

# Introduction to Git and GitHub

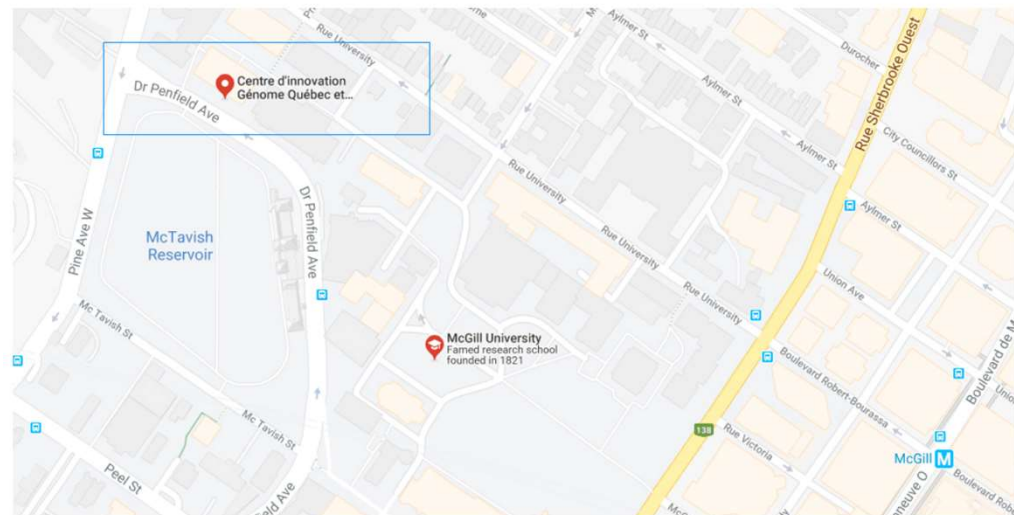
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Mission : aims to deliver inter-disciplinary research programs and empower the use of data in health research and health care delivery

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## Contact



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## **Outline for this workshop:**

1. Intro to Git and Version Control Systems
2. Basic Git functions
3. Advanced Git functions
4. Working with GitHub
5. Conclusions

