Using the Info Browser

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Emacs comes with a powerful built-in tool for reading manuals on-line, called the Info Browser. These manuals, or Info files, are in a format called "TeXinfo", because they can be viewed in textual format, using the browser, or they can be converted to LaTeX format for printing. Info files exist in numerous places, for nearly all of the programs in the gnu locker, and for many other utilities and packages as well.

To get started using the Info Browser, type Control-h i in emacs. This will load a menu of info files to choose from, including the Emacs editor and Info browsers themselves. For a tutorial on how to use the info browser, press "h".

Each Info file is set up like a tree, with each level consisting of several nodes, each of which contain sub-nodes. Nodes are indicated by a star at the beginning of the line. The basic commands for reading throughthese trees of nodes are:

m	prompts for a menu item, or "node", and goes to it
space	move forward a page (in current node)
delete	move backward a page (in current node)
n	go to next node
p	return to previous node
u	go up one level above current node
d	return to top level menu
q	quits Info browser and returns to original buffer

The Info browser, however, can be customized: you may extend or shrink menus, or enter bookmarks for commonly needed entries. Information on all this is all included in the node entitled Info.

Probably the most widely used is the Info file for Emacs. You can examine the Emacs Info node by starting up the Info browser, and then typing Emacs, followed by return, or by moving the cursor to the line that starts with "* Emacs", and hitting m and return. Here, you can find the **entire** GNU Emacs Manual, and any questions you have about Emacs can almost certainly be found here. If you are unsure of where to look, you can try one of the Indexes:

Indexes, nodes containing large menus

- Key Index:: An item for each standard Emacs key sequence.
- Command Index:: An item for each command name.
- Variable Index:: An item for each documented variable.
- Concept Index:: An item for each concept.

Simply move the cursor to the Index of your choice, hit m, and return.

The default top-level node only contains of six entries, but there are, in fact, over 20 currently on Athena. A list of these is kept in the consult locker. To get a more expansive listing of useful manuals at Athena in the top-level node of your Info browser, add this line to your .emacs file:

(setq Info-directory "/afs/athena/contrib/consult/lib/info")

Note that some of these nodes may require that you add the appropriate locker first. Details on how to customize this file are in the Info node entitled "Info".

Also, if you add a locker and it has an Info file, then that node will be automatically added when you start Info.