Git in real life

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CRC-TR 211 - Software Development Center

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Outline of the talk

- 1 Rewriting history
- 2 Git rebase
- 3 Git tag
- 4 Semantic versioning
- 5 Git-flow
- 6 Summary and outlook

Rewriting history

A very sharp knife!

About rewriting history

Yes, you can change the history of a repository!



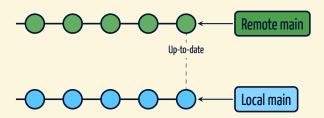
- Very bad if there are different copies of the history {E.g. branches, remote(s)}
- If you rewrite shared history,
 - it is generally hard to make the same change elsewhere and
 - merging (and hence pull/push) can lead to duplicated commits in history
- Fine as long as
 - yours is the only clone containing the rewritten history or
 - o you work on a git project alone and you know what to do then
 - o your **branch** is internal to the team and you inform people about rewriting

About rewriting history

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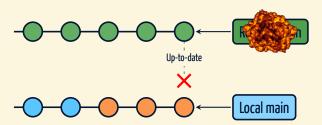


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 - merging (and hence pull/push) can lead to duplicated commits in history



As soon as you rewrite history contained elsewhere, you are in troubles!

Changing the last commit (message)

■ How can I fix a typo in the **last** commit message?

This procedure will change history!

Changing the last commit (message)

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This procedure will change history!

```
$ git commit -m "Added engine implementation"
[airplane f8b0c25] Added engine implementation
24 files changed, 1340 insertions(+), 476 deletions(-)
# Ops! I used a verb in past form, Internation
# With clean staging area:
$ git commit --amend -m "Add engine implementation"
[airplane 33f53f4] Add engine implementation
Date: Fri Nov 25 08:02:22 2022 +0100
24 files changed, 1340 insertions(+), 476 deletions(-)
```

Changing the last commit (content)

I forgot some changes in the **last** commit! And now?

This procedure will change history!

```
$ git commit -m "Review take-off system"
[airplane e1df32a] Review take-off system
1 file changed, 230 insertions(+), 61 deletions(-)
# Ops! I forgot a file!
```

Changing the last commit (content)

I forgot some changes in the last commit! And now?

This procedure will change history!

```
$ git commit -m "Review take-off system"
[airplane e1df32a] Review take-off system
1 file changed, 230 insertions(+), 61 deletions(-)
# Ops! I forgot a file!

$ git add wheels_electronic.h
$ git commit --amend --no-edit
[airplane c13e34f] Review take-off system
Date: Fri Nov 25 08:45:18 2022 +0100
2 files changed, 345 insertions(+), 88 deletions(-)
```

Changing the last commit (content)

I forgot some changes in the **last** commit! And now?

This procedure will change history!

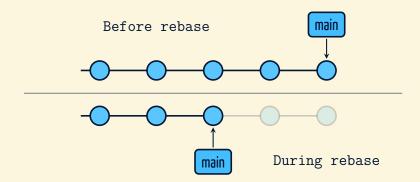
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$ git commit -m "Review take-off system"
[airplane e1df32a] Review take-off system
1 file changed, 230 insertions(+), 61 deletions(-)
# Ops! I forgot a file!