## **Hands-on Activities:**

- Quick Review Polls
- Git/GitHub exercises

## **What you will need:**

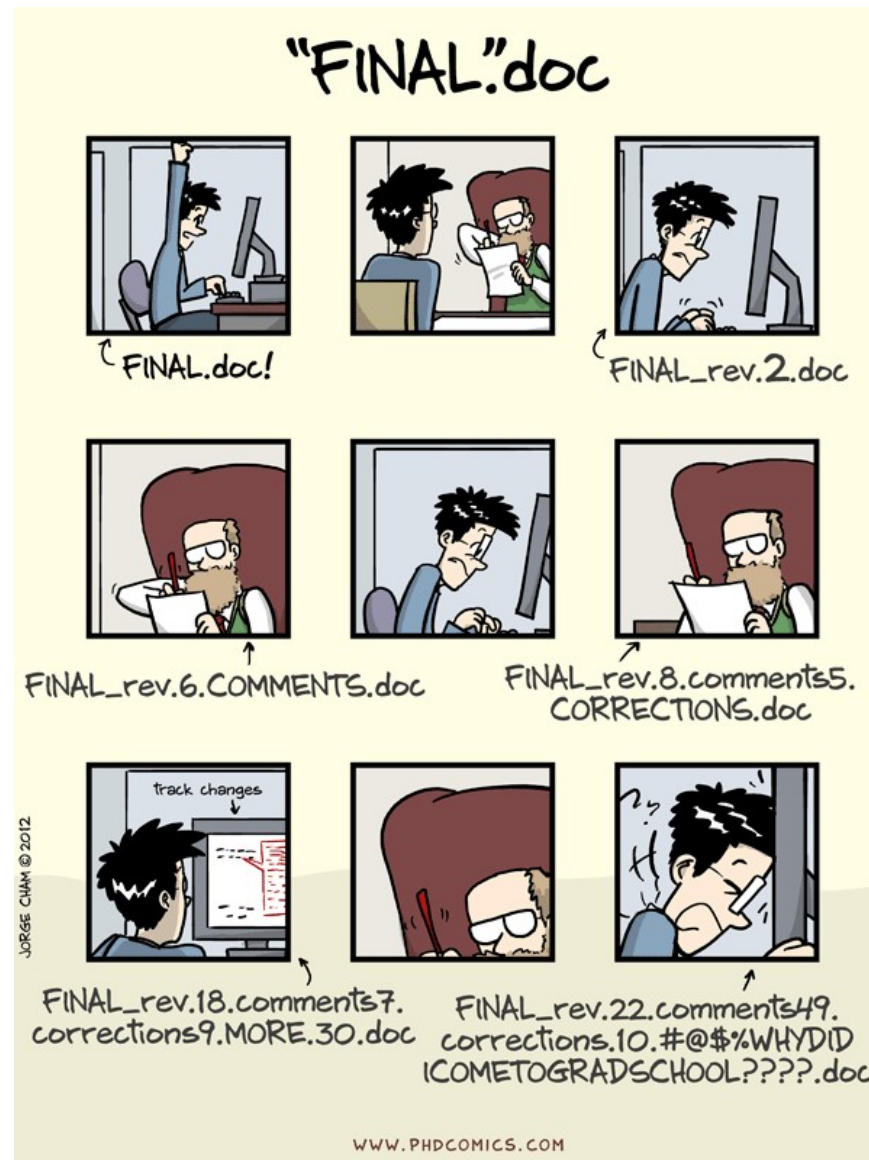
1. GitHub Desktop App
2. A Text editor

## What you WILL learn

- Basic theory and features behind Git and GitHub
- How to manage local and remote repositories

## What you will NOT learn

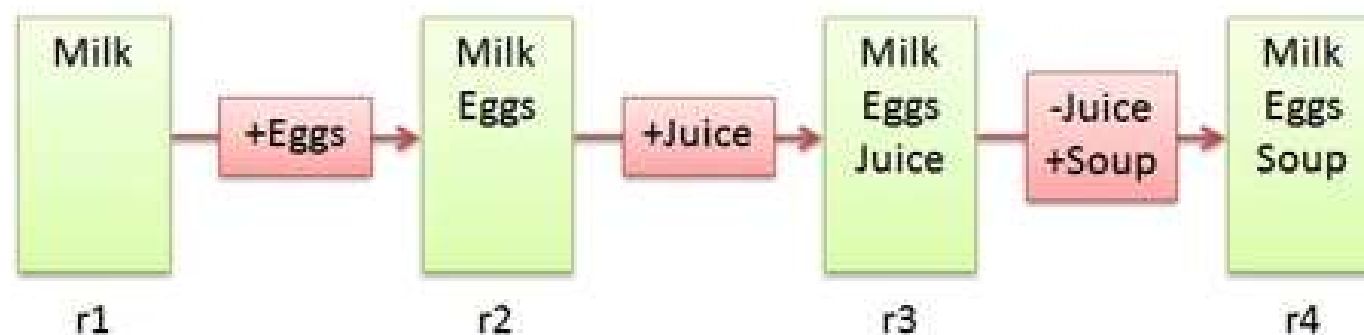
- How to code
- Data Analysis



## Version Control Systems

- Make it easier to document changes
- Less confusion
- Like an unlimited “undo” button

Groceries.txt



## Git

- A type of version control system
- Open-source
- Most popular VCS currently in use
- Creates a “Git Repository” which stores all the modified instances of your project





## What kind of files does Git track?

- Can track any file, but works best for **pure text files** (.txt,.R,.py etc.)
- Word documents, PowerPoint slides are in binary; Git has no support for displaying the changes occurring in these files
- Still useful for storing such files, just doesn't make the most of all of Git's features
- Markdown and LaTeX can be used instead of these binary files

## Git

vs.

