What the tmux?

Dotfiles Indy Meetup | 08.2020 | Clayton Parker

### Who Am I?



#### What is it?

tmux == Terminal MUltipleXer

Many terminals within a terminal

A way to save your work for later or organize things locally

A better screen

#### tmux vs screen

#### Pros

- Client / server model
- Better keybinding support
- Multiple paste buffers
- More modern overall
- BSD licensed

#### Cons

- No serial / telnet terminal
- No support for older platforms and odd terminals

### How it works?

Let's take a tour of the basic functionality of tmux

## **Key Bindings**

A note on the prefix before we get started

The prefix in tmux is ctrl + b

To avoid a conflict with screen's ctrl + a

Remap it in your tmux.conf if needed

```
# Change the prefix and release ctrl + b
set -g prefix C-a
unbind C-b

# Ability to send ctrl + a to applications still
bind C-a send-prefix
```

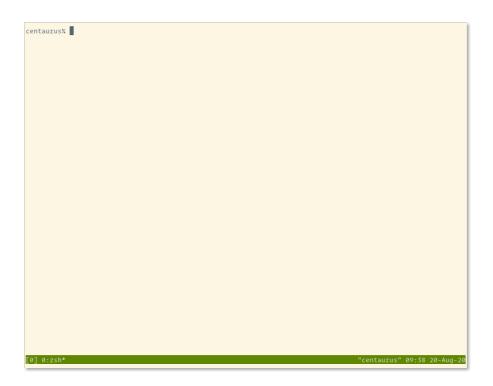
### Starting a new session



The foundation of tmux is the session

Every time you invoke tmux you are starting a new session within that server

#### Sessions



A session is started with a single window

A status line appears giving you info about the session

Another difference from default screen, automatic status line

### Sessions

```
0 (sort: index)
                                               0:zsh
```

prefix + s

Now we can see we have one session running one window

## Detaching

```
centaurus%
```

prefix + d

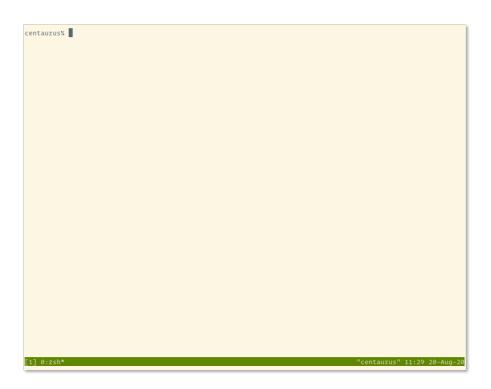
Now we are back to our original terminal, no longer in tmux

## Starting another session



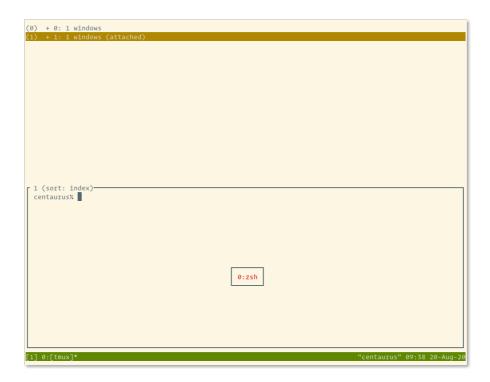
Running tmux again starts a completely new session on that server

### Sessions



We can see the session number is incremented in the status line

### Sessions



prefix + s

Now we can see we have two sessions running

This view also allows keyboard navigation, so you can see more detailed info

## Attaching



Now let's go back to our non tmux terminal How do we get back to the original session?

