

4. Startup File

Having explored vi commands somewhat, we are now ready to create a default editing environment through the use of `.exrc`, the configuration file which resides in user's home directory.

`.exrc` typically contains at least three types of entries:

- set commands to create preferred editing environment
- map commands to assign functions or macros to keys
- ab commands to either map abbreviations or automatically correct common spelling errors

When mapping escape sequences of some keys, we may need to quote them, that is, to insert them literally. This can be accomplished in vi by issuing a text input command and pressing `Ctrl-V` before the key we wish to quote is pressed.

Now let's look at a sample `.exrc`:

```
set autoindent
set wrapmargin=8
set ignorecase
map    #4      !}fmt^M
ab    teh     the
ab    cutsomer customer
```

Lines 1 and 2 set autoindent mode on and turn on wordwrap at column 72. Line 3 specifies that all searches are to be case insensitive. Line 4 maps function key 4 to reformat from the cursor position to the end of the paragraph. Finally, lines 5 and 6 map some common misspellings to the correct spelling. Note that `^M` on lines 4 and 5 are created by pressing `Ctrl-V` and then hitting `Ctrl-M`.

With a little creativity you can make vi look as personal as you wish.

NOTE: After creating `.exrc` make sure that `EXINIT` environment variable is not set as it would overwrite whatever settings you entered into `.exrc`. You can verify whether the `EXINIT` variable is set using this command from the UNIX command

prompt:

```
$ set | grep EXINIT
```

If you see no output, you're fine.

Make sure that .exrc contains no blank lines - they are not allowed.

```
/* The article above and any accompanying files are freely
 * distributable, but please leave this notice and the text intact.
 * Home for this document: http://www.infobound.com/vi.html
 * Copyright (C) 1994, 1999 Tony Thomas
 * Contact author through email:tony@infobound.com
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 * UNIX is a trademark of X/Open
 */
```

current rating:

```
image:rdf newsfeed //static.linuxhowtos.org/data/rdf.png (null)
|
image:rss newsfeed //static.linuxhowtos.org/data/rss.png (null)
|
image:Atom newsfeed //static.linuxhowtos.org/data/atom.png (null)
- Powered by
image:LeopardCMS //static.linuxhowtos.org/data/leopardcms.png (null)
- Running on
image:Gentoo //static.linuxhowtos.org/data/gentoo.png (null)
-
Copyright 2004-2025 Sascha Nitsch Unternehmensberatung GmbH
image:Valid XHTML1.1 //static.linuxhowtos.org/data/xhtml1.png (null)
:
image:Valid CSS //static.linuxhowtos.org/data/css.png (null)
- Level Triple-A Conformance to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 -
- Copyright and legal notices -
Time to create this page: ms
<!--
image:system status display /status/output.jpg (null)
-->
```