$ git add wheels_electronic.h
$ git commit --amend -C HEAD # use original commit timestamp
[airplane c13e34f] Review take-off system
Date: Fri Nov 25 08:33:01 2022 +0100
2 files changed, 345 insertions(+), 88 deletions(-)
```

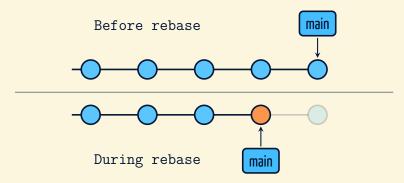
Git rebase



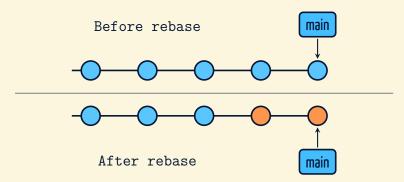
■ Go back in history till a given point



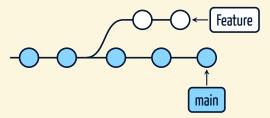
- Go back in history till a given point

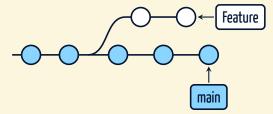


- Go back in history till a given point

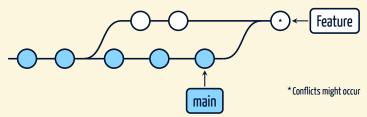


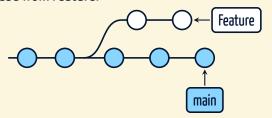
Three way merge from Feature:



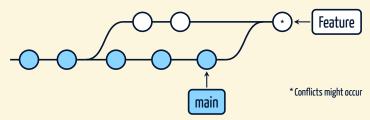


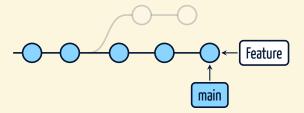
Three way merge from Feature:



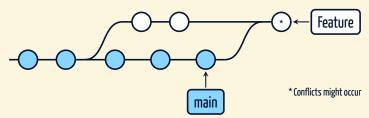


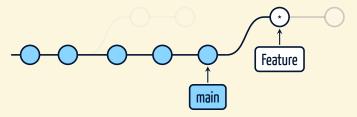
Three way merge from Feature:



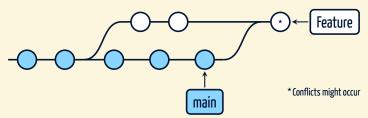


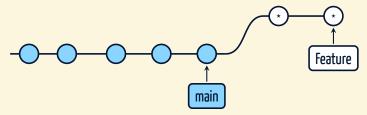
Three way merge from Feature:





Three way merge from Feature:





Git rebase in its (almost) full glory

```
rebase [-i] [--onto <newbase>] [<upstream> [<branch>]]

-i Set up the rebase interactively

<newbase> Where to apply the chosen commit

→ by default <upstream>

<upstream> Base history for the rebase to choose commits

<branch> The branch from which the rebase is done
```

Conflicts might occur

- Resolve them as usual and git-add the files
- 2 Run git rebase --continue

Git rebase in its (almost) full glory

```
rebase [-i] [--onto <newbase>] [<upstream> [<branch>]]

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Conflicts might occur

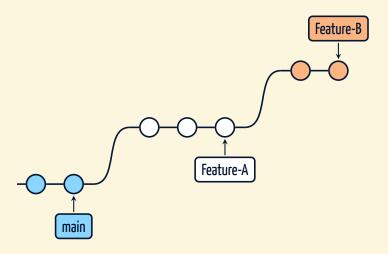
- Run git rebase --skip to ignore commit
- Run git rebase --abort to end rebase

Git rebase in its (almost) full glory

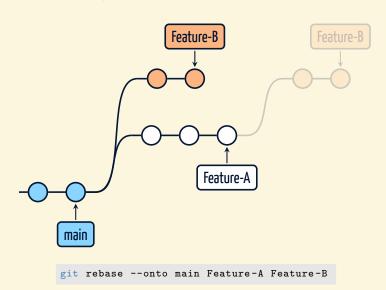
```
git rebase [-i] [--onto <newbase>] [<upstream> [<branch>]]
```

- If <branch> is specified, git will switch to it
- Commits in the current branch but that are not in <upstream> are saved to a temporary area
 - \hookrightarrow Use git log <upstream>..HEAD to see these commits
- The current branch is reset to <upstream>
 - → or <newbase> if the --onto option was supplied
- The previously saved commits are then reapplied to the current branch, one by one, in order → conflicts might occur!
 - → already existing commits are by default omitted

Another example



Another example



Back to rebasing instead of merging

Useful to keep history clean in repository

If working **alone** on a branch

- Get your work done
- git rebase main [your-branch]
- Then git merge main will be up-to-date
- Switch to main and do a trivial merge

