

[Vimliner: The Smallest, Fastest Outliner for VIM](#)

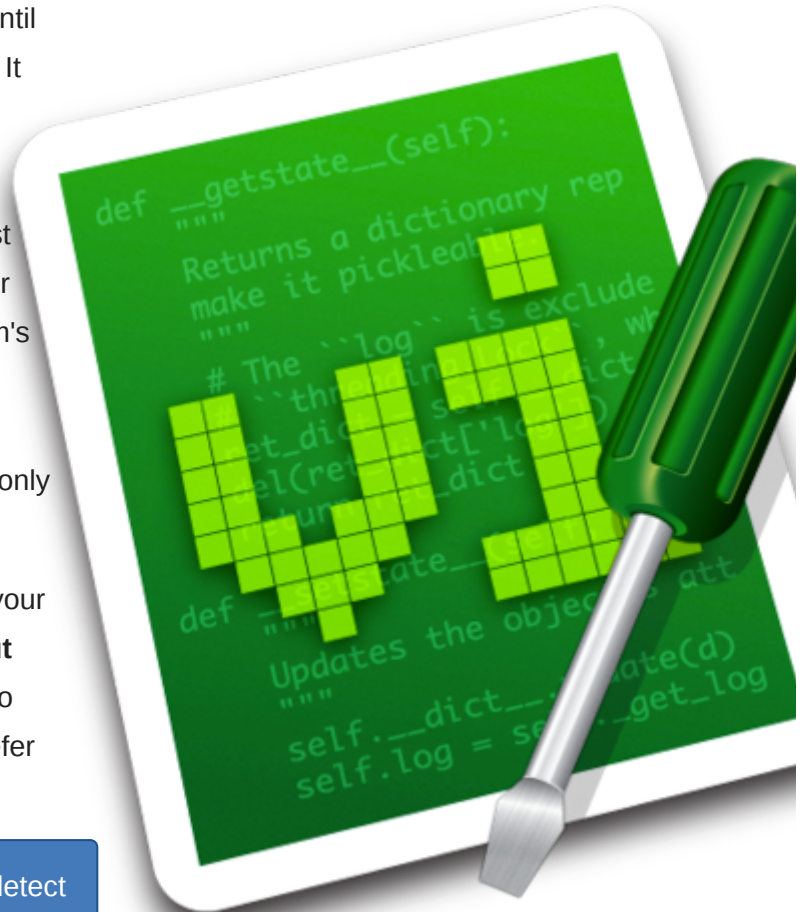
By [Roger Keays](#), 6 March 2016

I was quite fond of the [WorkFlowy](#) outliner until the sync failed and broke my offline access. It was just lucky that I'd made an export of my data not too long before it failed.

But really, I didn't need sync that much. I just needed a fast outliner. And what could be faster than Vim? With a bit of investigation into Vim's code folding capabilities, I came up with a **single-file script** to turn Vim into a **fast and simple outliner**. It is fully functional, and is only 21 lines of code.

To install Vimliner, just copy `vimliner.vim` to your `$HOME/.vim/ftdetect` directory and use a **.out** extension for your outliner files. You can also use `:set filetype=vimliner` if you prefer not to use the `.out` extension.

Download `vimliner.vim` to `$HOME/.vim/ftdetect`



Here is what it looks like. You just use **<TAB>** to open and close the folds, and navigate through your outline.

```
wiki.out (~/.wiki) - VIM
Truth-----
Freedom-----
Voice
  Writing
    Style-----
    Guidelines-----
    Grammar-----
    Composition-----
    Form-----
    Commas-----
    Arrangement-----
  Music
    Theory-----
    Production
      Audio Scrubbing
        Audacity-----
          strip metadata
            $ ffmpeg -i in.mov -map_metadata -1 -c:v copy -c:a copy out.mov
Practise-----
5812,1 11%
```

Here is the full code of vimliner.vim for the curious.

Enjoy!

```
"
" Vimliner is the smallest outliner for vim. It uses vim's existing code
" folding capabilities with some simple configuration. The result is a fast,
" powerful outliner using your favourite text editor.
"
" Install Vimliner by saving this file to $HOME/.vim/ftdetect/vimliner.vim
" on unix, or $HOME/vimfiles/ftdetect/vimliner.vim on Windows.
"
" Save your outliner files with a .out extension for Vimliner to be
" autodetected. Otherwise, use :set filetype=vimliner from within vim.
"
" The outliner uses an indentation level of 2 white spaces to create
" new levels. You can use vim's default code folding shortcuts to move
" throughout your outline, or just use <TAB> to open and close levels.
"
" The most frequent shortcut keys you will use are:
"
" <TAB> open or close the current fold
"  zx  close all other folds
"
" Use :help fold-commands in vim for additional shortcuts.
"
" The fold function consumes blank lines. If you need to separate one
" fold from another, use a string of space characters that match the
" current indent level.
"
" News And Updates:
"
" https://rogerkeays.com/vimliner
" https://www.vim.org/scripts/script.php?script_id=5343
"
" Release Notes:
"
" 20200430_1.2 - renamed to vimliner to avoid confusion with rival project
" 20200424_1.1 - allow lines containing only whitespace
" 20160305_1.0 - initial release
"
```

```

" License: https://opensource.org/licenses/Apache-2.0
" Author: Roger Keays
"

autocmd BufRead,BufNewFile *.out set filetype=vimliner
autocmd FileType vimliner set foldmethod=expr foldexpr=VimlinerFold(v:lnum)
autocmd FileType vimliner set foldtext=getline(v:foldstart).'\ ' fillchars=
autocmd FileType vimliner set shiftwidth=2 expandtab autoindent
autocmd FileType vimliner set linebreak breakindent showbreak=-----\

autocmd FileType vimliner hi Folded ctermbg=black ctermfg=yellow
autocmd FileType vimliner nnoremap <TAB> za

function! VimlinerFold(lnum)
    if getline(a:lnum) =~? '^$'
        return VimlinerFold(a:lnum - 1)
    endif

    let this_indent = indent(a:lnum) / &shiftwidth
    let next_indent = indent(a:lnum + 1) / &shiftwidth

    if next_indent == this_indent
        return this_indent
    elseif next_indent < this_indent
        return this_indent
    elseif next_indent > this_indent
        return '>' . next_indent
    endif
endfunction

```

About Roger Keays



Roger Keays is an artist, an engineer, and a student of life. He has no fixed address and has left footprints on 40-something different countries around the world.

Roger is addicted to surfing. His other interests are music, psychology, languages, the proper use of semicolons, and finding good food.

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