

130+ essential vim commands

Published on August 12th, 2013 by Jean. [1 Comment](#) –

Since the 70's, vi and vim are very popular text editors among programmers. 5 years ago, I wrote an article named “100 vim commands every programmer should know” and here is a reworked, updated version. Enjoy!

Basics

<code>:e filename</code>	Open <i>filename</i> for edition
<code>:w</code>	Save file
<code>:q</code>	Exit Vim
<code>:q!</code>	Quit without saving
<code>:x</code>	Write file (if changes has been made) and exit
<code>:sav filename</code>	Saves file as <i>filename</i>
<code>.</code>	Repeats the last change made in normal mode
<code>5.</code>	Repeats 5 times the last change made in normal mode

Moving in the file

<code>k</code> or Up Arrow	move the cursor up one line
<code>j</code> or Down Arrow	move the cursor down one line
<code>e</code>	move the cursor to the end of the word
<code>b</code>	move the cursor to the begining of the word
<code>0</code>	move the cursor to the begining of the line
<code>G</code>	move the cursor to the end of the file
<code>gg</code>	move the cursor to the begining of the file
<code>L</code>	move the cursor to the bottom of the screen
<code>:59</code>	move cursor to line <i>59</i> . Replace <i>59</i> by the desired line number.
<code>20 </code>	move cursor to column <i>20</i> .
<code>%</code>	Move cursor to matching parenthesis
<code>[[</code>	Jump to function start
<code>[{</code>	Jump to block start

Cut, copy & paste

<code>y</code>	Copy the selected text to clipboard
<code>p</code>	Paste clipboard contents

dd Cut current line
yy Copy current line
y\$ Copy to end of line
D Cut to end of line

Search

/word	Search <i>word</i> from top to bottom
?word	Search <i>word</i> from bottom to top
*	Search the word under cursor
^cstring	Search <i>STRING</i> or <i>string</i> , case insensitive
/jo[ha]n	Search <i>john</i> or <i>joan</i>
^< the	Search the, theatre or <i>then</i>
/the\>	Search <i>the</i> or <i>breathe</i>
^< the\>	Search <i>the</i>
^< !.\>	Search all words of 4 letters
^/	Search <i>fred</i> but not <i>alfred</i> or <i>frederick</i>
/fred\\joe	Search <i>fred</i> or <i>joe</i>
^<\\d\\d\\d\\d\\>	Search exactly 4 digits
/^\\n\\{3}	Find 3 empty lines
:bufdo /searchstr/	Search in all open files
bufdo %s/something/somethingelse/g	Search <i>something</i> in all the open buffers and replace it with <i>somethingelse</i>

Replace

:%s/old/new/g	Replace all occurrences of <i>old</i> by <i>new</i> in file
:%s/onward/forward/gi	Replace <i>onward</i> by <i>forward</i> , case insensitive
:%s/old/new/gc	Replace all occurrences with confirmation
:2,35s/old/new/g	Replace all occurrences between lines 2 and 35
:5,\$s/old/new/g	Replace all occurrences from line 5 to EOF
:%s/^hello/g	Replace the beginning of each line by <i>hello</i>
:%s\$/Harry/g	Replace the end of each line by <i>Harry</i>
:%s/onward/forward/gi	Replace <i>onward</i> by <i>forward</i> , case insensitive
:%s/ *\$/g	Delete all white spaces
:g/string/d	Delete all lines containing <i>string</i>
:v/string/d	Delete all lines containing which didn't contain <i>string</i>
:s/Bill/Steve/	Replace the first occurrence of <i>Bill</i> by <i>Steve</i> in current line
:s/Bill/Steve/g	Replace <i>Bill</i> by <i>Steve</i> in current line

