Git and GitHub: Collaborative Usage

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Agenda

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- 2. Forks: copies of a repository
- 3. Pull requests (PRs)
- 4. Merge conflicts: when branches collide
- 5. The blame feature
- 6. Repository management paradigms

About the trainer

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Services for the Pitt community:

- Consultations
- Training (on-request and via public workshops)
- Talks (on-request and publicly)
- Research collaboration

Support areas and interests:

- Computer programming fundamentals, esp. for data processing and analysis
- Open Science and Data Sharing
- Data stewardship/curation
- Research methods; science and technology studies

GitHub Access Permissions

Anyone can clone or pull from a *public* GH repo. (A repo may also be set to *private*.)

Only authorized Collaborators may *push* to a repo. To add Collaborators, click on your repo's Settings button (top right), then Collaborators from the left menu.

If your repo has multiple Contributors, consider having everyone work in their own branch, to minimize the number of merges needed as users push and pull to the origin repo.

Forks: copies of a repository

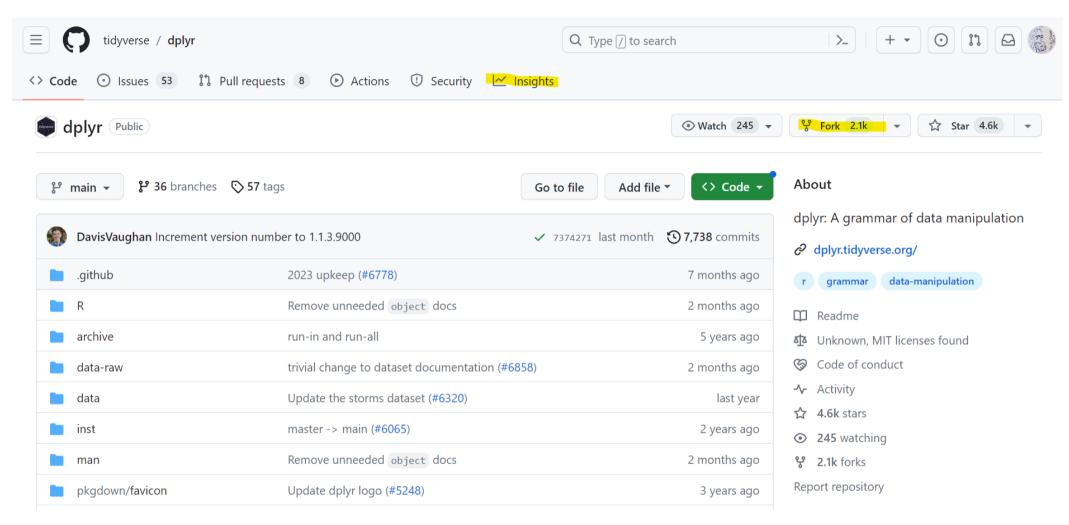
Forks

A **fork** is a copy of the repository under a new owner (usually retains original name). The fork owner can make whatever modifications they desire. So if I want to make a derivative project of tidyverse/dplyr, I can fork it to create dojobo/dplyr (dojobo is my username).