## GitHub

- A version control system

- Works locally and remotely

- Is open-source

- A server that **hosts** Git repositories

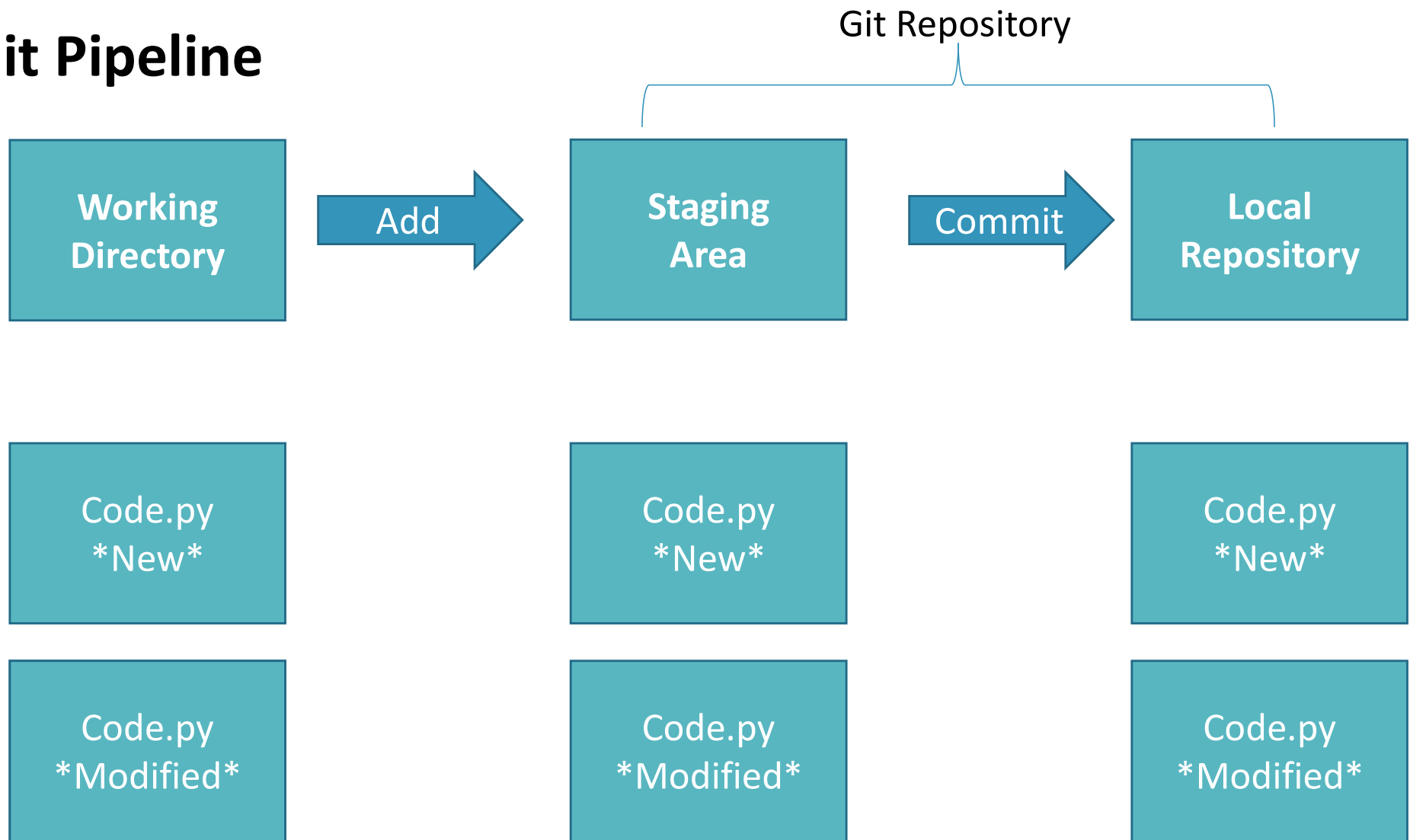
- Works solely as a cloud-based service

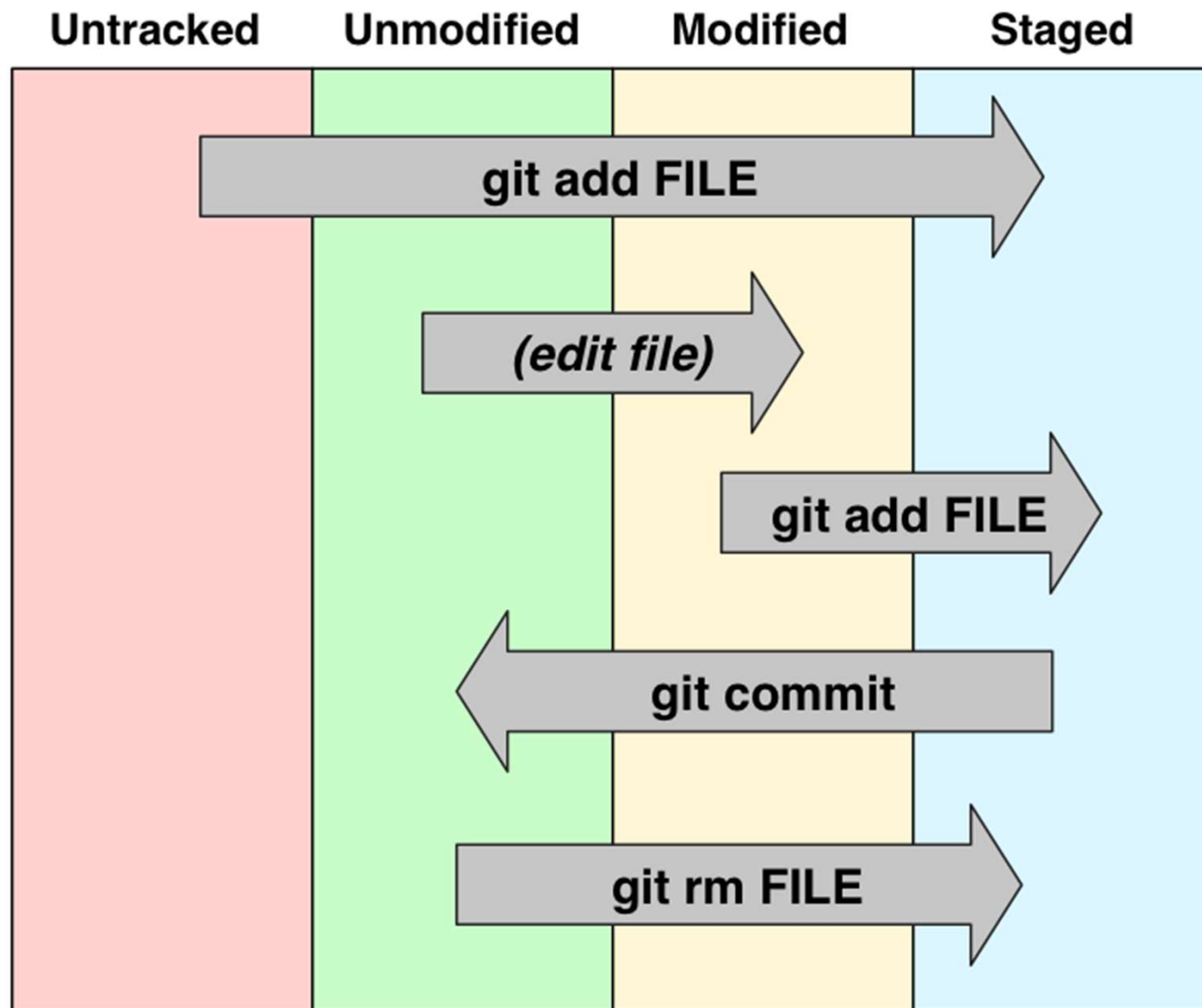
- Owned by Microsoft

# Working Directory $\neq$ Git Repository

- Working directory is your project folder
- Git Repository is a hidden file stored inside your working directory
- The Git Repository contains the **staging area** and your **commit history/local repository**

## Git Pipeline





## What is a commit?

- A commit is a saved instance of your project
- It has a **unique ID** and can be used to revert your project to a previous version
- Each commit keeps track of all modifications made since the previous commit

## Commit Messages

- Every commit **MUST** have an attached message/description
  - This helps others identify what changes have been made and why
- [filename added/changed ; what change ; why]

**BAD:**  
`git commit -m 'add user.rb'`

**GOOD:**  
`git commit -m 'create user model to  
store user session information'`

## Summary

- Untracked or modified files are first **added** to the **staging area**
- Changes that have been staged can then be **committed** to the **local repository**
- Commits can then be used to **revert** to previous instances of the project or simply to **keep track** of what changes have been made



## Poll #1

T/F – Both untracked and modified files must be **added** to the staging area

Where are pending changes kept prior to committing them?

T/F - GitHub is a type of VCS

# Part II – Basic Git Features

## Activity #0 – Initialize a Git Repository

## Activity #0 – Initialize a Git Repository

1. Create a new Git Repository (File → new repo OR “create a new repository on your hard drive”)
2. Open the generated project folder, what do you see?

