

Smart Documents

Marius Peter
<2020-11-08 Sun>

Contents

1	Introduction	6
2	First-time setup	6
2.1	TODO Unpacking our literate configuration	7
2.2	TODO User details	7
2.3	File system paths	8
3	Early setup	8
3.1	The first file to load	8
3.2	The second file to load	8
3.3	Profiling — start	9
3.4	Jumping to this file	9
3.5	Speeding up the next startup	9
3.6	Meta-files	9
3.6.1	Recently visited files	10
3.6.2	Projects' bookmarks	10
3.6.3	Location in previously visited file	10
3.6.4	Custom file	10
3.7	Backups	10
3.8	Initial and default frames	10
3.8.1	GNU/Linux	11
3.9	Secrets	11
4	Keyboard shortcuts	11
4.1	Files	11
4.1.1	Save a file	11
4.1.2	Open a file	12
4.1.3	List open files	12
4.1.4	Open this very file	12
4.1.5	Open a recently visited file	12
4.1.6	Locate a file	12
4.1.7	Open the agenda	12
4.1.8	Open the diary	12
4.1.9	Open Org mode document properties	12
4.2	Windows	12
4.2.1	Close window and quit	12
4.3	Frame	13
4.3.1	Make new frame	13
4.3.2	Make only frame	13
4.3.3	Delete frame or kill Emacs	13
4.3.4	Open sidebar	13
4.4	Text display	13

4.4.1	Zoom	13
4.5	Navigation	14
4.5.1	Move down one line	14
4.5.2	Move up one line	14
4.5.3	Move left one character	14
4.5.4	Move right one character	14
4.6	Customizing the editor	15
4.6.1	Customize a variable	15
4.6.2	Customize a face	15
4.7	One-click workflows	15
4.7.1	Export to PDF	15
4.7.2	Indent buffer	15
4.7.3	Beautify Org mode buffer	15
5	Packages	15
5.1	Meta	16
5.1.1	Package archives	16
5.1.2	TODO Convenient package update	16
5.1.3	use-package	16
5.2	evil-mode	16
5.3	Spelling, completion, and snippets	17
5.3.1	Syntax checking	17
5.3.2	Spelling	17
5.3.3	Insert template from keyword	17
5.3.4	Complete anything interactively	17
5.3.5	Delete all consecutive whitespaces	18
5.4	Utilities	18
5.4.1	Versioning of files	18
5.4.2	Navigate between projects	18
5.4.3	Display keyboard shortcuts on screen	18
5.4.4	Jump to symbol's definition	18
5.4.5	Graphical representation of file history	18
5.4.6	Auto-completion framework	19
5.5	Tree	19
5.6	Coding languages	19
5.6.1	TODO Emacs Lisp	19
5.6.2	Python	19
5.7	File formats	19
5.7.1	csv and Excel	19
5.7.2	Interacting with PDFs	20
5.7.3	Accounting	20
5.7.4	Plotting & charting	20
5.8	Cosmetics	20
5.8.1	Start page	20

5.8.2	Sidebar	21
5.8.3	Better parentheses	21
5.8.4	Highlight “color keywords” in their color	21
5.8.5	UTF-8 bullet points in Org mode	21
6	org-mode	21
6.1	Introduction	22
6.2	Basic customization	22
6.2.1	Base folder	22
6.2.2	Prevent/warn on invisible edits	22
6.3	Org cosmetics	22
6.3.1	Dynamic numbering of headlines	23
6.3.2	Document properties	23
6.3.3	Timestamps	24
6.4	Programming a Smart Documents	24
6.5	Agenda	24
6.6	L ^A T _E X export	24
6.6.1	Exporting timestamps	25
6.6.2	L ^A T _E X packages	25
6.6.3	Colored source blocks in PDF export	26
6.6.4	Cleaning directory after export	26
6.6.5	Chronological diary entries	26
6.6.6	Table of contents	26
6.7	Org links	27
7	One-click workflows	27
7.1	TODO Export to PDF	27
7.2	Beautify buffer	28
8	Editing preferences	28
8.1	Editor	28
8.1.1	Coding standards	28
8.1.2	Recent files	28
8.2	Frame	28
8.2.1	Header & mode lines	28
8.3	Window	29
8.4	Buffer	29
8.4.1	Save cursor location	29
8.4.2	Column filling	29
8.4.3	Right and left margins	29
8.5	Text	29
8.5.1	Beautiful symbols	29
8.5.2	Org mode sugar	30
8.5.3	Electric modes	30

8.6	Minibuffer	30
9	Themes	31
9.1	My light and dark themes	31
9.1.1	Colors	31
9.1.2	Cursors	32
9.1.3	Fonts	32
9.2	TODO minimal	33
10	Late setup	33
10.1	Profiling — stop	33
10.2	Profiling — report	33
11	Conclusion	33

List of Figures

List of Tables

1	Navigation keybindings	14
2	Light and dark themes' colors	31

Abstract

The idea of *Smart Documents* came to me as I was reflecting on how to improve the document creation process in my workplace. The GNU Emacs editor had captured my imagination and I wanted to create an accessible and highly productive text editor to benefit my organization. In this paper, I'll lay out my vision for the *Smart Document*, a file containing both text destined to the reader, and code describing how to update, validate, and present this text; then, I'll weave my personal GNU Emacs customizations with a tutorial. This paper is a *Smart Document* itself!

