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Vim Editing Multiple Files and Windowing Support Under Linux / UNIX

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- Vim Editing Multiple Files and Windowing Support Under Linux / UNIX

Q. How do I open and edit multiple files under VIM text editor running under Ubuntu Linux / UNIX operating systems to improve my productivity?

A. Vim offers multiple file editing with the help of windows. You can easily open multiple files and edit them using the concept of buffers.

Understanding vim buffer

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A buffer is nothing but a file loaded into memory for editing. The original file remains unchanged until you write the buffer to the file using w (other file saving related) command.

Understanding window

A window is noting but a viewport onto a buffer. You can use multiple windows on one buffer, or several windows on different buffers. By default, Vim starts with one window, for example open /etc/passwd file, enter:
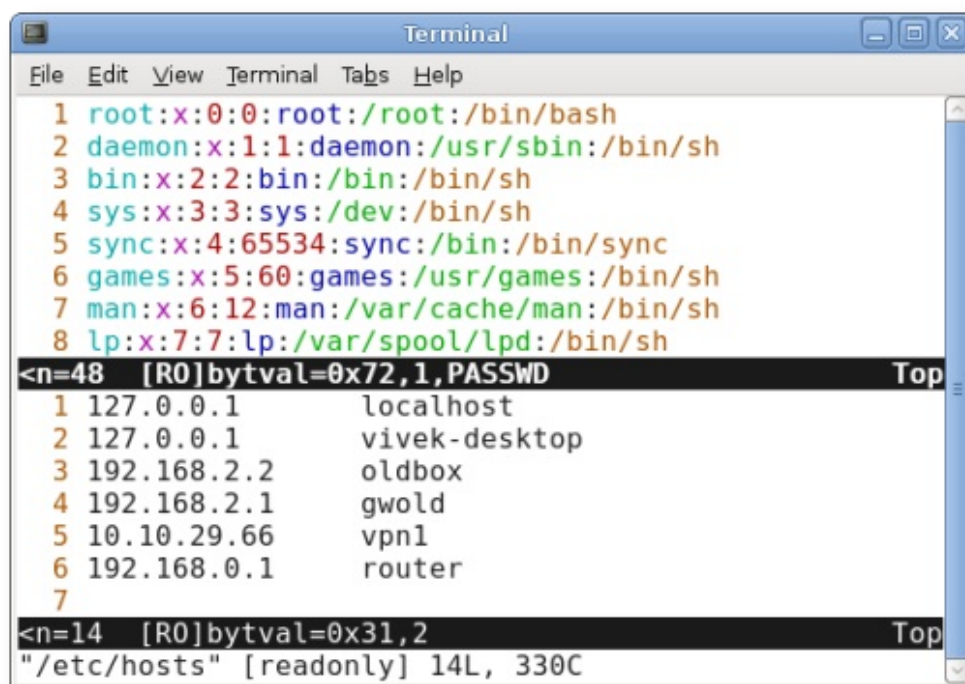
```
$ vim /etc/passwd
```

Open two windows

Start vim as follows to open two windows, split horizontally:

```
$ vim -o /etc/passwd /etc/hosts
```

OR

```
$ vim -o file1.txt resume.txt
```

[12]

(Fig.01: split horizontal windows under VIM)
The -O option allows you to open two windows, split vertically, enter:

```
$ vim -O /etc/passwd /etc/hosts
```

How do I switch or jump between windows?

This operation is also known as moving cursor to other windows:

1. Press CTRL + W + <Left arrow key> to activate left windows
2. Press CTRL + W + <Right arrow key> to activate right windows
3. Press CTRL + W + <Up arrow key> to activate to windows above current one
4. Press CTRL + W + <Down arrow key> to activate to windows down current one
5. Press CTRL-W + CTRL-W (hit CTRL+W twice) to move quickly between all open windows

How do I edit current buffer?

Use all your regular vim command such as i, w and so on for editing text.

How do I close windows?

