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Introduction

This short guide is for technical writing students and others who have little or no experience writing in a text editor.

Why did I write this guide?

As a technical writing student, my instructor recommended we use Notepad ++ as our text editor. I use a Mac. Unfortunately, Notepad++ is not compatible with MacOS. although my Mac laptop has a text editor, I realized its shortcomings after seeing an example of Notepad++.

So I looked around for an alternative. Since we use GitHub in class and Atom is a GitHub product, I decided to try it.

My needs for a text editor are very basic. I only need to:

- Practice writing in HTML, Markdown, and RST.
- Be able to preview what I write.

Installing Atom was super easy, but other basic set-up information was not as obvious for a non-developer like me. It took some time to get up and running, so I want to save other beginners time by sharing my learnings here.

I hope this guide gives you the tools to quickly start writing and previewing your work in Atom and gives me some practice creating projects in:

- RST/Sphinx/ReadtheDocs, and
- Framemaker

Thanks!!

Anita

Chapter 1

Install Atom

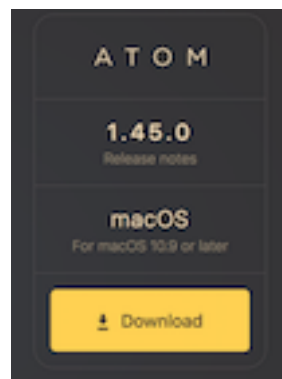
To work in Atom, you need to install it on your computer.

How to Install Atom

1. Go to <https://atom.io>. You will see a download button with your specific operating system (OS) and compatible versions listed above it.

For example, I'm running MacOS version 10.11.6, so when I go to the Atom homepage, the download window in Figure 1 is what appears to me. You should see an OS and version that is compatible to your OS.

Figure 1: Anita's Atom Download Window



2. Is the OS and version information correct for your system?
 - a) If yes, go to Step 3.

- b) If no, go to Step 4.
- 3. Click the **Download** button and follow the on-screen installation instructions.
- 4. When your download is complete, you are done. Go on to Chapter 2.
- 5. Click on the Other Platforms button at the bottom left of the Atom homepage window. You will be taken to Atom's latest version release page on GitHub.
- 6. click on Assets to open the list of the current available OS version downloadable files.
- 7. To download, click on th appropriate file name for your platform.
- 8. Once downloaded, open the file and follow the installation instructions.

Chapter 2

Install Highlight & Preview Packages

There are a lot of ways to customize Atom. Several customized “core packages” come pre-loaded with your Atom install. Other packages you need to install yourself.

HTML

Highlighted HTML syntax comes with your Atom installation. You only need to install the HTML preview package.

How to Install the HTML Preview Package

1. Open **Atom**.
2. On the top menu, click **Atom < Preferences**.
The settings pane opens.
3. On the left menu, click **Install**.
4. In the *Search Packages* box, type: **atom-html-preview**. The *atom-html-preview* package box appears.
5. Click **Install**.

Markdown

Markdown syntax highlighting and preview packages are part of the “core” packages, so they have already been installed. You don’t have to do anything more.

RST

To have highlighted (color-coded) syntax and a “live” preview window while you are writing your code, you need to install two packages:

- language-restructuredtext
- rst-preview

How to Install the RST Highlighting and Preview Packages

1. Open **Atom**.
2. On the top menu, click **Atom < Preferences**.
The settings pane opens.
3. On the left menu, click **Install**.
4. In the *Search Packages* box, type: **language-restructuredtext**. The *language-restructured* package box appears.
5. Click **Install**.
6. In the *Search Packages* box, type: **rst-preview**. The *rst-preview* package box appears.
7. Click **Install**.

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