Establishing a Page Layout for Hard-Copy Typesetting

For the most part, when it is ultimately intended that a PDF document will be printed, on some hard-copy typesetting device, the mechanics of establishing the overall page layout are identical to those which have been described already, in [section 4.2.1, “Establishing a Page Layout for On-Screen Reading”](#); a fundamental difference arises, only in the case where it is desired to add a “binding allowance” to either the left-hand, or the right-hand page margin.

When such a “binding allowance” is desired, the adjustment to the set-up of the page layout may be trivial, or relatively more complex, depending on whether:

- The ultimate output is to be printed one-sided, (typically as recto-only pages, each with blank verso): in this case, the “binding allowance” will be added to the left-hand page margin *only*, requiring no more than a trivial increment, equivalent to the width of the “binding allowance”, in the initial assignment of the page offset, (which *automatically* results in a corresponding reduction in the width of the right-hand page margin); as in the case of the on-screen layout, this one-sided printing layout requires no subsequent adjustment.
- The ultimate output is destined for two-sided printing, (on *both* recto *and* verso pages): in this case, the set-up of the page layout becomes relatively more complex, because the “binding allowance” must be *added to* the underlying page offset, to set a wider left-hand margin on recto pages, but must be *deducted from* it, to set a correspondingly narrower left-hand margin on verso pages; consequently, the page offset must be adjusted, at the start of *every* page, to achieve the desired alternation of left-hand and right-hand margin widths.

Neither traditional `troff`, nor `groff`, provide a standard method for configuration of the required margin width alternation; it is achievable, however, through page traps, which must be appropriately specified by the user. [Section 3.1.3 “Layout Adjustment to Support Duplex Printing”](#) provides an illustration of how this may be implemented, when using the `ms` macros, by exploiting the existing bottom-of-page trap to adjust the `PO` register setting at the *bottom* of every page, such that it will take effect, to adjust the page offset as required, at the start of the *following* new page; this technique should be adaptable for use with other macro packages, or even within a user-defined trap, should the user choose to rely on basic `groff` requests alone.

## 4.2.3. Ensuring that Content is Printed on a Particular Side of the Page

When printing a document, in a duplex format, style conventions may dictate that certain sections, such as tables of contents, body content, and also any appendices, any collected bibliographic references, and any index entries, which may be present, should *always* begin on a particular side of the page, (usually the recto); such conventions may, or may not, be extended to require that individual chapter headings, or major section headings, should also be placed on a particular side (again, usually the recto) of a new page. When such conventions are applied, the usual practice is to insert a page break *immediately* before the content which is to be so placed; however, if the content which immediately precedes this page break is already being printed on the side of the page, on which it is desired to place the following content, then one page break will not suffice; it will be necessary to add a second, so as to insert a blank page, and thus ensure that printing resumes on the appropriate side of the next available new page.

As we’ve already seen, in [section 3.1.3, “Layout Adjustment to Support Duplex Printing”](#), `groff`’s “.if o” request may be used to detect when document output is currently being directed to a recto page, (and conversely, the “.if e” request may be used to detect output to a verso page); thus, we may define specialized page break macros similar to:

```
.de NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\" Insert a page break, resuming output at the top of the
.\" next available new recto (i.e. odd numbered) page.
.\"
.  ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o
..
```

and:

```
.de NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\" Insert a page break, resuming output at the top of the
.\" next available new verso (i.e. even numbered) page.
.\"
.  ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e
..
```

Each of these page break macros simply delegates its operation to the generalized “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” helper macro, passing either `groff`’s “o”, or “e” page number property comparison operator, as argument, to specify whether output should resume on a new recto page, (odd numbered page), or a new verso page, (even numbered page),

respectively. A tentative, and perhaps a naïvely simplistic, implementation for such a generalized helper macro might be defined as simply as:

```
.de ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE
.\ " Insert page breaks, as required, to resume output at the
.\ " top of the next available new recto page, or new verso page,
.\ " as determined by the passed argument, (which MUST be either
.\ " of groff's conditional operators, "o" or "e").
.\ "
.\ " Usage: .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o \ " NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\ "          .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e \ " NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\ "
.  if \\$1 .bp \ " need to skip an entire page
.  bp          \ " advance to desired new page
..
```