1 Introduction

GNU Emacs is most often used as a text editor. It would be unfair to say it is just that, because Emacs is capable of so much more. The utmost level of customization is afforded by enabling the user to rewrite *any* part of the source code and observe the editor's modified behavior in real time. Since its inception in 1984, GNU Emacs has grown to be much more than a full-featured, high-productivity text editor — new *modes* have been written to interact with hundreds of file formats, including `.txt`, `.pdf`, `.jpg`, `.csv`, and `.zip` just to name a few. This paper itself was written in *Org mode*, a collection of functions enabling the harmonious mixing of code and comments in view of publication: this is the endgame of *literate programming*, and the basis of my vision for *Smart Documents*.

The following sections were laid out very deliberately. When we start Emacs, the source code blocks contained in this document are evaluated sequentially — our editing environment is constructed in real time as we execute the blocks in order. For instance, we only begin loading packages once we ensured `use-package` is working properly.¹

Customizing Emacs goes far, far beyond rewriting sections of this document — feel free to experiment and discover. Here are three commands that will help you understand all the symbols in this file, if you are browsing this paper within Emacs itself:

C-h f describe function

C-h v describe variable

C-h k describe key

You can always press `f1` to access Emacs built-in help.

2 First-time setup

The following code blocks are normally evaluated once — upon starting Emacs for the first time.

¹For more information on the detailed steps Emacs takes upon starting, refer to https://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/manual/html_node/elisp/Startup-Summary.html.

2.1 TODO Unpacking our literate configuration

```
(defvar sd-packed-p t
  "Boolean to track literate configuration packed/unpacked status.")

(defvar sd-unpack-sections (org-property-values "sd-unpack-path")
  "List of target sections in `my/literate-config' to be unpacked.")

(defun sd-unpack-sections ()
  "Unpack literate configuration into `emacs-user-directory'."
  (interactive)
  (mapcar 'sd-unpack sd-unpack-sections)
  )

(defun sd-unpack-section (&optional section)
  "Unpack SECTION into `user-emacs-directory'.
  If nil, unpack section under point.
  Make go through list of headings and unpack first matching
  ↪ SECTION."
  (interactive)
  (if (not section)
      (insert
       (concat
        "\n\nThe contents of this Section was automatically moved to\n="
        user-emacs-directory (org-entry-get nil "sd-unpack-path")
        ↪ "=\n"
        "Use `sd-pack-section' to copy the contents back into this
        ↪ section."))))

(defun sd-pack-section ()
  "Pack SECTION into `my/literate-config'."
  (interactive)
  (message "foobar!!!"))

(global-set-key (kbd "C-t") 'sd-pack-section)

(sd-unpack "init.el")
```

2.2 TODO User details

One advantage of working with *Smart Documents* is that they can automatically be populated with our details in the header, footer, or other appropriate element.

```
(setq user-full-name "Marius Peter")

(defun my/user-details-get ()
  "Get user details."
  (setq user-full-name (read-string "Enter full user name:"))
  (setq user-mail-address (read-string "Enter user e-mail address:"))
  (message "Successfully captured user details.))

(defun my/tokenize-user-details ()
  "Tokenize user details."

  (cons 'user-full-name user-full-name))

(unless (file-exists-p (concat user-emacs-directory
                              "meta/user-details"))
  (setq user-details '(user-full-name
                      user-mail-address))
  (append-to-file "Foobar\n" nil "~/.emacs.d/meta/foobar"))
```

2.3 File system paths

In this subsection, we tell Emacs about relevant paths to resources.

On my MS Windows machine, I add the path to Portable Git.²

```
(when (string-equal system-type "windows-nt")
  (add-to-list 'exec-path "C:/Users/marius.peter/PortableGit/bin/"))
```

3 Early setup

3.1 The first file to load

The contents of this Section was automatically moved to ~/.emacs.d/init.el. Use 'sd-pack-section' to copy the contents back into this section.

This is the very first user-editable file loaded by Emacs.³ In it, we disable GUI elements that would otherwise be loaded and displayed once Emacs is ready to accept user input.

It can be found here: early-init.el

3.2 The second file to load

Traditionally, file ~/.emacs is used as the init file, although Emacs also looks at ~/.emacs.el, ~/.emacs.d/init.el, ~/.config/emacs/init.el, or other locations.

²Download from <https://git-scm.com/download/win>

³This feature became available in version 27.1.

From the GNU website⁴

This file can be found here: `init.el`

If no file is found, Emacs then loads in its purely vanilla state.

3.3 Profiling — start

We start the profiler now , and will interrupt it in Section 10.1. We will then present profiling report in Section 10.2.

```
; (profiler-start)
```

3.4 Jumping to this file

We begin by defining a function to open this very file.

```
(defun my/find-literate-config ()  
  "Jump to this very file."  
  (interactive)  
  (find-file (concat my/literate-config ".org")))
```

3.5 Speeding up the next startup

```
(defun byte-compile-literate-config ()  
  "Byte compile our literate configuration file."  
  (delete-file (concat my/literate-config ".elc"))  
  (delete-file (concat my/literate-config ".el"))  
  (org-babel-tangle-file (concat my/literate-config ".org"))  
  (byte-compile-file (concat my/literate-config ".el")))  
  
(add-hook 'kill-emacs-hook 'byte-compile-literate-config)
```

