

# Auto Insert

A Template Package for

GNU Emacs

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This manual documents ‘`auto-insert-tkld.el`’, by Kevin Davidson ‘`Kevin.Davidson@ed.ac.uk`’.  
Auto Insert is a package for automatically setting up default text when creating a new file.



# 1 Overview of Auto Insert

*Auto Insert* is a package for setting up default contents in new GNU Emacs buffers. When typing `C-x C-f new-file.c` it can automatically set up the new buffer with standard copyright or disclaimer messages, RCS or SCCS version control lines, author's name, the date or other information.

The same can be achieved with an existing buffer, by typing `M-x auto-insert-type` to ask for the type of file that a buffer corresponds to. Types might include program source, documentation, letters, announcements or anything else for which a standard layout might be wanted.



## 2 Installation

Before you can use Auto Insert, it will have to be installed on your system. If this has already been done (by a system administrator or another user), you can skip [Section 2.1 \[Installing From Scratch\]](#), [page 5](#) and go stright on to [Section 2.2 \[Using Auto Insert\]](#), [page 5](#).

### 2.1 Installing From Scratch

To install Auto Insert, check the paths for info and lisp directories at the top of the ‘Makefile’ are correct for your system and type *make* to build the package. Typing *make install* will copy the files to the correct locations.

This manual can then be printed out on a PostScript printer by typing *lpr auto-insert.ps*.

### 2.2 Using Auto Insert

Try this now to test Auto Insert:

- Load the package into Emacs by typing *M-x load-library RET auto-insert-tkld RET*
- Create a new file in another window with *C-x 4 C-f new-file.c RET*.

This buffer should contain a skeleton file with a leading comment. For details on how to modify this text, see [Section 3.2 \[Creating Template Files\]](#), [page 8](#).

To make Auto Insert a permanent feature in Emacs, add `(require 'auto-insert-tkld)` to the ‘`~/.emacs`’ file in your home directory and check that any customisation variables are set to suitable values see [Section 3.1 \[Customisation Variables\]](#), [page 7](#), using `setq`.





## 3 Customisation

Auto Insert can be customised in two ways:

- Lisp variables that can be set in `‘.emacs’` or `‘site-start.el’`
- The insert files themselves can be edited.

### 3.1 Customisation Variables

Auto Insert can be customised to behave differently using the following variables:

**auto-insert-automatically** [User Option]  
Default: `t`

If `t`, automatically insert file contents based on file name and type. If `nil`, do not automatically insert any contents and leave the buffer untouched. This effectively turns off Auto Insert. If non-`nil` and non-`t`, then ask the user for each new file whether to insert file contents or not.

**auto-insert-alist** [User Option]  
An alist of regular expressions to match file names and the types of file they represent. For example `‘((“\\\.tex$” . “TeX”) (“\\\.c” . “C”))’` would define files ending in `‘.tex’` as being TeX documents and those ending in `‘.c’` as C source code.

**auto-insert-type-alist** [User Option]  
An alist of auto-insert types and the names of files that should be inserted for those types. For example `‘((“TeX” . “tex-insert.tex”) (“C” . “c-insert.c”))’`, would say that files of type `‘TeX’` should be automatically created with the contents of `‘tex-insert.tex’`. This file is to be found somewhere on `auto-insert-path`.

**auto-insert-path** [User Option]  
A list of directories in which Auto Insert files will be searched for. Typically this will include a directory containing a user’s own library of insert files and a system wide directory. For shared projects, where files should have a common appearance, a project specific directory could be set up.

**auto-insert-search-current-dir** [User Option]  
Default: `t`

Setting this to `t` causes Auto Insert to look for auto-insert files in the current directory associated with the new buffer, before looking along `auto-insert-path`. If a project requires a different file layout from the default, suitable insert files for each file type could be created in the project’s directory.

**auto-insert-num-prefix** [User Option]  
Default: `“0”`

The prefix used when inserting numerical days and months. Other suitable values might be `“ ”` or `“”`, to create right justified dates, or to close up space with no leading zero.

- user-mail-address** [User Option]  
 Default: "<user@machine>" or "<user@gnus-local-domain>"  
 Used when inserting the mail address of the user, this should be set to a valid mail address if the default is not a correct mail address.
- auto-insert-organisation** [User Option]  
 Default: 'gnus-local-organization' or '\$ORGANIZATION'  
 Used when inserting the organisation of the user. If GNUS has not been set up, the ORGANIZATION (or ORGANISATION) environment variable is used. If none are set, the empty string is used.
- auto-insert-system-name** [User Option]  
 Default: '(system-name)'  
 Used when inserting the hostname with %h. There shouldn't be any reason to change this.
- auto-insert-login-name** [User Option]  
 Default: '(user-login-name)'  
 The login name of the user, used when expanding %u.
- auto-insert-full-name** [User Option]  
 Default: '(user-full-name)'  
 The full name of the user, used when expanding %U. Normally this is taken from the password file.