Depending on the behaviour of any suite of macros, (whether standard, or user-defined), which has been chosen to control the document layout, this simplistic “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro implementation may require some refinement. For example, when the `ms` macros are being used, this naïvely simplistic implementation will *not* result in the intervening verso page being skipped over, when the “NEW-RECTO-PAGE” macro is invoked while `groff` is already processing output which is to be printed, or otherwise displayed, on a recto page.

It may seem surprising that the preceding trivial implementation of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro should fail, in the manner described, when used in conjunction with the `ms` macros, under the circumstances as described; however, given a basic understanding of the operation of page transition traps, in `ms`, the failure may be anticipated, and moreover, it is readily explained:

- When the “NEW-RECTO-PAGE” macro is invoked, during processing of a recto page, interpretation is redirected to the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro, with the “o” argument specified.
- On entering the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro, the expression “.if \\\$1 .bp” is interpreted as “.if o .bp”; since this is being evaluated within the processing context of a recto page, (which has an odd page number), the “.if o” condition evaluates as “true”, so the conditional “.bp” request *is* invoked.
- Invocation of the conditional “.bp” request causes the output position to advance to the bottom of the current recto page, (thus invoking any intervening traps, from the initial output position down to, and including, the bottom-of-page trap), and thence onwards to the top of the following verso page, whence `ms` arranges for activation of `groff`'s “no-space” mode.
- Following invocation of the conditional “.bp” request, the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro then issues a further *unconditional* “.bp” request, with the intent of advancing the output position further towards the bottom of the new verso page, and beyond, ultimately placing it at the top of the immediately following recto page. Unfortunately, by the time this unconditional “.bp” request is issued, “no-space” mode has already been activated, and consequently, since this “.bp” request is issued *without* any explicitly specified new page number argument, it is ignored,<sup>47</sup> and the output position remains at the top of the verso page, whence normal output will eventually resume.

Having established that the preceding, naïvely simplistic implementation of an “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro may be vulnerable to failure, when “no-space” mode may become active during its execution, (and furthermore, having established that this vulnerability is *not* specific to use in conjunction with the `ms` macros, or indeed with *any* particular macro suite), it behooves us to refine the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro implementation, in order to eliminate the vulnerability. To achieve this, we might consider refinements such as:

- Following invocation of the conditional “.bp” request, which implements the first of two page advances, in any case when two are required, insert an explicit “.rs” request, to explicitly deactivate “no-space” mode *before* the second “.bp” request is invoked, thus ensuring that this is *not* ignored.
- As an alternative to the preceding option, *implicitly* deactivate “no-space” mode, following the first of the two “.bp” request invocations, and prior to the second, by writing some arbitrary, but invisible output to the intermediate output page; implicitly, this has the same effect as insertion of the “.rs” request, but it is less

---

<sup>47</sup> This is *not* a defect in the `ms` macros; rather, it is a natural consequence of the design decision to activate “no-space” mode at the top of each new page — a perfectly legitimate design choice, which is intended to eliminate the output of any block of redundant vertical space, immediately following a transition to a new page. Furthermore, although this issue has been identified in the context of interoperation of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro, as defined, and the `ms` macros, similar behaviour will be observed in *any* context in which “no-space” mode is activated, following page transitions.

elegant, more cumbersome to implement, and its intent is less obvious, so it may be a less favourable method of achieving the desired effect.

- Rather than attempting to manipulate “no-space” mode, as both of the preceding options do, modify the form of the second, (i.e. the *unconditional*, or maybe even both), of the internal “.bp” requests, such that the form becomes “.bp <page-number>”; unlike the form of the “.bp” request without arguments, this form, with the “<page-number>” argument, is *not* ignored, whether “no-space” mode is active, or not.