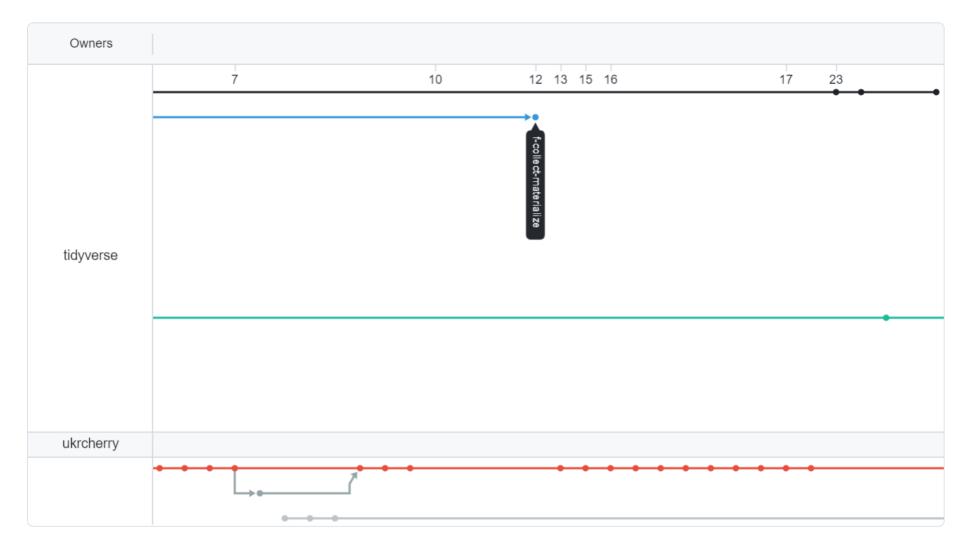
Parent repository updates can be merged into the fork at any time. So using the dplyr example, I can merge new tidyverse/dplyr commits into dojobo/dplyr, keeping up with the new developments.

To see what forks exist: Insights > Forks. (See also: Network)

To create your own fork: click Fork on the main page.



The Fork button, to make your own fork of a posted repo. Insights is also highlighted, where you may find the list of Forks and the Network graph (see next slide).



Part of the Network Graph for dplyr. Each row is a fork owner, each colored line is a branch, and each dot/node is a commit. The owner at bottom of image shows a one-commit branch and merge in dark gray, and a new branch (initial commit) in light gray. The black label near center of image shows the branch's name. The numbers at top are dates of a month.

Git and GitHub: Collaborative Usage

Activity: Fork our repo

- 1. Go to our repo for this workshop (I will provide the URL).
- 2. Click on Fork at top right to fork it into your account. Read the default settings and leave them as-is. Click the Create fork button.
- 3. Examine the new repository you've created, and confirm that it is a fork.
- 4. Create a new branch and commit a new file (you may do this on the GH website, or on a local clone, which you then push).
- 5. Refresh your fork on GH and confirm that your commit is there.

Pull Requests (PRs): collaborative merging

Pull requests (PRs)

Once a collaborator has developed their branch sufficiently and wants it merged to main, they make a request to repo administrators. This is called a **pull request (PR)** because you are asking to have your branch's commits *pulled* into main. (Not consistent with the git pull command!)

If the admin says Yes to the PR, the commits are merged into the target repo.

Depending on the nature of the commits, the repository's contribution policies, and your relationship to the repo admins, you may need to make a case for your PR, or may even be outright rejected.

To make a PR, click Pull Requests (top middle) and click New pull request.



Activity: Examine pull requests

- 1. On the tidyverse/dplyr repo, click on Pull requests.
- 2. Review some of the open PRs.
- 3. Click on the "Closed" button to see a list of Closed PRs, and review a few of those. Examine at least one accepted PR and one rejected PR.

Activity: Create a Pull Request

You will ask to have the commit you created in a previous activity, merged into our repofor this workshop.

- 1. Go to the repo for this workshop.
- 2. Initiate a PR by clicking Pull Request and then New pull request.
- 3. On the Compare Changes screen, select the appropriate branches for merging. The workshop repo and branch should be on the left, and your fork and repo on the right.
- 4. Examine the diffs and create a PR.

Then I will accept the PRs.

Merge conflicts: when branches collide

Merge conflicts

When you merge Branch B into Branch A, git will attempt to auto-merge, i.e., automatically reconcile the two branches. An example of a straightforward auto-merge is a new file created in Branch A, and a modified existing file in Branch B: both changes take effect.

If the merge can't be resolved automatically, then merging halts:

```
$ git merge branch_b
Auto-merging file1
CONFLICT (content): Merge conflict in file1
Automatic merge failed; fix conflicts and then commit the result.
```

and a merge conflict is generated at each appropriate position in the files.

Here's an example of what a merge conflict looks like:

The ====== is a divider between the contributions from each branch. (Note: HEAD is git's term for your current position, or which commit you currently have checked out. In the merge situation, it corresponds to the most recent commit of Branch A.) You'll have to manually reconcile the content in the "fenced" area, then delete the divider and fences.

