

Where the world builds software



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Why technical writers should use GitHub to host their portfolios?

A portfolio is a requirement for all technical writers. It doesn't matter if you're new to technical writing or a grizzled Rambo with experience dating back to dial-up. You *need* a portfolio to showcase your work and land that job!

The internet offers a number of reliable solutions, from a simple Dropbox or Google Drive link to a more elaborate personal website or blog. Whatever portfolio solution you choose, it's important to understand that a portfolio platform *can* be much more than just a space to showcase a collection of static work samples.

GitHub

GitHub's association with software development doesn't mean it's a tool exclusive only to developers and code writers. A GitHub repository can be used to store virtually any kind of data, and this includes your writing, which isn't too dissimilar from code – think lines of text. Testament to GitHub's flexibility, someone used it to write a [novel](#), and another used it to write an [instruction manual](#).

GitHub goes beyond *just* the provision of space to display your portfolio. Here are five intangible benefits on offer at GitHub that you won't easily find elsewhere:

- ***It shows you're tech-savvy***

As a technical writer, it makes not only good sense to choose a technical platform such as GitHub, but also a savvy one too. Now having a GitHub account doesn't make you Steve Wozniack, but it does infer that you associate yourself with that niche of professional and that you're also comfortable with tech.

- ***Your toolbox***

Given the requirements of different projects you work on, you'll have the opportunity to display proficiency across a range of document types and technical writing tools. This is a great way to show recruiters and hiring managers how flexible and adaptable you are. You can be the proverbial "Swiss-Army knife" of technical writing - multifaceted.

- ***Open-source access***

GitHub is a door to the world of open source. If you're new to technical writing then your first challenge is to figure out how to fill an empty portfolio with content you have confidence in. One way to overcome this obstacle is to contribute to open-source projects. GitHub gives you the access and opportunity to gain that much-needed experience. Or, if you're an experienced technical writer it's a great way to develop your network and actively participate in the community.

- ***GitHub's network***

A GitHub profile provides access to the work processes of each of its members. As GitHub's membership base is vast, this feature provides unprecedented access to developments all across the spectrum of software innovation and design.

- ***Communication skills***

You can demonstrate your communication and collaboration skills. Visitors to your profile can gain insight into your thought processes by reviewing a project's comment narrative. This is a great way to demonstrate professionalism and show that you're an effective team player.

Choosing GitHub as the home for your technical writing portfolio is a great option and a lot more than just a place to display your writing samples.

Get a free GitHub account [here](#).



Create your GitHub profile README

Your public profile README is the place to share relevant personal information with the GitHub community. You can use it to express things of general interest and fun or you can use it to introduce yourself, it's entirely up to you, it's your profile.

The following tutorial will take you through the steps to create a README for your GitHub public profile. If you don't already have a GitHub account, use this [link](#) to create one.

01. Go to your GitHub profile.
02. Click on the upper-right “+” drop-down menu, and select “New repository.” See Figure 01.

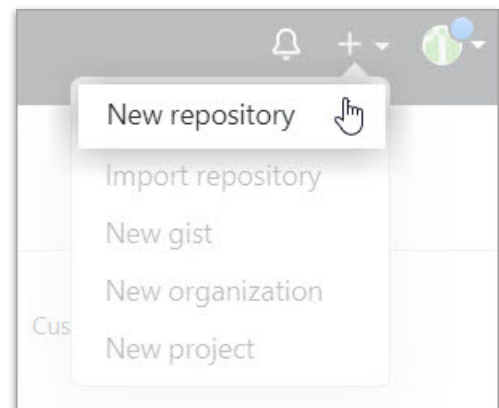


Figure 01

03. Ensure the “Owner” and “Repository name” is the same. This creates a *special* repository used to house the README. See Figure 02.