Press CTRL+W CTRL-Q to close the current windows. You can also press [ESC]+:q to quit current window.

How do I open new empty window?

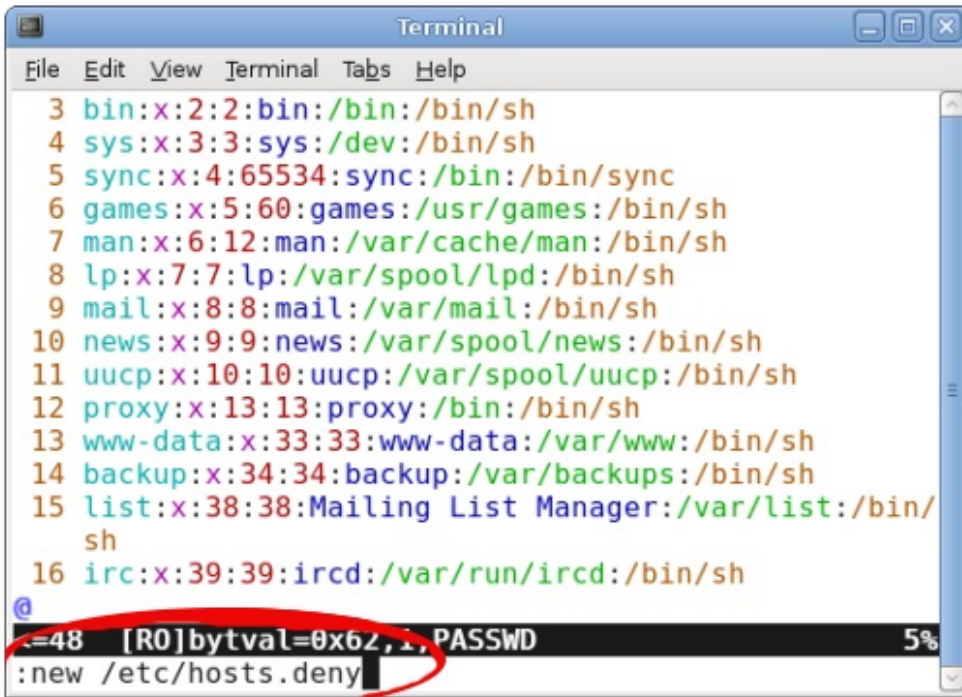Press CTRL+W + n - Create a new window and start editing an empty file in it.

How do I split current window in two?

Press CTRL+W+ s - to split current window in two.

How do I open exiting file in a new windows?