## **Activity #1 – Create and track a Text File with Git**

## Activity #1 – Create and track a Text File with Git

1. Create a text file (or code script) in the project folder
2. Open the GitHub Desktop App and add + commit the file to track it.
3. Look at your commit history to see your commit!
4. Modify the file and commit the changes. Try and make informative commit messages!

## **Activity #2 – Revert a file to a previous commit**

## Activity #2 – Revert a file to a previous commit

1. Make an unwanted change to your file
2. Use your commit history to revert to the previous commit
3. Make another unwanted change and commit it
4. Now use your commit history to revert the commit!



## Poll #2

T/F – After initialisation, a project folder becomes a git repository

Where in the git repository is a modification stored after it is “added”?

Is it possible for two commits to have the same ID?

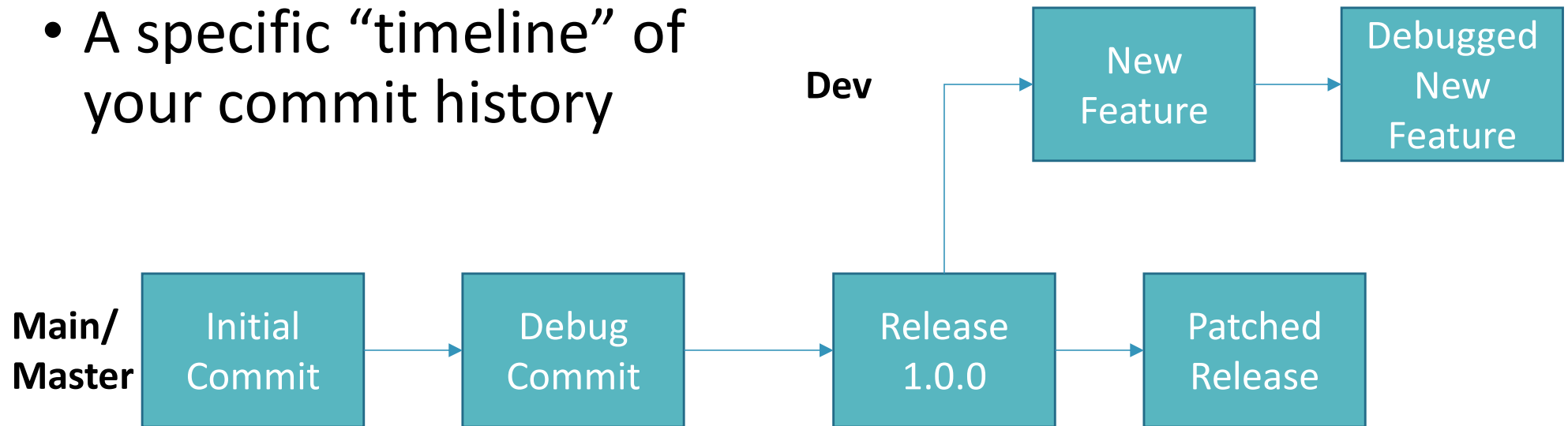
# Part III – Advanced Git Features

What if you want to test out a new feature without affecting your current version of the code?

