



# Planning and tracking work with GitHub

Childhood Cancer  
**Data**  **Lab**

x





# Objectives

- Describe some of the general benefits of an issue tracking system
- Review the features of GitHub issues, including issue templates
- Discuss what makes a “good” issue
- Illustrate how issue scope can have broader implications
- Briefly mention how we currently use GitHub issues to plan our work at the Data Lab

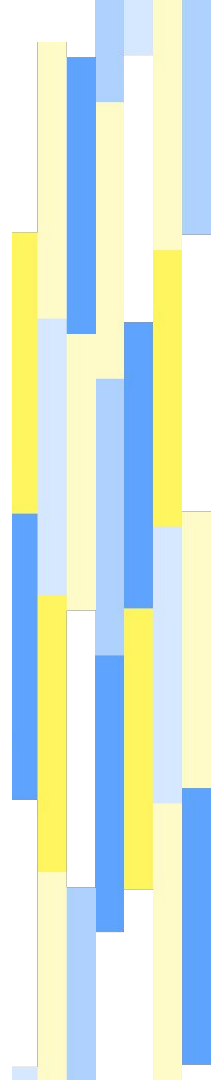


# How issue tracking helps

- Reduces the cognitive burden associated with tracking tasks in our head
- Allows us to have efficient conversations about how to tackle work
- Gives us the ability to surface known limitations that we don't intend to fix
- For scientific projects that are public or will be public eventually, there's the additional benefit of capturing scholarship that sometimes remains hidden



GitHub issues allow us  
to track issues  
alongside our code



# Tracking and planning work with GitHub #9

Edit New issue

🕒 Open jaclyn-taroni opened this issue last week · 1 comment



jaclyn-taroni commented last week

⋮

This issue tracks a lesson on tracking and planning work with GitHub. It will introduce GitHub issues and cover the following:

- What makes a "good" issue?
  - Small in scope
  - Contains enough context that someone else could conceivably carry out the work
  - It will eventually get assigned to someone
- Why are small issues good issues
  - Helps spread work across a team
  - May help avoid merge conflicts
  - Leads to pull requests that are more manageable to review
  - Small issues lead to small wins
- Using issue templates to help you write "good issues"
- A brief mention of sprint planning
  - ZenHub and GitHub Projects as tools that exist to help



## Assignees



jaclyn-taroni

## Labels



slides

## Projects



None yet

## Milestone



No milestone

## Development



[Create a branch](#) for this issue or link a pull request.

## Notifications

[Sign in now](#) to use Zenhub

🔕 Unsubscribe

Tracking and planning work with GitHub

Open jaclyn-taroni opened this issue last week · 1 comment

Allow us to write in GitHub-flavored Markdown

**jaclyn-taroni** commented last week

This issue tracks a lesson on tracking and planning work with GitHub. It will introduce GitHub issues and cover the following:

- What makes a "good" issue?
  - Small in scope
  - Contains enough context that someone else could conceivably carry out the work
  - It will eventually get assigned to someone
- Why are small issues good issues
  - Helps spread work across a team
  - May help avoid merge conflicts
  - Leads to pull requests that are more manageable to review
  - Small issues lead to small wins
- Using issue templates to help you write "good issues"
- A brief mention of sprint planning
  - ZenHub and GitHub Projects as tools that exist to help

Assignees

jaclyn-taroni

Labels

slides

Projects

None yet

Milestone

No milestone

Development

Create a branch for this issue or link a pull request.

Notifications

Sign in now to use Zenhub

Unsubscribe


Tracking and planning work with X

← → ↺ https://github.com/AlexsLemonade/2023-chop-training/issues/9

📄 ☆ 📧 ⬇️ 🖨️ 🔄 📱 📄 📅 🌈 🏠 ☰

# Tracking and planning work with GitHub #9

Open jaclyn-taroni opened this issue last week · 1 comment




jaclyn-taroni commented last week

This issue tracks a lesson on tracking and planning work with GitHub following:

- What makes a "good" issue?
  - Small in scope
  - Contains enough context that someone else could conceivably carry out the work
  - It will eventually get assigned to someone
- Why are small issues good issues
  - Helps spread work across a team
  - May help avoid merge conflicts
  - Leads to pull requests that are more manageable to review
  - Small issues lead to small wins
- Using issue templates to help you write "good issues"
- A brief mention of sprint planning
  - ZenHub and GitHub Projects as tools that exist to help

...

Assignees

 jaclyn-taroni

Labels

slides

Projects

None yet

Milestone

No milestone

Development

Create a branch for this issue or link a pull request.

