SOC 5050: Atom Cheatsheet

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What is Atom?

Atom is a highly extensible text editor designed for programmers, researchers, and data analysts. It is a side project of Github. Among other things, Atom provides what is known as 'syntax highlighting' - the use of color to identify different aspects of code. It has a built-in Markdown previewer and supports GitHub flavored Markdown. Atom also includes an 'autocomplete' feature that makes repetitive tasks easy to manage. More details can be found in the Atom Flight Manual.[1]

[1] See the course **User's Guide** for additional details on Atom and how you should use it in this course. The User's Guide also provides set-up instructions.

Adding Packages

To add a package:

1. Go to Atom ▷ Preferences

2. From the left-hand menu that appears, select Install.

3. Use the search function to find the package you wish to install.

4. Click the Install button (colored blue in lower right-hand corner below each package).

To see a list of currently installed packages:

1. Go to Atom ▷ Preferences

2. From the left-hand menu that appears, select Packages.

Changing a File's Language

To change the language of a file:

Figure 1: Atom's file settings bar.

1. In the lower right-hand corner of any file window, you will see three sets of text like the image to the right. The first piece of text will say either LF or CRLF - this refers to the type of line endings used by the operating system you are using. The second refers to the character encoding system used by the file. By default, this
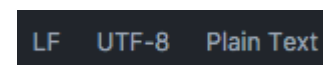
should be UTF-8.² Finally, the third peice of text will specify the current programming language setting for the file. On new files, this will be 'Plain Text'.

2. Click on 'Plain Text' (or whatever language appears in that space).

3. A search field will appear at the top of your window. Enter the language you are looking for, select it (you can use the Up Arrow and Down Arrow keys), and then hit Return.

Saving a File

Atom does not add file extensions to files when you save them. When working with Markdown files, remember to add the `.md` file extension to your files when you save them. Instead of saving a file named `myMarkdownFile`, save it as `myMarkdownFile.md`.

Likewise, when working with Stata do-files, remember to add the `.do` file extension to your files when you save them. Instead of saving a file named `myDoFile`, save it as `myDoFile.do`.

Using the Autocomplete Function

While you type, Atom will suggest words or phrases to automatically enter in your document. The suggestions will appear below your cursor like the screenshot below:
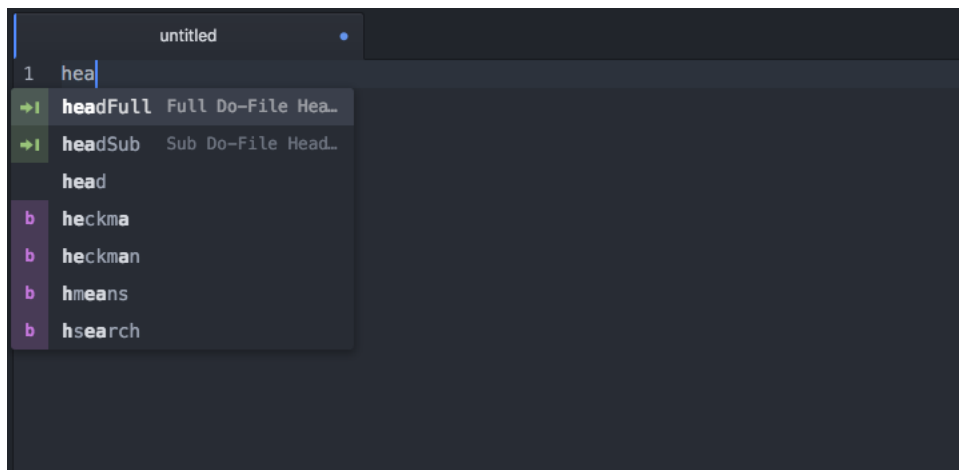

Figure 2: The autocomplete function in Atom.

To select an option, use the Up Arrow and Down Arrow keys, and then hit Return. For more on autocomplete, see the Atom Flight Manual.

Using Snippets

Note the green right facing arrow icon with a vertical green line in the previous image. This icon indicates that the option is for a **snippet**. Atom's snippets are short abbreviations (like headFull in the screenshot above) that contain much larger blocks of text. Hitting Return will enter that larger block of text into your document. For more on snippets, see the Atom Flight Manual.[3]

Using Tab Stops in Snippets

Some snippets come with areas of generic text that are meant to be replaced by you. Atom's documentation refers to these as 'tab stops'. Both do-file templates for this course contain these 'tab stops'. For example, the screenshot below shows the do-file title area that both templates have at their beginnings:

[3] If a snippet does not appear when you enter its abbreviation, check the programming language. If the snippet is for a Stata file, it will *only* appear in a file with Stata set as the programming language.
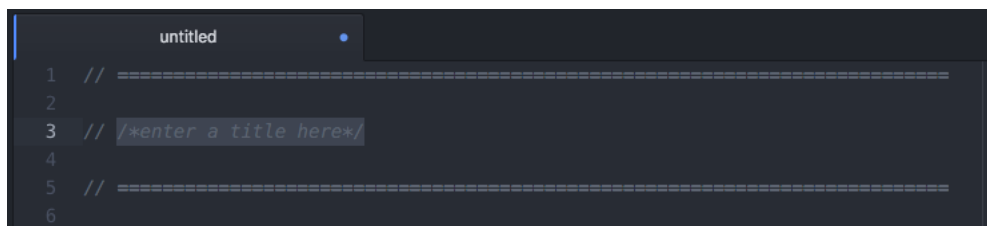
Figure 3: The tab stop function in an Atom snippet.

After you have expanded a snippet that contains these tab stops, your cursor will be automatically positioned over the first tab stop. You can immediately enter text into this field. Once you are done entering text, you can hit tab again to move to the next tab stop. The headFull snippet contains 14 tab stops; the headSub snippet has 10 tab stops.

Find and Replace

Atom comes with powerful find and replace tools. You can search within the currently selected file (Atom calls this a 'buffer') by going to Find ▷ Toggle Find in Buffer. You can also search within a full project directory by going to Find ▷ Toggle Find in Project. For more on snippets, see the Atom Flight Manual.

Previewing a Markdown File

If you have a Markdown file open, go to Packages ▷ Markdown Preview ▷ Toggle Preview and hit Return to open the previewer window. Re-

member that there may be slight variations in the way the previewer renders your file from the way GitHub renders your file.

Adding, Editing, and Removing Project Folders

To add a project folder to the left-hand navigation pane, go to File ▷ Add Project Folder....

To edit the contents of a project folder, such as adding a directory or file to it, right click on the folder name and select the relevant option. You can remove a file from a project folder by right clicking on it and selecting Delete.

Finally, to remove a project folder from the navigation pane, right click on the folder name and select Remove Project Folder.

Document Details

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