Any one of these modifications will offer an effective solution to the identified “no-space” mode failure of our original “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro implementation; of the three, the first is the most convenient, and perhaps also the most obvious to adopt; the second would require a more cumbersome, yet a less obvious implementation, but it offers no particular advantage over the first, so it probably merits no further consideration. Conversely, although it will necessitate a significantly more complex implementation — keeping track of suitable page numbers, for use as arguments to the “.bp <page-number>” requests, may present something of a challenge — the third option for refinement of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro implementation may offer some behavioural advantages, over the features accorded by the simpler first option; we will explore some of these potential advantages, with particular reference to document formatting using the ms macros, in [section 4.2.3.1, “Recto-Verso Page Break Handling when Using the ms Macros”](#).

Notwithstanding that adoption of the third of the preceding “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro refinement options may be advantageous, the simplicity and elegance of the first option may still offer a compelling reason for considering it. The refined implementation is straightforward:

```
.de ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE
.\" Insert page breaks, as required, to resume output at the
.\" top of the next available new recto page, or new verso page,
.\" as determined by the passed argument, (which MUST be either
.\" of groff's conditional operators, "o" or "e").
.\"
.\" Usage: .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o \" NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\"       .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e \" NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\"
.   if \\$1 \\{
.   \" Current page faces as does the desired output target,
.   \" so we need to skip an entire opposing page.
.   \"
.       bp \" advance to new opposing page
.       rs \" get out of "no-space" mode
.   \\}
.   bp     \" advance to desired new page
..
```

and, with this modified implementation in place, the original “NEW-RECTO-PAGE” and “NEW-VERSO-PAGE” macros will each introduce either one or two page breaks, as required, to resume output on the respectively appropriate side of the next available, and suitably facing, new page.

#### 4.2.3.1. Recto-Verso Page Break Handling when Using the ms Macros

Provided that the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro refinement, to correctly handle “no-space” mode effects, has been incorporated, the simple “NEW-RECTO-PAGE” and “NEW-VERSO-PAGE” macros, as developed in [the preceding section](#), *will* correctly introduce the appropriate number of page breaks, such that output resumes on the next available new recto page, or new verso page, respectively; why then, might we wish to consider adoption of a more complex technique for introduction of such page breaks?

One reason why we may wish to adopt the more complex technique is that, when two page breaks are required to advance to the appropriately facing page, any traps which are specified on the intervening page *will* be processed, as the output position advances down that page; when such traps result in the output of page headers, or footers, or both, as will be the norm when formatting with a macro suite such as ms, these headers, or footers, or both *will* be printed on the otherwise blank page. Thus, this intervening page will *not* be *completely* blank, so will *not* be considered as a candidate for pdfroff's blank page removal procedure; it may become a distraction when formatting for on-screen viewing.

By default, ms does *not* specify page footers; it *does* specify a single-line page header, displaying the page number at the centre-top of each page, *except* that this header is omitted, *in its entirety*, on any page having a page number of one, (unless such header omission is *explicitly* overridden). This suggests a possible technique, suitable for use with ms

when its default page header and footer policy is in effect,<sup>48</sup> by manipulating the *effective* page numbers around the page break, to ensure that any intervening blank page remains *entirely blank*; this might be achieved, within a modified variant of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro, by initially saving the *actual* page number prior to the page break, followed by a temporary change of *effective* page number, to one, when issuing the first (conditional) page break request, and ultimately, restoring the original *actual* page numbering sequence, when issuing the second (unconditional) page break request:

```
.de ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE
.\" Insert page breaks, as required, to resume output at the
.\" top of the next available new recto page, or new verso page,
.\" as determined by the passed argument, (which MUST be either
.\" of groff's conditional operators, "o" or "e").
.\"
.\" Usage: .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o \" NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\"       .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e \" NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\"
.   nr \\$0.% \\n%      \" save current page number
.   if \\$1 \\{
.     \" Current page faces as does the desired output target,
.     \" so we need to skip an entire opposing page.
.     \"
.     nr \\$0.% +1     \" update to skipped page number
.     bp 1             \" skip, numbering as page one
.   \\}
.   bp \\n[\\$0.%]+1  \" advance, restoring page number
.   rr \\$0.%         \" clear saved page number
..
```

