5 Tabbing

One of the commands that the VIEW word processor has in common with a typewriter is TAB. Put a default ruler onto the screen:

```
.. .......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.<
   _
```

TAB stops are set at every eighth character and shown as asterisks. Like any other characters in the ruler, they can be changed. There is, for example, no reason why a ruler should be constructed with all the TABs at one end, like this:

```
.. ...*...*...*...*...........................................b.......<
   _
```

(The b causes a bleep, just like the bell on a typewriter, except that VIEW allows you to place it wherever you like, and it has no connection necessarily with margins.)

The two dots in the left margin are a signal that this line is a ruler, whatever other characters happen to be on the line.

Try some TABs for yourself. Call up a default ruler and reset the TABs on it as you wish, by typing in more asterisks or cancelling those that are there already with dots. Then move the cursor to the line below the ruler and use the **TAB** key before you type text. You will find that so far VIEW behaves in much the same way as a normal typewriter.

5.1 Tabbing after typing

Now try this. Type a piece of text several lines long. Then place the cursor at the beginning of each line and press **TAB** .

```
.. .......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.<
        TextTextTextTextText
        TextTextTextTextText
        TextTextTextTextText
        TextTextTextTextText
```

The text immediately shoots over to line up with the first asterisk on the ruler at the top of the screen.

Now put the cursor back at the beginning of the line again, and press DELETE CHARACTER (function key **f9**).

A surprising thing happens - surprising to those who are only used to typewriters. The whole of the tabbing is cancelled, and the text shoots right back to the cursor position.

You can produce much the same effect by typing and tabbing as before, then instead of returning the cursor to the beginning of the line, press the black **DELETE** key on the lower part of the keyboard.

5.2 TAB characters

The reason for this behaviour is that the TAB is in fact a *character*, an invisible character - which may seem strange until you reflect that a space is also a character and invisible. So the reason why the DELETE CHARACTER key deleted the whole of the TAB is that it was deleting a single character - a TAB character.

TAB characters vary in length according to the TAB settings on the current ruler, and they can be altered, even after a tabbed line has been typed, by altering the ruler.

For example, if your ruler is like this:

```
.. .......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.<
```

and you type in

```
   JONES, Abel Baker
         The art and science of word processing
                 Oxford University Press
                     March 1984
```

you will have used no TAB in the first line, one in the second, two in the third, and three in the last.

If you then change the TAB spacings on the ruler and move the cursor down again, the TAB characters instantly change and the text jumps to the new spacing.

```
.. ...*...*...*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.......*.<
```

```
   JONES, Abel Baker
      The art and science of word processing
          Oxford University Press
              March 1984
```

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The text behaves in this way because the size of the TAB characters has been changed by the resetting of the TAB stops on the ruler.

If you wish to work with TABs a good deal you should study the relevant pages of the *GUIDE*.

5.3 Text outside the ruler

Having got this far with the placing and manipulation of text, we are ready for a rather more sophisticated operation. You have probably noticed in many reports, legal documents and leaflets that the main text often occupies the central part of the page only, with side headings and comment to left and right.

Since we need the ruler to align and format all text, how can we produce a layout like that?

The answer is to type the text first and the headings afterwards, like this.

```
.. .............>.........................<
                The   left   margin  is  set
                towards  the  middle  of the
                page   to  leave  room   for
                headings  and  notes  at the
                sides.   The   next  can  be
                justified or not as required
                and   TABs  can  be  set  as
                usual.
```

After the text is typed, release the margins by pressing RELEASE MARGINS (`SHIFT` and function key `f2`). Then move the cursor to the positions where you want the side headings to be, using the arrow keys. Type the headings and notes in like this:

```
.. .............>.........................<

   SIDE HEADINS The   left   margin  is  set   NOTES AND
   TYPED        towards  the  middle  of the   REFERENCES
   HERE         page   to  leave  room   for   TYPED HERE
                headings  and  notes  at the
                sides.   The   next  can  be
                justified or not as required
                and   TABs  can  be  set  as
                usual.
```

. . . and when you have finished the job, don't forget to restore the margins by pressing RELEASE MARGINS (**SHIFT** and function key **f2**) again.

Note: If you are using the method described here, always format your text before placing the headings and notes. If you try to format it afterwards, VIEW will assume that you want everything in the lines concerned included in the formatting, so all your headings will be collapsed into the text and you will have to start again!

5.4 Tables and formatting

Formatting text can to a great deal of damage to tables embedded in it, unless you take action to prevent the damage. This is related to the way in which formatting deals with TABs.

Suppose you have a line with a TAB in it which you format - with FORMAT BLOCK, global format, or the formatting that occurs when you reach the end of a justified line. In such a case VIEW treats the TAB as a space, and so will redistribute spaces in the line to accommodate the TAB. Naturally this would ruin any tabular layout.

The easiest way to prevent this from happening is to start each line of your table with a single TAB, or with one or more spaces. This acts as a signal to VIEW and it will not disturb the table.

If you want the table to line up with the left margin the simplest method is to place a ruler above the table with no right margin stop on it. This prevents formatting and protects the table.

These methods are described in more detail in chapter 12.