

org-change: Track changes in org-mode

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1 Introduction

org-change (ab)uses the org-mode link syntax for a simple “track changes” feature. It defines a **change** link type to mark additions, deletions, and replacements. For example:

```
[[change:old text][new text]]
```

Because org-mode (typically) hides the part of the link within the first pair of brackets, you only see **new text**. To indicate an addition, just omit **old text**:

```
[[change:][new text]]
```

To indicate a deletion, use ****DELETED**** as **new text**:

```
[[change:old text]**DELETED**]]
```

Two features make org-change useful:

1. Key bindings to automate inserting change links.
2. Export filters to render **change** links appropriately.

2 Key bindings

C-‘ a is for additions.¹

C-‘ d is for deletions.

C-‘ r is for replacements.

¹The quote in C-‘ is a left-quote character. It is not pretty, but practically every other ctrl prefix that does not also need shift is taken. It’s the curse of keymensionality.

You can mark a region and then use one of these keys to mark it as an addition, deletion, or replacement. In the case of replacement, you will be prompted for the new text.

You can use C-‘ a without marking a region. In this case, you will be prompted for the new text.

3 L^AT_EX export

When exporting to L^AT_EX, org-change uses the `changes` package, which must be included:

```
#+latex_header: \usepackage{changes}
```

org-change will then use the commands `\added`, `\deleted`, and `\replaced` provided by this package.

3.1 Comments

With the `changes` package, you can attach comments to changes. In `org-change`, text within double asterisks at the end of the `new text` portion of a change link will be exported as a comment. For example this:

```
[[change:old text][new text**I disagree**]]
```

Is exported to this:

```
\replaced[comment=I disagree]{new text}{old text}
```

You can add any option supported by `changes` by tagging it to the end of the comment. For example, you can indicate the author of the comment:

```
[[change:old text][new text**I disagree,author=SG**]]
```

which is exported to:

```
\replaced[comment=I disagree,author=SG]{new text}{old text}
```

4 Bugs and limitations

- Link hiding is sometimes inaccurate in org-mode. You may see stray brackets, especially with link that span multiple lines. Often M-q takes care of this.
- Whatever is inside a `change` link is exported as-is. For example, org-ref links are not interpreted.

5 Planned features

- More export filters
- Enable users to add export filters