## Attaching

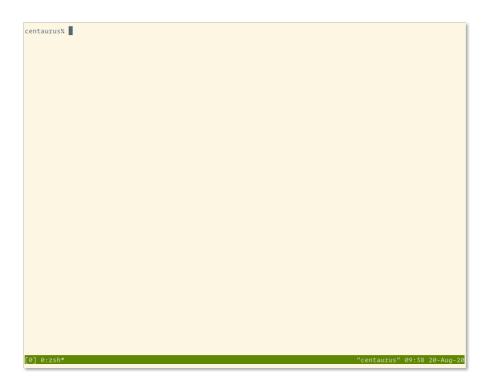
```
centaurus% tmux list-sessions
0: 1 windows (created Thu Aug 20 09:37:20 2020)
1: 2 windows (created Thu Aug 20 09:38:31 2020) (attached)
centaurus% tmux attach-session -t 0
```

You can see a list of sessions with the list-sessions command (or ls for short)

You can attach to a specific session using the attach command

The -t is the target

# Attaching



Now we are back to the original session

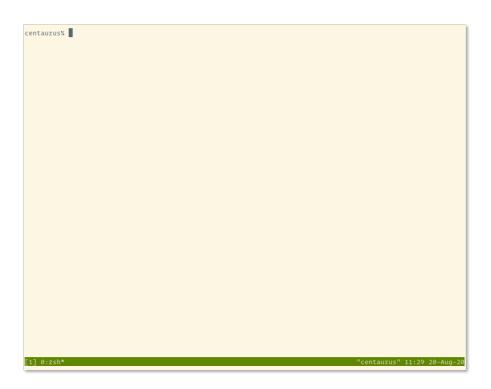
### Windows and Panes

The next most fundamental thing about tmux

Windows are a collection of panes

Each pane is a horizontal or vertical split of the window

### Windows and Panes



Starting out with one window in a new session

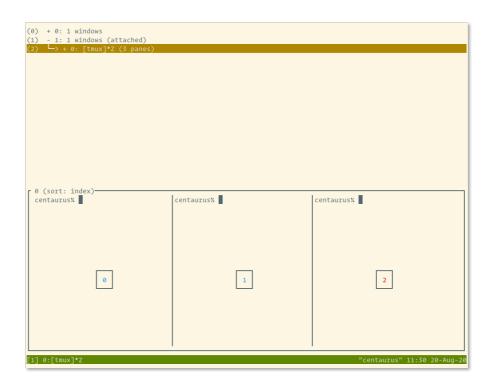
# Split Horizontally

```
centaurus%
centaurus%
```

# Split Vertically

centaurus%
centaurus%
] 0:zsh*

### Panes



prefix + s

Now we can see all the panes via the session list

### **New Window**



prefix + c

Create a second window in this session

You can see the new window in the status line

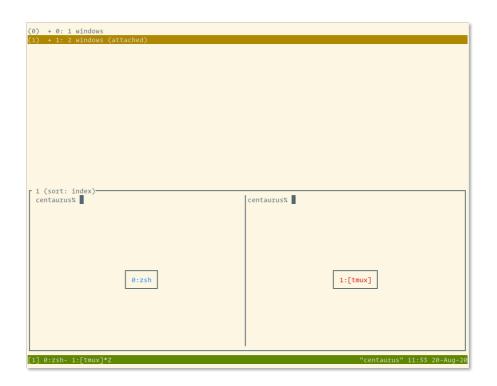
### **New Window**



prefix + "

