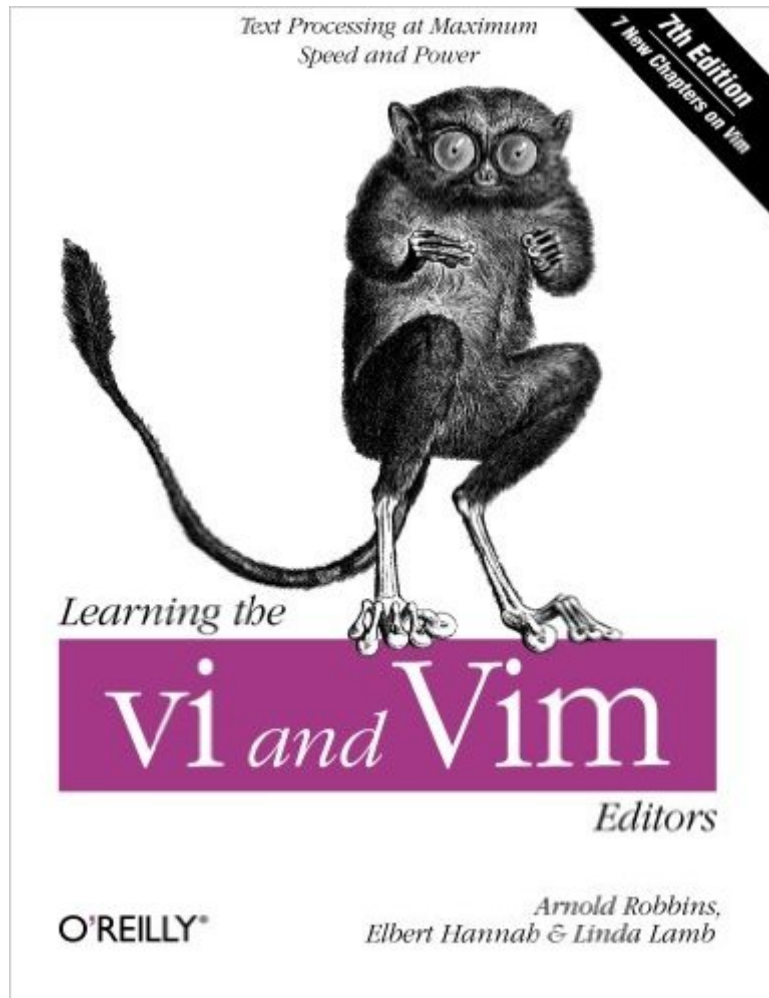


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Learning The Vi And Vim Editors



Synopsis

There's nothing that hard-core Unix and Linux users are more fanatical about than their text editor. Editors are the subject of adoration and worship, or of scorn and ridicule, depending upon whether the topic of discussion is your editor or someone else's. vi has been the standard editor for close to 30 years. Popular on Unix and Linux, it has a growing following on Windows systems, too. Most experienced system administrators cite vi as their tool of choice. And since 1986, this book has been the guide for vi. However, Unix systems are not what they were 30 years ago, and neither is this book. While retaining all the valuable features of previous editions, the 7th edition of Learning the vi and vim Editors has been expanded to include detailed information on vim, the leading vi clone. vim is the default version of vi on most Linux systems and on Mac OS X, and is available for many other operating systems too. With this guide, you learn text editing basics and advanced tools for both editors, such as multi-window editing, how to write both interactive macros and scripts to extend the editor, and power tools for programmers -- all in the easy-to-follow style that has made this book a classic. Learning the vi and vim Editors includes:

- A complete introduction to text editing with vi
- How to move around vi in a hurry
- Beyond the basics, such as using buffers
- vi's global search and replacement
- Advanced editing, including customizing vi and executing Unix commands
- How to make full use of vim
- Extended text objects and more powerful regular expressions
- Multi-window editing and powerful vim scripts
- How to make full use of the GUI version of vim, called gvim
- vim's enhancements for programmers, such as syntax highlighting, folding and extended tags
- Coverage of three other popular vi clones -- nvi, elvis, and vile -- is also included. You'll find several valuable appendixes, including an alphabetical quick reference to both vi and ex mode commands for regular vi and for vim, plus an updated appendix on vi and the Internet.

