1c. VS Code (OPTIONAL)

Martin Alfaro

PhD in Economics

FEATURES AND KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

We present a few keyboard shortcuts and handy features for VS Code. They also apply to its privacy-focused alternative VS Codium. Remarkably, these features are largely language-agnostic, holding regardless of the programming language you're working with.

For visual illustration, the features discussed are accompanied by GIFs. To view these GIFs, simply click "Example", or alternatively press `Alt+↑` or `Alt+↓` to open and close all of them simultaneously.

TO RUN A SCRIPT

Select the script to be executed and press `Ctrl+Enter`
▶ Example

TO FORMAT EXPRESSIONS AND MAKE THEM MORE LEGIBLE

Select the script to be formatted and press `Ctrl+k` + `Ctrl+f`. Sometimes, activating this tool requires running it twice.
▶ Example

TO ALIGN EQUAL SIGNS

This feature requires the VS Code Extension "Better Align". It aligns consecutive lines by using the equal sign and other symbols as a reference. It's implemented by pressing `Alt` + `a`.
▶ Example

See also the extension "Cursor Align", which aligns code by clicking the position on each line.

TO EXTEND THE CURSOR VERTICALLY

Hold down `Alt+Ctrl` + press `↑` or `↓`
▶ Example

TO SEE THE DOCUMENTATION OF A FUNCTION

It requires hovering over the function.
▶ Example

Alternatively, you can go to the REPL, press `?`, and then type the function's name you want to search for.
▶ Example

TO AUTOCOMPLETE A WORD

Start typing a word + press `Tab` when you see the option list.

▶ Example

TO INTRODUCE UNICODE CHARACTERS (TAB COMPLETION)

Type a unicode character/command, press `Ctrl` + `Space` to open an option list, and then choose the option and press `Tab`.

▶ Example

In Julia, Greek letters and math have the same syntax as Latex. To add them, you need to start with `\` (e.g., `\eq` for `≠`) and use Tab completion.

TO SELECT THE SAME WORD MULTIPLE TIMES

Select the word and then press `Ctrl+d` for selecting each additional time it appears. This is useful when you want to change part of the expression.

▶ Example

TO HIDE PART OF THE SCRIPT

Given a code block, add `#region` at the beginning and `#endregion` at the end.

▶ Example

When you have several lines indented, VS Code allows you to hide the block automatically. The following example shows this for a function.

▶ Example

TO TURN MULTIPLE LINES INTO A COMMENT

Select all the lines you want to interpret as a comment rather than code. Then, press `Ctrl` + `/`.

▶ Example