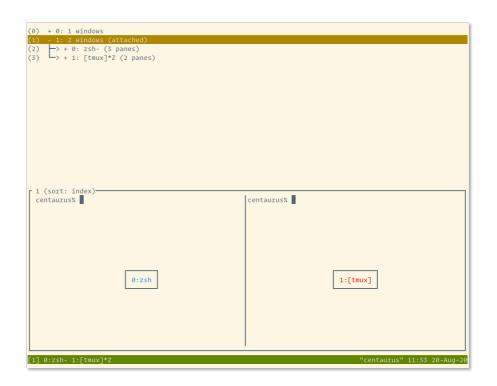
And another split just for fun

### **Session List**



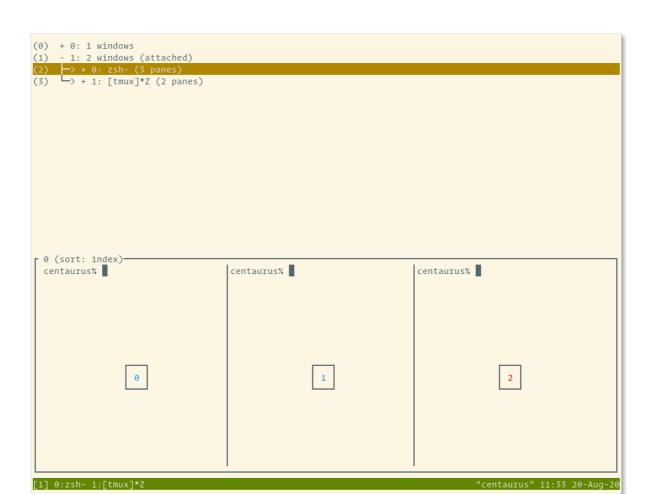
prefix + s

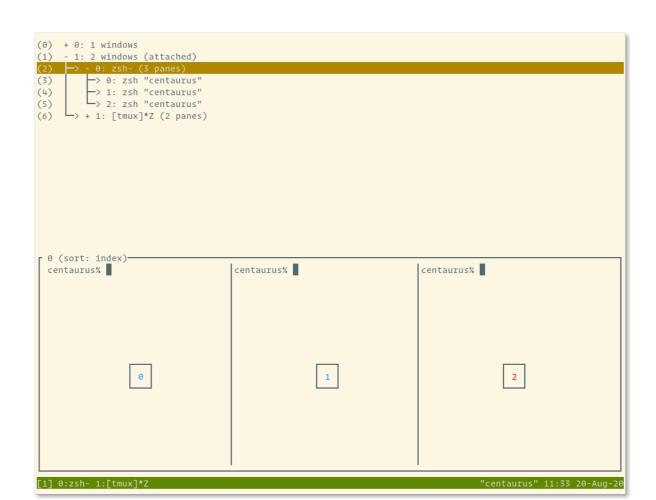
Go back to our session list and see everything we've created so far