3.6 Meta-files

In this section, we'll be tidying up the `.emacs.d/` directory — by default, many Emacs packages create files useful for themselves in our `user-emacs-directory`. This leads to undesirable clutter. Certain packages create files that log recently visited files (3.6.1); log location of known projects (3.6.2); log location in recently visited files (3.6.3) The commonality between all these files is that they tend to reference... other files. Thus, I decided to refer to them as meta-files. First, let's designate a folder to collect our meta-files together:

```
(setq my/meta-files-location (concat user-emacs-directory "meta/"))
```

⁴https://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/manual/html_node/emacs/Init-File.html

3.6.1 Recently visited files

```
(setq recentf-save-file (concat
                        my/meta-files-location
                        "recentf"))
```

3.6.2 Projects' bookmarks

```
(setq projectile-known-projects-file (concat
                                     my/meta-files-location
                                     "projectile-bookmarks.eld"))
```

3.6.3 Location in previously visited file

```
(setq save-place-file (concat
                       my/meta-files-location
                       "places"))
```

3.6.4 Custom file

Load settings created automatically by GNU Emacs Custom. (For example, any clickable option/toggle is saved here.) Useful for fooling around with `M-x customize-group <package>`.

```
(setq custom-file (concat user-emacs-directory "custom.el"))
(load custom-file)
```

3.7 Backups

Backups are very important!

```
(setq backup-directory-alist
      `((".*" . ,temporary-file-directory))
      auto-save-file-name-transforms
      `((".*" ,temporary-file-directory t))
      backup-by-copying t      ; Don't delink hardlinks
      version-control t       ; Use version numbers on backups
      delete-old-versions t   ; Automatically delete excess backups
      kept-new-versions 20    ; how many of the newest versions to keep
      kept-old-versions 5)    ; and how many of the old
```

3.8 Initial and default frames

We set the dimensions of the initial frame:

```
(add-to-list 'initial-frame-alist '(width . 100))
(add-to-list 'initial-frame-alist '(height . 50))
```

We also set the dimensions of subsequent frames:

```
(add-to-list 'default-frame-alist '(width . 50))
(add-to-list 'default-frame-alist '(height . 30))
```

3.8.1 GNU/Linux

These settings affect the first and subsequent frames spawned by Emacs in GNU/Linux. Frame transparency increases when focus is lost.

```
(when (and (display-graphic-p) (string-equal system-type "gnu/linux"))
  (set-frame-parameter (selected-frame) 'alpha '(90 . 50))
  (add-to-list 'default-frame-alist '(alpha . (90 . 50))))
```

3.9 Secrets

The code contained in the `secrets.org` file is loaded by Emacs, but not rendered in this PDF for the sake of privacy. It contains individually identifying information such as names and e-mail addresses, which are used to populate Org templates (Section 6). You need to create this `secrets.org` file, as it is ignored by `git` by default.

```
(org-babel-load-file "~/.emacs.d/secrets.org")
```

4 Keyboard shortcuts

The following bindings strive to further enhance CUA mode.⁵

```
(cua-mode)
```

What follows are the most useful keybindings, as well as the keybindings to the functions we defined ourselves. It doesn't matter if we haven't defined the functions themselves yet; Emacs will accept a keybinding for any symbol and does not check if the symbol's function definition exists, until the keybinding is pressed.

4.1 Files

4.1.1 Save a file

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-s") 'save-buffer)
```

⁵Common User Access. This is a term coined by IBM which has influenced user navigation cues on all modern desktop OSes. From IBM's CUA, we get the `Ctrl-c` and `Ctrl-v` keyboard shortcuts.

4.1.2 Open a file

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-o") 'find-file)
```

4.1.3 List open files

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-b") 'ivy-switch-buffer)
```

4.1.4 Open this very file

(Function defined in Section 3.4)

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-c c") 'my/find-literate-config)
```

4.1.5 Open a recently visited file

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-r") 'counsel-recentf)
```

4.1.6 Locate a file

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-c l") 'counsel-locate)
```

4.1.7 Open the agenda

```
(global-set-key [f5] 'org-agenda-list)
```

4.1.8 Open the diary

```
(global-set-key [f6]
  '(lambda ()
    "Load `org-agenda-diary-file'."
    (interactive)
    (find-file org-agenda-diary-file)))
```

4.1.9 Open Org mode document properties

```
(global-set-key [f9] 'sd-document-properties)
```

4.2 Windows

4.2.1 Close window and quit

The following bindings lead to more natural window & frame exit behaviors.

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-w")
  '(lambda ()
    "Delete window; if sole window, previous buffer."
    (interactive)
    (if (> (length (window-list)) 1)
      (delete-window)
      (previous-buffer)))))
```

4.3 Frame

4.3.1 Make new frame

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-n") 'make-frame)
```

4.3.2 Make only frame

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-`") 'delete-other-windows)
```

4.3.3 Delete frame or kill Emacs

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-q")
  '(lambda ()
    (interactive)
    "delete frame; if sole frame, kill Emacs."
    (if (> (length (frame-list)) 1)
      (delete-frame)
      (kill-emacs)))))
```

4.3.4 Open sidebar

```
(global-set-key (kbd "<left-margin> <mouse-1>") 'sd-sidebar)
```

4.4 Text display

4.4.1 Zoom

The typical binding on both GNU/Linux and MS Windows is adequate here: C-= to zoom in, C-- to zoom out.

It seems that starting with Emacs 27.1, Control + mousewheel works.

