

Please save the file located at this link as vilesson.txt. It will serve as a practice file for vi exercises.

1. Intro

Arguably, the most prolific editor in the world is vi. Available on every UNIX machine (and in its many incarnations also on DOS, OS/2 and other platforms), with the recent Internet explosion, this lean and powerful editor is attracting as much praise as criticism from the cyberspace citizens.

When vi is first started, it expects commands, be it text input, deletions, changes, searches. Following the command, an argument usually needs to be given, for example, following command i (insert text at the cursor), one would type text and then end the command with Escape. For deletion, one would press d and then an argument, for example w for word, or 3w for three words or } which in vi-speak means to the end of the paragraph. If simple mnemonic commands are not sufficient, command line is provided through pressing : (colon). From there long commands can be executed to be applied to ranges of lines in text. Even external programs can be used as filters to process parts of the text.

This particular design model has also allowed the author to make commands easy to remember and easy to deduce once some of them are memorized. This easy inference is necessary in vi since its bandwidth frugality precluded it from having menus.

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