Universal Ctags Source code indexer

CONCEPTS

ctags scans source files and writes a sorted index (the tags file) mapping each name to its file and location. Editors read it to jump to definitions without a language server.

Source files many languages
↓ `ctags -R`
tags file name, file, location
↓ `editor reads`
Jump Ctrl+] in Vim

Re-run ctags after larger edits: the index is a snapshot and does not update itself.

GENERATE TAGS

`ctags -R`
Index current directory recursively

`ctags -R` *`<dir>`*`...`
Index only these directories

`ctags` *`<file>`*`...`
Index specific files

`ctags -f` *`<tagfile>`* **`-R`**
Write to another file name

`ctags -f -` *`<file>`*
Write tags to stdout

`ctags -a` *`<file>`*
Append instead of overwrite

`ctags -L` *`<list>`*
Read file names from a list

`find . -name '*.c' | ctags -L -`
Read file names from stdin

SELECT FILES AND LANGUAGES

`ctags --exclude=`*`<pattern>`*
Skip matching files or dirs

`ctags --languages=`*`<list>`*
Only parse these languages

SELECT FILES AND LANGUAGES (cont.)

`ctags --list-languages`
List supported languages

TAG CONTENT

`ctags --list-kinds=`*`<lang>`*
List kinds of a language

`ctags --kinds-`*`<lang>`*`=+`***`<kinds>`***
Add kinds, e.g. --kinds-c=+p

`ctags --fields=+n`
Add line numbers

`ctags --extras=+q`
Add qualified names (Class.member)

OUTPUT FORMATS

`ctags -x` *`<file>`*
Cross-reference table on stdout

`ctags --output-format=json`
One JSON object per tag

CONFIG FILES

`ctags --options=`*`<path>`*
Read options from file or directory

`~/.ctags.d/*.ctags`
Per-user options, one per line

`.ctags.d/*.ctags`
Per-project options

USE IN VIM

Vim looks for ./tags then the parent directories when 'tags' contains ./tags;, so run ctags -R at the project root.

`Ctrl+]`
Jump to tag under cursor

`Ctrl+T`
Jump back up the tag stack

`:tag` *`<name>`*
Jump to a tag by name