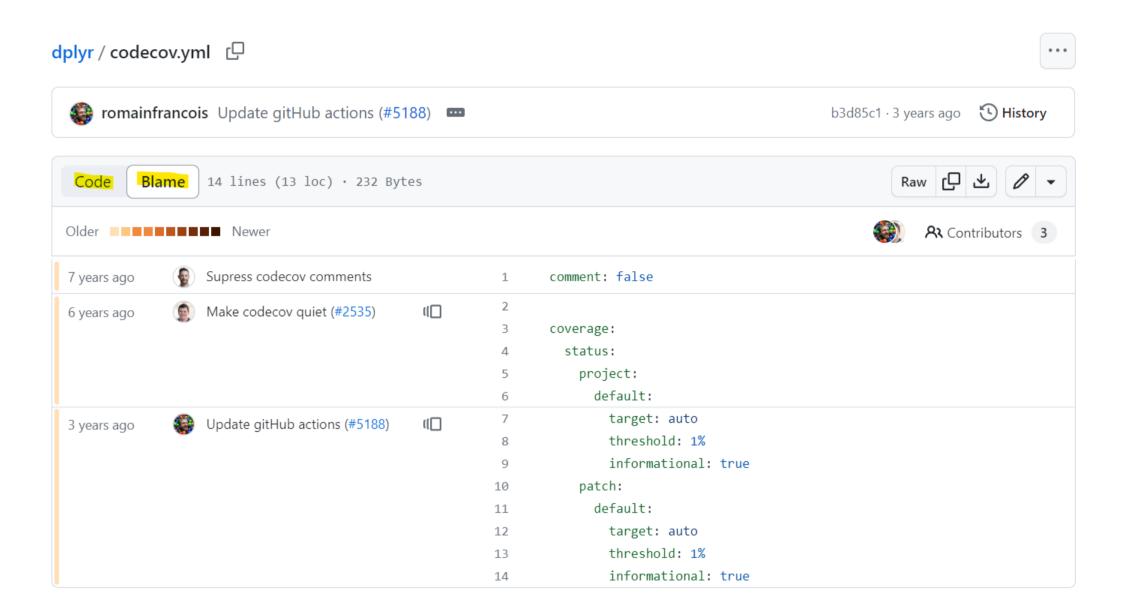
Once all merge conflicts are resolved, you can stage and commit the changes, to complete the merge.

The blame feature

The blame feature

The **blame** feature, which is not really about "blaming," tells you, for a given file, which user committed (wrote) each line. This can be useful when reconstructing history, bug-hunting, or re-assessing current design choices.

Similar to log, blame is available on the command-line, but probably best experienced in a richer platform like GitHub.



A file in the tidyverse/dplyr repo, codecov.yml. The view has been switched from Code (the default) to Blame. Note that each line in the file is assigned an author and commit.

Repository management paradigms

Repository management paradigms

- Branching workflows: https://git-scm.com/book/en/v2/Git-Branching-Branching-Workflows
- Distributed workflows: https://gitscm.com/book/en/v2/Distributed-Git-Distributed-Workflows

Resources for learning and practice

- Pro Git book, available online: https://git-scm.com/book/en/v2
- Git Gud, an in-browser git simulator: https://nic-hartley.github.io/git-gud/
- Learning resources collected by GitHub: https://docs.github.com/en/getstarted/quickstart/git-and-github-learning-resources
- Cheat sheet for commands usable in Git Bash and macOS Terminal: https://github.com/RehanSaeed/Bash-Cheat-Sheet

Or you can look for git and GitHub integrations in software you already use, for example: git in VS Code, git in RStudio, git in PyCharm

Or you can delve into one of these topics:

- GitHub Pages: easily build and host an associated page for your project (or create an empty repo solely to host a webpage)
- GitHub Actions: automate workflows, such as running a suite of tests on your code every time a new commit is pushed, to mitigate introduction of new bugs.