- Branching

## What is a Branch?

- A specific “timeline” of your commit history



- Allows us to implement new features without harming viable releases

## **Activity #3 – Create a new branch**

## Activity #3 – Create a new branch

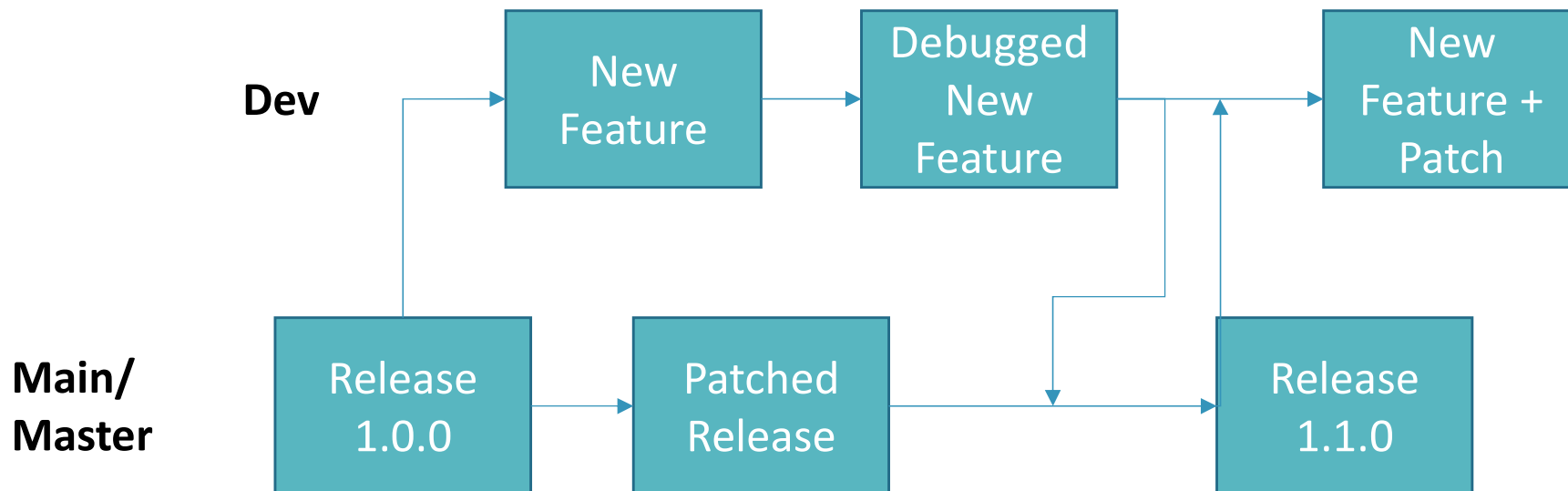
1. Click the “current branch” button and select “new branch”
2. Make changes to your file in the new branch and commit it
3. Switch back to the main branch and open the file, what do you notice?

Now that your test feature works, you might want to make it part of your official release

- Merge

## What is a Merge?

Action that will “merge”  
the commits from one  
branch into another





## Activity #4 – Merging Branches

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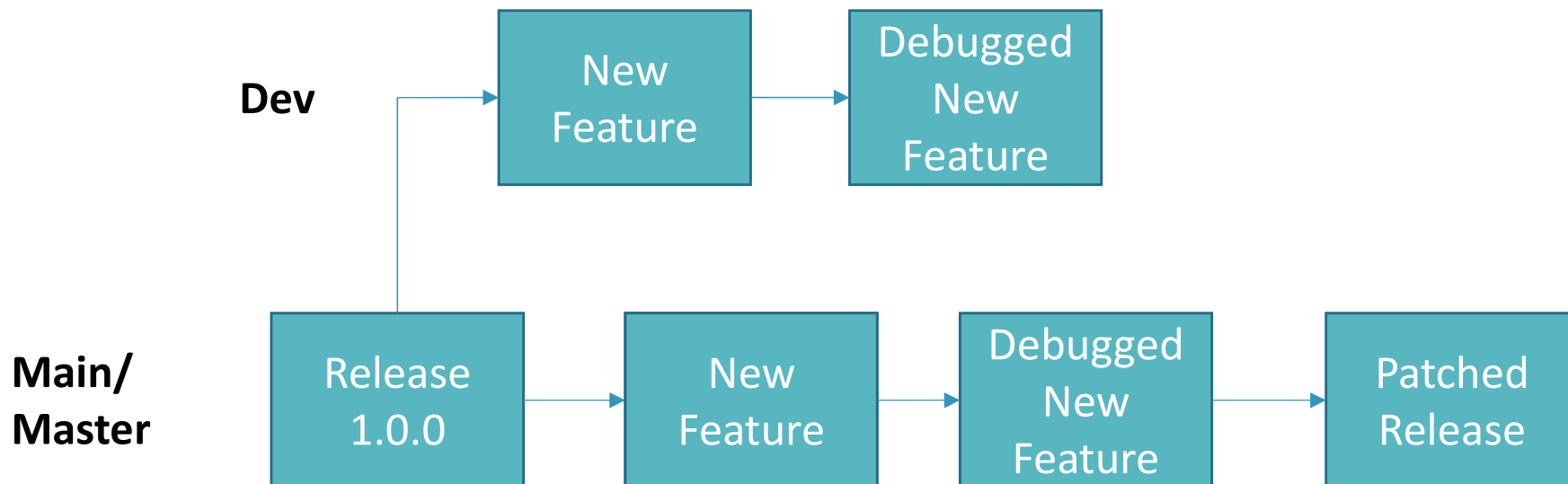
1. Switch to the main branch
2. Open the branch menu
3. Select the “choose a branch to merge into main” button and select your second branch.
4. Compare the branches again, the file should now be identical in both!

