**“maintainers”** are the only people in a project with commit access. In other projects, they’re simply the people who are listed in the README as maintainers.

A maintainer doesn’t necessarily have to be someone who writes code for your project. It could be someone who’s done a lot of work evangelizing your project, or written documentation that made the project more accessible to others. Regardless of what they do day-to-day, a maintainer is probably someone who feels responsibility over the direction of the project and is committed to improving it.

**A “contributor” could be anyone** who comments on an issue or pull request, people who add value to the project (whether it’s triaging issues, writing code, or organizing events), or anybody with a merged pull request (perhaps the narrowest definition of a contributor).

**“committer”** might be used to distinguish commit access, which is a specific type of responsibility, from other forms of contribution.