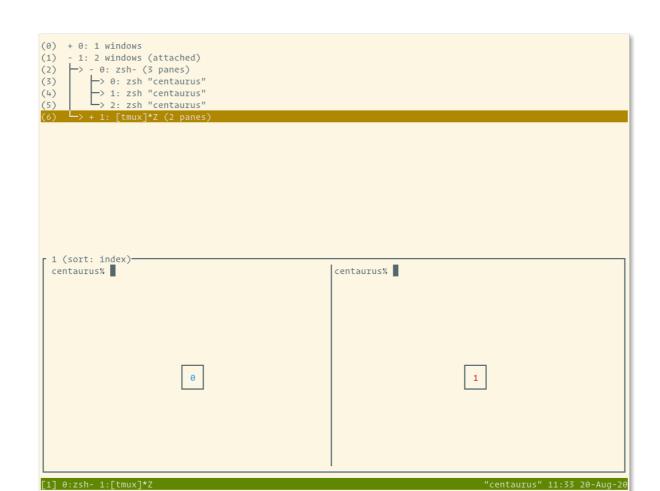


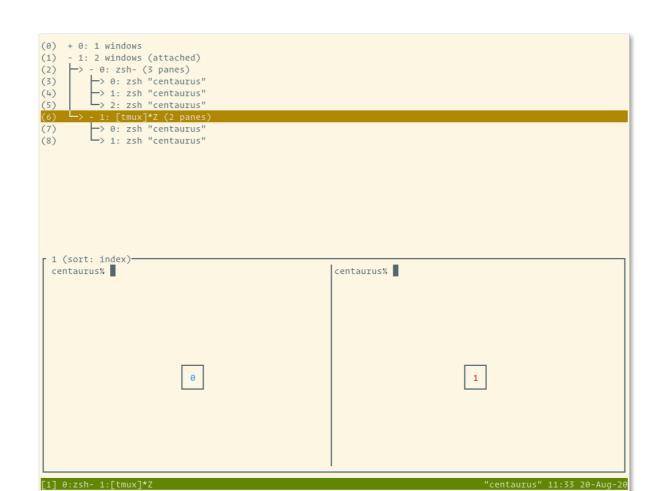
Using the keyboard to navigate

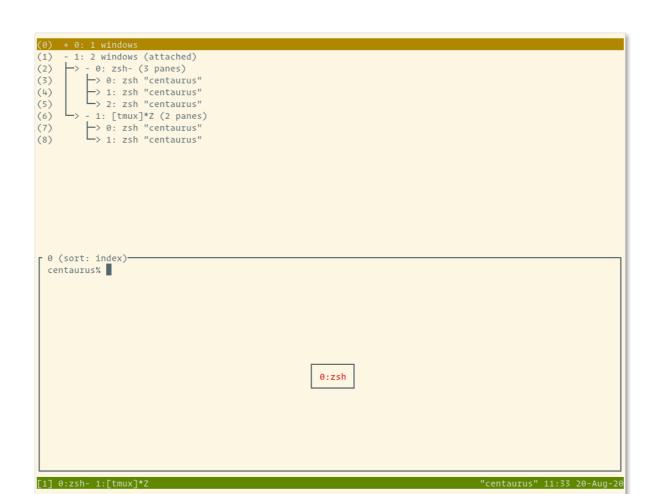
Hitting left and right to open / close the tree

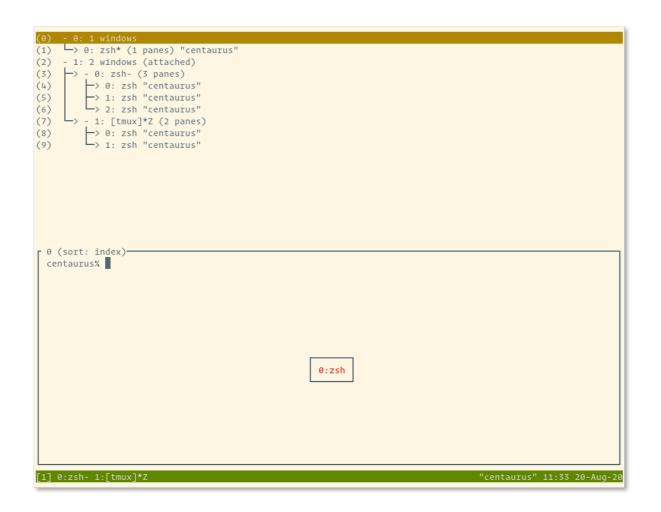








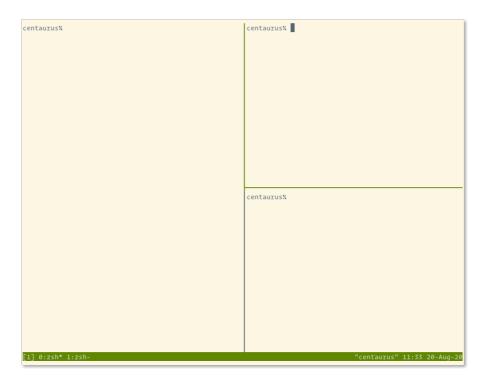




Now you can use the index on the side to go to a specific pane

Let's select 5

### Pane Selected



5

Now back to the second session's first window, first split Session 1 window 0 pane 1, all zero based of course

Sessions and Windows can have names

Our previous examples are all using numbered indexes

Let's see how naming things can make that clearer

```
# My tmux config uses folds in vim.
# zR open all folds
# zM close all folds
# za toggle fold at cursor position
# zj move down to start of next fold
# zk move up to end of previous fold
# General tmux settings
# set the command prefix to match screen
set -g prefix C-a
unbind C-b
# Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
bind C-a send-prefix
# Set the proper terminal type
set -q default-terminal "tmux"
# Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere with applications like
set -sg escape-time 0
# Make window and pane indexes start with 1
set -g base-index 1
setw -g pane-base-index 1
# use vi key bindings
setw -g mode-keys vi
# turn on mouse mode
setw -g mouse on
# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
```

