

Using Geany as a Typst Editor

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ABSTRACT

The general consensus is that the official [Typst web app](#) and/or VSCode (VSCodium) plus the Tinymist extension offer the smoothest writing experience in Typst.¹ However, if you have a [local Typst installation](#), you may use other editors if you wish. One alternative is [vim with the Typst plugin](#). I will discuss another option in this tutorial: Geany in conjunction with the Typst CLI (Command-Line Interface).

Geany is a popular, versatile text editor and IDE (Integrated Development Environment) based on the GTK3 toolkit. Geany does not have native support for Typst files at the moment.² Nevertheless, the procedure described below offers a writing environment with less distractions; some users might find that appealing.

This method uses Geany along with the Typst CLI, and a separate PDF viewer (as the external Preview app), to edit your local Typst files. The preview is asynchronous, i.e., not simultaneous but after you make an edit in Geany and save your file, the PDF will auto-update.

If you make a syntax error in your Typst source file, the PDF will not compile. You can then check output in the Terminal (where the Typst CLI is running) for detailed error messages about the problem and how to fix it.

Prerequisites

- A local installation of Typst with its pre-built [binary](#). (You should download and install the most recent version, 0.15.1, released on July 17, 2026.) This [tutorial](#) explains how to install Typst locally on your PC, without needing to rely on cloud computing.
- Geany³
- A PDF viewer (such as Document Viewer [aka Xreader], Evince, Atril, etc.)

Tip:

This procedure was tested within Mint 22.3 (“Zena”) Cinnamon. However, it should work identically with the Xfce and MATE editions.

¹VSCodium with the Tinymist extension bundles everything you need, and it is updated frequently. It includes instant preview, monitors your source file for changes and a jump-to-location feature (which allows you to jump between the Typst source file and the corresponding location in the Preview pane).

²User [elextr](#) on GitHub [explained](#) that file types for new programming languages are not added to Geany by plugins; rather, they are built in. Although it is possible to customize a file type if an existing markup is “close enough” to the syntax, but for a markup language with its own syntax — like Typst — such customization is difficult and probably unlikely.

³I have been using ver. 2.0, installed via Mint’s Software Manager. A Flatpak version (2.1.0) is also available but I have not experimented with it.

Steps to Follow

- Generate a PDF file by opening your Typst source file in a Terminal, and issuing the command:

```
$ typst compile your-filename.typ
```

- Leave the Terminal open after the PDF is compiled.
- Open the Typst-generated PDF with your favorite PDF Viewer (Document Viewer, Evince, Atril).
- Leave the PDF Viewer open on your desktop.
- Open your Typst source file in Geany.

Optional: If you wish to add a bit of color syntax highlighting to the displayed source file, you can set the document's filetype to **Markdown source file**. The syntax highlighting is minimal compared to the detailed highlighting that you see in VSCode; however, it adds some welcome visual contrast to the Typst source file (*personal opinion*).

To do this, from the Document menu > choose Set Filetype > then select Markup Languages > and click the radio button beside Markdown source file.

- Go back to your open Terminal and issue the command:

```
$ typst watch your-filename.typ
```

You should see output similar to this:

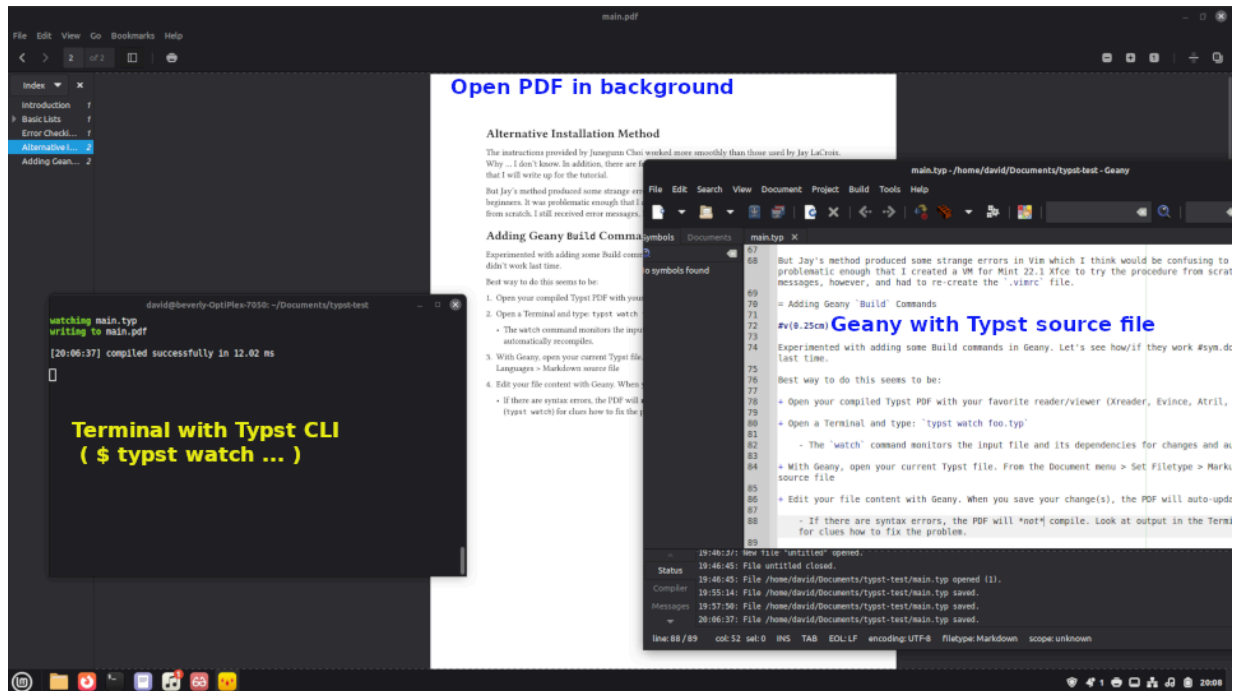
```
watching your-filename.typ
writing to your-filename.pdf

[18:55:54] compiled successfully in 5.59 ms
```