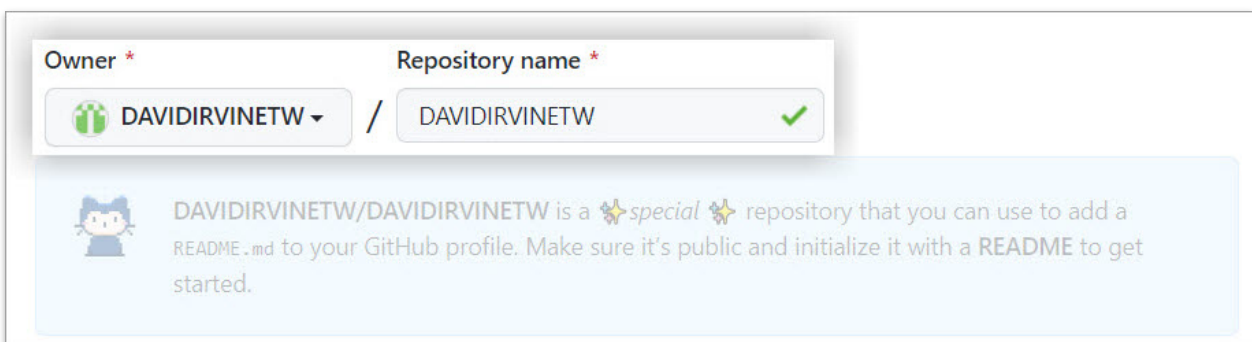
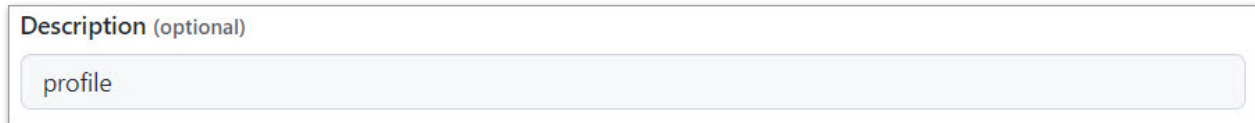


Figure 02

04. Describe the new repository (optional). See Figure 03.

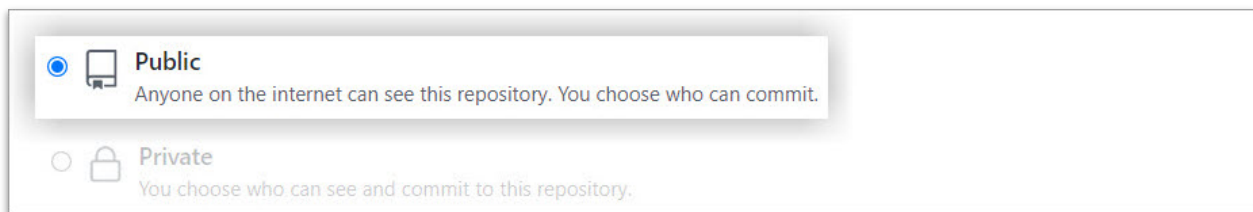
A screenshot of a web form for creating a repository. It features a label "Description (optional)" in a light gray box. Below the label is a text input field containing the word "profile".


Description (optional)

profile

Figure 03

05. Select public. See Figure 04.

A screenshot of a web form showing two radio button options for repository visibility. The "Public" option is selected, indicated by a blue dot. The "Private" option is unselected, indicated by a gray dot. Each option has a lock icon and a brief description.

☒  **Public**
Anyone on the internet can see this repository. You choose who can commit.


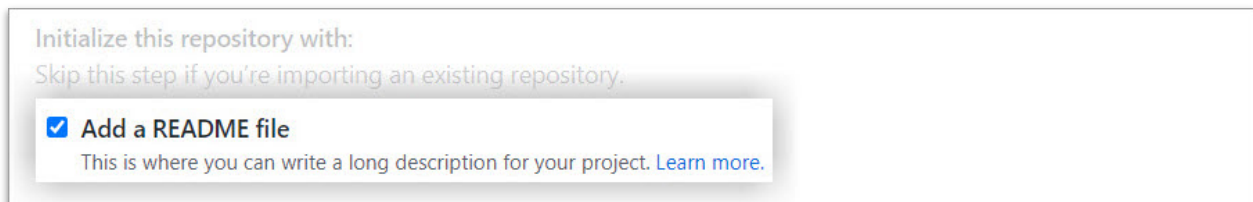
☐  **Private**
You choose who can see and commit to this repository.

