Learn

Using GitHub Pages To Host Your Website

Matt West

writes on August 16, 2013

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So you want to launch a simple website but don't want to have to go through the dull process of setting up yet another hosting package. There is an easier solution. If you just want to launch a simple static website you can use GitHub Pages to host your site for free.

Lets get started.

Note: This post assumes that you have a GitHub account and some basic knowledge of the version control system Git.

Create Your GitHub Repository

The files that make up your website will need to be stored within a GitHub repository. If you're creating a website to promote one of your existing GitHub projects you can add the website files to a new branch, otherwise you can just setup a new repo for your site.

Note: If you are not adding your website files to an existing repo make sure that you setup a new repo before continuing.

Now open up terminal (command prompt on Windows) and make sure that you have a copy of your GitHub repo on your computer. Once you got your local copy, move into the project folder using the `cd` command.

```
// Retrieve a copy of your GitHub repo.
git clone https://github.com/user/repository.git
// Move into that directory.
cd repository
```

Note: Make sure that you change the clone URL to the URL of your GitHub repo. This can be found on the main project page.

Creating an Orphan Branch

Now you need to create a new orphan branch within your repo that will hold all of your website files.

This new branch should be called `gh-pages`.

```
git checkout --orphan gh-pages
```

If you already had files in the master branch of your GitHub repo you now need to delete these from the new `gh-pages` branch. To do this you can use the following command:

```
git rm -rf .
```

Adding Your Website Files

Now that your repo has been properly setup it's time to add all of the HTML, CSS and JavaScript files that make up your website. Once you have added these to your repo you need to commit the changes. To do this you can use the following command.

```
git commit -a -m "Adding pages"
```

Note: The `-a` flag is shorthand for `git add .`

Pushing Your Changes to GitHub

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`git push` command.

```
git push origin gh-pages
```

That's it! Your website should now be available at http://**username**.github.io/**repository**/.

Using a Custom Domain

The last thing I want to cover in this post is how you can use your own domain name with your new GitHub-hosted website.

First you will need to create a new file in your GitHub repo called `CNAME` that contains the domain name (or subdomain) that you wish to use. This file should be placed in the `gh-pages` branch if you are using *project-pages* (as we have been in this post). If you are using *user-pages* the file should be placed in the `master` branch.

Your `CNAME` file might look like the following:

```
teamtreehouse.com
```

Next you will need to update the DNS records for your domain name. This is usually done through a control panel provided by your domain registrar.

If you want to use a root domain (such as `teamtreehouse.com`) for your website you will need to setup a new **A record** that points to the IP address

`204.232.175.78` .

If you are using a subdomain (such as `blog.teamtreehouse.com`) it's best to create a new **CNAME record** that points to your GitHub user subdomain (`**username**.github.io`). This is so that the DNS will be automatically adjusted if the servers IP address changes on GitHub.

Note: For information about the difference between CNAME and A records check out this video.

It may take a little while for your DNS changes to take effect. This is usually no more than a few hours. Once the changes have gone through, you should be able to access your new website from your custom domain name.

Final Thoughts

In this post I've showed you how to host pages that you've created yourself but it's worth noting that GitHub also has a tool for automatically generating pages for your projects. You can launch this tool from the project settings page.

GitHub pages does limit you to using static assets (HTML, CSS and JS) for your websites, but you could use something like Jekyll to make it easier to generate these files.

It's not going to meet everyone's needs but if you just want to launch a simple website, GitHub pages is a quick and easy way to get started.

github	github pages	html

make a website	web hosting

19 Responses to "Using GitHub Pages To Host Your Website"

Alexander Goncharov on August 16, 2013 at 9:48 am said:

lifehack 😃

Reply

VonVictor Valentino Rosenchild on August 16, 2013 at 8:07 pm said:

Thank you for sharing this information. Although I have been using GitHub for a while now, I never thought about using GitHub pages to host a website.

Thanks for the info!

Kindest regards,

VonVictor V. Rosenchild

Reply

Matt Smith on August 17, 2013 at 11:04 am **said:**

Cache headers are set to expire after 10 minutes in GitHub, correct? Can that that be changed?

