

Automating Monthly .NET Patching with GitHub Actions and dotnet-outdated



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- .NET Patching and Support Policy
- The Problem (2)
- Automate the humans away! in
 - GitHub Actions
 - Update .NET SDK Action and .NET release notes
 - dotnet outdated Global Tool
 - GitHub apps
- Q&A

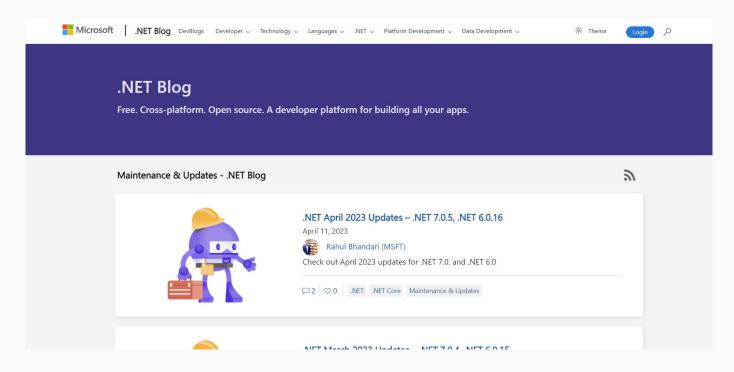


.NET Patching and Support Policy



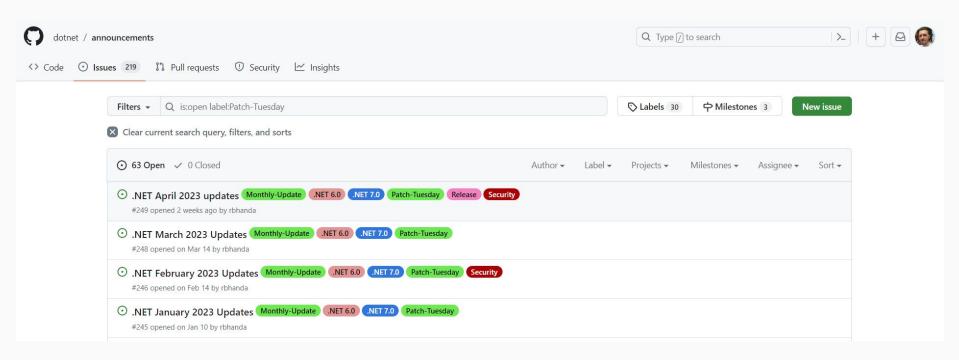
- Microsoft publishes a new .NET patch release (almost) every month
- Patches are released on the second Tuesday of the month
 - "Patch Tuesday"





devblogs.microsoft.com/dotnet





github.com/dotnet/announcements



- ~70% of patches include security fixes
 - 12 of 17 .NET 6 releases to April 2023
- Recent patched vulnerabilities include:
 - CVE-2023-2158 Denial of Service
 - CVE-2022-41089 Remote Code Execution
 - CVE-2022-41067 Information Disclosure
 - CVE-2022-41032 Elevation of Privilege



You need to run the latest patch for support from Microsoft.

"Updates are cumulative and released as patches, with each update built upon all of the updates that preceded it. **A device** needs to install the latest update to remain supported. Updates may include new features, fixes (security and/or non-security), or a combination of both."

.NET and .NET Core Support Policy



The problem 😩



- Every application needs patching every month
 - Keep ahead of bad actors
 - Stay supported
- We only have so much engineering time
- Manual patching doesn't scale
- Automated Updates only apply to a subset of use cases
- Patching is repetitive
- Patching is boring



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Homer Simpson - "Trash of the Titans" S9E22



Automate the humans away!



Solution

- Create a scheduled, automated GitHub Actions workflow
- Use open source tools to patch our repository
 - update-dotnet-sdk GitHub Action
 - dotnet outdated global tool
- Use GitHub apps to approve and merge the changes
- No extra code needs to be deployed to manage the process

