The tikzlings package
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Abstract
The TikZlings package provides a selection of cute little animals (and other beings) which can be used in TikZ. The following article will give an overview of the available creatures, their options and how to customise them.

1 Introduction
For most users their first contact with \LaTeX and friends is for something serious like writing a thesis or a report. However the \LaTeX world has much more to offer. There are many enthusiastic users and authors for whom \LaTeX is also a tool to create joyous documents like greeting cards or educational material for children.

The TikZlings package is a collection of cute little creatures which can be used with TikZ in many different situations. Figure 1 shows a family portrait of all of them.

Figure 1: Family portrait of the TikZlings.

2 Basic usage
The basic usage of the package is simple. After loading the package with `\usepackage{tikzlings}`, a command for each creature is available, which can be used in a `tikzpicture`:

\begin{document}
\begin{tikzpicture}
penguin
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{document}

Besides the `penguin` from the example above, the other available macros are `anteater`, `bat`, `bear`, `bee`, `bug`, `cat`, `chicken`, `coati`, `elephant`, `hippo`, `koala`, `marmot`, `mouse`, `moles`, `owl`, `panda`, `pig`, `rhino`, `sheep`, `sloth`, `snowman` and `squirrel`. And for the undecided, there is the macro `\tikzling`, which will draw a random TikZling.

3 Options
To make them more individual, the TikZlings come with several options for customisation. Via a simple key-value interface the user can adapt properties like the body colour:

\begin{tikzpicture}
\bee[body=cyan]
\end{tikzpicture}

There are also options to make the TikZlings appear three-dimensional (3D), only show their outlines (contour) or from behind (back):

The available options vary for the different creatures and giving an exhaustive list here would exceed the scope of this article, but a full list of all options can be found in the documentation [1].

Besides these options provided by the TikZlings package, also all typical TikZ options can be used:

\begin{tikzpicture}
\chicken[rotate=20]
\end{tikzpicture}

4 Accessories
The TikZlings come with an assortment of accessories, which can be used as an optional argument:

\begin{tikzpicture}
\elephant[tophat]
\end{tikzpicture}

As the TikZlings come in many different shapes and sizes, not all accessories will fit them off-the-peg. Therefore accessories can also be added separately with the `\thing` macro, for which one can use all the typical TikZ options to scale and shift it until it fits the TikZling:

\begin{tikzpicture}
\squirrel
\thing[harlequin,
    scale=0.65,yshift=1.05cm]
\end{tikzpicture}

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For a full list of available accessories, please consult the package documentation [1].

5 Further customisation

Everybody for whom all these options and accessories are not enough, can further customise the TikZlings. At their heart, they are just paths in a \texttt{tikzpicture} so any \texttt{Ti\kern-0.1667emkern+0.4emZ} code can be added:

\begin{tikzpicture}
\fill[blue] (0,0) rectangle (1,1);
\end{tikzpicture}

To make such additions easier, the TikZlings package provides several hooks for the user to add code at different layers of the drawing. For example one can use the \texttt{\textbackslash mousehookbelly} macro to give the mouse a dress, which will be located between the belly and the arms:

\begin{tikzpicture}
\newcommand{\mousehookbelly}{
\fill[red!80!black]
(0.55, 1.35) -- (0.65, 0.3) --
(-0.65, 0.3) -- (-0.55, 1.35)
-- (0.0, 0.9) -- cycle;
}
\mouse
\end{tikzpicture}

Other available hooks are

- \texttt{\textbackslash (tikzling)hookbody}
- \texttt{\textbackslash (tikzling)hookbackground}
- \texttt{\textbackslash (tikzling)hookforeground}

6 Suggestions or problems

The package source is hosted at \url{https://github.com/samcarter/tikzlings}, along with a tracker for bug reports, feature requests or contributions.

7 Acknowledgements

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References


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