# Merging is not the only way to combine branches

- Rebasing

## Rebasing

Instead of merging the other branch's changes as a new commit, rebasing rewrites the target branch's commit history to add the commits directly



## Conflicts

If branches have competing commits, git will raise a **conflict** and not be able to merge/rebase

Can occur if:

- Both branches edit the same line
- Both added a file of the same name
- One branch edited a file, the other deleted it

## Activity #5 – Resolving Conflicts

## Activity #5 – Resolving Conflicts

1. In both branches, make a change on the **same line** and commit it
2. Try and merge your second branch into the main
3. When the merge conflict occurs, open the text file and resolve the issue
4. Try to merge again
5. Look at your commit history, how is your resolved merge shown in the commit?

## Summary

- Branches can be used to develop new features without affecting a previous, viable version of your code
- Merges or Rebases can be used to combine the commits of two different branches
- Conflicts prevent branches from being combined



## Poll #3

When could it be more useful to rebase a branch instead of merging?

T/F – Merging branches with changes in the same file will ALWAYS create a merge conflict

How could we prevent conflicts from occurring?

# Part IV – Hosting Projects on GitHub

# GitHub Interface

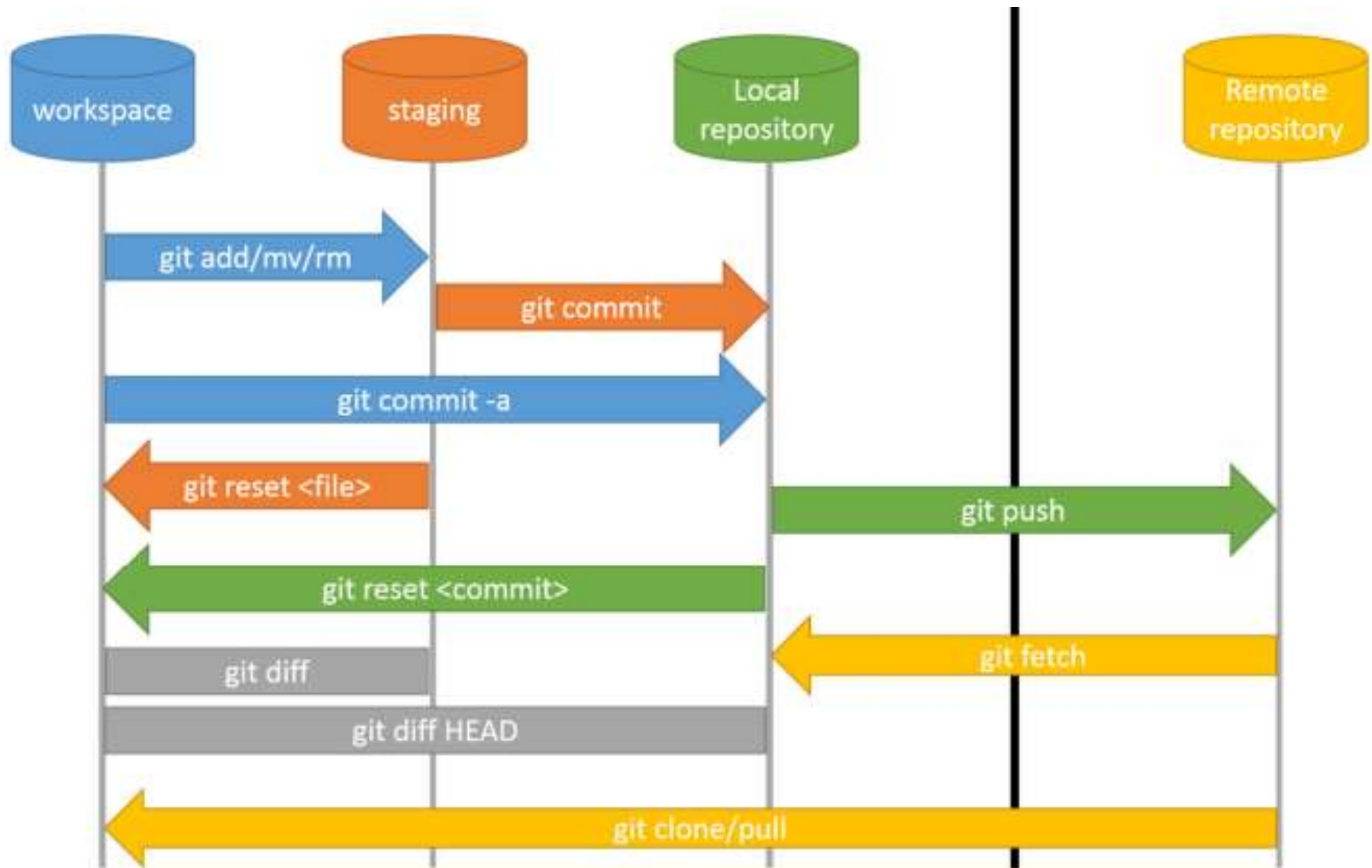
## Why use remote repositories like GitHub?

