

# 1 Essential Emacs

To start an emacs editing session, type: emacs [file]. If you want the graphical features of emacs and work on it remotely, be sure to set the DISPLAY by setenv (in C shell) or export (in Korn and BASH shell) at first. If you log in remotely by using ssh, the DISPLAY setting will be forwarded automatically. Emacs commands use the Control key and the Meta key (Meta is usually the ESCAPE or ALT key). In this section, C- indicates that the Control key is pressed at the same time as the character that follows. Similarly, M- indicates the use of the Meta key. Most of the time it is not necessary to keep the Meta key pressed down while typing the next key.

## Emacs Commands

### Moving around in a file

C-v: Move forward one screen.

M-v: Move backward one screen.

Carriage return (or enter) moves the cursor to the beginning of the next line.

C-f: Move forward one character (right).

C-b: Move backward one character (left).

C-p: Move to previous line.

C-n: Move to next line.

M-<: To get to the top of the file.

M->: To get to the bottom of the file.

### Locating text

C-s: Start incremental search forward. To search the string forward again, simply C-s again.

C-r: Start incremental search backward. To search the string backward again, simply C-r again.

C-g: Cancel incremental search.

### **Deleting text**

DEL: Delete previous character.

C-d: Delete character under cursor.

C-k: Delete from cursor to the end of the line.

M-d: Delete the word the cursor is on.

M-k: Delete the sentence the cursor is on.

C-y: Restore what you have deleted.

### **Cut-Paste text**

1. Use C-k to kill the block of the text you want to cut.
2. Move the cursor to the right place you want to paste the text, and type C-y.

### **Handling file**

C-x C-f: Find file and read it.

C-x i: Insert file at cursor position.

C-x C-s: Save file.

C-x C-w: write buffer contents to file.

C-x C-c: Exit emacs. You will be asked save or not save the buffers.

### **Handling windows**

C-x 2: Split the current window horizontally into two.

C-x 1: Delete all windows but this one.

C-x o: Move to other window.

## **Undo last edit**

C-x u: Undo last edit.

## **Commands without keys**

Not every emacs command has keys. Some of them just has their specific names. In order to use them, do following:

M-x + command name + return

At this point, emacs ask the argument of the command, then:

command argument + return

For example, you want go to the 1000th line in the file, do the following:

M-x: a mini window called echo area at the bottom will be invoked.

goto line + return: in echo area the command goto-line will be invoked and ask the command argument.

1000 + return: the cursor will be moved to the beginning of 1000th line.

For details of all these commands, check emacs tutorials and help manual.

## **Reference**

1. The Emacs Tutorial in its help manual
2. A very practical new user guide is at [http://www.cs.indiana.edu/elisp/guide/new-users-guide\\_toc.html](http://www.cs.indiana.edu/elisp/guide/new-users-guide_toc.html)
3. A more complete guide is at [http://www.cs.indiana.edu/elisp/xemacs/xemacs\\_toc.html](http://www.cs.indiana.edu/elisp/xemacs/xemacs_toc.html)