Notice that, with this modification, it is unnecessary to explicitly cancel “no-space” mode after the conditional page break, because the following unconditional “.bp \\n+[\\\$0.%]” request will cause a further page break, even when “no-space” mode is in effect. However, there *is* a potential pitfall with this modification: it *will not work* if the effective format for the page number register has been assigned as anything other than decimal numerals! To avoid this pitfall, it is necessary to temporarily force the page number register to exhibit decimal numeric format, within the scope of execution of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro, for example, by encapsulating the simple request:

```
.   nr \\$0.% \\n%      \" save current page number
```

(which itself requires the page number to be expressed in decimal numeric format), within an extended sequence of requests, such as:

```
.   af \\$0.% \\g%      \" save page number format
.   af % 0              \" interpret as decimal numeric...
.   nr \\$0.% \\n%      \" to save its current value
.   af % \\g[\\$0.%]    \" restore its original format
```

Furthermore, when the subsequent request:

```
.   bp \\n[\\$0.%]+1  \" advance, restoring page number
```

is eventually interpreted, the *saved* page number *must* be expressed in decimal numeric format; thus, it is convenient to further extend the request sequence, for saving the original page number format and value, completing it by appending the additional request:

```
.   af \\$0.% 0        \" keep saved value as decimal
```

---

48. The default page header and footer policy ceases to be in effect, if the (effectively irreversible) “.P1” macro has been called, thus overriding the omission of page one headers, and so causing the page header to be printed on any subsequent page numbered one, (which would include those introduced by the conditional page break, within the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro), or if any of the page header or page footer trap macros have been redefined, or if any page footer text has been defined. If any such policy changes *are* in effect, the modified “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro would need to take steps to nullify them; such steps could significantly add to the required complexity of the macro. Details of the additional complexity, which would be necessary, depend on the precise nature of the departure from the default policy, within each individual document, and thus are left to the ingenuity of the publisher of the document to devise.

Thus, the modified form of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro becomes:

```
.de ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE
.\" Insert page breaks, as required, to resume output at the
.\" top of the next available new recto page, or new verso page,
.\" as determined by the passed argument, (which MUST be either
.\" of groff's conditional operators, "o" or "e").
.\"
.\" Usage: .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o \" NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\"       .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e \" NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\"
.   af \\$0.% \\g%      \" save page number format
.   af % 0              \" interpret as decimal numeric...
.   nr \\$0.% \\n%      \" to save its current value
.   af % \\g[\\$0.%)    \" restore its original format
.   af \\$0.% 0         \" keep saved value as decimal
.   if \\$1 \\{
.   \" Current page faces as does the desired output target,
.   \" so we need to skip an entire opposing page.
.   \"
.       nr \\$0.% +1    \" update to skipped page number
.       bp 1           \" skip, numbering as page one
.   \\}
.   bp \\n[\\$0.%) +1  \" advance, restoring page number
.   rr \\$0.%          \" clear saved page number
..
```

As it now stands, when used with the `ms` macros, with their default page header and footer policies in effect, this implementation of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro will advance the output position to the top of the next available, appropriately facing new page; if an additional intervening page is inserted, it will remain *completely* blank, and page numbering will resume on the new output page.