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C--") 'text-scale-decrease)
(global-set-key (kbd "C-=") 'text-scale-increase)
(global-set-key (kbd "C-+") 'text-scale-increase)
```

4.5 Navigation

Alt (Meta) is the privileged key for motion in a buffer. It is followed by an optional numerical argument, and a movement command. You may navigate in a buffer by keeping Alt pressed, optionally inputting a number from the keypad or number row, then pressing any of the following movement keys: j, k, h, and l. You will move in that direction in the amount of the numerical argument.

Table 1: Navigation keybindings.

	Backwards	Forwards
Character	M-h	M-l
Line	M-k	M-j
Word	M-f	M-b
Paragraph	M-a	M-e

We prevent Org mode from overriding preferred navigation keys.

```
(local-unset-key (kbd "M-j"))
(local-unset-key (kbd "M-k"))
(local-unset-key (kbd "M-l"))
(local-unset-key (kbd "M-h"))
```

4.5.1 Move down one line

```
(global-set-key (kbd "M-j") 'next-line)
```

4.5.2 Move up one line

```
(global-set-key (kbd "M-k") 'previous-line)
```

4.5.3 Move left one character

```
(global-set-key (kbd "M-h") 'left-char)
```

4.5.4 Move right one character

```
(global-set-key (kbd "M-l") 'right-char)
```

4.6 Customizing the editor

4.6.1 Customize a variable

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-c v") 'customize-variable)
```

4.6.2 Customize a face

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-c f") 'customize-face)
```

4.7 One-click workflows

A major advantage of the Emacs document production system: arbitrarily complicated functions can be assigned to very simple keybindings. This means we can automate workflows up to a pretty absurd level.

4.7.1 Export to PDF

PDF is probably the most prevalent file format for sharing static documents.

1. Document

```
(global-set-key (kbd "C-p") 'my/org-quick-export)
```

2. TODO Presentation

4.7.2 Indent buffer

Indent buffer in every mode.

```
(global-set-key [f12] 'sd-indent-buffer)
```

4.7.3 Beautify Org mode buffer

Not only indent, but also clean up superfluous newlines.

```
(local-set-key [f12] 'sd-org-beautify)
```

5 Packages

Packages are collections of .el files providing added functionality to Emacs.

5.1 Meta

How do we bootstrap packages? First, let's figure out:

1. Where we get our packages from
2. How we upgrade packages
3. How we ensure our required packages are installed

5.1.1 Package archives

List of package archives.

```
(require 'package)
(add-to-list 'package-archives '("melpa" .
  ↳ "https://melpa.org/packages/") t)
(add-to-list 'package-archives '("org" . "https://orgmode.org/elpa/")
  ↳ t)
(package-initialize)
```

5.1.2 TODO Convenient package update

One-function rollup of upgradeable package tagging, download and lazy install.

5.1.3 use-package

We ensure use-package is installed, as well as all packages described in this configuration file.

```
(unless (package-installed-p 'use-package)
  (package-refresh-contents)
  (package-install 'use-package)
  (eval-when-compile (require 'use-package)))
(setq use-package-always-ensure t)
(require 'use-package)
(require 'bind-key)
```

5.2 evil-mode

Forgive me, for I have sinned.

This is the 2nd most significant customization after org-mode. Enabling evil-mode completely changes editing keys.⁶

⁶For more information on vi keybindings, visit <https://hea-www.harvard.edu/~fine/Tech/vi.html>.


```
(use-package evil)
; (setq evil-toggle-key "C-c d") ; devil...
; (evil-mode 1)
```

5.3 Spelling, completion, and snippets

The following customizations open the doors to vastly increased typing speed and accuracy.

5.3.1 Syntax checking

We require a package to highlight syntax errors and warnings. The `flycheck` package ensures we are aware of all our code's syntactical shortcomings.

```
(use-package flycheck)
(global-flycheck-mode)
```

5.3.2 Spelling

```
(use-package flyspell)
(add-hook 'text-mode-hook 'flyspell-mode)
```

5.3.3 Insert template from keyword

Thanks to `yasnippet`, we can type certain keywords, then press `TAB`, to automatically insert a predefined text snippet. We can then navigate through the snippet by using `<tab>` (next field) and `<backtab>` (previous field).⁷

For instance: typing `src` then pressing `TAB` will expand the keyword to the following text:

```
#+BEGIN_SRC emacs-lisp :tangle yes

#+END_SRC
```

We notice that `emacs-lisp` is highlighted — this is the first modifiable field. Many clever programming tricks can be performed with `yasnippet` to save us a ton of time with boilerplate text!

```
(use-package yasnippet)
(yas-global-mode 1)
```

5.3.4 Complete anything interactively

```
; (add-hook 'after-init-hook 'global-company-mode)
```

⁷`<backtab>` is synonymous with pressing `shift-tab`.

5.3.5 Delete all consecutive whitespaces

```
(use-package hungry-delete)
(global-hungry-delete-mode)
```

5.4 Utilities

5.4.1 Versioning of files

Wonderful Git porcelain for Emacs. Enables the administration of a Git repository in a pain-free way.

```
(use-package magit
  :bind ("C-c g" . magit-status))
```

5.4.2 Navigate between projects

This enables us to better manage our .git projects.

