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Study Guide

vi/vim

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Introduction

VI/Vim is a text editor that is upwards compatible to Vi. When using Vi throughout the Linux Academy we are really using a "low level" VIM utility. Full versions of VIM can be installed with apt-get install vim or yum install vim. Vi is an important text editor because it is usually always available on systems and systems in recovery mode. Vi/VIM is a very powerful text editor. This cheat sheet relates to the Linux+ and LPIC Level 1 exam requirements.

Important: Command mode is the mode you are in when opening or editing any file in vi. To navigate between modes hit esc first, then what you want to do. Hitting esc will take you back to command mode. You need to be in command mode before entering ex mode or insert mode.

Example: after your done editing text hit the esc key. This takes you to command mode where you can navigate the file. If you want to go from insert mode to ex mode, once in insert mode, in the esc key and then hit the : key. This process will exit from insert mode back to command mode where you hit the : key to open ex mode. This guide is meant to go with the linuxacademy.com videos on Vi. For more explanation and examples please review that video.

Command Mode

Command mode accepts commands which are usually in the form of individual letters such as a and i. You can use h, j, k and I to navigate files in similar ways as the up and down arrow on a keyboard. You can also use the up and down arrow on a keyboard.

- L – moves cursor one character to the right
- H – moves cursor one character to the left
- J – moves cursor down one line
- K – moves cursor up one line

Yank – Term used to copy text. Use YY to "yank" a line of text.

- yy - will yank/copy entire line the cursor is currently on
- 2yy - will copy the current line of text as well as the line underneath it (2lines)
- 3yy - will copy three lines, 4yy 4 lines of text 5yy…
- p – will paste the contents from yanked yy text, starting on the line **after** your cursor
- P – (Note this is case sensitive) uppercase P will paste the yanked line(s) starting on the line **before** the cursor
- 5G – moves your cursor to line 5
- 5gg – moves your cursor to line 5 (note case sensitive)
- G – Moves the cursor to the beginning of the last line in the file
- 1G – Moves the cursor to the first line of the file
- L – Also moves the cursor to the beginning of the last line on the terminal screen
- H – Moves the cursor to the first line on the terminal screen
- o – opens insert mode to insert text, creates a new line **below** your current cursor position
- u – undo
- cc – Removes the entire line and places you into insert mode.
- / - search, /root will search the file for root you can navigate to the next occurrence using the n key
- ? – is the same as / as it relates to searching

Insert Mode

Insert mode allows you to add/edit text inside of the file. As stated under command mode options above, there are different ways to insert into insert mode. Depending on what command is issued depends on how you enter, such as, replacing a word, starting a line above or below a cursor etc.

Inserting into insert mode from command mode
- i – insert text and not replace it
- R – over write existing text when new text added
- cw – remove current word cursor is on and insert into insert mode to add text
- cc – replace the entire of line of text

Ex Mode

You enter ex mode by typing a : this will open on the bottom of the screen a command prompt starting with a : ex mode is used for saving and manipulating files. It is very powerful; you can even browse the Linux command line from this mode, load files into your file, and other powerful actions. You must be in command mode before entering into ex mode.

Searching and Replacing Text – Vi/Vim allows you to search and replace text much like the SED editor.

- :%s/user/root – will replace the **first** occurrence of "user" on **each** line of the file with "root"
- :%s/user/root/g – will replace **all** occurrences of "user" with root; adding the g means "global"
- :w – saves changes
- :wq – saves changes and quits
- :q – quits without saving changes
- :e /file.txt – will load the new file.txt **into** the vi editor for editing. This will only occur if the current changes to the file being edited are saved
- :r allows you to bring contents of an old file into a new one
- :! Allows you to run shell commands from within vi example: !ls /etc