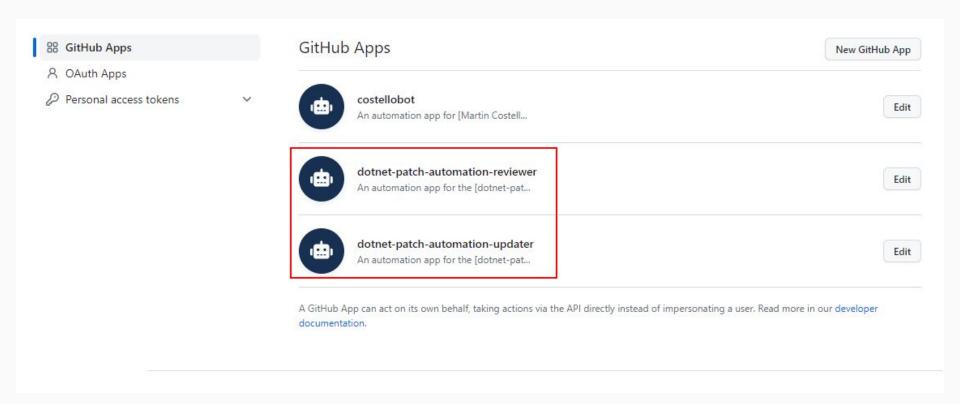


GitHub Actions Workflow

- Just 17 lines of YAML
- Runs weekly on a Cron schedule
- Can be run on-demand
- Uses a <u>reusable workflow</u>
- Minimal configuration

```
name: update-dotnet-sdk
on:
  schedule:
    - cron: '00 21 * * TUE'
 workflow_dispatch:
permissions:
  contents: read
jobs:
  update-sdk:
   uses: martincostello/update-dotnet-sdk/.github/workflows/update-dotnet-sdk.yml@v2
   with:
      labels: "dependencies,.NET"
      user-email: ${{ vars.GIT_COMMIT_USER_EMAIL }}
      user-name: ${{ vars.GIT_COMMIT_USER_NAME }}
    secrets:
      application-id: ${{ secrets.UPDATER_APPLICATION_ID }}
      application-private-key: ${{ secrets.UPDATER_APPLICATION_PRIVATE_KEY }}
```







Permissions

User permissions are granted on an individual user basis as part of the User authorization flow. Read our permissions documentation for information about specific permissions.

Changes to permissions will be applied to all future installations. Current users will be prompted to accept any changes and enable the new permissions on their installation.

Repository permissions 3 Selected

Repository permissions permit access to repositories and related resources.

•



Contents (i)

Repository contents, commits, branches, downloads, releases, and merges.

Access: Read and write ▼

Pull requests (i)

Pull requests and related comments, assignees, labels, milestones, and merges.

Access: Read and write ▼

Creating a GitHub app



Private keys

Generate a private key

You need a private key to sign access token requests. Learn more about private keys.



Private key

SHA256:I6B311hY18BuDxIV+F5ugpJbor8Qb5yEcdaLQynZGv8=

Private Added 6 hours ago by martincostello

Delete

Creating a GitHub app

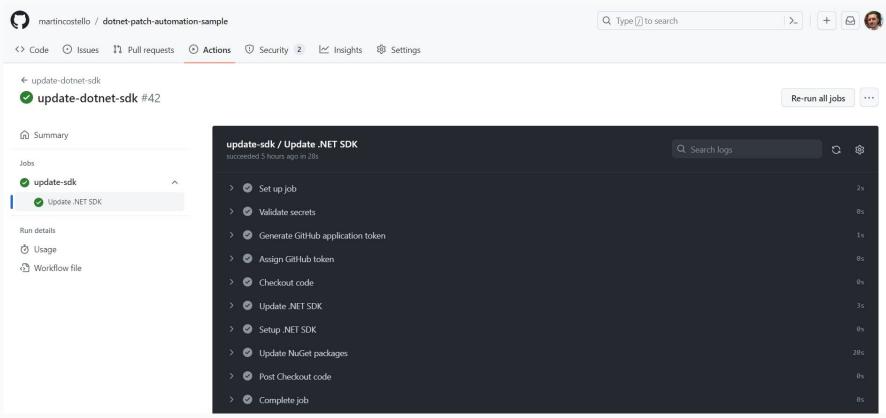


ecurity	Repository secrets		
Code security and analysis Deploy keys	△ OSSF_SCORECARD_TOKEN	Updated 5 hours ago	/
Secrets and variables			
Actions	A REVIEWER_APPLICATION_ID	Updated 6 hours ago	0 0
Codespaces			
Dependabot	A REVIEWER_APPLICATION_PRIVATE_KEY	Updated 6 hours ago	0 0
tegrations	UPDATER APPLICATION ID	Updated yesterday	0 0
GitHub Apps	G OF DATER_AFFEICATION_ID	opauted yesterday	0
∃ Email notifications	□ UPDATER_APPLICATION_PRIVATE_KEY	Updated yesterday	0 0