```
(use-package projectile
  :bind ("C-c p" . 'projectile-command-map)
  :init (projectile-mode 1)
        (setq projectile-completion-system 'ivy))
```

5.4.3 Display keyboard shortcuts on screen

```
(use-package which-key
  :init (which-key-mode))
```

5.4.4 Jump to symbol's definition

dumb-jump is a reliable symbol definition finder. It uses different matching algorithms and heuristics to provide a very educated guess on the location of a symbol's definition.

```
(use-package dumb-jump)
(add-hook 'xref-backend-functions #'dumb-jump-xref-activate)
```

5.4.5 Graphical representation of file history

```
(use-package undo-tree)
(global-undo-tree-mode)
```

5.4.6 Auto-completion framework

```
(use-package ivy
  :config (setq ivy-use-virtual-buffers t
                ivy-count-format "%d/%d "
                enable-recursive-minibuffers t))
(ivy-mode t)
```

1. Smartly suggesting interactive search matches

Wonderful counsellor!

```
(use-package counsel
  :bind ("M-x" . counsel-M-x)
  :config (counsel-mode t))

(global-set-key (kbd "C-f") 'counsel-grep-or-swiper)
```

2. Searching for items

```
(use-package swiper
  :bind (("C-f" . counsel-grep-or-swiper)))
```

5.5 Tree

```
(use-package treemacs)
```

5.6 Coding languages

5.6.1 TODO Emacs Lisp

5.6.2 Python

Python is included by default on most Linux distributions.

```
(use-package py-yapf)
(add-hook 'python-mode-hook 'py-yapf-enable-on-save)
```

5.7 File formats

5.7.1 csv and Excel

```
(use-package csv-mode)
```

5.7.2 Interacting with PDFs

Org mode shines particularly when exporting to PDF—Org files can reliably be shared and exported to PDF in a reproducible fashion.

```
(use-package pdf-tools)
;; (pdf-tools-install)
```

5.7.3 Accounting

Ledger is a creation of John Wiegley's. It enables double-entry accounting in a simple plaintext format, and reliable verification of account balances through time.⁸

```
(use-package ledger-mode
  :bind
  ("C-c r" . ledger-report)
  ("C-c C" . ledger-mode-clean-buffer))
```

These reports can be generated within Emacs. It is quite useful to pipe their output to an automated “smart document”.

```
(setq ledger-reports
  '(("bal" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) bal")
    ("bal-USD" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) bal --exchange USD")
    ("reg" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) reg")
    ("net-worth" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) bal ^Assets ^Liabilities
      ↪ --exchange USD")
    ("net-income" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) bal ^Income ^Expenses
      ↪ --exchange USD --depth 2 --invert")
    ("payee" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) reg @%(payee)")
    ("account" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) reg %(account)")
    ("budget" "%(binary) -f %(ledger-file) budget --exchange USD")))
```

5.7.4 Plotting & charting

```
(use-package gnuplot)
```

5.8 Cosmetics

5.8.1 Start page

We replace the standard welcome screen with our own.

⁸For more information, visit <https://www.ledger-cli.org/>.

```
(setq inhibit-startup-message t)
(use-package dashboard
  :config
  (dashboard-setup-startup-hook)
  (setq dashboard-startup-banner (concat user-emacs-directory
    ↪ "img/Safran_logo.svg"))
  (setq dashboard-items '((recents . 5)
    ↪ (projects . 5)))
  (setq dashboard-banner-logo-title "A modern professional text
    ↪ editor."))
```

5.8.2 Sidebar

Get inspiration from `ibuffer-sidebar` and create a better sidebar.

```
(defun sd-sidebar ()
  (interactive)
  (treemacs))
```

5.8.3 Better parentheses

```
(use-package rainbow-delimiters
  :config (add-hook 'prog-mode-hook #'rainbow-delimiters-mode))
(show-paren-mode 1)
```

5.8.4 Highlight “color keywords” in their color

This highlights hexadecimal numbers which look like colors, in that same color.

```
(use-package rainbow-mode
  :init
  (add-hook 'prog-mode-hook 'rainbow-mode))
```

5.8.5 UTF-8 bullet points in Org mode

This section was removed, as it is more explicit to display the headline character for what it is: a collection of at least one asterisk.

6 org-mode

Org mode is so significant that this section of the paper deserves its own introduction.

6.1 Introduction

Phew, after all this initialization, I can finally introduce Org mode! I am so **excited**.

Org mode replaces a word processor, a presentation creator, and a spreadsheet editor. The spreadsheet ability captures more than 80% use cases wherein one wishes to include a table in a text document destined for physical publication. (It is clear that Excel spreadsheets are *not* destined for physical publication — simply attempt to print an Excel spreadsheet with the default settings.) In my opinion, Org mode matches all *useful* features of the Microsoft Office suite 1-to-1.

What follows are customizations designed to make Org mode behave more like Microsoft Word. The end goal is, once again, to draw as many new users to Emacs as possible!

Check out how much information Org mode keeps concerning the most recent header:

```
(save-excursion
  (org-previous-visible-heading 1)
  (org-entry-properties))

(("CATEGORY" . "smart-documents")
 ("BLOCKED" . "")
 ("FILE" . "/home/blendux/.emacs.d/smart-documents.org")
 ("PRIORITY" . "B")
 ("ITEM" . "Introduction"))
```

6.2 Basic customization

6.2.1 Base folder

Org base directory is in user home on GNU/Linux, or in AppData in MS Windows.

