

VIM configuration

Make VI default editor

In order to make vi the standard global default editor to edit crontab for example use this command for debian:

```
update-alternatives --config editor
```

and select vim.basic or vim.nox

or

change the symlink to the default editor manually:

```
rm /etc/alternatives/editor
ln -s /usr/bin/vi /etc/alternatives/editor
```

or

In order to make vi the global default editor in debian to edit crontab for example, either

```
vi /etc/bash.bashrc
```

and add this line at the end of the file:

```
export VISUAL=vi
```

To make this change only for an individual user (whereby ~ is the home directory of the current user or change it to the home directory of the user this should be changed for):

```
vi ~/.bashrc
```

and add this line at the end of the file:

```
export VISUAL=vi
```

Debian 9 VIM Mouse issues

In Debian 9, vi/vim has mouse support enabled by default. While this makes it easy to go to a different area of the file via mouse clicks, it causes copy&paste to fail and/or to behave weirdly.

To revert to the old behaviour, a local .vimrc file needs to be created. It can be empty (just containing a double quote sign which is a comment). When this file exists, the default config with mouse support (/usr/share/vim/vim80/defaults.vim) is not being loaded. Editing the defaults.vim file directly is discouraged as this will be overwritten by updates.

```
vi ~/.vimrc
```

add something to it. In the very least one double quoted line as a comment:

```
"placeholder as /usr/share/vim/vim80/defaults.vim is loaded if no ~/.vimrc  
exists
```

Debian vim colour syntax highlighting

By default Debian installs vim-tiny which does not support syntax highlighting. To install all required modules for console use

```
apt-get install vim-nox
```

then edit /etc/vim/vimrc

```
vi /etc/vim/vimrc
```

and enable syntax, dark backgrounds and remembering the previous cursor position by removing the double-quotes in front of the relevant lines like this:

```
" Vim5 and later versions support syntax highlighting. Uncommenting the next  
" line enables syntax highlighting by default.  
syntax on  
  
" If using a dark background within the editing area and syntax highlighting  
" turn on this option as well  
set background=dark
```

Good default configuration

Add the configuration to your local .vimrc file in your home directory for various sensible and convenient settings:

```
vi ~/.vimrc
```

```
"placeholder as /usr/share/vim/vim80/defaults.vim is loaded if no ~/.vimrc  
exists  
syntax on  
set tabstop=4      " The width of a TAB is set to 4.  
                  " Still it is a \t. It is just that  
                  " Vim will interpret it to be having  
                  " a width of 4.  
  
set shiftwidth=4    " Indents will have a width of 4
```

```
set softtabstop=4      " Sets the number of columns for a TAB
set expandtab         " Expand TABs to spaces
set nocompatible      " Fix telnet issues where cursor keys add A B etc
set mouse-=a          " Disable automatic visual mode when selecting with
mouse

" Only do this part when compiled with support for autocmds.
if has("autocmd")

    " Enable file type detection.
    " Use the default filetype settings, so that mail gets 'tw' set to 72,
    " 'cindent' is on in C files, etc.
    " Also load indent files, to automatically do language-dependent
indenting.
    " Revert with ":filetype off".
    filetype plugin indent on

    " Put these in an autocmd group, so that you can revert them with:
    " ":augroup vimStartup | au! | augroup END"
augroup vimStartup
    au!

    " When editing a file, always jump to the last known cursor position.
    " Don't do it when the position is invalid or when inside an event
handler
    " (happens when dropping a file on gvim).
autocmd BufReadPost *
    \ if line("'"") >= 1 && line("'"") <= line("$") |
    \   exe "normal! g`'" |
    \ endif

augroup END

endif " has("autocmd")
```

More info

[VIM Cheat Sheet](#)

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