

98-172 : Great Practical Ideas for Computer Scientists

EMACS cheat sheet

Navigation

Amount	Operation			
	Move		Delete	
	forward	backward	forward	backward
Characters	C-f	C-b	C-d	DEL
Words	M-f	M-b	M-d	M-DEL or C-DEL
Lines	C-n	C-p	<i>No bindings</i>	
Line end/start	C-e	C-a	C-k	C-SPC C-a C-w
Sentences	M-a	M-e	M-k	C-x DEL
Expressions	C-M-f	C-M-b	C-M-k	
Paragraphs	M-}	M-{		
Buffer end/start	M-<	M->	<i>No bindings</i>	
Page down/up	C-v	M-v		

Other navigation commands

M-g g n Jump to line n
C-x C-x Swap mark and point (see "Terminology" section, below).

Terminology

C-, *control* The control key.
M-, *meta* The alt key on most PC keyboards; on Macs, usually the option key.
kill, yank ring "cut" and "paste" respectively.
A list of saved values which can be iterated through. Eg. the kill ring, which saves killed text for yanking.
point The current cursor location.
mark A saved location in a buffer, set with C-SPC.
region The text between the point and mark.
prefix argument A way to modify commands' behavior using a "prefix" key combination. Behavior depends on the command being modified. Most commonly, it repeats the command a specified number of times.
mode A buffers' *modes* add special behavior to it; for example, Python-mode adds syntax highlighting and useful commands for Python code.
SPC The space key.
DEL The delete or backspace key.
RET The enter or return key.

Miscellanea

C-/ Undo. Also C-_, C-x u, and M-x undo.
C-u n Numeric prefix argument; usually, repeats a subsequent command n times.
C-g Cancel or abort a command.
C-x C-c Quit emacs.
TAB Mode-dependent; usually auto-indent current line.
M-x NAME Run the named command.
M-: EXPR Evaluate a lisp expression (for advanced users).

Files and buffers

C-x C-f Open file by name.
C-x C-s Save file.
C-x C-w Write file with new name.
C-x b Switch buffer by name.
C-x C-b List buffers. Hit enter on a buffer to switch to it.

Killing (cutting) and yanking (pasting)

C-y Yank (paste) most recently killed (cut/copied) text.
M-y After C-y, yank next-recently-killed. Repeat to continue.
C-SPC Mark current location.
C-w Kill current region.
M-w Copy the current region without killing it.

Search and replace

C-s Search forward. Repeat (or use after C-r) for next match.
C-r Search backward. Repeat (or use after C-s) for previous match.
C-M-s Search forward using regexp matching.
C-M-r Search backward using regexp matching.
M-x % Interactive string replacement. Also M-x query-replace. The regexp version is M-x query-replace-regexp.

Help

C-h C-h Help about help.
C-h c KEY Name of the function associated with a key combination.
C-h k KEY Help for the function associated with a key combination.
C-h f NAME Help for a particular function.
C-h a WORD Help for all functions matching a particular word.
C-h b Display key bindings.
C-h m Help for the current modes.
C-h r The emacs manual.

Long commands

M-x iswitchb-mode Makes switching buffers a *lot* nicer.
M-x ansi-term Opens an emulated terminal inside emacs.
M-x compile Prompts for a command to run to compile code.
M-x menu-bar-mode Toggles display of the menu bar. M-x scroll-bar-mode and M-x tool-bar-mode behave analogously.
M-x customize A special mode that makes customizing emacs much easier. See also customize-group. One useful group is iswitchb.

Resources (other than google.com)

<http://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/manual/emacs.html>
The emacs manual, online.
<http://www.stackoverflow.com/>
Good general-purpose programming questions site.
[#emacs on irc.freenode.org](#)
An IRC channel for all things emacs.
<http://www.emacswiki.org/>
A wiki dedicated to emacs.