Notifications

Sign in now to use Zenhub

Unsubscribe

Allow us to assign specific people to carry out a task

## Edit

- What makes a "good" issue?
  - Small in scope
  - Contains enough context to be understood
  - It will eventually get assigned to someone
- Why are small issues good issues?
  - Helps spread work across a team
  - May help avoid merge conflicts
  - Leads to pull requests that are more manageable to review
  - Small issues lead to small wins
- Using issue templates to help you write "good issues"
- A brief mention of sprint planning
  - ZenHub and GitHub Projects as tools that exist to help

## Allow us to organize issues with labels, milestones, and projects

 jaclyn-taroni

## Labels

slides

## Projects

None yet

### Milestone


No milestone

## Development

Create a branch for this issue or link a pull request.

## Notifications

[Sign in now](#) to use Zenhub

 Unsubscribe



Tracking and planning work with GitHub #9  
jaclyn-taroni opened this issue last week · 4 comments

Open

Write Preview

Leave a comment

Attach files by dragging & dropping, selecting or pasting them.

Close issue

Comment

Remember, contributions to this repository should follow its [code of conduct](#)

- ✓ **Close as completed**  
Done, closed, fixed, resolved
- Close as not planned**  
Won't fix, can't repro, duplicate, stale

Allow us to close issues as completed or as not planned

© 2023 GitHub, Inc. [Terms](#) [Privacy](#) [Security](#) [Status](#) [Docs](#) [Contact GitHub](#) [Pricing](#) [API](#) [Training](#) [Blog](#) [Ab](#) [Sign in now](#) to use Zenhub

Issues · AlexsLemonade/2023-c

https://github.com/AlexsLemonade/2023-chop-training/issues

AlexsLemonade / 2023-chop-training

Type to search

<> Code

Issues 17

Pull requests 2

Zenhub

Actions

Projects

Wiki

Security

Insights

Settings

Filters

is:issue is:open

Labels 11

Milestones 0

New issue

☐

17 Open

4 Closed

Author

Label

Projects

Milestones

Assignee

Sort

☐

Final version of schedule

#20 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

Initial review through getting code merged

live-demo slides

#17 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

How to leave pull request reviews (live demo)

live-demo

#16 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

On being a pull request reviewer (slides)

slides

#15 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

Strategies for more reasonable diffs (live demo with some slides)

live-demo slides

#14 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

2

☐

On being a pull request author (slides)

slides

#13 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

Facilitating review at a "systems level"

slides

#12 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

Sign in now to use Zenhub

Issues · AlexsLemonade/2023-c

← → ↻ https://github.com/AlexsLemonade/2023-chop-training/issues/assigned/jaclyn-taroni

AlexsLemonade / 2023-chop-training

Type to search

<> Code

Issues 17

Pull requests 2

Zenhub

Actions

Projects

Wiki

Security

Insights

Settings

Filters

is:open is:issue assignee:jaclyn-taroni

Labels 11

Milestones 0

New issue

Clear current search query, filters, and sorts

☐

8 Open

0 Closed

Author

Label

Projects

Milestones

Assignee

Sort

☐

On being a pull request reviewer (slides)

slides

#15 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

On being a pull request author (slides)

slides

#13 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

Facilitating review at a "systems level"

slides

#12 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

☐

Pull request responsibilities shared between authors and reviewers

slides

#11 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

2

☐

Analytical code review overview

slides

#10 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

2

☐

Tracking and planning work with GitHub

slides

#9 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni

Sign in now to use Zenhub

Issues · AlexsLemonade/2023-chop-training

https://github.com/AlexsLemonade/2023-chop-training/issues?q=is%3Aopen+is%3Aissue+label%3Alive-demo

AlexsLemonade / 2023-chop-training

Type to search

<> Code Issues 17 Pull requests 2 Zenhub Actions Projects Wiki Security Insights Settings

Filters is:open is:issue label:live-demo Labels 11 Milestones 0 New issue

Clear current search query, filters, and sorts

<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Open ✓ 0 Closed	Author	Label	Projects	Milestones	Assignee	Sort
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Initial review through getting code merged</b> live-demo slides #17 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>How to leave pull request reviews (live demo)</b> live-demo #16 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Strategies for more reasonable diffs (live demo with some slides)</b> live-demo slides #14 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni						2
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Working with branches in Git</b> live-demo slides #5 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Git basics</b> live-demo slides #4 opened last week by jaclyn-taroni						1

ProTip! Add no:assignee to see everything that's not assigned.