:%s/Bill/Steve/g	Replace <i>Bill</i> by <i>Steve</i> in all the file
:%s/^M//g	Delete DOS carriage returns (^M)
:%s/r/r/g	Transform DOS carriage returns in returns
:%s#<[^>]\>##g	Delete HTML tags but keeps text
:%s/^(.*)\n\1\$/\1/	Delete lines which appears twice
Ctrl+a	Increment number under the cursor
Ctrl+x	Decrement number under cursor
ggVGg?	Change text to Rot13

Case

Vu	Lowercase line
VU	Uppercase line
g~~	Invert case
vEU	Switch word to uppercase
vE~	Modify word case
ggguG	Set all text to lowercase
gggUG	Set all text to uppercase
:set ignorecase	Ignore case in searches
:set smartcase	Ignore case in searches excepted if an uppercase letter is used
:%s/\<./u&/g	Sets first letter of each word to uppercase
:%s/\<./l&/g	Sets first letter of each word to lowercase
:%s/./u&	Sets first letter of each line to uppercase
:%s/./l&	Sets first letter of each line to lowercase

Read/Write files

:1,10 w outfile	Saves lines 1 to 10 in <i>outfile</i>
:1,10 w >> outfile	Appends lines 1 to 10 to <i>outfile</i>
:r infile	Insert the content of <i>infile</i>
:23r infile	Insert the content of <i>infile</i> under line 23

File explorer

:e .	Open integrated file explorer
:Sex	Split window and open integrated file explorer
:Sex!	Same as :Sex but split window vertically
:browse e	Graphical file explorer
:ls	List buffers

:cd ..	Move to parent directory
:args	List files
:args *.php	Open file list
:grep expression *.php	Returns a list of .php files contening <i>expression</i>
gf	Open file name under cursor

Interact with Unix

!:pwd	Execute the <i>pwd</i> unix command, then returns to Vi
!!pwd	Execute the <i>pwd</i> unix command and insert output in file
:sh	Temporary returns to Unix
\$exit	Retourns to Vi

Alignment

:%!fmt	Align all lines
!}fmt	Align all lines at the current position
5!!fmt	Align the next 5 lines

Tabs/Windows

:tabnew	Creates a new tab
gt	Show next tab
:tabfirst	Show first tab
:tablast	Show last tab
:tabm n(position)	Rearrange tabs
:tabdo %s/foo/bar/g	Execute a command in all tabs
:tab ball	Puts all open files in tabs
:new abc.txt	Edit <i>abc.txt</i> in new window

Window splitting

:e filename	Edit <i>filename</i> in current window
:split filename	Split the window and open <i>filename</i>
ctrl-w up arrow	Puts cursor in top window
ctrl-w ctrl-w	Puts cursor in next window
ctrl-w _	Maximize current window vertically
ctrl-w	Maximize current window horizontally
ctrl-w =	Gives the same size to all windows
10 ctrl-w +	Add 10 lines to current window

:vsplit file	Split window vertically
:sview file	Same as :split in readonly mode
:hide	Close current window
:nly	Close all windows, excepted current
:b 2	Open #2 in this window

Auto-completion

Ctrl+n Ctrl+p (in insert mode)	Complete word
Ctrl+x Ctrl+l	Complete line
:set dictionary=dict	Define <i>dict</i> as a dictionary
Ctrl+x Ctrl+k	Complete with dictionary

Marks

m {a-z}	Marks current position as {a-z}
' {a-z}	Move to position {a-z}
"	Move to previous position

Abbreviations

:ab mail mail@provider.org	Define <i>mail</i> as abbreviation of <i>mail@provider.org</i>
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Text indent

:set autoindent	Turn on auto-indent
:set smartindent	Turn on intelligent auto-indent
:set shiftwidth=4	Defines 4 spaces as indent size
ctrl-t, ctrl-d	Indent/un-indent in insert mode
>>	Indent
<<	Un-indent
=%	Indent the code between parenthesis
1GVG=	Indent the whole file

Syntax highlighting

:syntax on	Turn on syntax highlighting
:syntax off	Turn off syntax highlighting
:set syntax=perl	Force syntax highlighting