

VI SURVIVAL GUIDE, by Tim Maher, 3/6/03

The vi editor has a hundred different commands, and many different ways to do the same thing. The following is a carefully selected subset of commands to allow you to easily perform the most essential operations. Beginners should invoke vi in the extra-friendly beginner's mode, called **vedit** ! To make this automatic, put the following alias in your shell startup file:

```
.cshrc: alias vi 'vedit' .kshrc: alias vi='vedit' .bashrc: alias vi='vedit'
```

COMMAND MODE OPERATIONS

How can you tell if you're in command mode? Well, if you invoked vi as **vedit**, and you do not see *append mode*, *insert mode*, or something similar in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen, you're there! If you did *not* use **vedit**, then you can still identify command mode by pressing **<ESC>** ; if it beeps, you're in command mode!

Cursor Positioning Commands

arrow keys	move cursor in indicated direction (<i>Korn shell users should avoid, because</i>
h	move cursor <i>left</i> <i>only h,j,k, & l work with the Korn shell's VI mode)</i>
j	move cursor <i>down</i>
k	move cursor <i>up</i>
l	move cursor <i>right</i>
/abc	move cursor to next line containing abc
:set number	show line numbers; set nonumber turns off (<i>needed for following commands</i>)
:3	go to line 3
:\$	go to last line

Commands to Enter/Leave Input Mode

i	enter input mode, and put new text where cursor is
a	enter input mode, and put new text to right of cursor
<ESC>	terminate input mode, return to Command Mode <i>CRITICAL!</i>

Basic Editing Commands

u	undo last change
U	undo all changes made since cursor arrived at current line
x	delete the character covered by the cursor

More Advanced Editing Commands

:7delete	delete line 7
:7,16delete	delete lines 7 through 16
:7,16move3	move lines 7 through 16 to after line 3
:7,16copy3	copy lines 7 through 16 to after line 3
:1,\$s/abc/def/g	in lines 1 through \$ (<i>last line in file</i>), substitute def for abc
:17s/abc//g	on line 17 , substitute <i>nothing</i> for abc (deletes abc)
:s/abc//g	on current line, substitute <i>nothing</i> for abc (deletes abc)

Saving changes and Quitting

:w	write new version of file to disk, using remembered filename
:w name	write to disk, using specified file <i>name</i>
:q	quit editing session

NOTE: You can force VI to accept a **write** or **quit** command by appending a **!**; e.g., **w!**

INPUT MODE OPERATIONS

a,b,c, etc.	enter a, b,c (or whatever) into on-screen image of file
<ESC>	return to Command Mode (<i>press the key, don't type these symbols</i>)