How to start emacs server only if it is not started?

Asked 12 years, 8 months ago   Modified 1 year, 7 months ago   Viewed 25k times

▲

52

▼

🔖

🕓

I'd like to use emacsclient to edit emails in Mutt.

I added this in .emacs

```
(server-start)
```

And in .muttrc I added

```
set editor="emacsclient -nw %s"
```

It seems they work. When I start a second Emacs, it complains there is already a server running so it issues errors. How to make sure to do `(server-start)` only if the server isn't already started?

Thanks

emacs   configuration   mutt

Share   Improve this question

Follow

edited Jul 1, 2011 at 5:24

asked Apr 6, 2011 at 17:24

Meng Lu
13.9k   12   40   48

5 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default) ⇅
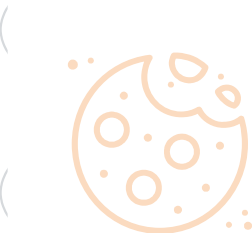
answered Apr 6, 2011 at 19:35

Philipp
48.6k   12   86   110

e emacs --daemon says *This platform*
it 9:59

ll server-start , but I agree this is
3

om stdin . Is there any way to fix this

I found that `(load "server")` resulted in errors when trying to use magit (in particular, on Windows). Using `(require 'server)` instead prevents these errors. – Mark Aug 26, 2022 at 18:34 ✎

The emacs daemon can be started automatically in a very simple manner. Just add this to your .bashrc/.zshrc/whatever

54

```
export ALTERNATE_EDITOR=""
```

Now when you invoke `emacsclient` (using either `--tty` or `--create-frame`) the server will be started (with `emacs --daemon`) if it's not already running.

I also find this shell alias handy:

```
alias e='emacsclient --tty'
```

Note that since Emacs 23 this is the preferred way to use Emacs in daemon mode. `(start-server)` is now mostly deprecated.

Share   Improve this answer   Follow   edited Jul 2, 2018 at 2:10   answered Apr 7, 2011 at 9:14

bignose
30.8k 15 77 114

Bozhidar Batsov
56k 13 101 117

This is a nice solution. `emacsclient -c` also works, and supports graphical clients. However, how would you go about opening a file in an existing emacs frame (say, in another terminal). Currently, I have a bash script called `e` that checks to see if the first argument is `-o` (for other) and runs `emacsclient` without `-c` if it does. Is there a better way, using the alias, that you can override the `-t` and cause an existing frame to open the file? – edam Oct 23, 2012 at 14:18 ✎

@edam not sure if you found your answer, but it sounds like you want the -t switch to emacsclient. It's a bit hard to tell because your comment seems to blur the distinction between a non-graphical emacs ~~instance in a terminal with a windowed graphical instance~~ -t is for the former, -c is for the latter.

with. You can run it like this: `$ e -o` ~~r~~unning elsewhere (which is useful). And it ~~i~~s are bad otherwise!). It always runs emacs ~~th~~e end to change this. – edam May 1, 2015

~~th~~e preferred way to use Emacs in daemon ~~start~~ed"? I don't see that mentioned in the ~~a~~rpo Sep 1, 2016 at 16:00

~~f~~or -t it actually tells me to start the server. ~~I~~t makes it sound like thats the preferred

~~work~~s for me. Whenever I start emacsclient, ~~i~~t to attempt to connect to an existing

16   server, and if no server exists, start one then connect to it.

Share Improve this answer   Follow

answered Feb 4, 2014 at 14:59

Eldritch Cheese
1,197   11   21

---

1   The `-a ''` option is great. Note that `-c` always create a new frame. If typically want to edit the file in the existing emacs frame, so I omit this option – Fred Schoen Oct 22, 2017 at 21:52

Avoid the problem alltogether via

8
```
emacs --daemon
```

in any shell or terminal so that Emacs runs in the background. That way `emacsclient` is always happy as there is always an Emacs server to connect to.

This being Emacs, there is also a function that starts the server only when needed but I can't quite recall its name right now. I use the `--daemon` option happily quite happily myself.

Share Improve this answer   Follow

answered Apr 6, 2011 at 17:27

Dirk is no longer here
363k   56   647   727

---

1   I cannot agree more, the beauty of `emacs --daemon` shines when I put this in my standard Startup Applications Prefs in Ubuntu `/usr/bin/emacs --daemon` and whenever I startup my machine I can swiftly jot down a floating idea to my capture template in emacs by hitting `Super + I` (a keyboard shortcut to `emacsclient -c --eval '(progn (org-capture) (delete-other-windows) (setq-local kill-buffer-hook (lambda () (delete-frame))))'`) and I get a nice emacs frame telling me what annoying ideas you want to get rid of off my head. – doctorate Aug 27, 2018 at 10:48 ✎

n the background? – alper Feb 21, 2021 at

you do get your prompt back. Try it, and
Feb 21, 2021 at 23:25

`Connection refused` error message

Feb 23, 2021 at 20:24

ien

Update: now I prefer to use this line instead:

```
if ! ps -e -o args | grep -i 'emacs' | grep 'daemon'; then
```

because the process name will depend on your machine or the way you installed emacs.

Now your shell will start the deamon on startup, but only if it is not already running. Less wait time when you first run `emacsclient -t`, and it is faster than letting `emacs --daemon` check if it's already running.

As an alternative you could simply add:

```
eval 'emacsclient -e "(server-running-p)"'
```

Share   Improve this answer   Follow   edited Dec 9, 2021 at 9:52   answered Feb 23, 2021 at 19:47

Jose V

1,695   1   17   32

---

1   I needed to use `ps -xe -o args | grep -q '^emacs --daemon'` on FreeBSD, because without the x option ps would not show emacs --daemon, and it also prints the version number, so I dropped the $ on the end. – peterhil Nov 18, 2021 at 0:32

Your privacy