Encrypted secrets

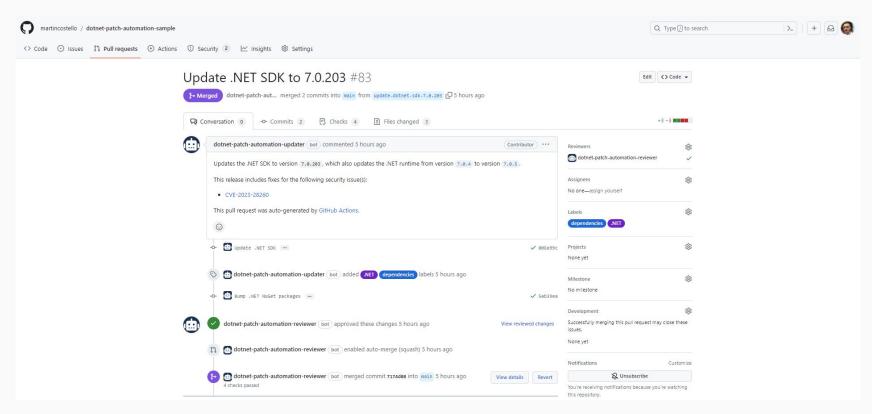
GitHub Actions





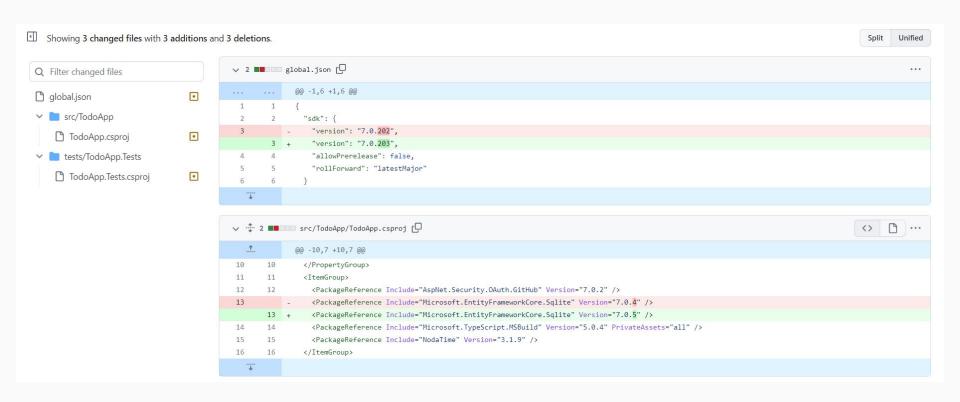
github.com/martincostello/dotnet-patch-automation-sample





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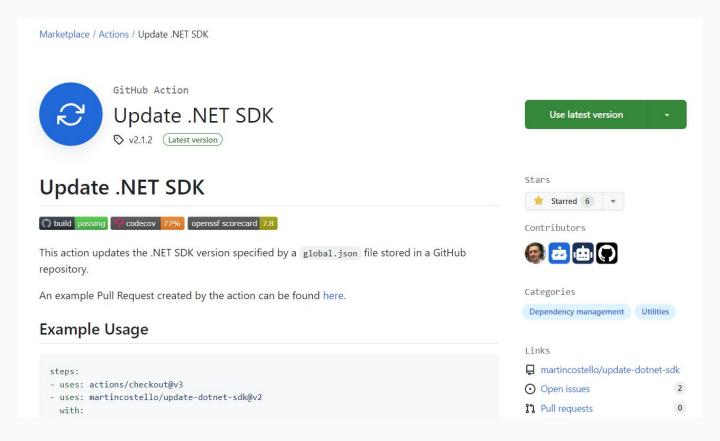






How does it work?