Figure 04

06. Check “Add a README file.” See Figure 05.

A screenshot of a web form showing the "Initialize this repository with:" section. It includes a link to skip the step if importing an existing repository. Below, the "Add a README file" option is checked with a blue checkbox. A brief description and a "Learn more" link are provided.

Initialize this repository with:
Skip this step if you're importing an existing repository.

☒ **Add a README file**
This is where you can write a long description for your project. [Learn more.](#)

Figure 05

07. Click “Create repository.” See Figure 06.

A screenshot of a web form showing a single green button with the text "Create repository".

Create repository

Figure 06

The README is now displayed at the top of your profile page.



How to add files to a GitHub repository

The following guide will show you how to add files to a GitHub repository.

01. Go to your GitHub profile.

02. Select “Repositories.” See Figure 07.

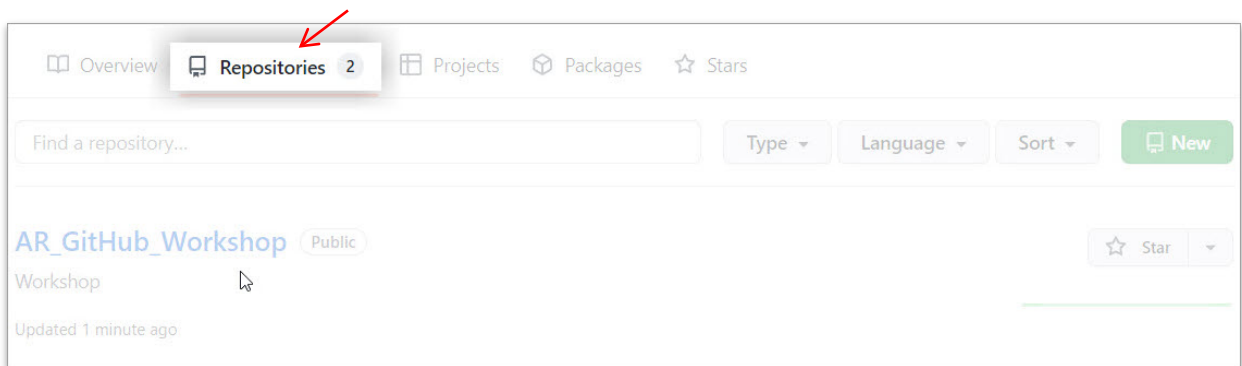


Figure 07

03. Select the repository you wish to add to. See Figure 08.

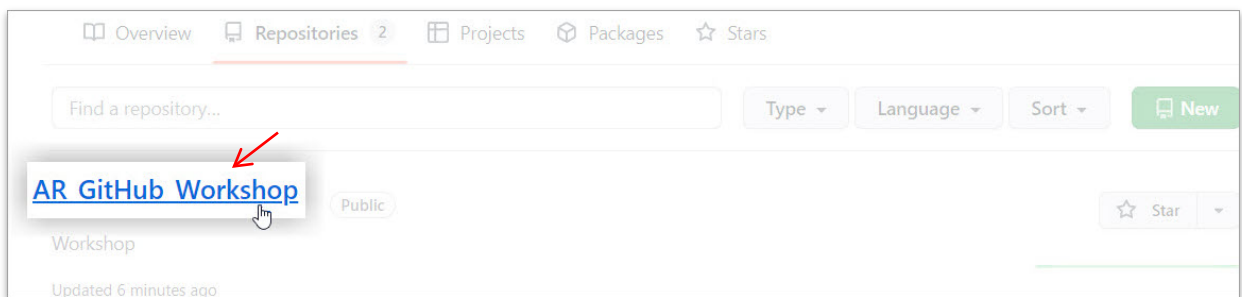


Figure 08

04. Click the “Add file” drop-down menu. There are 2 options: “Create a new file” and “Upload files.” See Figure 09.

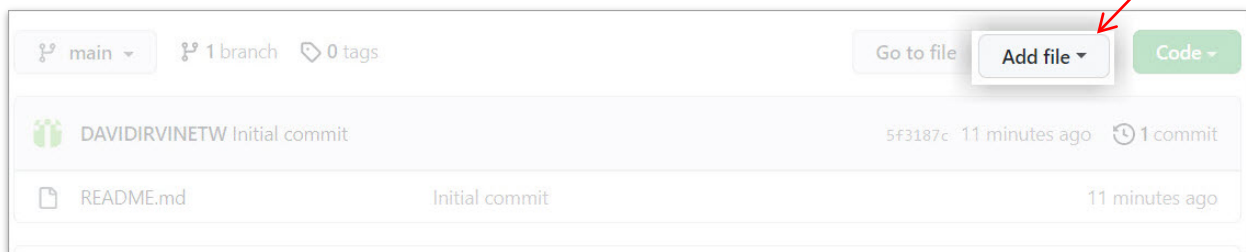


Figure 09

05. Select “Upload files.” See Figure 10.

Browse your computer and select your files, or drag and drop your files into the field provided.

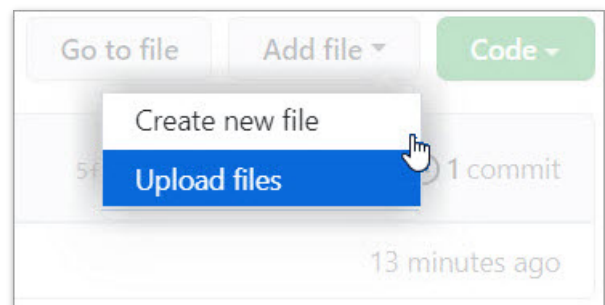
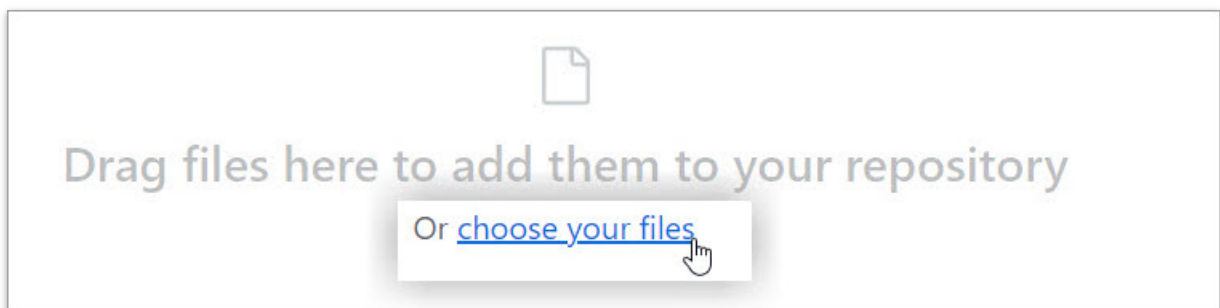