Let's say we have this in our first session

```
print('hello')
                                                     centaurus% tail -f some.log
                                                      centaurus% python3 hello.py
                                                      hello
                                                      centaurus%
```

And this in the second

```
print('hello')
                                                       centaurus% tail -f some.log
                                                       centaurus% python3 hello.py
                                                       centaurus%
```

prefix + \$

Let's name this one work

```
print('hello')
                                                      centaurus% tail -f some.log
                                                      centaurus% python3 hello.py
                                                      hello
                                                      centaurus%
```

Now it is starting to make more sense

```
print('hello')
                                                        centaurus% tail -f some.log
                                                        centaurus% python3 hello.py
                                                        hello
                                                        centaurus%
```

prefix + ,

We can also rename the windows

This will stop the current process from renaming them constantly

```
print('hello')
                                                     centaurus% tail -f some.log
                                                      centaurus% python3 hello.py
                                                      hello
                                                      centaurus%
```

Starting to look better

```
>>> help(print)
Help on built-in function print in module builtins:
print(...)
   print(value, ..., sep=' ', end='\n', file=sys.stdout, flush=False)
   Prints the values to a stream, or to sys.stdout by default.
   Optional keyword arguments:
   file: a file-like object (stream); defaults to the current sys.stdout.
   sep: string inserted between values, default a space.
   end: string appended after the last value, default a newline.
   flush: whether to forcibly flush the stream.
lines 1-11/11 (END)
centaurus%
```

prefix + ,

Rinse and repeat

```
>>> help(print)
Help on built-in function print in module builtins:
   print(value, ..., sep=' ', end='\n', file=sys.stdout, flush=False)
   Prints the values to a stream, or to sys.stdout by default.
   Optional keyword arguments:
   file: a file-like object (stream); defaults to the current sys.stdout.
   sep: string inserted between values, default a space.
   end: string appended after the last value, default a newline.
   flush: whether to forcibly flush the stream.
lines 1-11/11 (END)
centaurus%
```

Looking tidy now

```
# My tmux config uses folds in vim.
# zR open all folds
# zM close all folds
# za toggle fold at cursor position
# zj move down to start of next fold
# zk move up to end of previous fold
# General tmux settings
# set the command prefix to match screen
set -g prefix C-a
unbind C-b
# Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
bind C-a send-prefix
# Set the proper terminal type
set -q default-terminal "tmux"
# Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere with applications like
set -sg escape-time 0
# Make window and pane indexes start with 1
set -g base-index 1
setw -g pane-base-index 1
# use vi key bindings
setw -g mode-keys vi
# turn on mouse mode
setw -g mouse on
# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
```

Let's go back to the first session we created

```
# My tmux config uses folds in vim.
# zR open all folds
# zM close all folds
# za toggle fold at cursor position
# zj move down to start of next fold
# zk move up to end of previous fold
# General tmux settings
# set the command prefix to match screen
set -g prefix C-a
unbind C-b
# Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
bind C-a send-prefix
# Set the proper terminal type
set -g default-terminal "tmux"
# Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere with applications like
set -sg escape-time 0
# Make window and pane indexes start with 1
set -g base-index 1
setw -g pane-base-index 1
# use vi key bindings
setw -g mode-keys vi
# turn on mouse mode
setw -g mouse on
# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
 (rename-session) personal
```