The watch command monitors the input file and its dependencies for changes and automatically recompiles to PDF.

- Continue to leave your Terminal open.
- When you make an edit in Geany and save your file, the PDF will auto-update.

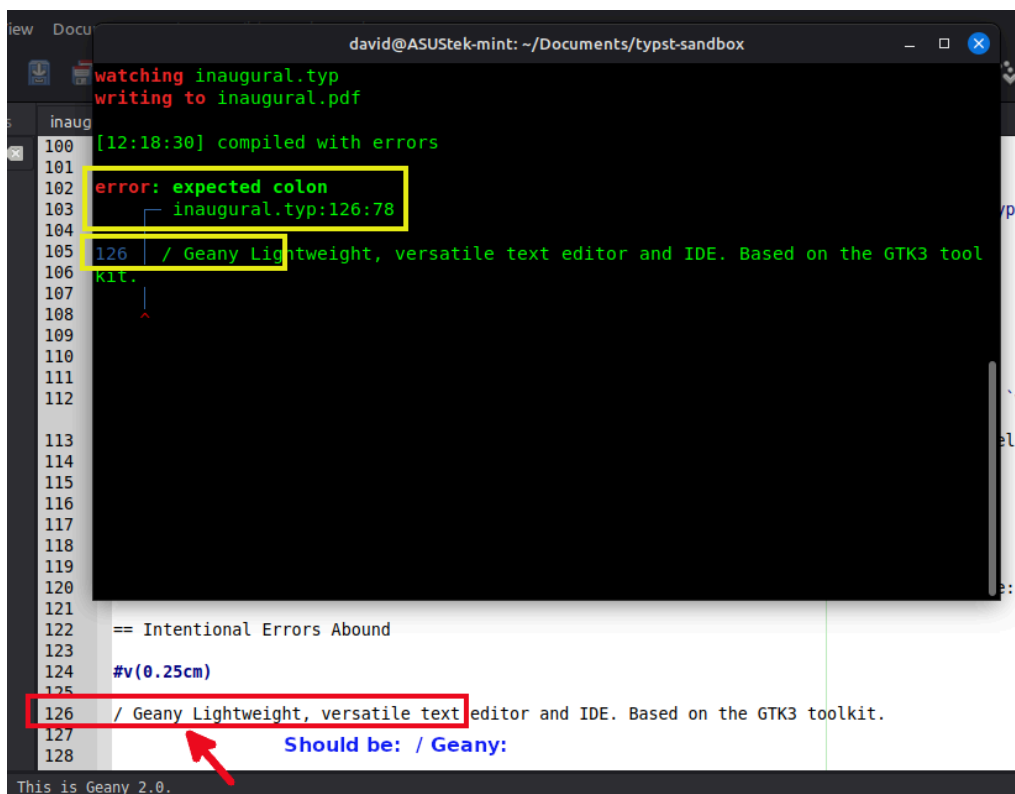
The screenshot below gives you an idea of how this arrangement looks. (To reduce clutter, you can minimize windows as needed.)



Dealing with Errors

If you make a syntax error in your Typst source file, the PDF will not compile. You can then check output in the Terminal (where the Typst CLI is running) for detailed error messages about the problem and how to fix it.

