THE GEEK DIARY

Basic vi commands (cheat sheet)

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vi is one of the most commonly used editor program and included by default with every UNIX and linux system. vi basically operates in 3 modes, namely :

1. **vi mode** – the mode vi starts in
2. **command mode** – you can be in command mode from the vi mode by pressing the key colon (":")
3. **input mode** – in this mode user starts the actual editing of the text

Below are some of the most commonly used vi commands in all 3 modes of operation.

vi mode commands

l	Move one character to the right
h	Move one character to the left
w	Move one word to the right
W	Move one word to the right past punctuation
b	Move one word to the left
B	Move one word to the left past punctuation
e	Move to the end of the current word
1G	Move to the beginning of the file
H	Move to the top of the current screen
M	Move to the middle of the current screen
L	Move to the bottom of the current screen
Ctrl-G	Move to the last line in the file
Ctrl-F	Move one screen towards the end of the file
Ctrl-D	Move 1/2 screen towards the end of the file
Ctrl-B	Move one screen towards the beginning of the file
Ctrl-U	Move 1/2 screen towards the beginning of the file
Ctrl-L	Refresh the screen
5G	Move to line 5 of the file (5 can be any line number)
/string	Find text string forward
?string	Find text string backward
n	Find forward next string instance after a string search
N	Find backward next string instance after a string search
ZZ	Save the file exit vi
x	Delete the character at the cursor

10dd	Delete the 10 lines following the cursor
yy	Yank the current line
p	Put the yanked line below the current line
P	Put the yanked line above the current line

Command mode commands

Command	Action
:g/X/s//x/g	Global Search and replace (X=search object x=replace object)
:r file	Import a file into the current file
:34 r file	Import a file into the current file after line 34
:w	Write out the file to save changes
:w file	Write the file to named file
:wq	Save the file exit vi
:w!	Force save the file
:q!	Quit vi but don't save changes

Input mode commands

A	Append characters to the current line
i	Insert characters to the left of cursor
I	Insert characters at the beginning of the current line
o	Add a new line after current line
O	Insert a new line above the current line