Press [ESC]+:new /path/to/file. This will create a new window and start editing file /path/to/file in it. For example, open file called /etc/hosts.deny, enter:
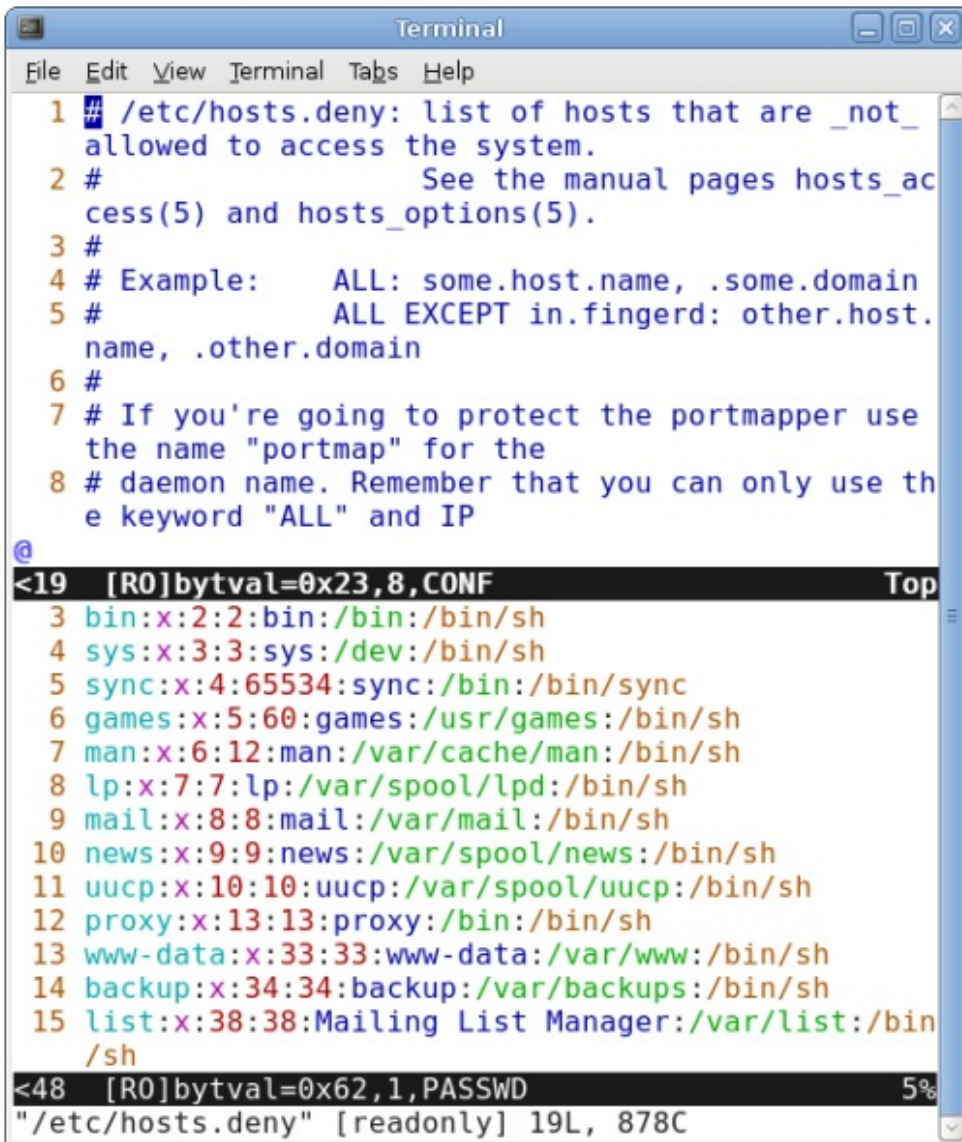
```
:new /etc/hosts.deny
```

(Fig.02: Create a new window and start editing file /etc/hosts.deny in it.)

(Fig.03: Two files opened in a two windows)

How do I resize Window?

You can increase or decrease windows size by N number. For example, increase windows size by 5, press [ESC] + 5 + CTRL + W+ +.

To decrease windows size by 5, press [ESC]+ 5 + CTRL+ W + -.

Moving windows cheat sheet

Key combination	Action
CTRL-W h	move to the window on the left
CTRL-W j	move to the window below
CTRL-W k	move to the window above
CTRL-W l	move to the window on the right
CTRL-W t	move to the TOP window
CTRL-W b	move to the BOTTOM window

How do I quit all windows?

Type the following command (also known as quit all command):

```
:qall
```

Note: If any of the windows contain changes, Vim will not exit. The cursor will automatically be positioned in a window with changes.

You can then either use ":write" to save the changes:

```
:write
```

or ":quit!" to throw them away:

```
:quite!
```

How do save and quit all windows?

To save all changes in all windows and quite , use this command:

```
:wqall
```

This writes all modified files and quits Vim. Finally, there is a command that quits Vim and throws away all changes:

```
:qall!
```

Further readings:

- Refer "Splitting windows" help by typing :help under vim itself.

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[3] Turn on or off color syntax highlighting in vi or vim: **http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/turn-on-or-off-color-syntax-highlighting-in-vi-or-vim/**

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[12] Image: **http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/vim-two-windows.png**

[13] Image: **http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/new-windows-with-file.png**

[14] Image: **http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/new-windows-with-file1.png**