Git It Right: A Complete Cheatsheet

Source Control

Source control is the practice of tracking and managing changes to code. There are two types:

1. In centralized source control, a centralized server acts as the ultimate source of truth for a collection of versioned files.
   - *Implications.* An internet connection to the central server is required for most basic operations.
   - *Examples.* Subversion, CVS
2. Distributed or decentralized source control doesn't require a central source of truth and allows for most operations to be local.
   - *Implications.* You can work independently of an internet connection.
   - *Examples.* Git, Mercurial (Hg)

History of Git: Git was developed by Linus Torvalds, the creator of Linux, to handle the requirements of the Linux Kernel Project. It is often used, because...

1. Due to its distributed nature, Git can scale massively.
2. Git is very fast to execute, since most of its operations are local.
3. Due to its history, it has a very active community.

Git Theory

A repository is a collection of version controlled files that are kept together. This includes **(a)** all the files related to a specific project/application, **(b)** the history of changes, and **(c)** any special configurations.

Git states: Git has three **local** states.

1. The working directory state holds all the project or application files. These files may or may not be managed by Git, but Git is aware of them.
2. The staging area state or Git index state is holding area for the queue of changes to be included in your next commit.
3. The local Git repository state is a hidden folder called `.git`, which contains your entire local commit history.

Git also has a remote (repository) state, which is just another repository with its own three internal states. A specific Git command is used to move files between these states. i.e.,

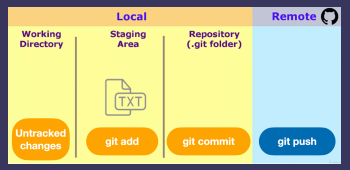

Figure 1: Git states and associated commands. Source

Git Theory (2)

Tracking: A tracked file is any file that Git is aware of and is actively tracking. In other words, any files that aren't new.

Git Command	Description
`git ls-files`	Returns the list of files tracked by Git
`git commit -am " commit message"`	Simultaneously add and commit a tracked file
`git add .`	Recursively add untracked files from current filepath location

Quick Start

Installation: Depends on your OS.

- *MacOS.* Normally, it's pre-installed. Otherwise, use command line developer tools to install it.
- *WindowsOS.* Install the open source Git for Windows Project. Make sure to execute your Git commands from the Git Bash.

Configure: You need to tell Git who you are and where the remote repository hosting platform is.

Git Command	Description
`git config --global user.name "bellanich"`	Set your global username
`git config --global user.email "youremail@gmail.com "`	Set your global email
`git config --global --list`	Check your global configs

Initialize your project: Here's how to start a new Git project.

Git Command	Description
`git init my-project-name`	Initialize a new empty Git repository
`git init`	Convert an existing dir into a Git project
`git clone git-project-url`	Initialize from your code hosting platform of choice
`git remote add origin git-project-url`	Add a remote reference to your local repository
`git push origin main`	Force push to main branch (only do for initialization)

Commit History

Introduction: Your Git commit history is the chronological record of all commits ever made within your Git repository, where each commit is a snapshot of your project at a specific point in time.

- *Implications.* The commit messages you make matter. We recommend writing conventional commits.

A project's Git history is typically represented as a directed acyclic graph (DAG) data structure.

Commit History (2)

How does Git commit history work? Git doesn't copying entire files in each commit. Rather, it uses a system of blobs and pointers.

- Git uses SHA-1 hashing to create unique identifiers (hashes) for file content and stores
- The hashes are stored as blobs (binary large objects) in a database
- Git uses pointers to reference the changes made to these blobs in its commit history

Search: Here is how you can search through your Git history logs.

Git Command	Description
`git log --oneline --graph --decorate`	View your entire Git history in a user friendly way
`git log --since="3 days ago"`	Search for all Git commits made in the last 3 days
`git log -- your_filename`	Get the history for only a specific file
`git log --follow -- your_filename`	Include filename changes in your Git history search
`git show git_commit_hash`	See a given commit's entire content, including: commit message, that commit's git diff results, author, and date

Compare: You can what you have and haven't committed in Git. You can also compare different points in your commit history.

Git Command	Description
`git diff`	Compare staged and unstaged changes in your working directory to your last commit.
`git diff -- your_filename`	Only preview comparisons for a specific file
`git diff --staged HEAD`	Review the (staged) changes about to be committed
`git diff commit_hash1 commit_hash2`	Compare two commits
`git diff local_branchname origin/remote_branchname`	Compare local and remote branches

Repo restructuring: Here's how to get Git to track your repo structuring.

Git Command	Description
`git mv current_filepath new_filepath`	Rename your file and get Git to track it in one-go
`git rm your_filename`	Simultaneously delete and stop tracking a file in one-go
`git add -A`	Stages any file renaming or deletions done via your IDE
`git checkout -- deleted_filename`	Undo tracked file deletion

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Undo Unwanted Changes

Undo unwanted changes: Once you've commited something, it's in Git forever. However, there are some things that can be undone.