A further option, which is not supported by the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro, as it now stands, may be worthy of consideration: instead of inserting a page header, and thus resuming page numbering immediately, on the page where output itself resumes following “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE”, also omit the header of this page, then reinstate it to resume numbering only on the next following page. Once again, assuming that `ms` is being used, with its default page header and footer policies in effect, this additional feature may be readily supported, in a similar manner to the suppression of *all* output on intervening pages, by replacing the unconditional statement:

```
.   bp \\n[\\$0.%) +1  \" advance, restoring page number
```

within the current “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” implementation, with the alternative unconditional statements:

```
.   bp 1              \" advance, without numbering the page
.   pn \\n[\\$0.%) +1  \" restore numbering on following page
```

or make it conditional, for example on having passed<sup>49</sup> a second argument of “no” (say), to suppress immediate resumption of page numbering, otherwise, resume it immediately:

```
.   ie '\\$2'no' \\{
.   \" Page numbering is to be suppressed, on the first page
.   \" on which output is resumed.
.   \"
.       bp 1              \" advance, without numbering the page
.       pn \\n[\\$0.%) +1  \" restore numbering on following page
.   \\}
.   \" Otherwise, page numbering is to be resumed immediately.
.   \"
.   el .bp \\n[\\$0.%) +1  \" advance, restoring page number
```

---

49. To achieve this, the “NEW-RECTO-PAGE” and “NEW-VERSO-PAGE” macros would also require modification, to pass their own arguments on to “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE”, following the “o” and “e” arguments, which they already pass, respectively.



Thus, the refined set of page break macros, for advancing the output position to a new recto page, or to a new verso page, becomes the complementary pair:

```
.de NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\" Insert a page break, resuming output at the top of the
.\" next available new recto (i.e. odd numbered) page.
.\"
. ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o \\$@
..
```

and its complement:

```
.de NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\" Insert a page break, resuming output at the top of the
.\" next available new verso (i.e. even numbered) page.
.\"
. ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e \\$@
..
```

together with their common helper macro:

```
.de ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE
.\" Insert page breaks, as required, to resume output at the
.\" top of the next available new recto page, or new verso page,
.\" as determined by the first passed argument, (which MUST be
.\" either of groff's conditional operators, "o" or "e").
.\"
.\" Usage: .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o [no] \" NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\"       .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e [no] \" NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\"
.\" The second argument is optional; if specified as "no", the
.\" ms page header, (incorporating the page number), will not
.\" be printed on the first page, on which output is resumed.
.\"
. af \\$0.% \\g%          \" save page number format
. af % 0                 \" interpret as decimal numeric...
. nr \\$0.% \\n%         \" to save its current value
. af % \\g[\\$0.%]      \" restore its original format
. af \\$0.% 0           \" keep saved value as decimal
. if \\$1 \\{
. \" Current page faces as does the desired output target,
. \" so we need to skip an entire opposing page.
. \"
.   nr \\$0.% +1         \" update to skipped page number
.   bp 1                 \" skip, numbering as page one
. }
. ie '\\$2'no' \\{
. \" Page numbering is also to be suppressed, on the first page
. \" on which output is resumed.
. \"
.   bp 1                 \" advance, without numbering the page
.   pn \\n[\\$0.%]+1    \" restore numbering on following page
. }
. \" Otherwise, page numbering is to be resumed immediately.
. \"
. el .bp \\n[\\$0.%]+1  \" advance, restoring page number
. rr \\$0.%             \" clear saved page number
..
```

Another optional refinement, which may be considered, could be to assign the page number format, for use on pages following any page break which is introduced by either “NEW-RECTO-PAGE”, or “NEW-VERSO-PAGE”, by passing the desired formatting code as a macro argument, rather than preserving the prevailing format internally, within the

“ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro. A possible implementation of such a refinement may be achieved by defining a new internal-use macro:

```
.de ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE.af
.\" Helper macro, to be called ONLY by ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE;
.\" assign page number format for use on subsequent pages, as
.\" specified by passed argument, or default to decimal.
.\"
.   if '\\$2'no' .shift  \" ignore "no" argument
.   af % \\$2 0          \" assign as specified, or default
..
```

