Why Vim is My Favourite Text Editor

CT3112 Professional Skills: Assignment 01

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2024–02–22

Introduction

By the end of this presentation, I intend for you to have gained an understanding of:

- What Vim is.
- The benefits of Vim.
- The drawbacks of Vim.
- Why I prefer Vim for all my text-editing work.
- Whether or not Vim might be the right text editor for you.

What is Vim?

- **Vim** is terminal-based, modal text editor released in 1991, designed to be minimal & fast to use.
- It has a number of fast, mnemonic keybindings that make typical text-editing tasks much faster.
- A **terminal-based** text editor is a text-only editor that is ran from the command line or terminal.
- A **modal** text editor is one in which there are a number of different **modes** that the editor can be in at any one time.

Figure: A Screenshot of Vim Being Used to Write this Presentation (in LaTeX)

What is a Terminal?

- A **terminal** is a text-based interface for a computer, originating from when computers did not have any graphics.

- It is typically interacted with via a **command line**, where text commands are written to start programs.

- To start Vim from the command line, simply type `vim file_name.txt`

Figure: A Computer Terminal from 1978

What are the Vim Modes?

- **Normal mode** (ESC) is for the navigation & manipulation of the text in the file being edited, via the shortcut keybindings. It is the default mode of the program.

- **Insert mode** (i) is for inserting new text. This mode is similar to the default to the default behaviour of a more traditional text editor such as Notepad: text can be typed or removed with the backspace key, and navigation or selection can be done with the mouse or arrow keys.

- **Visual mode** (v) is for the selection of text blocks for manipulation, with the selected text being highlighted, similar to selecting text with the mouse in other text editors. Visual mode has two sub-modes: **visual block** (CTRL+v) & **visual line** (V), in which text can be selected either vertically by columns or horizontally by line.

What are the Vim Keybindings?

- Too many to list here!
- Navigation in normal mode can be done with the `hjkl` (direction) keys, which correspond to the left, down, up, & right arrow keys respectively, allowing quick navigation without removing your fingers from the home row.