9.1 What is version control?

A [Version Control System](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Version_control) (VCS) keeps a record of all the changes you make to your files that make up a particular project and allows you to revert to previous versions of files if you need to. To put it another way, if you muck things up or accidentally lose important files you can easily roll back to a previous stage in your project to sort things out. Version control was originally designed for collaborative software development, but it’s equally useful for scientific research and collaborations (although admittedly a lot of the terms, jargon and functionality are focused on the software development side). There are many different version control systems currently available, but we’ we’ll focus on using *Git*, because it’s free and open source and it integrates nicely with RStudio. This means that its can easily become part of your usual workflow with minimal additional overhead.