

# To Vim or Not to Vim

## The Tale of Love and Hate



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# HOW IT ALL STARTED

- ▶ an open-source text editor with both GUI and command line versions released in 1991
- ▶ a re-write of the classical Unix editor **vi** on Amiga computers by **Bram Moolenaar**
- ▶ originally an acronym of *Vi IMitation* changed to *Vi IMproved* once it superseded vi in 1993
- ▶ rivalry between Vim and Emacs is known as the *Editor war*<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ charityware
- ▶ every modern editor has a Vim input mode that mimics the unique interface of vi and Vim

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<sup>1</sup>The Church of Emacs vs. The Culf of vi



# WHY SHOULD ANYONE CARE?

- ▶ same editor everywhere → productivity boost
  - ▶ installed on most servers
  - ▶ easy to install in Docker containers
- ▶ effective for touch typists thanks to different modes
- ▶ most IDE functions in 70 MB of RAM
- ▶ same editor for all languages (Python, JS, Clojure, LaTeX, ...)
- ▶ distraction-free coding
- ▶ 100% customizable, have only what you need there
- ▶ disadvantages:
  - ▶ steep learning curve
  - ▶ takes time to setup and tune
  - ▶ inferior debuggers
  - ▶ lacks sophisticated framework integration (vs. JetBrains)



# WHY SHOULD ANYONE CARE?

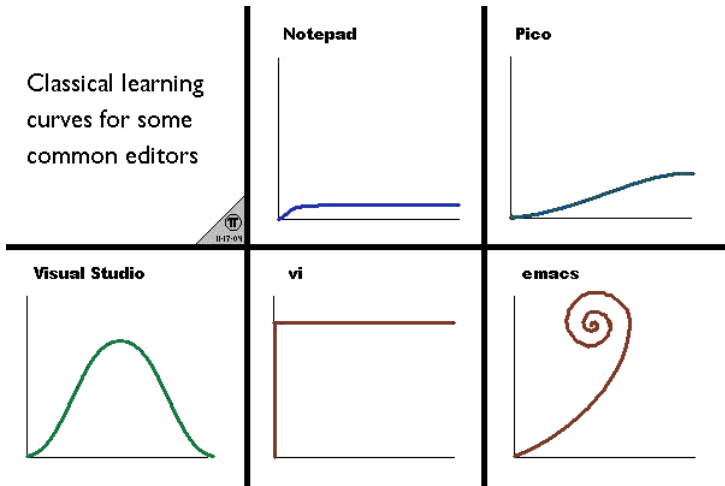


Figure: The problem is the steep learning curve.



# THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF VIM

1. extensibility (non-existent in vi, taken from Emacs)
2. modal interface from vi (normal, insert, command, visual)
  - ▶ no need for a mouse
3. chainable commands (unique, a sort of an own language)

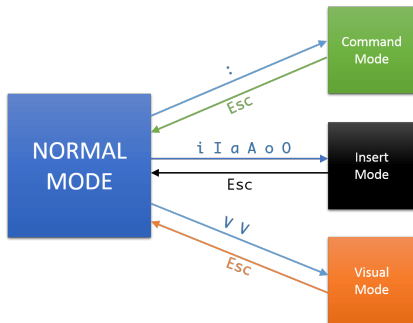


Figure: Different Vim modes, courtesy of <https://freblogg.com>



# NORMAL MODE

- ▶ to move around the file
  - ▶ h, j, k, l → arrow keys
  - ▶ gg/G → beginning/end of file
  - ▶ 20 → apply operation to 20 lines
- ▶ copy/paste
  - ▶ y → yank (copy)
  - ▶ d → delete
  - ▶ c → cut
- ▶ search current file
  - ▶ / → start the search
  - ▶ n → goto next occurrence
  - ▶ N → goto previous occurrence
- ▶ run commands with “:”, e.g. “:q” to quit

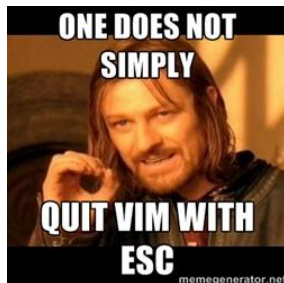


Figure: The different modes are the source of constant mocking.



# INSERT MODE

- ▶ input text using keyboard
- ▶ behaves as traditional editor
- ▶ move around with regular arrows
- ▶ enter insert mode via “i”
- ▶ back to insert mode with ESC



# COMMAND MODE