Git Command	Description
`git reset HEAD your_filename`	Undoes an unwanted `git add`.
`git reflog`	View records of time travel, i.e. `HEAD` resets
`git checkout -- your_filename`	Reverts a file to its last commit version
`git commit --amend -m "new commit message"`	Update your Git commit message

Note. The `git reflog` holds records for the last 60 days. After that, it autopurges.

Resets: There are 3 different types of resets in Git.

1. Soft Reset. Moves the `HEAD` and branch pointer to a different commit, but leaves changes in the staging area. Undoes a `git commit` while keeping changes made.
2. Mixed Reset. Moves the `HEAD` and branch pointer to a different commit and clears the staging area. Default in Git.
3. Hard Reset. Same as a mixed reset, except it also discards all changes in the working dir. Hence, a destructive operation.

Stashing

Introduction: The Git stash command allows you to temporarily save and store changes in your working directory that are not ready to be committed. It stores these changes as a stack data structure.

- *When to use?* Whenever you want to save but not commit incomplete work. e.g., switching branches or addressing urgent tasks
- *Best practices.* Save your stash with a specific stash message, especially when working with multiple stashes at once

Git Command	Description
`git stash list`	Get the list of all stashed changes in your repo
`git stash`	Stash all tracked changes
`git stash -u`	Include untracked changes in your stash
`git stash show stash{@1}`	Shows aggregate file changes for 1st index in Git stash stack
`git stash push -m "stash message"`	Stash your work with a clear message

Move stashes: Eventually, you'll either **(a)** want to delete your stashed work to declutter the stash stack or **(b)** move your stashed work back into the working directory.

Git Command	Description
`git stash apply`	Applies most recent stash to working directory **without deleting it** from stash stack
`git stash drop`	Manually delete most recent stash from stack

Stashing (2)

Commands to move stashes: (continued)

Git Command	Description
`git stash pop`	Shorthand combination of `git stash apply` and `git stash drop`
`git stash apply stash@{1}`	Apply a specify specific stash to working dir
`git stash drop stash@{1}`	Delete a specify specific stash from stack
`git stash clear`	Deletes all stashes

Stash into another branch: You can use git stash to move changes from one branch into another one. Here are the 2 steps:

1. Stash the changes that you want move
2. Use the command `git stash branch new_branch_name` to automatically create a new branch, where your stash is applied. Your stash will also be removed from the stack.

Tagging

Introduction: Git tags are just labels that we can link to a specific commit in our history. There is a 1-to-1 mapping between git tags and commits.

- *Why?* They let us mark significant events or milestones in our repository. e.g., project releases
- *Note.* Tags function like commits. You make them locally and then push to the remote repository.

There are 2 different types of Git tags:

1. Lightweight tags are markers on a commit
2. Annotated tags have more information than a lightweight tag does. They also contain the tag message, the tag author, and tagging date.

Basic usage: Here are the basic Git tag commands.

Git Command	Description
`git tag tag_name`	Create a local **lightweight tag** for most recent commit
`git tag tag_name "your tag message"`	Create a local **annotated tag** for most recent commit
`git tag tag_name commit_hash "your tag message"`	Create a local annotated tag **for an older commit**
`git tag --list`	Shows the names of all Git tags within your repo
`git show tag_name`	Preview the contents of the tagged commit
`git tag --delete tag_name`	Delete a **local** tag
`git diff tag_name1 tag_name2`	Compare the differences between 2 different tagged commits

Syncing tags: When you push a tag to your remote repository, you also push its associated commit.

Tagging (2)

Commands to sync your Git tags:

Git Command	Description
`git push origin tag_name`	Push a specific Git tag to remote
`git push origin remote_branch_name --tags`	Push all Git tags to a specific remote branch
`git push origin :tag_name`	Delete a tag that you've accidentally pushed to remote

Undoing tags: Let's suppose that you put your git tag on the wrong commit. There are 2 ways to fix it:

1. Delete and recreate your Git tag on the correct commit.
2. Force a git tag change by using the command `git tag -a tag_name -f commit_hash`. This forces the git tag to move from its current commit to a new one.

Branches

Introduction: It's a best practice to create all your changes on feature (or topic) branches, make sure these changes stable, and then merge into the `main` branch.

Git Command	Description
`git branch`	Lists all current **local** branches
`git branch --all`	Lists all current local and remote branches
`git branch -m old_branch_name new_branch_name`	Rename your Git branch
`git branch --delete branch_name`	Deletes a **local** branch

Merging: Insert the changes from one branch into another as a new commit. Main types of merges are:

- A fast forward merge happens when one branch is ahead of another. i.e.,

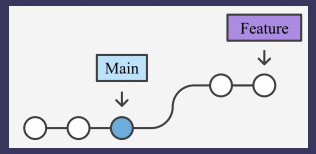

Figure 2: Before fast-forward merge. Source

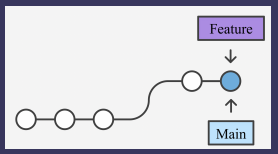

Figure 3: After fast-forward merge. Source

- A 3-way merge happens when histories between two branches diverge. This can result in a Git conflict. i.e.,

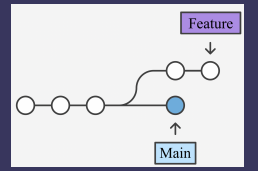

Figure 4: Before 3-way merge. Source

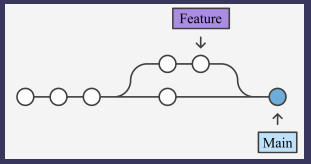

Figure 5: After 3-way merge. Source

Branches (2)

Either way, you can squash multiple commits into one as you merge. This ensures that your commit history size remains manageable. Of course, less common merge types do exist for very specific situations.