This new internal-use macro would then be called, normally exclusively in practice, by a further modified variant of the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” macro:

```
.de ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE
.\" Insert page breaks, as required, to resume output at the
.\" top of the next available new recto page, or new verso page,
.\" as determined by the first passed argument, (which MUST be
.\" either of groff's conditional operators, "o" or "e").
.\"
.\" Usage: .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE o [<arg> ...]  \" NEW-RECTO-PAGE
.\"       .ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE e [<arg> ...]  \" NEW-VERSO-PAGE
.\"
.\" The second, and subsequent arguments are optional; if the
.\" second is specified as "no", the ms page header, (in which
.\" the page number is normally included), will not be printed
.\" on the first page, on which output is resumed, and a third
.\" argument, if present, will be interpreted as specifying a
.\" page number format for use on subsequent pages.
.\"
.\" Otherwise, if a second argument is specified, and it is
.\" not "no", it will be interpreted as the specification of
.\" the page number format for use on subsequent pages.
.\"
.   af % 0                \" make page number decimal...
.   nr \\$0.% \\n%        \" to save its current value
.   \\$0.af \\$@          \" select, and apply new format...
.   af \\$0.% 0           \" keeping saved value as decimal
.   if \\$1 \\{
.   \" Current page faces as does the desired output target,
.   \" so we need to skip an entire opposing page.
.   \"
.   nr \\$0.% +1         \" update to skipped page number
.   bp 1                 \" skip, numbering as page one
.   \\}
.   ie '\\$2'no' \\{
.   \" Page numbering is also to be suppressed, on the first page
.   \" on which output is resumed.
.   \"
.   bp 1                 \" advance, without numbering the page
.   pn \\n[\\$0.%]+1     \" restore numbering on following page
.   \\}
.   \" Otherwise, page numbering is to be resumed immediately.
.   \"
.   el .bp \\n[\\$0.%]+1 \" advance, restoring page number
.   rr \\$0.%            \" clear saved page number
..
```

It is worth noting that each of the page break macros, developed above, is implemented *exclusively* using fundamental groff requests; none of them is *explicitly* dependent on ms. However, they *do* exhibit an *implicit* dependency on

default ms behavioural traits — specifically that no page headers are printed on any page with a page number of one, and page footers are normally *entirely* blank. Thus, they should work equally effectively with *any* macro suite which mimics, or can be made to mimic, these ms behavioural traits.

There is at least one potentially detrimental consequence of depending on these ms behavioural traits, which will become apparent in any reference to the “\n%” page number register on any page on which an effective page number of one has been substituted for the real page number, to suppress printing of the page header on the page where output is resumed, following a page break. The detrimental effect of page number substitution will be particularly noticeable when collecting of references for inclusion in a table of contents; such references would be expected to reflect the real page number, but the “\n%” register will reflect only the effective page number of one. This effect, and a mechanism for neutralizing it, will be explored in [section 4.4, “Alternative Techniques for Generating Tables of Contents”](#).

As a final observation, on the handling of recto-verso page breaks: the “NEW-RECTO-PAGE”, “NEW-VERSO-PAGE”, and their supporting “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE” and “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE.af” macro variants, as they have been developed above, are intended only as examples; depending on their individual requirements, users are invited to adapt, and consolidate the techniques which they illustrate, as may be deemed appropriate. A practical illustration may be found in the `pdfmark.ms` source file, for this document; this never uses the “NEW-VERSO-PAGE” macro, and it *always* suppresses the printing of page headers on the first output page following any use of its “NEW-RECTO-PAGE” macro; thus, rather than implementing them separately, as illustrated above, it consolidates the implementations of both the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE”, and the “ADVANCE-TO-NEW-PAGE.af” macros, with *unconditional* page header suppression, into a free-standing “NEW-RECTO-PAGE” macro implementation, within which it also incorporates a mechanism for propagation of *real* page numbers, when constructing table of contents references,

### **4.3. Further Considerations for Using Document References**

#### **4.3.1. Creating a Document Reference Map**

#### **4.3.2. Deploying a Document Reference Map**

### **4.4. Alternative Techniques for Generating Tables of Contents**

# Appendix A

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