

Linux and Vim

Skill Module

1 Introduction

1.1 Why Learn Vim?

With powerful IDEs like Eclipse and Netbeans available, you might ask why one should even bother learning vim; it's an archaic text editor lacking many of the features that make IDEs so palatable. While to some extent this is true, vim is still an extremely powerful text editor that will make you much more efficient. Vim has an extremely rich set of functionality that will allow you to edit text in ways that conventional text editors do not allow.

If you are a computer science major, in many of your classes you will need to work in a terminal environment and learning to use vim will be crucial in allowing you to program.

2 Getting Vim

Ideally, you should be working with vim in Linux environment.

2.1 Linux

If you work in a linux environment, obtain vim from your package manager. For instance, on Ubuntu you would do:

```
sudo apt-get install vim
```

You can also obtain the graphical version of vim by doing:

```
sudo apt-get install gvim
```

2.2 Windows

Follow this link to obtain Gvim. Gvim is a graphical version of vim:

2.3 Mac

I have no idea

3 Understanding Vim Configuration Files

Note: this only applies if you develop on a *nix environment, which I highly suggest that you do. Vim is an extremely configurable text editor. You can change how it behaves with regards to colorschemes, syntax coloring, tab spacing, etc. To deal with all of this, Vim uses a *configuration file*. This configuration file is named `.vimrc`. On linux systems, files whose names are prefixed by dots are hidden. This means that running `ls` or just looking through your file explorer, they will not be shown by default.

Vim knows to look for this configuration file in a few places. The location it looks first is in your home directory, i.e. `/.vimrc`. I won't go into detail here about actually writing your own configuration files; for now, copy mine and as you use vim more you can change it suit your own purposes. I've included the file on the website. Download the file and place it in your home directory after you install vim.

4 Using Vim

If you have already tried opening vim and editing a file, you know that it's not as intuitive as notepad. Luckily, this also means its not as bad. Let's delve into how exactly one can use vim.

4.1 Modes

There are two modes in vim, **Command Mode** and **Insert Mode**. **Command Mode** is what you'd expect; you can type normally just like any other text editor.