How to use Emacs with the Ada Information Server

Frank Piron, KonAd GmbH

The Ada Information Server (AIS) is a program to extend simple editors so that they are more Ada aware. See http://www.white-elephant.ch/ais.php for the software and documentation. White Elephant also provides a client with which you may use some core features of the Ada Information Server in an easy way.

I wrote a little elisp library ais-int which may be loaded into Emacs. If you have an installation of Emacs, Ada Information Server and -Client on your machine you may use ais-int to extend Emacs with some core features of the Ada Information Server.

Installation

Put the file ais-int.el to a directory. For example c:\emacs\lisp. Add the lines (example)

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;load ais-emacs integration
(load "c:/emacs/lisp/ais-int")
```

to your .emacs file. [1]

Customization

Edit the ais-int.el file to match your AIS installation. See the customization-sections at the begin of ais-int.el where you set up your AIS-environment and your favourite key-bindings. I recommend to adjust also the compilation-search-path for jumping into a file from a compilation buffer (see below).

For the installation and configuration of the Ada Information Server and –client please see the above link.

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[1] Note that your .emacs file is located in your home directory. This is the directory where the environment variable HOME refers to.

Usage

Reference: open an Ada source file, place point[2] on a symbol and type "M-x ais-reference"[3] or just <F3> if you have the default key-bindings as defined in my ais-int.el. Emacs opens the file where the symbol is defined and sets point at the begin of the declaration or definition. Note that the project you are working on has not to be compiled for that function to work!

Location: open an Ada source file, place point on a symbol and type "M-x ais-location" or just <F4> if you have the default key-bindings. Emacs opens a compilation buffer with a list of references where you may place point on a reference and hit <RET> or use Mouse-2. If the directory of the reference is contained in compilation-search-path (see "Customization") then Emacs opens the file and jumps to the referred line. Otherwise Emacs opens a file-dialog on Windows or requests the file in the minibuffer.

Unused: open an Ada source file and type "M-x ais-unused" or hit the <F5> key if you have the default key-bindings. Since this function starts a usually longer running process a message in the mini buffer informs you that this process is running. Emacs is blocked during the run. Finally Emacs opens a compilation buffer with all found unused declarations and the usual compilation-buffer behavior.

Syntax: open an Ada source file and type "M-x ais-syntax" or hit the <F6> key if you have the default key-bindings. The behavior is like **Unused**.

Close: Type "M-x ais-close" or hit the <F7> key with the default key-bindings. The Ada Information Server is shut down.

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[2] In other editors terminology: "the cursor".

[3] Remember that in emacs notation "M-x ais-location" is typed as follows: Hold down the Meta-key which is normally the „Alt"-key and type „x". Then in the minibuffer type "ais-location" and hit the "Enter"-key.