Sign in now to use Zenhub

sjspielman requested your review on this pull request.

Add your review

## Performing code review instructor notes #30

Edit

<> Code ▾



sjspielman wants to merge 2 commits into [main](#) from [sjspielman/pr-review-instructor-notes](#) 📄

💬 Conversation 0 🔗 Commits 2 📄 Checks 0 📄 Files changed 1 +27 -0 █████



sjspielman commented 14 minutes ago

This PR adds instructor notes towards [#16](#), which entails leaving PR reviews as a live demo; this PR might actually be enough to close that issue, since we have [AlexsLemonade/2023-chop-training-demo#5](#) tracking next steps.

I drew on the ideas sketched out in [AlexsLemonade/2023-chop-training-demo#5](#) to create these instructor notes, divvying up types of comments in different places one can leave comments.

Questions for reviewers:

- Are there other pull request views or features that I should mention here?
- I don't expect we'll have enough time to *iterate* in review; as in, author would respond to reviews and then reviewer would come back for round 2. But, I could write a section in the instructor notes for this, with a big "second half of demo time pending!" if we want to allow for that potential.



🔗 instructor notes for performing code review

Verified

90422c4

### Reviewers



[jaclyn-taroni](#)

At least 1 approving review is required to merge this pull request.

Still in progress? [Convert to draft](#)

### Assignees

None yet—assign yourself

### Labels

None yet

### Projects

None yet

[Sign in now](#) to use Zenhub



## GitHub allows us to create multiple issue templates for a repository

We can create Markdown files with some features:

- Structure we find useful (e.g., a checklist or set of headers)
- A YAML header indicating things like labels and prefixes for the title





refinebio-examples/.github/ISSUE\_TEMPLATE

← → ↺ https://github.com/AlexsLemonade/refinebio-examples/tree/staging/.github

🔍 Type to search

+ - ⌚ 🔗 📧 👤

<> Code 33 Issues Pull requests 1 Zenhub Discussions Actions Projects Wiki Security Insights Settings

📁 staging refinebio-examples / .github / ISSUE\_TEMPLATE / 📄

🔍 Go to file t Add file ...

👤 jaclyn-taroni Add a template for user reports or questions (#450) 33cdeff · 2 years ago 🕒 History

Name	Last commit message	Last commit date
📁 ..		
📄 new-analysis.md	Add some issue templates (#319)	3 years ago
📄 other-issue.md	Add a template for user reports or questions (#450)	2 years ago
📄 report-a-problem-or-ask-a-question.md	Add a template for user reports or questions (#450)	2 years ago

Customize the issue creation experience with a config.yml file. [Learn more about configuring a template chooser.](#)

Sign in now to use Zenhub



---

name: New analysis example  
about: Use this issue template for filing a new analysis issue  
title: 'New Analysis Example:'  
labels: new analysis example  
assignees: ''

---

### What are the goals of this new example analysis?

<!-- What should this new example show that's not currently shown in the existing samples -->  
<!-- What was the background and context that lead to this new example? -->  
<!-- Links to github comments or related issues are also helpful -->

### What kind of dataset will this need?

<!-- Is there a particular species, sample size, experimental model, etc. that's needed -->

### What steps should be included in this analysis?

<!-- An outline of what steps should probably be taken would be nice if possible -->

### What packages/methods do you recommend using or looking into for this analysis?

<!-- Do you have helpful references and resources we should consult for creating this example? -->



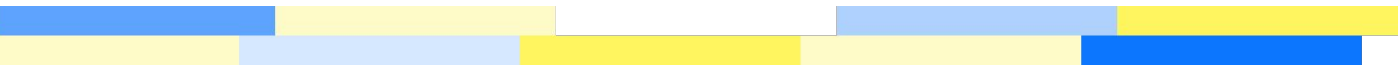
# Milestones and projects allow you to further organize your issues

Milestones let you track groups of issues or pull requests and assign a due date. Milestones also let you view the completion percentage and find open and closed issues quickly ([GitHub docs](#)).

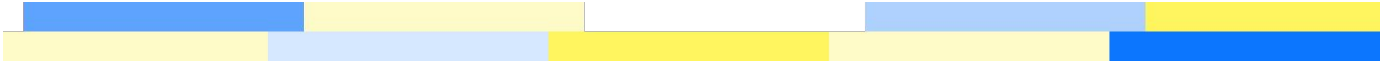
Projects can organize issues as a table, spreadsheet, or task-board and let you represent complex relationships between issues with tasklists ([GitHub docs](#)).