prefix + \$

Same process as before for this window

```
# My tmux config uses folds in vim.
# zR open all folds
# zM close all folds
# za toggle fold at cursor position
# zj move down to start of next fold
# zk move up to end of previous fold
# General tmux settings
# set the command prefix to match screen
set -g prefix C-a
unbind C-b
# Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
bind C-a send-prefix
# Set the proper terminal type
set -g default-terminal "tmux"
# Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere with applications like
# vim
set -sg escape-time 0
# Make window and pane indexes start with 1
set -q base-index 1
setw -g pane-base-index 1
# use vi key bindings
setw -g mode-keys vi
# turn on mouse mode
setw -g mouse on
# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
[personal]0:vim*
```

```
# My tmux config uses folds in vim.
# zR open all folds
# zM close all folds
# za toggle fold at cursor position
# zj move down to start of next fold
# zk move up to end of previous fold
# General tmux settings
# set the command prefix to match screen
set -g prefix C-a
unbind C-b
# Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
bind C-a send-prefix
# Set the proper terminal type
set -g default-terminal "tmux"
# Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere with applications like
set -sg escape-time 0
# Make window and pane indexes start with 1
set -g base-index 1
setw -g pane-base-index 1
# use vi key bindings
setw -g mode-keys vi
# turn on mouse mode
setw -a mouse on
# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
 (rename-window) dotfiles
```

prefix + ,

And again for the window

```
# My tmux config uses folds in vim.
# zR open all folds
# zM close all folds
# za toggle fold at cursor position
# zj move down to start of next fold
# zk move up to end of previous fold
# General tmux settings
# set the command prefix to match screen
set -g prefix C-a
unbind C-b
# Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
bind C-a send-prefix
# Set the proper terminal type
set -q default-terminal "tmux"
# Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere with applications like
set -sg escape-time 0
# Make window and pane indexes start with 1
set -g base-index 1
setw -g pane-base-index 1
# use vi key bindings
setw -g mode-keys vi
# turn on mouse mode
setw -g mouse on
# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
[personal]0:dotfiles*
```

Now everything has a proper name

```
(0) - personal: 1 windows (attached)
(1) → 0: dotfiles* (1 panes) "centaurus"
(2) - work: 2 windows
(3) -> + 0: hello world- (3 panes)
(4) -> + 1: docs* (2 panes)
 personal (sort: index)—
  # set the command prefix to match screen
  set -g prefix C-a
  unbind C-b
  # Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
  bind C-a send-prefix
  # Set the proper terminal type
  set -g default-terminal "tmux"
  # Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere w 0:dotfiles ns like
  # vim
  set -sg escape-time 0
  # Make window and pane indexes start with 1
  set -q base-index 1
  setw -g pane-base-index 1
```

prefix + s

Let's look at the list again for each session

(0) - personal: 1 windows (attached) (1) → 0: dotfiles* (1 panes) "centaurus" (2) - work: 2 windows (3) → + 0: hello world- (3 panes) (4) → + 1: docs* (2 panes)	
work (sort: index)— centaurus% python3 hello.py hello centaurus%	
0:hello world	1:docs
[personal]0:dotfiles*	nes 1-11/11 (END)   "centaurus" 14:22 20-Aug-20

Much more informative now

### **Key Bindings**

Vi and Emacs layouts for copy mode

Defaults are vague and hard to remember

Remap things to suit your style (read the Brian Hogan book)

#### Pane Movement

By default movement between panes is

prefix + <arrows>

#### Pane Movement

Set up vi style movement

```
bind C-h select-pane -L
bind C-j select-pane -D
bind C-k select-pane -U
bind C-l select-pane -R
```

Allows to hold ctrl and use hjkl

#### Pane Resizing

```
bind -r H resize-pane -L 5
bind -r J resize-pane -D 5
bind -r K resize-pane -U 5
unbind L
bind -r L resize-pane -R 5
```

Works much better for my vim brain

## **Splitting**

```
unbind '"'
unbind %
bind | split-window -h -c "#{pane_current_path}"
bind - split-window -v -c "#{pane_current_path}"
bind c new-window -c "#{pane_current_path}"
```

Another thing that works better for my brain

## Modality

Like vi, tmux has different modes

#### Command Mode



prefix + :

Manipulate everything from here

Not often used, but handy for certain one off tasks

#### **Command Mode**

```
2: 1 windows (created Thu Aug 20 16:14:34 2020) (attached)
personal: 1 windows (created Thu Aug 20 12:12:29 2020) (attached)
work: 2 windows (created Thu Aug 20 12:14:27 2020)
```