Interactive rebase

- It allows to act on commits while re-applying them
- It offers further possibilities to tidy up work

```
$ git log --oneline -n 4
e499d89 Deploy engine turbo
                                     # This should be rephrased
f8b0c25 Improve flaps of wings
dfb705b Make some wheels maintenance # Here we forgot a file
a0a3f28 Work on cockpit instruments
```

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$ git log --oneline -n 4
e499d89 Deploy engine turbo
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a0a3f28 Work on cockpit instruments
$ git add wheel_test.cpp
$ git commit -m "This commit message does not matter"
[airplane 364ff12] This commit message does not matter
Date: Mon Nov 28 11:57:01 2022 +0100
1 files changed, 546 insertions(+), 810 deletions(-)
```

```
$ git log --oneline -n 4
e499d89 Deploy engine turbo  # This should be rephrased
f8b0c25 Improve flaps of wings
dfb705b Make some wheels maintenance # Here we forgot a file
a0a3f28 Work on cockpit instruments

$ git add wheel_test.cpp
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[airplane 364ff12] This commit message does not matter
Date: Mon Nov 28 11:57:01 2022 +0100
1 files changed, 546 insertions(+), 810 deletions(-)
$ git rebase -i HEAD~5 # --> Edit, save, exit from editor
```

pick a0a3f28 Work on cockpit instruments #1 pick dfb705b Make some wheels maintenance #2 pick f8b0c25 Improve flaps of wings #3 pick e499d89 Deploy engine turbo #4 pick 364ff12 This commit message does not matter #5 # Rebase 9fdb3bd..e499d89 onto 9fdb3bd # Commands: # p. pick <commit> = use commit # r, reword <commit> = use commit, but edit the commit message # e, edit <commit> = use commit, but stop for amending # s. squash <commit> = use commit. but meld into previous commit # f, fixup [-C | -c] <commit> = like "squash" but keep only the previous commit's log message, unless -C is used, in which case keep only this commit's message; -c is same as -C but opens the editor # x, exec <command> = run command (the rest of the line) using shell # b, break = stop here (continue rebase later with 'git rebase --continue') # d. drop <commit> = remove commit # 1, label <label> = label current HEAD with a name # t, reset <label> = reset HEAD to a label # m, merge [-C <commit> | -c <commit>] <label> [# <oneline>] create a merge commit using the original merge commit's message (or the oneline, if no original merge commit was specified): use -c <commit> to reword the commit message # These lines can be re-ordered; they are executed from top to bottom. # [...]

```
pick a0a3f28 Work on cockpit instruments
                                                                    #1
pick dfb705b Make some wheels maintenance
                                                                    #2
fixup 364ff12 This commit message does not matter
                                                                    #5
pick f8b0c25 Improve flaps of wings
                                                                    #3
edit e499d89 Deploy engine turbo
                                                                    #4
# Rebase 9fdb3bd..e499d89 onto 9fdb3bd
# Commands:
# p. pick <commit> = use commit
# r, reword <commit> = use commit, but edit the commit message
# e, edit <commit> = use commit, but stop for amending
# s. squash <commit> = use commit. but meld into previous commit
# f, fixup [-C | -c] <commit> = like "squash" but keep only the previous
                    commit's log message, unless -C is used, in which case
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                    opens the editor
# x, exec <command> = run command (the rest of the line) using shell
# b, break = stop here (continue rebase later with 'git rebase --continue')
# d. drop <commit> = remove commit
# 1, label <label> = label current HEAD with a name
# t, reset <label> = reset HEAD to a label
# m, merge [-C <commit> | -c <commit>] <label> [# <oneline>]
         create a merge commit using the original merge commit's
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# [...]
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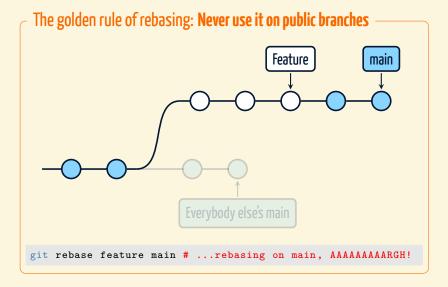
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Date: Mon Nov 28 11:57:01 2022 +0100
1 files changed, 546 insertions(+), 810 deletions(-)
$ git rebase -i HEAD~5 # --> Edit, save, exit from editor
# When asked for, rephrase commit as wished
Successfully rebased and updated refs/heads/airplane.
```

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1 files changed, 546 insertions(+), 810 deletions(-)
$ git rebase -i HEAD~5 # --> Edit, save, exit from editor
# When asked for, rephrase commit as wished
Successfully rebased and updated refs/heads/airplane.
$ git log --oneline -n 4
51a4b9b Deploy engine turbo and new pipes
afc765a Improve flaps of wings
                                       History changed!
9927a77 Make some wheels maintenance
a0a3f28 Work on cockpit instruments
```

