# org-change: Track changes in org-mode

Stefano Ghirlanda

April 11, 2023

## 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 provided by org-change make this syntax useful:

1. Key bindings to insert `change` links.

2. Export filters to render `change` links appropriately.

Right now, only exporting to Latex is supported.

## 2 TODO Installation

## 3 Key bindings

`C-' a` for additions.[1]

---

[1] The 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.

`C-' d` for deletions.

`C-' r` for replacements.

You can mark a region and then use 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 also use `C-' a` without marking a region. In this case, you will prompted for the new text.

# 4 LaTeX export

When exporting to LaTeX, 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.

org-change supports some additional features of the `changes` package. You can add a comment to any edit like this:

```
[[change:old text][new text**A comment**]]
```

which is exported to

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

The comment must be at the end of `new text`. You can add other fields supported by `changes` by tagging them to the end of the comment. For example, you can indicate the author of the comment:

```
[[change:old text][new text**My comment,author=SG**]]
```

which is exported to:

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

# 5 Customization

The key bindings and the face used to display change links can be changed through the customize interface:

```
M-x customize-group RET org-change
```

# 6   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.

# 7   Planned features

- More export filters

- Enable users to add export filters

- A convenient way to see the hidden part of a link