

NetworKit Development Guide

NetworKit is an open-source toolkit for high-performance network analysis. This text is meant to provide some guidelines for the ongoing development of the project. It is meant for core developers, occasional contributors, and students working on the code.

The following text assumes some basic familiarity with the Mercurial version control software. It is not a Mercurial tutorial, because you will find a good one at hginit.com. Rather, it explains concepts and workflows for the development of this project.

Repositories

The NetworKit main repository is at <http://algorith.it.kit.edu/parco/NetworKit/NetworKit>. This repository has public read access and write access for selected developers.

algorith.it.kit.edu (an installation of [RhodeCode](#)) makes it easy to create and manage forks. Forking is distinct from branching and creates a new repository with a new address, its own access control etc. A fork contains all branches of its parent.

Branches

Currently, the two most important branches of NetworKit are **Dev** and **default**.

```
_____ Dev
_____/_____ default
```

As the name says, **default** is the branch which you are on if you do not switch. It is therefore the release branch, containing code which is ready for use. Unless you are a core developer preparing a release or fixing an urgent bug, you do not make changes to **default**.

Dev is the development branch and most of the development of new features happens in this branch. This is also where new releases are being prepared. When pushing into this branch, think about whether your code ready for the core development team to work with and will be suitable for a release in the foreseeable future.

It can be appropriate to create additional branches for projects, features, developer teams etc. Creation of branches should be coordinated with the core development team.

Tags

A tag is nothing more than a “symbolic name” for a revision. In NetworKit tags are used to mark release versions in the **default** branch, with a MAJOR.MINOR version name scheme.

Workflows

This section describes how to work with branches and forks in different scenarios.

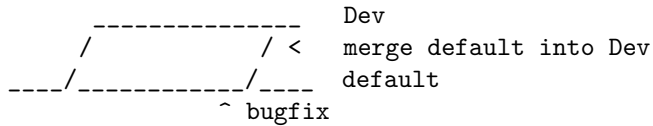
Using NetworKit

If you want to build and use NetworKit and do not plan to contribute changes, simply clone the repository. By default, you will be on the **default** branch, which represents the current release. Follow the setup instructions in the [Readme](#).

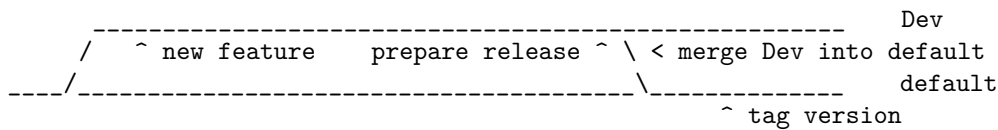
Core Development

This section describes workflows for the core development team.

Bugfixes Bugfixes are changes that should be immediately visible to users of NetworKit, such as solutions for urgent errors or improvements of the **Readme** document. In this case, make the changes in the **default** branch and commit. Then switch to the **Dev** branch and merge the **default** branch back into **Dev**.



Releasing New Features When new features should be released, the **Dev** branch is merged into the **default** branch. Additional testing and cleanup is performed before that happens. The new major or minor release is then tagged with a version number.



Contributions

Users of NetworKit are welcome to contribute their modifications. For incremental improvements we recommend working on the **Dev** branch. We recommend the following workflow:

1. create a fork of the main repository
2. commit your changes to the **Dev** branch
3. send a pull request to the main repository

Student Exercises

NetworKit is currently also used as a teaching tool. This section describes the workflow for student teams. Suppose course **Networks101**

1. Fork the main repository via algothub.iti.kit.edu and name the fork according to your team.
2. Make sure that the correct access rights for your team are set.
3. Switch to the appropriate branch for the course (e.g. **Networks101**) and **ONLY** work on this branch.
4. Work with the forked repository as you please. Coordinate with your team.
5. On completion of the exercise, send a pull request from your fork to the main repository.
6. The pull request is now under review. Watch for and react to comments from the reviewers.
7. Your exercise is complete when the pull request has been accepted.

We also ask student teams to adhere to the following conventions:

- With multiple teams working on the same exercise, append your team name to the class and file names as well as the names of unit tests to avoid naming clashes.
- If you plan to make modifications to existing parts of NetworKit, discuss them with the core developers first, e.g. by posting to the [e-mail list](#).
- Delete forked repositories when they are no longer needed.

Reviewing Student Exercises

1. Before the course starts, create an appropriate branch for the course (e.g. **Networks101**). Derive the branch from the **Dev** branch.
2. Receive pull requests from student teams via alghub.iti.kit.edu.
3. To review a pull request, pull from the forked repository of the student team. Switch to the course branch and review the changes.
4. You can use the comment section of the pull request to give feedback.
5. If the code is okay, change the status of the pull request to accepted.

Good contributions from the student exercises should be merged back into the **Dev** branch.

Student Projects

Students with long-term projects like Bachelor's or Master's theses should familiarize themselves with the guidelines and select a forking/branching model with their advisor.

Branching Cheat Sheet

- list all available branches: `hg branches`
- check on which branch you are: `hg branch`
- see heads (most recent commits) of all branches: `hg head`
- see tip (most recent commits) of the branch you are currently working on: `hg tip`
- switch to a specific branch: `hg update branchname`
- start a new branch: `hg branch branchname`
- merge `branchY` into `branchX`: `hg update branchX`, then `hg merge branchY`

Conventions

The following general conventions apply to all NetworKit developers.

Versioning

- Before you commit, make sure your code compiles and run the unit tests.
- Commit regularly and often to your local repository.
- Use meaningful commit messages.
- Get the newest changes from the repository regularly and merge them into your local repository.
- Make sure that you merged correctly and did not break other's work.
- Push correct code early if possible. Merging is easier if all developers are up to date.
- Never push code which breaks the build for others.
- Never push `--force` to the main repository.

Unit Tests

Every new feature must be covered by a unit test. Omitting unit tests makes it very likely that your feature will break silently as the project develops, leading to unnecessary work in tracing back the source of the error.

Unit tests for NetworKit are based on the [googletest](#) library. For more information read the [googletest primer](#).

- Each source folder contains `test` folder with `googletest` classes. Create the unit tests for each feature in the appropriate `test/*GTest` class by adding a `TEST_F` function.
- Prefix standard unit tests with `test` and experimental feature tests with `try`. A `test*` must pass when pushed to the main repository, a `try*` is allowed to fail.
- Keep the running time of test functions to the minimum needed for testing functionality. Testing should be fast, long-running unit tests look like infinite loops.
- If the unit test requires a data set, add the file to the `input/` folder. Only small data sets (a few kilobytes maximum) are acceptable in the repository.
- Any output files produced by unit tests must be written to the `output/` folder.

Code Style

- Read some code to get used to the code style and try to adopt it.
- Document classes, methods and attributes in Doxygen style.
- Use the `count` and `index` integer types for positive integer quantities and indices.
- In most cases, objects are passed by reference. New objects are stack-allocated and returned by value. Avoid pointers and `new` where possible.
- Use the `override` keyword to indicate that a method overrides a virtual method in the superclass.

Exposing C++ Code to Python

TODO - documentation coming soon

Contact

To discuss important changes to NetworKit, use the [e-mail list](#).

To suggest improvements to workflows and conventions, write to `christian.staudt @ kit.edu`.

Further Reading

- hginit.com
- [Working with named branches](#)
- [Managing releases and branchy development](#)