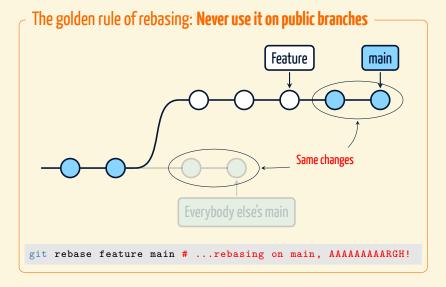
Coming back to changing public history

The golden rule of rebasing: **Never use it on public branches** Feature

Coming back to changing public history



Coming back to changing public history



Git tag

Lightweight tags

They simply are a name for an object (often a commit) and they are usually meant for private or temporary use

```
$ git tag v1.0
$ git tag
v1.0
$ git show v1.0
commit aa879f463acd41fc38c7e96090cc1eea279304df
Author: Alessandro Sciarra <sciarra@itp.uni-frankfurt.de>
Date: Wed Aug 16 14:01:08 2025 +0200

Coffee machine production ready
# Commit differences
```

Lightweight tags

They simply are a name for an object (often a commit) and they are usually meant for private or temporary use

Annotated tags

Tag objects contain a creation date, the tagger name and e-mail, a tagging message, and an optional GnuPG signature

```
$ git tag -a v1.0 -m\
      "Coffee machine software ready for production"
$ git show v1.0
tag v1.0
Tagger: Alessandro Sciarra <sciarra@itp.uni-frankfurt.de>
Date: Wed Aug 17 09:12:24 2025 +0200
Coffee machine software ready for production
commit aa879f463acd41fc38c7e96090cc1eea279304df
Author: Alessandro Sciarra <sciarra@itp.uni-frankfurt.de>
Date: Wed Aug 16 14:01:08 2025 +0200
Coffee machine production ready
# Commit differences
```

Prefer annotated tags for releases!

Lightweight tags

They simply are a name for an object (often a commit) and they are usually meant for private or temporary use

Annotated tags

Tag objects contain a creation date, the tagger name and e-mail, a tagging message, and an optional GnuPG signature

Tags as commits are by default local

Use git push --tags to push them

Tagging a code: Let's speak about the **same** code!

A milestone in development

A tag in the git history is to some extent a commitment, but it is also a statement of invaluable help about the codebase!

Why should I?

- The codebase is released
- The codebase will be released
- The codebase is private but shared with colleagues
- The codebase will be (maybe) inherited
- The software is used to produce data

Semantic versioning

```
[Prefix]X[.Y[.Z]]
```

According to the Semantic Versioning , increase

MAJOR version X when you make incompatible API changes

MINOR version Y when you add functionality in a backwards-compatible manner

PATCH version Z when you make backwards-compatible bug fixes

[Prefix]X[.Y[.Z]]

According to the Semantic Versioning , increase

MAJOR version X when you make incompatible API changes

 ${\color{red} {\sf MINOR}}\ version\ {\color{gray}{\bf Y}}\ when\ you\ {\color{gray}{\bf add}}\ functionality\ in\ {\color{gray}{\bf a}}\ backwards\text{-}compatible\ manner$