Figure 10



06. Click “Commit changes.” See Figure 11.

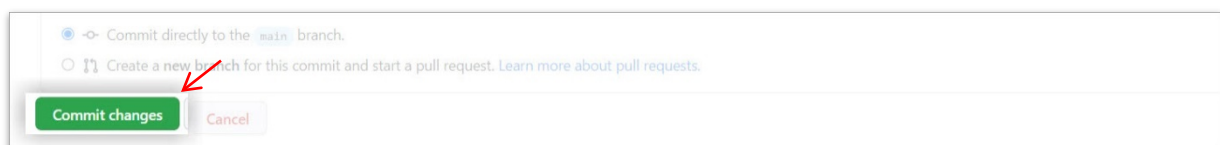


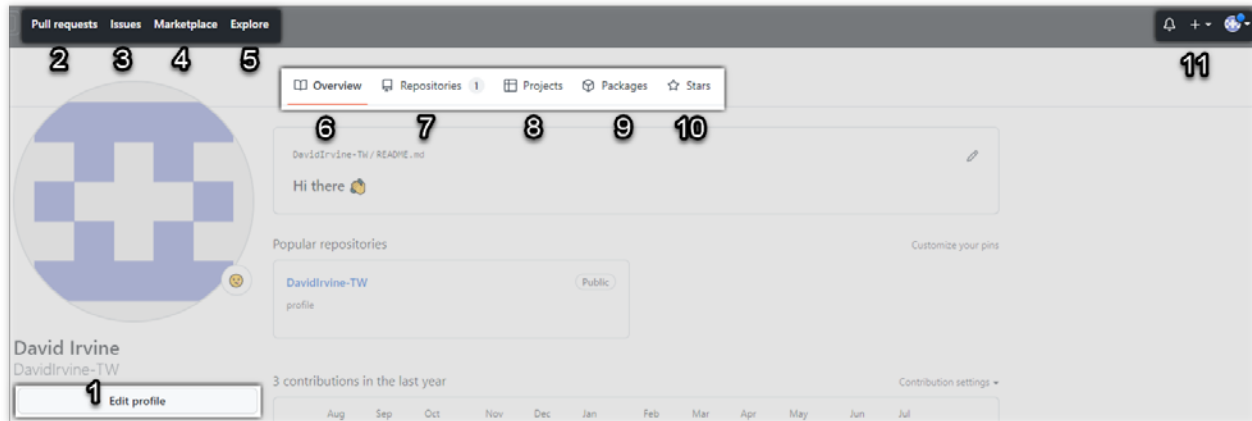
Figure 11

Your files have now been added to the repository.



UI quick-reference

GitHub profile UI:



Item	Description
01. Edit profile	- Manage profile information <i>add/edit/save: name/location/organization/bio/website/Twitter</i>
02. Pull request	- Push notifications <i>create/assign/mention/review/filter: public/private notifications</i>
03. Issues	- Track project developments <i>create/assign/mention/filter: public/private notifications</i>
04. Marketplace	- Workspace tools <i>browse: types/categories/verification</i>
05. Explore	- GitHub community <i>browse: topics/trending/collections/events/sponsors</i>
06. Overview	- User profile <i>view: public profile</i>
07. Repositories	- Display repositories <i>view/sort/search: repositories</i>
08. Projects	- List projects <i>plan/track/open/close/filter: projects</i>
09. Packages	- Software hosting <i>store/share/open/close: public/private packages</i>
10. Stars	- List starred repositories <i>create/sort/search: repositories</i>
11. [+]	- New <i>create/import: repository/gist/organization</i>



User persona

John Doe

age: 38
residence: London
education: Post graduate degree
occupation: Technical writer (new)
marital status: Married with kids



"What else can my portfolio platform do for me?"

John is a new technical writer. He is currently looking for an online portfolio platform where he can display his writing samples. He is looking to get the most benefit possible from his hosting site. John is comfortable with computers and is aware of GitHub.

Comfort With Technology

INTERNET

SOFTWARE

MOBILE APPS

SOCIAL NETWORK

Criteria For Success:

John is looking for an online space to display his writing samples. He is looking for a hosting option that offers advantages he can maximize.

Needs

- Online portfolio space
- Low maintenance
- Cheap/free
- Professional

Wants

- Personalized URL
- Customizable templates
- Additional benefits
- To be in good company

Values

- Open-source software
- Good documentation

Fears

- High maintenance options
- HTML/CSS coding
- Choosing an inappropriate hosting site
- Not reaching his target audience

**GitHub**