Learning either vi or vim is required knowledge if you use Linux or Unix, and in either case, reading this book is essential. After reading this book, the choice of editor will be obvious for you too.

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Customer Reviews

I use TextMate for writing code and for most text editing while I'm on the Mac (although I'm editing this review with MacVim version 7.3, otherwise I'd feel dirty). Everywhere else I use vi and Vim (Windows/Linux/OpenBSD/etc.) I spent years using Emacs and gradually made the shift to Vim a few years ago. I found Vim to be lighter weight and easier to configure than Emacs. Anyway, if you're tackling an uber-editor like Vim, you need a really great book. For Vim, that book is "Learning the vi and Vim Editors". The book initially introduces you to vi and ex, giving you the most basic commands. Pay attention to these first few chapters as it lays the foundation for the rest of the book. You'll move on to learn about global replacement and the power of regular expressions in the context of text replace commands. A short chapter is devoted to advanced editing features and takes you through basic vi customizations, how to execute Unix commands, how to filter text within vi through Unix commands, abbreviations to simplify repetitious typing, mapping keys to simplify repetitious keystrokes, and some basic ex scripting. A very brief chapter introduces you to the major vi clones. Then, a really beefy section spanning chapters 9 through 15, covering 159 pages, takes you through Vim in great detail. All the major differences between vi and Vim are discussed. You'll learn about multi-window editing, the specifics of Vim scripting, GVim (the GUI version of Vim), and Vim enhancements related to software developers. Following the Vim section of the book, there are small chapters that describe each of the other major vi clones, including nvi, elvis and vile. Near the end of the book, you'll find the appendixes crammed full of vi and ex commands.

vi, like many of the utilities developed during the early years of Unix, has a reputation for being hard to navigate. Bram Moolenaar's enhanced clone, Vim ("vi Improved"), has gone a long way toward removing reasons for such impressions. Vim includes many conveniences, visual guides, and help screens. It has become possibly the most popular version of vi, so this seventh edition of this book devotes seven new chapters to it in Part 2. However, many other worthy clones of vi also exist and they are covered in part 3. The first two chapters present some simple vi commands with which you can get started. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on easier ways to do tasks. Chapters 5 through 7

provide tools that help you shift more of the editing burden to the computer. They introduce you to the ex line editor underlying vi, and they show you how to issue ex commands from within vi. Chapter 8, provides an introduction to the extensions available in the four vi clones covered in this book. It centralizes in one place the descriptions of multiwindow editing, GUI interfaces, extended regular expressions, facilities that make editing easier, and several other features, providing a roadmap to what follows in the rest of this book. It also provides a pointer to source code for the original vi, which can be compiled easily on modern Unix systems, including Linux. Part 2 describes Vim, the most popular vi clone. Chapter 9, provides a general introduction to Vim, including where to get binary versions for popular operating systems and some of the different ways to use Vim. Chapter 10 describes the major improvements in Vim, such as built-in help, control over initialization, additional motion commands, and extended regular expressions.

This new edition goes above and beyond of what's currently available in the area of Vi/Vim tutorials. It is fascinating to watch how much time and typing a programmer can save every single day, once they've figured out how to use a tool like Vim efficiently. Many people just know 5% of what an editor is capable of, and day-in and day-out they're using way too many keystrokes. What a waste of time and what a strain on your hands! "vi and vim" 7th edition (make sure to get the latest, not the previous one) explains how to make the most out of this editor. By the way, you should always use "vim", not the legacy "vi" editor, which is a waste of time as it lacks important features. Luckily "vim" is standard on many systems like Linux nowadays, and even if you type "vi" there, you'll get the better "vim" automatically. Learning shortcuts for common editing tasks like block indentation, text formatting, or screen movement is essential for fast typing, and the challenge is to keep the shortcuts all memorized. Vim isn't your father's editor, it has literally thousands of keystroke combinations, and if you don't have a system to memorize them, you'll never use them. Luckily, "vi and vim" 7th edition explains them all in detail and in a way that makes it easier to recall them later when you need them. The book gives mnemonics whenever possible and it explains concepts like vim's combination of action and move commands in a way that lets you understand the concept behind these commands instead of simply having to memorize nonsensical keystrokes. There's some chapters which I consider fluff, but I guess there is people out there using odd vi incarnations like "elvis" or "gvim", so the authors felt like they were worth to be covered as well.

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