PATCH version Z when you make backwards-compatible bug fixes

Choose your alternative, but give yourself a rule, e.g. increase

MAJOR version X when you introduce new big features

MINOR version Y when you add minor functionality or do big refactoring

PATCH version Z when you make bug fixes (without large changes)

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MAJOR version X when you introduce new features
MINOR version Y when you do big refactoring or fix bugs

[Prefix]X[.Y[.Z]]

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Choose your alternative, but give yourself a rule, e.g. increase

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MINOR version Y when you add minor functionality or do big refactoring

PATCH version Z when you make bug fixes (without large changes)

MAJOR version X when you introduce new features
MINOR version Y when you do big refactoring or fix bugs

However you do it, use a CHANGELOG file to list user-relevant changes!

Ideally

```
$ git tag -n
 v2.0.0 Coffee machine ready for milk drinks
                                                    Major
 v1.3.1
          Fix milk temperature problem
                                                    Patch
 v1.3.0 Interface milk system with machine
                                                    Minor
 v1.2.0 Add foam generator
                                                    Minor
 v1.1.0 Add milk container
                                                    Minor
 v1.0.0 Coffee machine production ready
                                                    Major
 v0.7.1 Fix pipe failures
                                                    Patch
 v0.7.0
          Interface all components
                                                    Minor
 v0.6.0
          Add coffee grounds container
                                                    Minor
 v0.5.0 Add water tray
                                                    Minor
 v0.4.0 Add water tank
                                                    Minor
 v0.3.0 Add bean container
                                                    Minor
 v0.2.0
          Add brew system and core engine
                                                    Minor
 v0.1.0
          Deploy coffee machine skeleton
                                                    Minor
```

- Clear evolution of the codebase for everybody
- v1.0 usually refers to the first production-ready version

Summary so far







5 Git-flow

- Motivation and background
- The main branches
- Feature branches
- Release branches
- Hotfix branches
- Git-flow: an additional tool

Disclaimer and references

Vincent Driessen back in 2010

In the following I will give you a summary of his blog page.
All credit goes to the author and no original part is here contained.

Vincent Driessen as 🕠 nvie

The original author also implemented a collection of git extensions which allow to easily use his branching model (active till 2012).

Alternative implementations

```
AVH Edition:  gitflow-avh (archived in June 2023)

CJS Edition:  gitflow-cjs (still active, but rarely)
```

Motivation

	COMMENT	DATE	
Q	CREATED MAIN LOOP & TIMING CONTROL	14 HOURS AGO	
ø	ENABLED CONFIG FILE PARSING	9 HOURS AGO	
φ	MISC BUGFIXES	5 HOURS AGO	
φ	CODE ADDITIONS/EDITS	4 HOURS AGO	
Q.	MORE CODE	4 HOURS AGO	
19	HERE HAVE CODE	4 HOURS AGO	
ΙIφ	ARAAAAA	3 HOURS AGO	
6	ADKFJ5LKDFJ5DKLFJ	3 HOURS AGO	
φ.	MY HANDS ARE TYPING WORDS	2 HOURS AGO	
φ	HAAAAAAAANDS	2 HOURS AGO	
AS A PROJECT DRAGS ON, MY GIT COMMIT			
MESSAGES GET LESS AND LESS INFORMATIVE.			

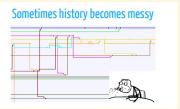
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Q.	MORE CODE	4 HOURS AGO
ÌÒ	HERE HAVE CODE.	4 HOURS AGO
9	ARAAAAA	3 HOURS AGO
Q.	ADKFJ5LKDFJ5DKLFJ	3 HOURS AGO
φ	MY HANDS ARE TYPING WORDS	2 HOURS AGO
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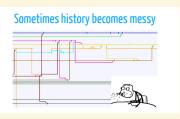
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https://image.slidesharecdn.com/[...]