Rebasing: rewrite the commit history by "rewinding" the changes from one branch onto another. This means moving commits around.

- *Why?* This lets you maintain a linear project history when your feature and master branches start to diverge. It also eliminates the unnecessary merge commits required by merging.
- *Pull with a rebase.* You can pull changes from `main` into your feature branch as a rebase. This keeps your Git history flat. Use `git pull --rebase origin master`.

The Golden Rule of Rebasing is do **not** rebase on **public branches**.

- *Why?* Branch histories can diverge. This can only be resolved with a merge, which would pollute the commit history.
- *More info.* Check out this explanation.

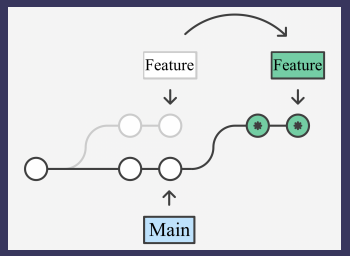

Figure 6: The effects of a `git rebase`. Source

Branching strategies: the strategy chosen by a software development teams when writing, merging and deploying code. Here are some noteworthy ones:

1. GitFlow allows for parallel development to protect the production code. Many variants exist. It has the following types of branches:

Branch	Description
`master`	The code that's in production
`develop`	Where developers merge their features into. Branches off of `master`.
`feature`	One new feature per branch. Branches off of `develop`. Merge back once stable.
`release`	Prepare for a new production release, needs to be merged back into `master` and `develop`.
`hotfix`	Fix a bug that has been discovered and must be resolved (usually from production)

2. In trunk-based development, developers merge small, frequent updates to a core "trunk" or `main` branch. You **push directly** into `master` and use `release` branches.
3. Ship / Show / Ask has three categories for merges:

Category	Description
Ship	Make a change **directly** into your mainline. Great for updated docs, simple bug fixes; etc.

Branches (3)

3. Ship / Show / Ask has 3 categories for merges: (continued)

Category	Description
`Show`	Open a Pull Request with your change but merge without waiting for anyone.
`Ask`	Open a Pull Request and wait for approval before merging

Aliases

Introduction: Rather than adding Git aliases to a `~/.bashrc` or `~/.zshrc` file, you can declare them directly in Git.

Git Command	Description
`git config --global alias.alias_name "your git command"`	Creates a new Git alias. Do **not** include `git` in double quotations, since Git automatically adds this.
`git config --global --unset alias.alias_name`	Globally delete your Git alias

Your alias definition will be saved in your machine's `~/.gitconfig` file. You can also edit or delete your aliases from here.

Favorite aliases:

Git Alias	Definition
`git history`	`git config --global alias.history "log --graph --abbrev-commit --decorate --format=format:'%C(bold blue)%h%C(reset) - %C(bold cyan)%aD%C(reset) %C(bold green)(%ar)%C(reset) %C(bold cyan)(committed: %cD)%C(reset) %C(auto)%d%C(reset)%n'' %C(white)%s%C(reset)%n'' %C(dim white)- %an <%ae> %C(reset) %C(dim white)(committer: %cn <%ce>)%C(reset)'"`

Git Conventions

Repository name conventions: what to keep in mind when naming projects and referencing remote

- *Project names* are expected to be **(a)** a short and descriptive name, **(b)** in all lowercase letters, and **(c)** only use dashes as separators.
- *Remote repository* is referred to as `origin` in Git.

Commits: There are some shorthands to refer to the most recently made commits.

Git Command	Description
`HEAD`	Shorthand in Git for the last commit
`HEAD^`	Shorthand for 2nd to last commit.
`HEAD^3`	Shorthand for 3 commits before current `HEAD`.

Default branch name: The Git community is slowly migrating away from the default branch name being `master` and towards it being `main`.

Git Command	Description
`git branch -m main`	Change the default branch name from `master` → `main` for a **specific repo**
`git config --global init.defaultBranch main`	Change the default branch across **all repositories**

Git Conventions (2)

Naming new branches: One convention for branch naming is to have a prefix that states the branch's general purpose. i.e.,

Branch Type	Convention
`feature`	Branch name is either `feat/my-description` or `feature/my-description`
`bugfix`	Branch name is either `fix/my-description` or `bugfix/my-description`
`release`	Branch name is `release/version-number`
`hotfix`	Branch name is `hotfix/my-description`

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