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HINT: If you're reading this via elvis' built-in :help command, then you should probably begin by reading about :help itself. To do that, move the cursor onto the word ":help" and press the **Enter** key.

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If you require technical support, you may get a quicker response by posting a message to the comp.editors newsgroup.

1. WHAT IS ELVIS?

Elvis is a clone of vi/ex, the standard UNIX editor. Elvis supports nearly all of the vi/ex commands, in both visual mode and ex mode. Elvis adds support for multiple files, multiple windows, a variety of display modes, on-line help, and other miscellaneous extensions.

Like vi/ex, Elvis stores most of the text in a temporary file, instead of RAM. This allows it to edit files that are too large to fit in a single process' data space. Also, the edit buffer can survive a power failure or crash.

Elvis 2.1 runs under the following operating systems:

* **UNIX.** If you have X-windows, elvis can use a graphical interface, in addition to the traditional text-based interface.
* **MS-Windows/95 and Windows/NT.** Both a console (text-based) and a graphical version are available.
* **MS-DOS.** It can also run in a DOS window under Windows 3.1. However, there is no graphic 16-bit version of elvis.
* **OS/2.** The basic OS/2 port only supports a text-mode interface using VIO calls; it acts exactly like the termcap interface. There is also a real port of the termcap version which requires the EMX library, and a version which uses the graphical "x11" interface which requires XFree86.

Elvis is freely redistributable, in either source form or executable form. There are very few restrictions on how you may use it.

1.1 About this manual

This document is written in HTML. You should be able to view it with any Web browser, such as Mosaic or Netscape. These browsers also allow you to print the manual, if you prefer.

You can also use elvis to view it or print it; elvis has a built-in HTML display mode. To print this document using elvis, you must first set some printer options. After that, you can just load any of these files, maybe set the display mode to HTML via the command ":display html" (if elvis doesn't set the display mode automatically), and then give the command ":lp".

Each chapter is stored in a separate file; you'll need to print each one separately. A shell script/batch file named printdoc.bat is provided to help you do this.

1.2 Overview of Elvis

The user interface of Elvis/vi/ex is weird. There are two major command modes in Elvis, and a few text input modes as well. Each command mode has a command which allows you to switch to the other mode.

You will probably use the visual command mode most of the time. This is the mode that Elvis normally starts up in.

In visual command mode, the entire screen is filled with lines of text from your file. Each keystroke is interpreted as part of a visual command. If you start typing text, it will *not* be inserted, it will be treated as part of a command. To insert text, you must first give an "insert text" command, such as i. This will take some getting used to. (An alternative exists. Look up the initialstate option.)

The ex mode is quite different. Elvis displays a ":" character on the bottom line of the screen, as a prompt. You are then expected to type in a command line and hit the **Enter** key. The set of commands recognized in the ex mode is different from visual mode's.

1.3 Special features of Elvis

Compared to the traditional ex/vi, elvis supports the following major new features:

Multiple edit buffers
: You can edit several files at the same time. The :buffer ex command lists the current edit buffers. You can switch to a different buffer by typing :(*buffername* or :buffer *buffername*.

Multiple windows
: The :split ex command or ^Ws visual command will create a new window showing the same edit buffer. You can use :split *filename* to edit a different file in a new window. Related commands allow you to do things like search for a tag and display it in a new window, or move among windows.

Multiple user interfaces
: In addition to the traditional termcap user interface, elvis also supports graphical interfaces for X11 and Windows95, plus some other stripped-down interfaces.

A variety of display modes
: The :display command lists the available display modes, and can set the display to a particular mode. The ^Wd visual command toggles between display modes.

Online help
: This uses elvis' built-in "html" display mode to display the manual, which uses multiple fonts and hypertext links to improve readability. To access it, give the command :help. (But you already figured that out, didn't you?)

Highly configurable
: Elvis has a set of configuration scripts, each of which is run at a specific time. For example, elvis.ini is run when elvis starts up, and elvis.arf is run after reading a file. See the chapter on sessions for a discussion of these.

There is also an elvis.msg file which can be used to translate the built-in messages into another language.

The X11 interface has a fully configurable toolbar.

The elvis.syn file contains descriptions of various languages, for use with the syntax-coloring display mode.

Enhanced tags
The tags feature has been extended to support overloaded tags, which C++ tends to use a lot. See the tags chapter.

Macro debugger
To help you develop keyboard macros (and also report incompatibilities between elvis and vi), elvis has a built-in macro debugger. The the article in the Tips chapter.

Network support
Elvis can read via the **http** protocol, and read/write via the **ftp** protocol. See the Internet chapter.

Aliases
You can construct csh-style aliases for the ex commands, via the :alias command. See the article in the Tips chapter.

New options
Elvis has roughly 200 different options. See the Options chapter for a list.

Built-in calculator
Elvis has a :calc command which evaluates C-like expressions. These expressions are also used for some other commands, such as :if and :eval, among other things. See the Arithmetic expressions chapter.