Motivation



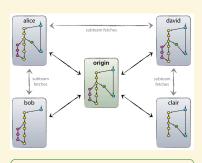


https://www.xkcd.com/1296/

- https://image.slidesharecdn.com/[...]
- Ordered and standardized way to daily work
- Easy way to keep big projects history and development tidied up
- Sustainable work in team also for new members
- In larger projects, easy interaction within and between sub-teams
- A way to go for released software

Background

- Central repository (e.g. GitHub)
- Developers pull/push from/to origin
- Sub-team fetches lead to high work efficiency
- It might be useful to work together with two or more developers on a big new feature, before pushing the work in progress to origin prematurely.
- Never forget origin is public!



Technically, this means nothing more than that, for example, Alice has defined a Git remote, named **bob**, pointing to Bob's repository, and vice versa.

The main and develop branches

origin/main

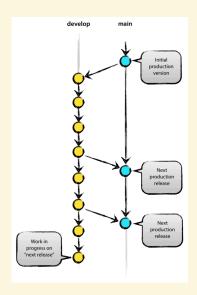
The source code of HEAD always reflects a production-ready state

origin/develop

The source code of HEAD always reflects a state with the latest delivered development changes for the next release

Each time when changes are merged back into main, this is a new production release by definition

→ hooks for enforced policies!

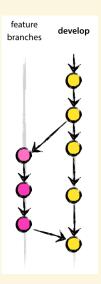


The feature branches

Properties

- May branch off from: develop
- Must merge back into: develop
- Any name except:
 main, develop
 release-*, hotfix-*

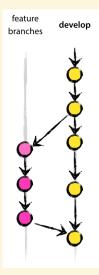
Feature branches typically exist in developer repository only, not in origin.



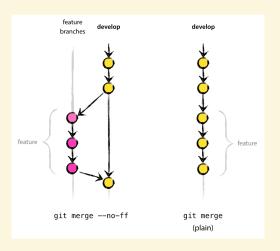
The feature branches

How it looks like:

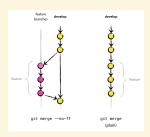
```
$ git switch -c myfeature develop
Switched to a new branch "myfeature"
# Some development, commits, etc.
$ git switch develop
Switched to branch 'develop'
$ git pull origin develop
Already up-to-date.
$ git merge --no-ff myfeature
Updating ea1b82a..05e9557
(Summary of changes)
$ git branch -d myfeature
Deleted branch myfeature (was 05e9557).
$ git push origin develop
[...]
```



Why to avoid a fast-forward merge?



Why to avoid a fast-forward merge?



- No information lost about the historical existence of a feature
- Easy to see in history which commits have implemented a feature
- Easy to revert a whole feature (i.e. a group of commits)
- It will create (empty) commit objects
 - → the gain is much bigger than the cost!

The release branches





The release branches



Make you feel like

Preperties:

May branch off from:

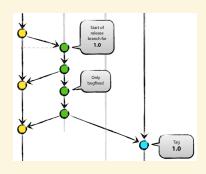
develop

• Must merge back into:

develop, main

• Branch naming convention:

release-*



The release branches



Release branches support preparation of a new production release

Make you feel like

- Last-minute checks, minor bug fixes and preparing meta-data (version number, etc.) should be done on a release branch
- By doing all of this work on a release branch, the develop branch is cleared to receive features for the following release
- When a new release branch is created, all features that are targeted for this release must be merged into the develop branch

The release branch: How it works

Creation

```
Version 1.1.5 is the current production release
We are ready for "next release" -> NOW we decide v1.2
$ git switch -c release-1.2 develop
Switched to a new branch "release-1.2"
$ ./bump-version.sh 1.2 #Just modify some files
Files modified successfully, version bumped to 1.2.
$ git commit -a -m "Bump version number to 1.2"
[release-1.2 74d9424] Bumped version number to 1.2
1 files changed, 1 insertions(+), 1 deletions(-)
```

Adding new features here is **strictly prohibited!**

The idea is to just make sure everything works and is ready to be published!