In the example below, I intentionally omitted the required colon in the term list. (It should be “ / Geany: “ rather than “ / Geany “). The Terminal output displays an error message “expected colon” as well as indicating the line number (126) of the error:



A more complicated example shows that error messages sometimes flag the precise location within a line. The `#set` command to change the text color to red should end with a semicolon in this instance: `#set text(fill:red);` with (instead of the incorrect `#set text(fill:red)with`).⁴ The Terminal output helpfully displays the location of the missing semicolon:

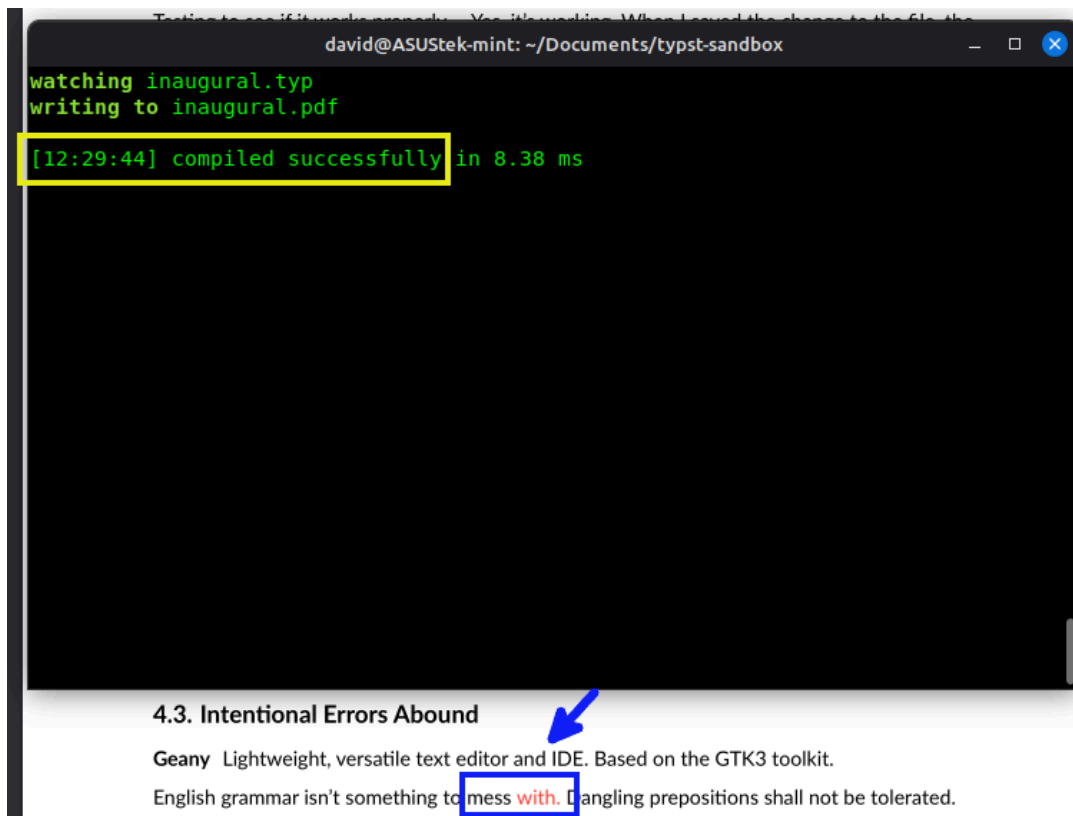
```

100 watching inaugural.typ
101 writing to inaugural.pdf
102 [12:27:05] compiled with errors
103 error: expected semicolon or line break
104   └─ inaugural.typ:128:59
105
106 128 English grammar isn't something to mess #set text(fill:red)with. #set text
107 (fill:black)Dangling prepositions shall not be tolerated.
108
109 error: expected semicolon or line break
110   └─ inaugural.typ:128:86
111
112 128 English grammar isn't something to mess #set text(fill:red)with. #set text
113 (fill:black)Dangling prepositions shall not be tolerated.
114
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122 == Intentional Errors Abound
123
124 #v(0.25cm)
125
126 / Geany: Lightweight, versatile text editor and IDE. Based on the GTK3 toolkit.
127
128 English grammar isn't something to mess #set text(fill:red)with #set text(fill:black)Danglin

```

Once you have corrected these two mistakes and saved your change, the Typst source file will compile successfully to PDF:

⁴Another `#set` command switches the text color back to black.



Conclusion

Although editing Typst files with Geany sounds cumbersome and lacks real-time preview, it works well. Some users may find it less distracting than working with VS Code/VSCodium.

This approach has the advantage that no external utilities — such as the Tinymist extension — are needed; in addition, people who feel intimidated by vi(m) may appreciate a user-friendly, GUI text editor such as Geany.