- Backup for your code
  - Can access the repository from anywhere
- Collaborations
  - Easy to keep track of changes made by you and collaborators
- Open Science
  - Easy to access, download and use others' code
  - Easy to discuss with **users** of your code

In case of fire



- 1. git commit
- 2. git push
- 3. leave building



## Pushing and Pulling

- **Push:** Updates your **remote** repository with recent commits from your **local** repository
- **Pull:** Updates your **local** repository with recent commits from your **remote repository**

## Activity #6 – Pushing commits to GitHub

## Activity #6 – Pushing commits to GitHub

1. Click the “Publish Repository” button
2. Now open your GitHub account in the browser and find your repository. See if your commit history is the same as in your local repo.



## Activity #7 – Pulling Commits from GitHub

## Activity #7 – Pulling Commits from GitHub

1. From the GitHub website, open your file and select the edit option
2. Make a change to the file and commit it.
3. Return to the desktop app and do Repository -> Pull
4. Look at your commit history and your file, what do you see?

## Create a local copy of a GitHub Repository

- “Cloning”
- Usually done to **use** published code
  - Reproduce results
  - Use code on a dataset of interest
- Creates a **direct link** to the original repository
  - Anything changes you **push** will affect the original repository
  - Any changes in the original repo can be **pulled** into your clone

## Activity #8 – Clone a Repository

- Find a GitHub repo that interests you and clone it!

## Activity #8 – Clone a Repository

1. Go to the GitHub website and search for a repo that interests you.
2. Copy the repo's URL
3. In the Desktop App, do File → Clone a repository and paste the URL.
4. Open the cloned repo and explore!

## Create a remote copy of a GitHub Repository

- “Fork”
- Usually used to **contribute** to published code
  - Can then edit the forked repository locally
  - Can then **push** local changes to your forked copy
  - When your changes are done, you can make a **pull request** to add your changes to the original repo
- Much safer way to contribute to source code

## **Activity #9 – Fork a Repo and make a Pull Request**

- Fork the repo I made for this course and add a text file to it. Then, make a pull request!

## **Activity #9 – Fork a Repo and make a Pull Request**

1. Open the link in chat to access the repo I made.
2. Click the “fork” button
3. Clone your forked copy to your computer and add a text file with one thing you have learned today. Commit the file.
4. Push the commit to your forked repo.
5. On the GitHub website. Look at your forked repo and select the “create Pull Request” button



## Poll #4

What command lets you update your remote repo with local changes?

T/F - Cloning a repository is the best way to contribute new features

T/F – You will always be able to push changes from a cloned repo to the original

What is the advantage of using a Pull Request prior to merging changes from a contributor?

# Part V – Conclusion

## What have we learned?

- What VCS, Git and GitHub are
- Why they are so useful
- How to undertake basic tasks in a local and remote repository
- How services like GitHub improve code collaboration and Open Science



## What next?

- Just use Git!
  - Track your hobby projects
  - Track your research
  - Use open-access code or software from publications
  - Consider trying Git on the command line

# Questions?

## Image Sources

<https://betterexplained.com/articles/a-visual-guide-to-version-control/>

<https://github.com/qw3rtman/git-fire>

<https://walkingrandomly.com/?p=6653>