The release branch: How it works

Creation

```
$ git switch -c release-1.2 develop
$ ./bump-version.sh 1.2 #Just modify some files
$ git commit -a -m "Bump version number to 1.2"
```

Finalisation

```
$ git switch main
Switched to branch 'main'
$ git merge --no-ff release-1.2
Merge made by recursive. (Summary of changes)
$ git tag -a v1.2
$ git switch develop
Switched to branch 'develop'
$ git merge --no-ff release-1.2 #Maybe conflicts!
Merge made by recursive. (Summary of changes)
$ git branch -d release-1.2
Deleted branch release-1.2 (was ff452fe).
```

The hotfix branch

The hotfix branch

A hotfix is not something bad!



...and, after all, never forget Murphy's law!

The hotfix branch

Properties:

• May branch off from:

main

• Must merge back into:

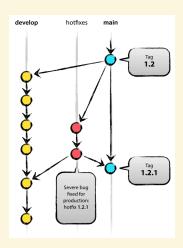
develop, main

• Branch naming convention:

hotfix-*

Main advantage

The essence is that work on the develop branch can continue, while a quick production fix is prepared



The hotfix branch: How it works

Creation

```
$ git switch -c hotfix-1.2.1 main
Switched to a new branch "hotfix-1.2.1"
$ ./bump-version.sh 1.2.1 #Just modify some files
Files modified successfully, version bumped to 1.2.1.
$ git commit -a -m "Bump version number to 1.2.1"
[hotfix-1.2.1 41e61bb] Bump version number to 1.2.1
1 files changed, 1 insertions(+), 1 deletions(-)
# Some work to fix the situation
$ git commit -m "Fix severe production problem"
[hotfix-1.2.1 abbe5d6] Fix severe production problem
5 files changed, 32 insertions(+), 17 deletions(-)
```

The hotfix branch: How it works

Creation

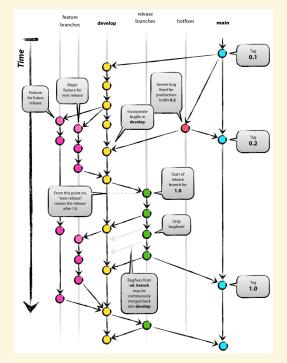
```
$ git switch -c hotfix-1.2.1 main
$ ./bump-version.sh 1.2.1 #Just modify some files
$ git commit -a -m "Bump version number to 1.2.1"
# Some work to fix the situation
$ git commit -m "Fix severe production problem"
```

Finalisation

```
$ git switch main
Switched to branch 'main'
$ git merge --no-ff hotfix-1.2.1
Merge made by recursive. (Summary of changes)
$ git tag -a v1.2.1
$ git switch develop
Switched to branch 'develop'
$ git merge --no-ff hotfix-1.2.1
Merge made by recursive. (Summary of changes)
$ git branch -d hotfix-1.2.1
Deleted branch hotfix-1.2.1 (was abbe5d6).
```

Summary







But, wait, everything by hand?!

Git-flow: How to easily apply what we learnt

Pick a set of high-level repository operations





nvie or better gitflow-avh gitflow-cjs



Git-flow: How to easily apply what we learnt

Pick a set of high-level repository operations

nvie or better gitflow-avh gitflow-cjs

The base syntax

 $\,\rightarrow\,$ Standard raw git commands can be used as usual, too

```
# To initialize a new repository, use:
git flow init [-d]
# To list/start/finish auxiliary branches, use:
git flow <type>
git flow <type> start <name> [<base>]
git flow <type> finish <name>
# To push/pull an auxiliary branch to the remote, use:
git flow <type> publish <name>
git flow <type> publish <name>
git flow <type> publish <name>
sit flow <type> publish <name>
mane>
sit flow <type> publish <name>
must flow <type> publish <name>
sit flow <type> publish <name>
```

Git-flow: How to easily apply what we learnt

Pick a set of high-level repository operations

nvie or better gitflow-avh gitflow-cjs

Take-home message

If you have a released software or plan to have one, Git-flow branching model can help you to bring your product to another level!