Reply

> **Matt West on** August 17, 2013 at 3:13 pm **said:**
>
> Not that I'm aware of.
>
> The answer in this StackOverflow post claims that GitHub don't current support modifying the HTTP headers, but it is on their wishlist. http://stackoverflow.com/questions/14798589/github-pages-http-headers
>
> Reply

Jonathan Sky on August 17, 2013 at 4:40 pm **said:**

thanks for share this

Agen Bola

Agen Judi

Prediksi Skor Bola

Reply

Tom Ireland on August 18, 2013 at 10:51 am **said:**

Awesome tip, bud. Just recently created my own site on there. Pretty awesome stuff and Jekyll is cool.

Reply

Walt on August 18, 2013 at 4:26 pm **said:**

Mr. West: You da bomb!

Reply

tanluc on August 19, 2013 at 5:04 am **said:**

Thanks so much Matt West because this shared.

tai game mien phi

Reply

Webmaster Blog on August 19, 2013 at 5:43 am **said:**

Just wish to say your article is as amazing. The clearness in your post is just cool and i could assume you are an expert on this subject. Fine with your permission let me to grab your feed to keep updated with forthcoming post. Thanks a million and please carry on the gratifying work.

Reply

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michaelbraganza4 on August 23, 2013 at 8:25 am **said:**

Hello Friends,

This is really good blog. Thanks for sharing this information.

Site:- http://www.myit.ie

Keywords:- Website Design Dublin, Web Design Dublin, Web Design Ireland

Thanks 🙂

Reply

Vladimir Varankin on August 30, 2013 at 2:30 pm **said:**

Nice article! But what are the reasons to store gh-pages branch as an orphan?

Reply

> **Matt West on** August 31, 2013 at 9:52 am **said:**
>
> Storing the pages on an orphan branch means that you can have them in the same repo as your project code.
>
> Reply

Gersande on September 21, 2013 at 1:59 am **said:**

Excellent article !

Reply

Pravin Purohit on September 25, 2013 at 9:32 am said:

Well Cool Article . But matt do you know any alternatives to github for hosting projects?

Reply

> Manisha on September 25, 2015 at 11:09 pm said:
>
> you can check this site for alternative hosting plans. I am liking their service. I have website hosted by them.
>
> http://www.hostpreneur.net
>
> Reply

Caspar on October 28, 2015 at 7:52 am said:

The IP given in this article has been deprecated! See here: https://github.com/blog/1917-github-pages-legacy-ip-deprecation

Reply

Ramil on November 30, 2015 at 8:54 pm said:

Any thoughts on the file size limit you can host for your static website? Thanks 😀

Reply

VADER on December 9, 2015 at 12:22 am said:

I HATE YOU LUKE SKYWALKER! I HATE YOU!

Reply

Rowe Morehouse on December 30, 2015 at 2:39 am said:

This article has incorrect information concerning configuring the IP address for the A record at your DNS provider.

Two A records should be added, with the following IPs:
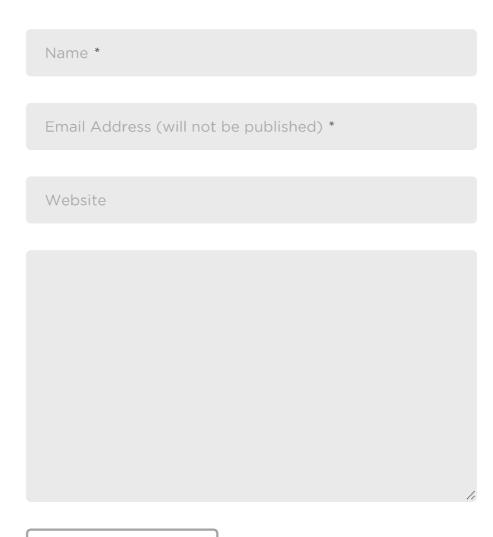
192.30.252.153
192.30.252.154

See this article:

https://help.github.com/articles/tips-for-configuring-an-a-
record-with-your-dns-provider/

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