LPdoc
A Documentation Generator for (C)LP Systems

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Introduction / Motivation

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  → automate process as much as possible.

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  ◦ Produce useful documentation even if no comments or assertions in program.
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  - Be largely (CLP) platform-independent and modular.
Overall operation

- Main.pl
- Comp1.pl
- ... CompN.pl

User files
Sys. files

LPdoc

 SETTINGS
 Manuals, Readmes,...
 Installation scripts
 Index entries
 WWW & info sites

texinfo
info
dvi, ps
pdf
hml
man
ascii,...

Code + Assertions

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Overall operation

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- Or manually:
  - Creating manual:
    - Edit SETTINGS file
      - `lpdoc format` (dvi, ps, html, ...)
  - Viewing manual: `lpdoc dviview, lpdoc htmlview, ...
  - Installing manual: `lpdoc install`
  - + cleanup, etc.

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Inputs

- Basic types of input files:
  - Files to be documented (possibly including assertions and comments).
  - Used but not documented (library) files
    (e.g., system and user libraries: types, properties, reexports, etc.).
  - SETTINGS, template files, HTML style (css files), etc.
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- SETTINGS:
  - Determines main file and components.
  - Defines the paths to be used to find files (independent of the paths used by the LPdoc application itself).
  - Selects indices (predicates, ops, declarations, properties, types, libraries, concepts, authors, ...), options, etc.
  - Defines location of BiBTeX file(s), HTML styles, etc.
  - Defines document installation location, WWW site, etc.
Assertions

- Assertions:
  - Written in the Ciao assertion language.
  - Declarations, used to:
    - state general properties, types, modes, exceptions, ...
    - of certain program points, predicate usages, ....
  - Includes standard compiler directives (dynamic, meta_predicate, etc.).
  - Have a certain qualifier: check, true, trust, ...
  - Can include documentation text strings.
- \texttt{LPdoc} understands assertions natively and uses them to generate the documentation.
Assertions (Contd.)

- Examples – pred:

  :- pred qsort(X,Y) : list(X) => sorted(Y)
  # "@var{Y} is a sorted permutation of @var{X}.".

- Examples – prop, regtype:

  :- prop sorted(X) # "@var{X} is sorted.".
  sorted([]).
  sorted([_]).
  sorted([X,Y|R]) :- X < Y, sorted([Y|R]).

  :- regtype list(X) # "@var{X} is a list.".
  list([]).
  list([_|T]) :- list(T).
Comments

- Declarations, typically containing textual comments:
  
  ```prolog
  :- comment(CommentType,CommentData).
  (also: :- doc(CommentType,CommentData).)
  ```

- Examples:
  
  ```prolog
  :- comment(title,"Complex numbers library").
  :- comment(summary,"Provides an ADT for complex numbers.").
  :- comment(ctimes(X,Y,Z),"@var{Z} is @var{Y} times @var{X}.").
  ```

- Markup language, close to LaTeX/texinfo:
  
  - Syntax: @command (followed by either a space or {},) or @command{body}.
  - Command set kept small and somewhat generic, to be able to generate
documentation in a variety of formats.
  - Names typically the same as in LaTeX.
  - Types of commands:
    - Indexing and referencing commands.
    - Formatting commands.
    - Inclusion commands, etc.
Structure of generated documents

- Overall structure:
  - Single file → simple manual without chapters.
  - Multiple files:
    * Main file gives title, author(s), version, summary, intro, etc.
    * Other (“component”) files are chapters and appendices.

- Chapters:
  - If file does not define main → assumed library, interface (API) documented.
    else → assumed application, usage documented.
  - Structure:
    * Chapter title/subtitle (or file name if unavailable).
    * Info on authors, version, copyright, ...
    * Chapter intro.
    * Interface (usage, exports, reexports, decls, ops, modules used, ...).
    * Documentation for decls, preds, props, regtypes, multifiles, modedefs,...
    * Bugs, changelog, appendices, ...
Documentation of predicates, props, etc.

- If no declarations or comments:
  - One line stating predicate name and arity
    (useful: goes to index → automatic location, automatic completion).
  - If property or regtype: source code (often best description).
- Comments for the predicate/property/regtype...
- All assertions, described in textual form (unless stated otherwise).
- \texttt{pred} assertions documented as “usages”.
- Comments associated with \texttt{pred} assertions used to describe the usages.
- Syntactic sugar (e.g., modes) can be documented as is or expanded.
- The text in properties is \textit{reflected} into the predicates which use such properties (also if property is imported from another module).
Architecture and Implementation

- Standalone application (Ciao standalone executable).
- Uses the Ciao generic modular program processing library (see the paper on the Ciao module system):
  - We want to be fully modular and incremental.
  - To support syntax extensions (ops, expansions, ...) the task requires a full reader, precise module visibility, etc.
- System is indeed quite incremental (vital for, e.g., the Ciao manual).

- Size: 300K (dynamic) / 2.7 M (static).
- 11K lines Prolog + 12K lines from Ciao libraries + 1K misc (html/css, BiBTeX, ...).
Comparison with other systems

- We are not aware of other systems with the capabilities of LPdoc.
- Some systems for pure “literate programming” in LP.
  - Quite useful, but almost all text must be written manually.
  - LPdoc goes much further and is much more automatic (“knows at least as much as the compiler”).
- Some automatic documenters with more limited capability (e.g., Icon, Perl, ...).
- Closest system is javadoc (developed in parallel with LPdoc):
  - Nicely formatted HTML manuals.
  - Also uses information typically available to the compiler.
  - Allows inclusion of textual comments in HTML format.

Disadvantages:
- Assrt. lang., treatment of props, markup, output formats, etc. richer in LPdoc.
- Perhaps too tied to HTML.
- Cannot show source code, as LPdoc.
- (+ the obvious one: tied to Java).
Conclusions

- In use at CLIP since late 1996 (and elsewhere) → some user experience.
- Very good for reference manuals in general. Also for “internals” manuals.
- Most satisfactory for libraries (highest quality documentation with least effort).
- Somewhat stilted for user’s manuals, but still useful.
- Much easier to maintain documentation up to date.
- With practice, one can with moderate effort write assertions and comments that:
  - document the program code,
  - produce a manual documenting the use of the code,
  - greatly improve the debugging and maintenance cycles (verification).

*Writing assertions/comments more likely if effort pays off in several ways!*

- All CLIP software manuals, web sites, etc. currently produced using LPdoc.
- Can be downloaded freely from http://www.clip.dia.fi.upm.es/Software.
- Can be adapted to other (C)LP systems and output formats.
System Demo

- LPdoc
- The Ciao preprocessor – Ciaopp
  - No assertions or comments.
  - Add assertions, comments.
  - Generate dvi, view
  - Add citations.
  - Generate html, view; info, view
  - Add a figure. View in several formats.
  - Visit Ciao manual, show help on current symbol.
  - Visit WWW site, collection of manuals.
  - Style sheets.

SYSTEM DEMO