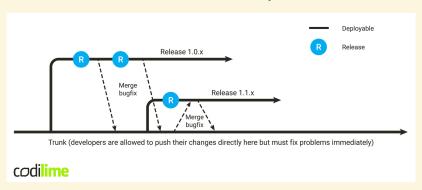
Think about it

Even if you use a (slightly) different branching model, it might well be that available git extensions still partially fit your use case

I heard Git-flow is obsolete, is it?

No, it is not!

Trunk-based development



In the last years this alternative approach has become popular

No, it is not!

When does trunk-based development work best?

When you need to iterate quickly When you work mostly with senior developers

When does Git-flow work best?

When you have a lot of junior developers
When you have an established product
When you run an open-source project

In academia

Development is rather slow and in small teams

Summary and outlook

What did we left out in this git trilogy?

git mv Move or rename a file, a directory, or a symlink {pretty trivial} git rm Remove files from the working tree and from the index {pretty trivial} git restore Restore working tree files {we mentioned it already} git reset Reset current HEAD to the specified state git blame Find out who modified each line in each file git revert Create new commits to undo existing ones git bisect Use binary search to find the commit that introduced a bug git grep Print lines matching a pattern git [...] Some more technical commands

What did we left out in this git trilogy?

```
git mv
                Move or rename a file, a directory, or a symlink {pretty trivial}
     git rm
                Remove files from the working tree and from the index {pretty trivial}
git restore
                Restore working tree files {we mentioned it already}
  git reset
                Reset current HEAD to the specified state
 git blame
                Find out who modified each line in each file
 git revert
                Create new commits to undo existing ones
 git bisect
                Use binary search to find the commit that introduced a bug
  git grep
                Print lines matching a pattern
   git [...]
                Some more technical commands
```

Go for it!

Read your favourite source, you'll be able to understand it alone!

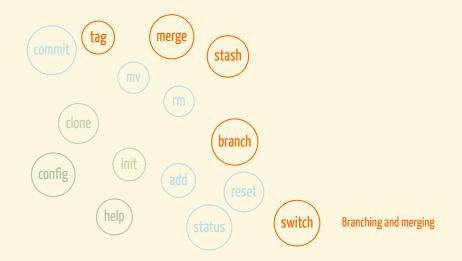
Setup and Config



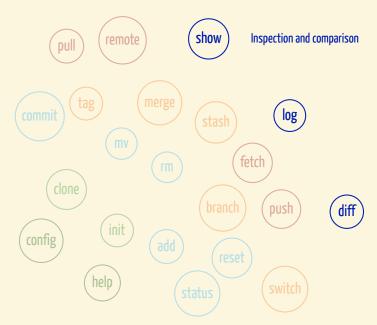
help

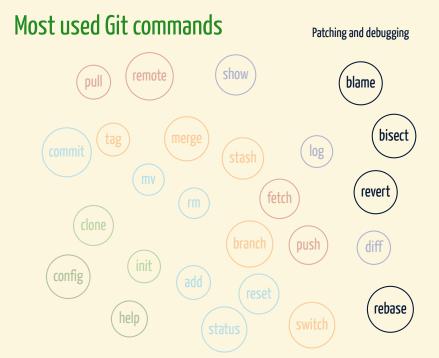




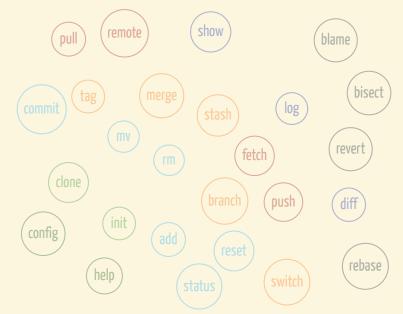
















Thanks for listening and remember

In case of fire:

- git switch -c dfjaskjdsgk
- git commit -am 'fvfsdavg'
- git push
- Exit the building



Not sure whether I need an alias for that...

Questions? Feedback?