```
(setq org-directory (concat user-emacs-directory "~/org"))
```

6.2.2 Prevent/warn on invisible edits

```
(setq org-catch-invisible-edits t)
```

6.3 Org cosmetics

First, we ensure the display of markup symbols for **bold**, *italic*, underlined and ~~strikethrough~~ text, and ensure our document appears indented upon loading.⁹

We then set values for many other Org-related cosmetic symbols.

```
(setq org-hide-emphasis-markers nil
      org-startup-indented t
      org-src-preserve-indentation nil)
```

⁹It *appears* indented, but the underlying plaintext file does not contain tab characters!

```
org-edit-src-content-indentation 2
org-ellipsis " □ " ) ; folding symbol
```

6.3.1 Dynamic numbering of headlines

We enable the dynamic numbering of headlines in an Org buffer. We also set the numbering face to `org-special-keyword`, which specifies a `:background white` attribute. This is necessary because otherwise, the background of the numbering may be overridden by the `TODD` face attribute `:background coral`.

```
(add-hook 'org-mode-hook 'org-num-mode)
(setq org-num-face 'org-special-keyword)
```

By default, we hide Org document properties such as `#+TITLE`, `#+AUTHOR`, and `#+DATE`, because those keywords are defined when the document template is populated. We can nevertheless always access those properties and edit them manually, with a simple keyboard shortcut (cf. Section 4.1.9).

6.3.2 Document properties

```
(defun org-property-value (property)
  "Return the value of a given Org document property."
  (interactive)
  (save-excursion
    (goto-char (point-min))
    (re-search-forward
      (concat
        "^[[[:space:]]*#\\"
        property
        ":[[:space:]]*\\(.*?\\)[[:space:]]*$")
      nil t)
    (nth 3 (car (cdr (org-element-at-point))))))

(defun sd-document-properties ()
  "Open separate buffer to edit Org mode properties."
  (interactive)
  (let ((title (car (org-property-value "TITLE")))
        (date (org-property-value "DATE")))
    (with-output-to-temp-buffer "Smart Document Properties"
      (print title)
      (print date))))

(add-hook 'org-src-mode-hook
  '(lambda ()
     "Disable flycheck for `emacs-lisp-mode'."))
```

```
(setq-local flycheck-disabled-checkers
  '(emacs-lisp-checkdoc)))
```

6.3.3 Timestamps

More literary timestamps are exported to \LaTeX using the following custom format:

```
(setq org-time-stamp-custom-formats
  '("%d %b. %Y (%a)" . "%d %b. %Y (%a), at %H:%M"))
```

6.4 Programming a Smart Documents

The following languages can be used inside SRC blocks, in view of being executed by the Org Babel backend upon document export.

```
(setq org-babel-load-languages
  '((shell . t)
    (python . t)
    (plantuml . t)
    (emacs-lisp . t)
    (awk . t)
    (ledger . t)
    (gnuplot . t)
    (latex . t)))

(org-babel-do-load-languages
 'org-babel-load-languages '((C . t)
                              (shell . t)
                              (gnuplot . t)))
```

6.5 Agenda

The agenda displays a chronological list of headings across all agenda files for which the heading or body contain a matching `org-time-stamp`.¹⁰

We open the agenda in a separate window.

```
(setq org-agenda-window-setup 'other-frame)
```

6.6 \LaTeX export

We'll be compiling our documents with Lua \TeX . This will afford us some future-proofing, since it was designated as the successor to pdf \TeX by the latter's creators.

¹⁰An `org-time-stamp` can be inserted with `C-c .` (period)

First, we define the command executed when an Org file is exported to \LaTeX . We'll use `latexmk`, the Perl script which automagically runs binaries related to \LaTeX in the correct order and the right amount of times.

Options and why we need them:

-shell-escape required by `minted` to color source blocks

-pdflatex=lualatex we use `lualatex` to generate our PDF

-interaction=nonstopmode go as far as possible without prompting user for input

```
(setq org-latex-pdf-process
  '("latexmk -pdf -f \
  -pdflatex=lualatex -shell-escape \
  -interaction=nonstopmode -outdir=%o %f"))
```

6.6.1 Exporting timestamps

We customize the format for org time stamps to make them appear monospaced in our exported \LaTeX documents. This makes them visually distinguishable from body text.

```
(setq org-latex-active-timestamp-format
  "\\texttt{%s}")
(setq org-latex-inactive-timestamp-format
  "\\texttt{%s}")
```

6.6.2 \LaTeX packages

The following packages are loaded for every time we export to \LaTeX .

```
(setq org-latex-packages-alist
  '(("AUTO" "babel" t
    ("pdflatex"))
    ("AUTO" "polyglossia" t ; Babel replacement for LuaLaTeX
    ("xelatex" "lualatex"))
    (" " "booktabs" t ; Publication quality tables in LaTeX
    ("pdflatex"))
    ("table,svgnames" "xcolor" t ; svgnames opens up ~150 color
    ↪ keywords
    ("pdflatex"))
    ("skip=0.5\\baselineskip" "caption" t ; Increase space between
    ↪ floats and captions
    ("pdflatex" "lualatex"))))
```

6.6.3 Colored source blocks in PDF export

Little bonus for GNU/Linux users: syntax highlighting for source code blocks in \LaTeX exports.

