What Is GitHub?

GitHub is a web-based Git repository hosting service.

Simply put, it is a tool that enables collaboration by hosting shared Git repositories that teams of developers can all contribute to.

While GitHub uses Git, the functionality it provides is **entirely different** from Git. So try to make it stick in your mind that Git and GitHub are not the same thing.

In short, Git is a Version Control System while GitHub is an online platform for hosting and sharing code, text files, and more complex file formats.

What is GitHub

Why Use GitHub?

GitHub provides a great way for you to store your code in a safe and remote location (in case something happens to your local machine). It's a fantastic way to collaborate with other developers both privately and publicly.

Many large open source projects are hosted on GitHub, which makes it very easy to examine shared code both on GitHub and on local machines.

In the next couple of chapters we will learn how to move code from our local repository to a remote repository on GitHub using the `push` command, as well as retrieve code from a remote repository on GitHub using the `pull` command.

We'll also learn about GitHub specific concepts like `forking` and `pull requests`.

Want to get a sense for how popular GitHub is in the development community? Here are some projects you may have heard of that are hosted there:

- Angular
- React
- Ruby on Rails
- Twitter Bootstrap
- Node.js
- JQuery
- Homebrew

Getting Started with GitHub

If you don't have an account on GitHub yet, head to github.com and create an account. Signing up is easy!

Be sure to use whatever email address is in your `.gitconfig` when you sign up on GitHub.

If you'd rather sign up with a different email address, change your `.gitconfig` accordingly. You'll run into some minor annoyances if there's a mismatch between the email address in your GitHub profile and the email address in your `.gitconfig`.