The output lands you in copy mode

```
# pane window client
                                                                                                     [0/118]
# Put switch client back into place (was L)
unbind "'"
bind -r "'" switch-client -l
# Switch to last window
unbind ';'
bind -r ';' last-window
# Re-define swtich to last pane, so this is easier to remember
bind -r l last-pane
# Show notices when there is activity on another window
setw -g monitor-activity on
set -g visual-activity off
# Theme based on tmuxline
source-file ~/.tmux/tmuxline.tmux
# Force utf-8
set -gq status-utf8 on
source-file ~/.tmux.local
# turn on folds
# vim: fdm=marker
```

prefix + [

Probably my favorite feature, I still use tmux in a tiling window manager because of this

Modify the defaults to make it less aggravating

```
# pane window client
# Put switch client back into place (was L)
unbind "'"
bind -r "'" switch-client -l
# Switch to last window
unbind ';'
bind -r ';' last-window
# Re-define swtich to last pane, so this is easier to remember
bind -r l last-pane
# Appearance Settings
# Show notices when there is activity on another window
setw -g monitor-activity on
set -g visual-activity off
# Theme based on tmuxline
source-file ~/.tmux/tmuxline.tmux
# Force utf-8
set -gq status-utf8 on
# Localized settings for an OS
# -----
source-file ~/.tmux.local
# turn on folds
# vim: fdm=marker
(search up) vi
```

```
(1/22 results) [0/118]
# pane window client
# Put switch client back into place (was L)
bind -r "'" switch-client -l
# Switch to last window
bind -r ';' last-window
# Re-define swtich to last pane, so this is easier to remember
bind -r l last-pane
# Appearance Settings
# Show notices when there is activity on another window
setw -g monitor-activity on
set -g visual-activity off
# Theme based on tmuxline
source-file ~/.tmux/tmuxline.tmux
# Status Line
# Force utf-8
set -gq status-utf8 on
# Localized settings for an OS
source-file ~/.tmux.local
# turn on folds
# 11m: fdm=marker
```

Navigate the results with vi or emacs keybindings

```
set -sg escape-time 0
 setw -g pane-base-index 1
# use vi key bindings
setw -g mode-keys vi
# turn on mouse mode
setw -g mouse on
# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
bind -n WheelUpPane if-shell -F -t = "#{mouse_any_flag}" "send-keys -M" "if -Ft= '#{pane_in_mode}' 'send-keys
-M' 'copy-mode -e'"
bind -n WheelDownPane select-pane -t= \; send-keys -M
# Default is to copy and cancel selection, this copys to the clipboard and leaves the selection
bind-key -T copy-mode-vi MouseDragEnd1Pane send-keys -X copy-pipe "pbcopy" \; display-message 'text copied to
clipboard!'
bind-key -T copy-mode-vi Enter send-keys -X copy-pipe "pbcopy" \; display-message 'Text copied to clipboard!'
bind-key -T copy-mode-vi y send-keys -X copy-pipe "pbcopy" \; display-message 'Text copied to clipboard!'
# vi like copy mode
# from https://twitter.com/nickmorrott/status/928343075646210050?s=09
bind -T copy-mode-vi v send-keys -X begin-selection
bind -T copy-mode-vi V send-keys -X select-line
bind -T copy-mode-vi C-v send-keys -X rectangle-toggle \; send-keys -X begin-selection
bind -T copy-mode-vi Escape send-keys -X cancel
# set the scrollback
set -a history-limit 200000
# force tmux to use utf-8
setw -gq utf8 on
# Custom key bindings
[personal]0:dotfiles*
```

spacebar to start highlighting, enter to add it to the copy buffer

```
# pane window client
# Put switch client back into place (was L)
unbind "'"
bind -r "'" switch-client -l
# Switch to last window
bind -r ';' last-window
# Re-define swtich to last pane, so this is easier to remember
bind -r l last-pane
# Appearance Settings
# Show notices when there is activity on another window
setw -g monitor-activity on
set -g visual-activity off
# Theme based on tmuxline
source-file ~/.tmux/tmuxline.tmux
# Status Line
# Force utf-8
set -gq status-utf8 on
# Localized settings for an OS
source-file ~/.tmux.local
# turn on folds
# vim: fdm=marker
centaurus%
```

