Git Ignore

Excluding Files from Staging and Commits

What is Git Ignore?

There is a file we can add to a Git repository that will exclude certain files and/or folders when adding changes to the stage.

Git will look for a file called ".gitignore" in the root of your repository. If there is a file named as such, Git will check it for info on what you'd like excluded.

Why add a .gitignore file to your project?

You'll most often see this used for configuration files.

Some coding frameworks or code editors create a file used for configuration that is specific to the user working in the folder.

When a file like this is generated, it would not be useful for a team member to replicate when cloning your repository.

Building a .gitignore file.

Once you create a file by the expected name, you can begin easily populating it with the names of files and folders that you don't want included in your commits.

A simple example may look like this…

.DS_Store
Desktop.ini

These two lines target MacOS Finder and Windows Explorer positioning data files.

Automating the process.

Don't know which files you might need to target?

There is a website, gitignore.io, that can generate a file that targets common files and folders for all sorts of projects.

If you know what tools you're using in and on your project, you can easily get started with a file generated by this web app…
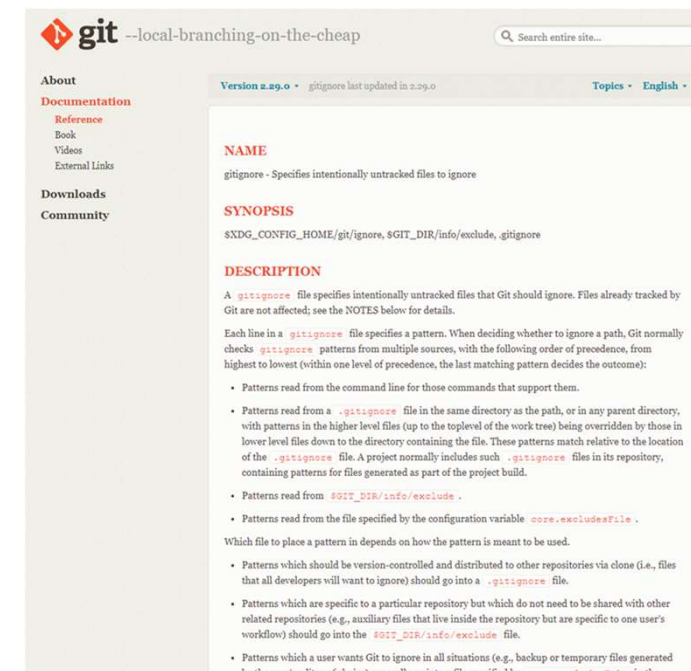
https://www.toptal.com/developers/gitignore

Consider Windows, MacOS, and VisualStudioCode.

Read the official documentation.

Visit the official documentation for full details on how to target files and folders using more advanced patterns.

https://git-scm.com/docs/gitignore

Recommended Reading

In the following book you can find more information regarding writing your own .gitignore files:

- Loeliger, J., McCullough, M. (August 2012). *Version Control with Git, 2nd Edition.* O'Reilly Media, Inc.

To learn about writing markdown (used for READMEs), try this book:

- Mailund, T. (August 2019). *Introducing Markdown and Pandoc: Using Markup Language and Document Converter.* Apress.