```
(when (string-equal system-type "gnu/linux")
  (add-to-list 'org-latex-packages-alist '("AUTO" "minted" t
                                           ("pdflatex" "lualatex"))))

(setq org-latex-listings 'minted)
(setq org-latex-minted-options '(("style" "friendly")
                                  ("breaklines" "true")
                                  ("breakanywhere" "true"))))
```

6.6.4 Cleaning directory after export

Now, we set the files to be deleted when a \LaTeX \rightarrow PDF compilation occurs. We only care about two files, in the end: the Org mode file for edition, and the PDF for distribution.

```
(setq org-latex-logfiles-extensions
      '("aux" "bcf" "blg" "fdb_latexmk"
        "fls" "figlist" "idx" "log" "nav"
        "out" "ptc" "run.xml" "snm" "toc" "vrb" "xdv"
        "tex" "lot" "lof"))
```

6.6.5 Chronological diary entries

By default, Org agenda inserts diary entries as the first under the selected date. It is preferable to insert entries in the order that they were recorded, i.e. chronologically.

```
(setq org-agenda-insert-diary-strategy 'date-tree-last)
```

What follows is an additional document class structures that can be exported in \LaTeX .

```
;; (add-to-list 'org-latex-classes
;;            '("book-blendoit"
;;              "\\documentclass[12pt]{book}"
;;              ("\\chapter{%s}" . "\\chapter*{%s}")
;;              ("\\section{%s}" . "\\section*{%s}")
;;              ("\\subsection*{%s}" . "\\subsection*{%s}")
;;              ("\\subsubsection*{%s}" . "\\subsubsection*{%s}")))
```

6.6.6 Table of contents

By default, body text can immediately follow the table of contents. It is however cleaner to separate table of contents with the rest of the work.

```
(setq org-latex-toc-command "\\tableofcontents\\clearpage")
```

The following makes TODO items appear red and CLOSED items appear green in Org's \LaTeX exports. Very stylish, much flair!

6.7 Org links

This is a mind-bending capacity of Org mode: we can assign arbitrary functions to be executed when a user follows an Org link. Org links appear like hyperlinks both in buffers and PDF exports — e.g. the following link to this very section, Section 6.7 — but their in-buffer behavior can be arbitrarily assigned.

```
(org-add-link-type
 "tag" 'endless/follow-tag-link)

(defun endless/follow-tag-link (tag)
  "Display a list of TODO headlines with tag TAG.
  With prefix argument, also display headlines without a TODO keyword."
  (org-tags-view (null current-prefix-arg) tag))

[[tag:work+phonenumber-boss][Optional Description]]
```

7 One-click workflows

In this section, we'll implement useful one-click workflows. It comes later keybinding definitions for two reasons:

1. To a new user, keybindings are more important than the precise implementation of the bound function — it is more important to know how to drive a car than how a car works.
2. If the following subsections share the same name as the keybinding subsection (Section 4), the links will resolve to the earliest heading in the document, i.e. the keybinding subsection and not the subsection describing the 'one-click workflow'.

7.1 TODO Export to PDF

This reimplements the most common Org mode export: Org \rightarrow \LaTeX \rightarrow PDF. The binding is defined in Section 4.7.1.

```
(defun my/org-quick-export ()
  "Org async export to PDF and open.
  This basically reimplements `C-c C-e C-a l o'."
  (interactive)
  (org-open-file (org-latex-export-to-pdf)))
```

7.2 Beautify buffer

Binding defined in Section 4.7.2.

```
(defun sd-indent-buffer ()  
  "Indent entire buffer."  
  (interactive)  
  (save-excursion  
    (indent-region (point-min) (point-max) nil)))  
  
(defun sd-org-beautify ()  
  "Beautify Org mode buffer."  
  (interactive)  
  (when (eq major-mode 'org-mode)  
    (sd-indent-buffer)))
```

8 Editing preferences

These customizations enhance editor usability. They also encompass cosmetic changes not brought about a specific package.

8.1 Editor

8.1.1 Coding standards

This is just a better default. Don't @ me.

```
(setq c-default-style "linux"  
      c-basic-offset 4)
```

8.1.2 Recent files

The keybinding for opening a recently visited file is described in paragraph 4.1.5.

```
(recentf-mode 1)  
(setq recentf-max-menu-items 25)  
(setq recentf-max-saved-items 25)  
(run-at-time nil (* 5 60) 'recentf-save-list)
```

8.2 Frame

8.2.1 Header & mode lines

1. Mode line

```
(setq-default mode-line-format
  (list
    '(:eval
      (list
        " "
        (if buffer-read-only " " " ")
        (propertize " %b "
                    'help-echo (buffer-file-name)
                    )
        (if (buffer-modified-p) " " " "))))))
```

8.3 Window

8.4 Buffer

8.4.1 Save cursor location

Save cursor location in visited buffer after closing it or Emacs.

```
(save-place-mode 1)
```

8.4.2 Column filling

A line of text is considered “filled” when it reaches 79 characters in length.

```
(setq-default fill-column 79)
(add-hook 'org-mode-hook
  'turn-on-auto-fill) ; Automatically break lines longer than
                     ; =fill-column=.
```

8.4.3 Right and left margins

We set reasonable margins on either side of our buffer.

```
(setq-default left-margin-width 2
              right-margin-width 2)
```

8.5 Text

8.5.1 Beautiful symbols

We want the Emacs Lisp keyword `lambda` to be rendered as λ within the editor. This is mostly for a subjective “cool” factor.

