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Practical Vim, Second Edition

Edit Text at the Speed of Thought

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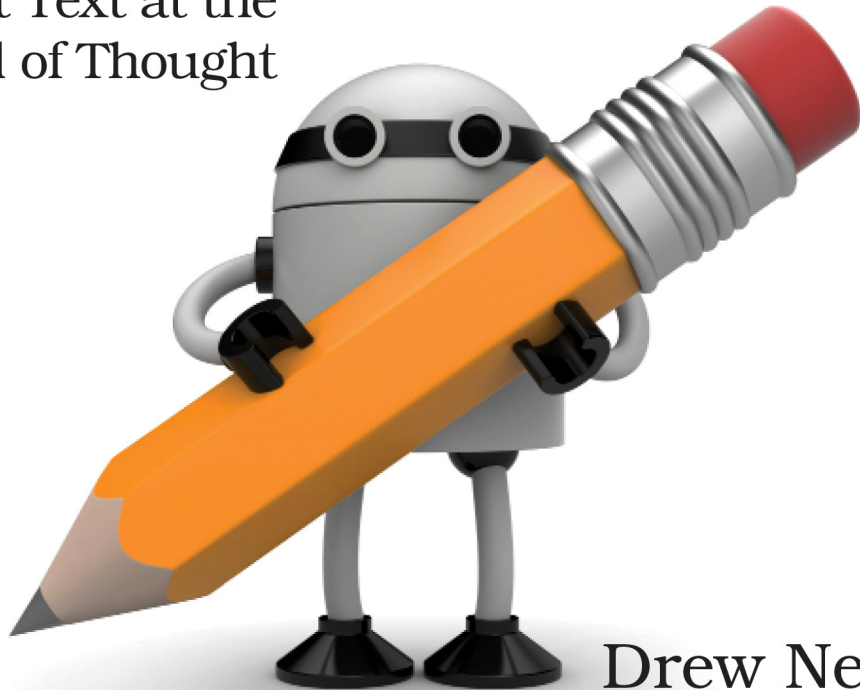
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Drew Neil

Foreword by Tim Pope

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The team that produced this book includes:

Katharine Dvorak (editor)
Potomac Indexing, LLC (index)
Cathleen Small (copyedit)
Dave Thomas (layout)
Janet Furlow (producer)

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Foreword to the First Edition

Conventional wisdom dictates that Vim has a steep learning curve. I think most Vim users would disagree. Sure, there's an initial hump, but once you run through `vimtutor` and learn the basics of what to put in your `vimrc`, you reach a point where you can actually get work done—a sort of hobbled productivity.

What comes next? The Internet's answer to this is the “tip”—a recipe for solving a specific problem. You might search for specific tips when your current solution to a problem feels suboptimal, or you might proactively read some of the more popular tips. This strategy works—it's how I learned, after all—but it's slow. Learning that `*` searches for the word under the cursor is helpful, but it hardly helps you think like a Vim master.

You can understand my skepticism, then, when I found out *Practical Vim* was using a tips format. How could a couple of hundred tips accomplish what took me thousands? A few pages in I realized my definition of “tip” was narrow-minded. In contrast to the problem/solution pattern I had expected, *Practical Vim* tips teach lessons in thinking like a proficient Vim user. In a sense, they are more like parables than recipes. The first few tips are lessons about the wide applicability of the `.` command. This is a staple of any proficient Vim user's repertoire, yet without guidance it was years before I came to realize this on my own.

It is for this reason that I am excited about the publication of *Practical Vim*. Because now when Vim novices ask me what's the next step, I know what to tell them. After all, *Practical Vim* even taught me a few things.

Tim Pope

Vim core contributor

April 2012