What is "Linting"?

Asked 9 years, 10 months ago   Active 11 days ago   Viewed 448k times

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PHPLint, **JSLint**, and I recently came across "you can lint your **JS** code on the fly" while reading something about some *IDE*.

So, what *is* "linting"?

🔖

188

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lint   gjslint

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edited Nov 10 '20 at 15:55

me meagar ♦
215k   39   309   321

asked Dec 14 '11 at 11:14

Ashkan Kh. Nazary
20.5k   13   41   62

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9   I've been hearing this term only since visual studio code became a thing. before it was just "intellisense"-like. Even though this term dates back from 1978 from wikipedia, it seems to me it's been popular only recently. – v.oddou Apr 11 '18 at 13:22 ✎

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7 Answers

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Linting is the process of running a program that will analyse code for potential errors.

See [lint](#) on wikipedia:

> lint was the name originally given to a particular program that flagged some suspicious and non-portable constructs (likely to be bugs) in C language source code. The term is now applied generically to tools that flag suspicious usage in software written in any computer language.

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edited Dec 14 '11 at 11:21

answered Dec 14 '11 at 11:16

Oded
469k   95   851   986

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165   Cite from [wikipedia](#) - *"The term was derived from the name of the **undesirable bits of fiber and fluff** found in sheep's wool."* – tan9 Jul 21 '16 at 5:39 ✎

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23   @HasanBaidoon - it just reports violations of a style policy, doesn't necessarily act on them on behalf of the user. – Oded Jun 15 '17 at 14:53

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1   Would stylecop be considered a linter? – Adam Plocher Aug 15 '17 at 13:13

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2   @Adam - usually a linter would also have the option to auto-fix issues it found. – Oded Aug 15 '17 at 13:48

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2   @tan9 probably the term lint derives first to the stuff in clothes drying machines' filters as I doubt many programmers have face-to-face experience with sheep – MichaelChirico May 9 '18 at 3:03

▲

208

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Lint was the name of a program that would go through your C code and identify problems before you compiled, linked, and ran it. It was a static checker, much like FindBugs today for Java.

Like Google, "lint" became a verb that meant static checking your source code.

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answered Dec 14 '11 at 11:17

duffymo
296k   41   354   548

▲

136

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Linting is the process of checking the source code for Programmatic as well as Stylistic errors. This is most helpful in identifying some common and uncommon mistakes that are made during coding.

A `Lint` or a `Linter` is a program that supports linting (verifying code quality). They are available for most languages like JavaScript, CSS, HTML, Python, etc..

Some of the useful linters are JSLint, CSSLint, JSHint, Pylint

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answered May 20 '15 at 3:15

VSri58
3,483   2   12   16

▲

62

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Apart from what others have mentioned, I would like to add that, Linting will run through your source code to find
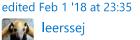
```
-   formatting discrepancy
-   non-adherence to coding standards and conventions
-   pinpointing possible logical errors in your program
```

Running a Lint program over your source code, helps to ensure that source code is legible, readable, less polluted and easier to maintain.

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edited Feb 1 '18 at 23:35
leerssej
11.5k   5   44   52

answered Sep 20 '16 at 10:01
Mangu Singh Rajpurohit
9,304   3   54   82

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29

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lint is a tool that is used to mark the source code with some suspicious and non-structural (may cause bug). It is a static code analysis tool in C at the beginning.Now it became the generic term used to describe the software analysis tool that mark the suspicious code.

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answered Aug 16 '13 at 12:45

Marcus Thornton
5,143   5   42   47

24

Interpreted languages like Python and JavaScript benefit greatly from linting, as these languages don't have a compiling phase to display errors before execution.

Linters are also useful for code formatting and/or adhering to language specific best practices.

Lately I have been using ESLint for JS/React and will occasionally use it with an airbnb-config file.

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answered Feb 13 '18 at 5:48

JSON C11
9,350   6   69   62

7

Linting is a process by a linter program that analyzes source code in a particular programming language and flag potential problems like syntax errors, deviations from a prescribed coding style or using constructs known to be unsafe.

For example, a JavaScript linter would flag the first use of parseInt below as unsafe:

```
// without a radix argument - Unsafe
var count = parseInt(countString);

// with a radix paremeter specified - Safe
var count = parseInt(countString, 10);
```

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answered Aug 25 '19 at 13:54

RajeshK
419   4   9

1   Example cases are always a good thing to read. – carloswm85 May 30 at 2:33

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