## 3.2 Creating Template Files

Auto Insert template files are plain text files containing default text. However, for shared templates this alone would not be very useful, since the user would not be able to put their own name at the head of the file, nor could the filename itself be automatically inserted in the new buffer.

To solve this Auto Insert will also expand certain %-escapes into dynamically defined text, including the current date and time, filename, username, etc. The initial positions of point ( See Info file 'emacs', node 'Point') and mark ( See Info file 'emacs', node 'Mark' ) can also be set.

Auto Insert template files will be searched for in order through the directories listed in auto-insert-path See [Section 3.1 \[Customisation Variables\], page 7](#). This allows users to define their own library of templates to override any system-wide defaults.

- '%u' is replaced by the user's login name from auto-insert-login-name, see [Section 3.1 \[Customisation Variables\], page 7](#)
- '%U' is the user's full name from auto-insert-full-name, see [Section 3.1 \[Customisation Variables\], page 7](#)
- '%h' is the name of the user's machine (the value of auto-insert-system-name), see [Section 3.1 \[Customisation Variables\], page 7](#)
- '%a' is the user's mail address from user-mail-address, see [Section 3.1 \[Customisation Variables\], page 7](#)

<code>'%f'</code>	is the file name (without the directory part)
<code>'%F'</code>	is the file name, capitalised
<code>'%b'</code>	is the base file name (without any suffix)
<code>'%B'</code>	is the base file name capitalised
<code>'%e'</code>	is the file's suffix (extension)
<code>'%E'</code>	is the file's suffix, capitalised
<code>'%p'</code>	is the full path name of the file
<code>'%P'</code>	is the directory part of the file name
<code>'%d'</code>	is the current date in a standard format
<code>'%y'</code>	is the current year
<code>'%Y'</code>	is the final two digits of the current year
<code>'%M'</code>	is the month in figures
<code>'%m'</code>	is the month in words
<code>'%D'</code>	is the day of the month
<code>'%o'</code>	is the user's organisation (from the lisp variable <code>gnus-local-organization</code> , if it's set, or the environment variable <code>\$ORGANIZATION</code> or <code>\$ORGANISATION</code> )
<code>'%{ and %}'</code>	surround a comment. This is text that is simply removed when inserted.
<code>'%[ and %]'</code>	surround a string that is used to prompt the user for text to be inserted in the buffer at that point. This is useful for inserting text that cannot be inferred from the buffer's name.
<code>'%1, %2, . . . , %9'</code>	refer to the nth string that was prompted for with <code>%[ %]</code> .
<code>'%( and %)'</code>	surround an Emacs lisp form that is evalled and deleted
<code>'%^'</code>	centres the current line
<code>'%+'</code>	fills the current paragraph. This allows text to be tidied up after long replacements have been inserted.
<code>'%='</code>	justifies the current paragraph, so that the right and left margins are straight.
<code>'%&lt; and %&gt;'</code>	surround a value for fill-prefix. This is used for subsequent paragraph fills, and also for justifying paragraphs. This is useful for text that is embedded in a comment where each line should be prefixed with a common sequence (eg <code>';;;' in Emacs lisp, <code>'//'</code> in C++).</code>
<code>'%%'</code>	is a single <code>%</code>
<code>'%@'</code>	sets the initial position of 'point'



## Variable Index

### A

auto-insert-alist..... 7  
auto-insert-automatically..... 7  
auto-insert-full-name..... 8  
auto-insert-login-name..... 8  
auto-insert-num-prefix..... 7  
auto-insert-organisation..... 8

auto-insert-path..... 7  
auto-insert-search-current-dir..... 7  
auto-insert-system-name..... 8  
auto-insert-type-alist..... 7

### U

user-mail-address..... 8



Concept Index

<b>A</b>		
Auto Insert .....	3	
Auto Insert Concepts .....	13	
<b>C</b>		
Customisation .....	7	
<b>O</b>		
Overview .....	3	
<b>P</b>		
Percent Expansions .....	8	
<b>T</b>		
Tailoring .....	7	
Template Files .....	8	
<b>V</b>		
Variables .....	11	





# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Overview of Auto Insert .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Installation .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Installing From Scratch .....	5
2.2	Using Auto Insert .....	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Customisation .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1	Customisation Variables .....	7
3.2	Creating Template Files .....	8
	<b>Variable Index .....</b>	<b>11</b>
	<b>Concept Index .....</b>	<b>13</b>