Use command mode to show the copied text

buffer0: 90 dex 1\012"	bytes:	"#	Make	window	and	pane	indexes	start	with	1\012set	- g	base-index	1\012setw	-g pane-ba <mark>[0/0]</mark>
[personal]0	·dotfil	ec*											centaurus"	17:25 20-Aug-20

#### Enhance Copy Mode

```
bind-key -T copy-mode-vi Enter send-keys -X copy-pipe "pbcopy" \; display-message
bind-key -T copy-mode-vi y send-keys -X copy-pipe "pbcopy" \; display-message 'Tex

# vi-ish bindings
bind -T copy-mode-vi v send-keys -X begin-selection
bind -T copy-mode-vi V send-keys -X select-line
bind -T copy-mode-vi C-v send-keys -X rectangle-toggle \; send-keys -X begin-selection
bind -T copy-mode-vi Escape send-keys -X cancel
```

Normally kicked out of copy mode, these help avoid that and retain position Also, some vi style keys to make things easier

#### Mouse Mode

```
# turn on mouse mode
setw -g mouse on

# Don't mark the window on right click
unbind -T root MouseDown3Pane
bind -n WheelUpPane if-shell -F -t = "#{mouse_any_flag}" "send-keys -M" "if -Ft= ':
bind -n WheelDownPane select-pane -t= \; send-keys -M

# Default is to copy and cancel selection, this copys to the clipboard and leaves
bind-key -T copy-mode-vi MouseDragEnd1Pane send-keys -X copy-pipe "pbcopy" \; disp
```

The mouse is NOT evil!

Modify it to make it MUCH more useful

### More Config Examples

```
# Set the scrollback
set -g history-limit 2000000

# Set the delay so that it doesn't interfere with applications like vim
set -sg escape-time 0

# Make window and pane indexes start with 1
set -g base-index 1
setw -g pane-base-index 1

# Create a new session
bind S new-session
```

#### Community

The community has created a lot of things that make tmux even better See the awesome tmux list for more info on these things:

Plugins

Themes

Status line helpers

#### Status line

```
1 # My tmux config uses folds in vim. -
 3 # ZR open all folds
 # # # # close all folds 

5 # Za toggle fold at cursor position 

6 # Zi move down to start of next fold 

7 # Zk move up to end of previous fold 
11 7
12 # set the command prefix to match screen
13 set -g prefix C-a¬
14 unbind C-b-
15 # Allow for C-a C-a to send it to the application
16 bind C-a send-prefix
( My name is Zach Galifianakis, I hope I'm pronouncing that right. )
( )
( - Zach Galifianakis )
     0 (xx)\_____ )\\\

─ 16:34 Thu, Aug 20 ─ /home/clayton ─ 
centaurus% —
```

tmuxline making my status line easy to manage via vim and airline

#### Managing Environments

Teamocil, Tmuxinator, And many more...

Used Teamocil for years (because of the Arrested Development joke)

Very helpful for repeated set ups locally or remote

#### Clients

Language libraries like python, ruby, etc.

Interact with tmux via your own program

Endless possibilities for integration into things

#### Pair Programming

Using tools like wemux to remote pair

Maybe not quite as easy as the VSCode pairing

Could be good for two command line junkies though

#### **Alternatives**

Tiling Window Managers

Builtin to terminal (e.g. iTerm2, Kitty, etc)

#### Links

- My Dotfiles
- Awesome tmux
- wemux
- Teamocil
- Tmuxinator

#### Books

- Brian Hogan's tmux 2 Productive Mouse-Free Development
- Tao of tmux free online book

These books are both based on tmux 2, not the latest, but still very informative

#### FIN