```
(global-prettify-symbols-mode 1)
```

8.5.2 Org mode sugar

Let's pimp out the appearance of our text in Org mode. First, we prettify checkbox lists.

```
(when (string-equal system-type "gnu/linux")
  (add-hook 'org-mode-hook
    (lambda ()
      "Beautify Org symbols."
      (push '("[ ]" . "○") prettify-symbols-alist) ;
      ↳ Unchecked item
      (push '("[X]" . "●") prettify-symbols-alist) ; Checked
      ↳ item
      (push '("[-]" . "◉") prettify-symbols-alist) ;
      ↳ Partially checked item
      (push '("-" . "□") prettify-symbols-alist) ; DONE
      ↳ headings
      (prettify-symbols-mode))))
```

- ☐ This first item is unticked
- ☐ This second item is partially completed
 - ☒ This first sub-item is ticked
 - ☐ This sub-item is not ticked
- ☐ This third item is ticked

8.5.3 Electric modes

Electricity is a very important technology. In Emacs jargon, “electric” modes tend to automate behaviors or present some elegant simplification to a workflow.¹¹

```
(electric-pair-mode) ; Certain character pairs are automatically
↳ completed.
(electric-indent-mode) ; Newlines are always intelligently indented.
```

8.6 Minibuffer

We replace the longer yes-or-no-p questions with more convenient y-or-n-p.

```
(defalias 'yes-or-no-p 'y-or-n-p)
```

Disable minibuffer scroll bar.

```
(set-window-scroll-bars (minibuffer-window) nil nil)
```

¹¹More information can be found at <https://www.emacswiki.org/emacs/Electricity>.

9 Themes

Without a carefully designed theme, our editor would become unusable. Thus, we describe two themes that were developed purposefully and iteratively.

```
(setq custom-theme-directory (concat user-emacs-directory "themes/"))
(load-theme 'blendoit-light)
;; (load-theme 'blendoit-dark)
```

9.1 My light and dark themes

A highly legible, unambiguous, and classic theme.

9.1.1 Colors

The default face is a black foreground on a white background, this matches MS Word. We are striving for a simple, intuitive color scheme.

Most of the visual cues derived from color are identical in both light and dark themes (Table 2).

Table 2: Light and dark themes' colors.

Color	blendoit-light	blendoit-dark
Black	default text	default background
Lighter shades	lesser headers	<i>n/a</i>
White	default background	default text
Darker shades	<i>n/a</i>	lesser headers
Red	negative	<i>same</i>
Tomato	timestamp 'TODO'	<i>same</i>
Green	positive	<i>same</i>
ForestGreen	timestamp 'DONE'	<i>same</i>
Blue	interactive content; links	<i>same</i>
SteelBlue	anything Org mode; anchor color	<i>same</i>
DeepSkyBlue	highlight	<i>same</i>
DodgerBlue	isearch	<i>same</i>
Purple		

9.1.2 Cursors

In order to imitate other modern text editors, we resort to a blinking bar cursor. We choose red, the most captivating color, because the cursor is arguably the region on our screen:

1. most often looked at;
2. most often searched when lost.

In files containing only fixed-pitch fonts (i.e. files containing only code), the cursor becomes a high-visibility box.

In files containing a mix of variable-pitch and fixed-pitch fonts, the cursor is a more MS Word-like bar.

```
(setq-default cursor-type 'bar)
```

9.1.3 Fonts

1. Currently used *chad fonts*

Hack¹² default and fixed-pitch, default code font

- Legible, modern monospace font
- Strict, sharp, uncompromising

Public Sans¹³ variable-pitch, default body text font

- Very modern yet neutral
- Designed for the U.S. government
- Exceptional color on screen

Hermit¹⁴ org-block, anything Org/meta in general

- Slightly wider than Hack
- More opinionated shapes
- Very legible parentheses, very useful for Emacs Lisp!

Jost¹⁵ org-document-title and org-level-1

- Ultra-modern
- Tasteful amount of geometric inspiration

2. Previously used *virgin fonts*

Liberation Sans¹⁶ variable-pitch

¹²<https://sourcefoundry.org/hack/>

¹³<https://public-sans.digital.gov/>

¹⁴<https://pcaro.es/p/hermit/>

¹⁵<https://indestructibletype.com/Jost.html>

¹⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberation_fonts

- Metrically compatible with *Arial* (ugh)
- Unoffensive, unambitious forms
- Pretty angular letters, it's like you're trying to read squares

Open-Sans¹⁷ *variable-pitch*

- Ooh geometric Bauhaus influences, look at me
- Tall leading height is *h a r m o n i o u s*

3. Using proportional fonts when needed

We use *variable-pitch-mode* for appropriate modes.

```
(add-hook 'org-mode-hook 'variable-pitch-mode)
(add-hook 'info-mode-hook 'variable-pitch-mode)
```

4. **TODO** Default font size

Make default font size larger on displays of which the resolution is greater than 1920×1080.

9.2 **TODO** *minimal*

10 **Late setup**

At this point, our editor is almost ready to run. Phew! All that's left to do is to interrupt our profiling activities, and smartly store the result of our profiling.

10.1 **Profiling — stop**

```
;; (profiler-stop)
```

10.2 **Profiling — report**

```
;; (profiler-report)
```

11 **Conclusion**

In this configuration file, we described a series of customization steps taken to make Emacs more palatable to modern IDE users.

¹⁷<https://www.opensans.com/>