Emacs Mini-Reference Card

The following is an edited version of the GNU Emacs Reference Card. Only basic commands related to the editor have been retained. The article on emacs in the DESY Computing Newsletter No 4 has been used as a basis. Additional features have been noted including registers, cursor position, continuation and auto-fill mode, query replace, spelling check, and keyboard macros. Note that *C* stands for the control key and *M* stands for escape or meta key. If there is no obvious escape key, then it can be accessed by *C*-[on most terminals.

Basic Cursor and Screen Movement

Arrow keys	forward/backward and up/down
M-f, *M-b*	forward, backward one word
C-n, *C-p*	forward (next), backward (previous) one line
C-e, *C-a*	end, beginning of line
M-e, *M-a*	end, beginning of sentence
	A sentence is defined by a typist's convention, i.e. '.', '?', or '!' followed by two spaces.
C-v, *M-v*	forward, backward one page (view of the screen)
M-<, *M->*	top, bottom of buffer

Deleting Text and Pasting

Del key	kill or delete previous character
C-d	delete one character (forward)
M-d	delete one word (forward)
C-k	kill or delete to the end of current line
M-k	delete to the end of sentence

Sections of text can be deleted by first delimiting a region. This is done by setting a "mark" which defines the beginning of the region and putting the cursor at the end of the region (called the"point"). Wiping or killing a region places the selected text in a special kill buffer. This special buffer can be used later or yanked back in to your editing session.

C-@	set mark (defines the beginning of a selected region)
C-x C-x	exchange mark and point
C-w	wipe or kill the selected region (and put into kill buffer)
C-y	yank in or paste from the kill buffer at this point
M-w	save selected region into the kill buffer without actually killing it

Registers (Memorizing Text or Locations)

C-x x **a**	copy selected region to register **a** (**a** is any character)
C-x g **a**	insert contents of register **a** at this point
C-x / **a**	save this location in register **a**
C-x j **a**	move cursor to location stored in register **a**

Cursor Position Information

M-x what-line	print line number of the cursor point in the buffer
M-=	print number of lines in the current selected region
C-x =	print character code, character position, and column number of the point

Note: line numbers are not displayed continually to keep the editor from becoming intolerably slow.

Continuation and Auto-Fill Mode

When a line is typed beyond the right margin, a continuation marker, '\', will appear. The line will continue until the return key is pressed even though it appears on the next line on the screen. If you would like to have line breaks appear automatically at the right margin, then turn the auto-fill mode on with *M-x auto-fill-mode*. Repeating the same command will turn the mode off.

Query Replace (String Substitution)

M-% oldstring newstring	enter string substitution mode
Space bar	replace and go on to next match
Comma (,)	replace and don't move
Del key	skip to next without replacing
!	replace all remaining matches
^	back up to previous match
M (Meta)	exit string substitution mode

Incremental Search (search and move as you type text)

C-s,*C-r*	forward, reverse search. Type command again to repeat search
M (Meta)	exit search mode

Multi-Buffer Editing

C-x C-f	read a file into an editing buffer
C-x C-s	save your work by updating your file
C-x C-w	write out buffer to a particular file
C-x i	insert a file into current buffer
C-x b	move to another buffer
C-x C-b	list all buffers created so far (displayed in a split window)
C-x 1	remove the split window
C-x k	kill this buffer

Note: Cut-and-paste from buffer to buffer is possible.

Spelling Check

M-$	check spelling of current word
M-x *spell-region*	check spelling of words in a selected region
M-x *spell-buffer*	check spelling of all words in the buffer

Keyboard Macros (programming a series of key strokes)

C-x (	start defining keyboard macro
C-x)	end keyboard macro definition
	Type your key strokes in between these two commands
C-x e	execute last keyboard macro

Getting Help

M-x help-with-tutorial	access tutorial
M-x help-for-help	help files
M-x info	documentation reader

Error Recovery

C-g	abort partially typed command
C-x u or *C-_*	undo last command
C-l	refresh screen
M-x revert-buffer	recover file following a system crash

Quitting

C-z	suspend emacs (standard ASCII terminals only)
C-x C-c	quit emacs