We don't use these at the Data Lab; we use something called [ZenHub](#) instead because it allows us to group issues in sprints and represent dependencies between issues (the latter is supposedly coming to GitHub projects in the future!).





What makes a “good” issue?



# What makes a “good” issue?

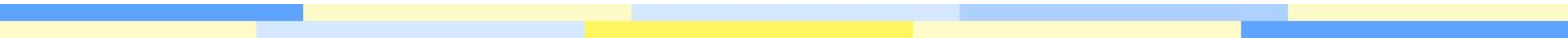


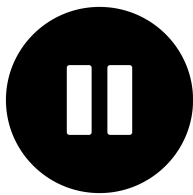
- Title and labels are informative about the contents of the issue “**at a glance.**”
- Contains enough **context** for someone onboarding to the project or returning to the project after some time to be assigned to contribute to the discussion.
- Communicates **any gotchas** or known unknowns.
- Records ideas about **how to accomplish the task** if the person filing the issue has them.
- Communicates the **requirements for satisfying or closing the issue.**

# A good issue is focused



Roughly, the smallest unit of work something could be broken down into to result in a single, functional pull request that is manageable for review.





# Some caveats

- Sometimes the author of an issue (or the person that initially comes up with an idea) can't fully flesh out the issue, either because of a time constraint or because some research is required.
  - We often file issues like that prefixed with `[PLACEHOLDER]` or `[WIP]` internally.
- Sometimes you need to have a discussion before work can begin. Filing an issue can facilitate an asynchronous discussion and helps make decisions transparent.
  - We often label these with a `discussion` label internally.



Why are focused issues good issues?



# Focused issues set us up for **focused pull requests**

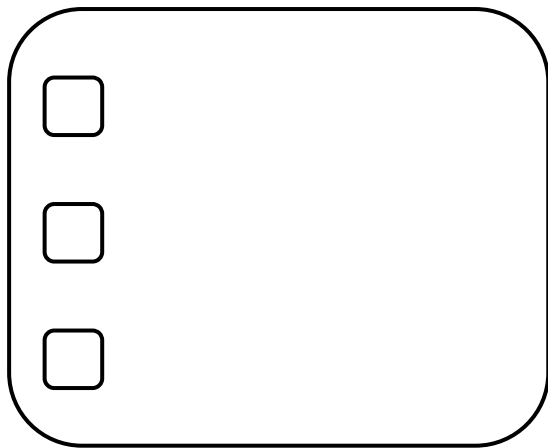


A focused pull request is a more timely and thoroughly reviewed pull request.

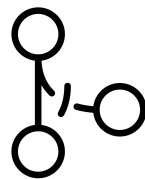


# Focused issues allow us to **spread work across the team**

Without duplicating efforts. But that means you need to always assign yourself if you're working on something.



# Focused issues might help us **avoid merge conflicts**



If you're combining focused issues with other practices – like planning work as a team and making sure PR branches aren't long-lived – you can assign issues in a manner that minimizes the chances that people will be touching the same parts of the codebase.

But that means you have to stick to what's on the issue!

# Focused issues help our team achieve **small wins**



Hitting the closed as completed button feels great!

Focused issues let us see the meaningful progress we are making, which can boost the way we feel.

[Amabile and Kramer. \*The Power of Small Wins\*.](#)



# Using issues for planning as a team





# Quick tips from Data Lab practices

The Data Lab teams plan their work (i.e., pick issues to tackle) in two week chunks (“sprints”). Here are some things that we’ve learned.

Make sure you **use assignments** on issues. Bonus points if you have an idea of who will review ahead of time! Review is part of everyone’s workload.

You can also fall into a pattern where more folks are reviewing an individual pull request than are necessary and gum up the works that way. Planning ahead could help avoid that, too.



# Quick tips from Data Lab practices

The Data Lab teams plan their work (i.e., pick issues to tackle) in two week chunks (“sprints”). Here are some things that we’ve learned.

It can be tempting to – or sometimes necessary to – work on issues that weren’t originally planned during a set time period.

If everything you do will need to be reviewed, unplanned issues creeping in can cause more than one person’s workload to balloon unexpectedly.



# Quick tips from Data Lab practices

The Data Lab teams plan their work (i.e., pick issues to tackle) in two week chunks (“sprints”). Here are some things that we’ve learned.

We now have a meeting set up where we nominate issues for technical design discussions. Sometimes an issue isn’t enough and having a synchronous discussion upfront will save both the author and reviewer time.

*Folks might end up doubling back and redoing work if there isn’t agreement on approach upfront!*