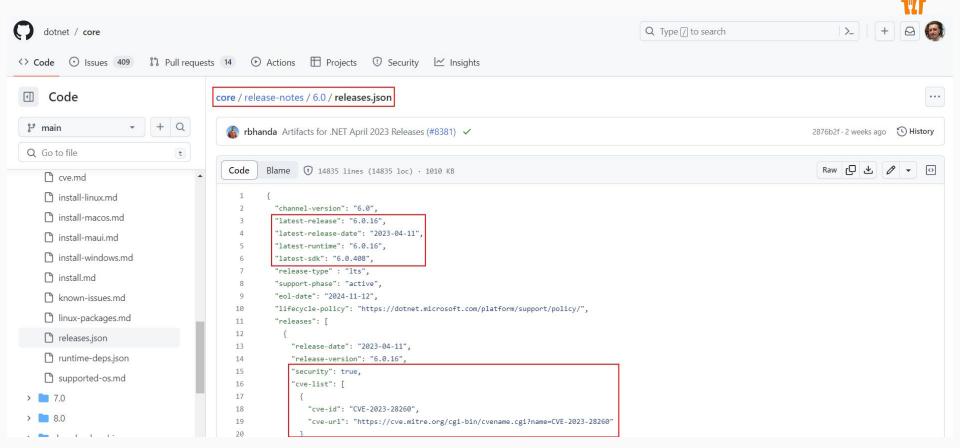


Update .NET SDK Action

- JavaScript action
- Checks the <u>.NET release notes</u>
- Updates global.json
- Uses the GitHub API to create (and label) a pull request

```
- name: Update .NET SDK
 id: update-dotnet-sdk
 uses: martincostello/update-dotnet-sdk@v2
 with:
    branch-name: ${{ inputs.branch-name }}
    channel: ${{ inputs.channel }}
    commit-message: ${{ inputs.commit-message }}
    dry-run: ${{ inputs.dry-run }}
    global-json-file: ${{ inputs.global-json-file }}
    labels: ${{ inputs.labels }}
    repo-token: ${{ steps.assign-token.outputs.access-token }}
    user-email: ${{ inputs.user-email }}
    user-name: ${{ inputs.user-name }}
```

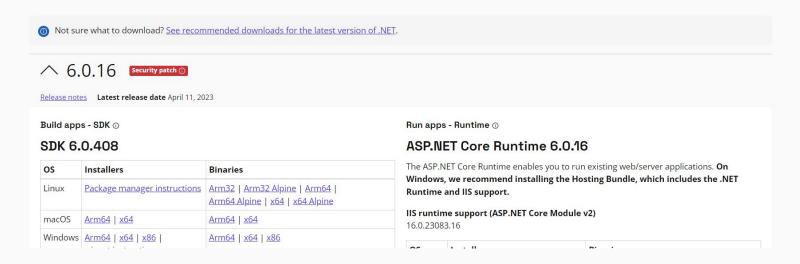
Update .NET SDK Action







Download .NET 6.0





- .NET global tool CLI application
- Published via NuGet <u>package</u>
- Checks NuGet for package updates
- Supports filtering by package and SemVer tags
- Updates <PackageReference>
 and <PackageVersion> tags

```
PowerShell Core
dotnet-patch-automation-sample (ca97a99) [!] via .NET v7.0.202
 dotnet outdated
» TodoApp
  [net7.0]
  Microsoft.EntityFrameworkCore.Sqlite 7.0.4 -> 7.0.5
» TodoApp.Tests
  [net7.0]
  Shouldly 4.2.0 -> 4.2.1
Version color legend:
<red> : Major version update or pre-release version. Possible breaking changes.
<yellow>: Minor version update. Backwards-compatible features added.
<green> : Patch version update. Backwards-compatible bug fixes.
You can upgrade packages to the latest version by passing the -u or -u:prompt option.
Elapsed: 00:00:02.9052013
dotnet-patch-automation-sample (ca97a99) [!] via .NET v7.0.202 took 3s
```



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```
PowerShell Core
dotnet-patch-automation-sample (ca97a99) via .NET v7.0.202
 dotnet outdated --upgrade --version-lock Major --include "Microsoft.AspNetCore."
  [net7.0]
  Microsoft.AspNetCore.Mvc.Testing 7.0.4 -> 7.0.5
Version color legend:
<red> : Major version update or pre-release version. Possible breaking changes.
<yellow>: Minor version update. Backwards-compatible features added.
 <green> : Patch version update. Backwards-compatible bug fixes.
Upgrading package Microsoft.AspNetCore.Mvc.Testing...
Project TodoApp.Tests [net7.0] upgraded successfully
Elapsed: 00:00:08.3794555
dotnet-patch-automation-sample (ca97a99) [!] via .NET v7.0.202 took 9s
```



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```
PowerShell Core
dotnet-patch-automation-sample (ca97a99) [!] via .NET v7.0.202
 git diff
diff --qit a/tests/TodoApp.Tests/TodoApp.Tests.csproj b/tests/TodoApp.Tests/TodoApp.Tests.csproj
index 1974f40..3d994ca 100644
--- a/tests/TodoApp.Tests/TodoApp.Tests.csproj
+++ b/tests/TodoApp.Tests/TodoApp.Tests.csproj
@@ -10,7 +10,7 @@
     <PackageReference Include="GitHubActionsTestLogger" Version="2.0.1" />
     <PackageReference Include="JustEat.HttpClientInterception" Version="4.0.0" />
     <PackageReference Include="MartinCostello.Logging.XUnit" Version="0.3.0" />
     <PackageReference Include="Microsoft.AspNetCore.Mvc.Testing" Version="7.0.5" />
     <PackageReference Include="Microsoft.NET.Test.Sdk" Version="17.5.0" />
     <PackageReference Include="Microsoft.Playwright" Version="1.32.0" />
     <PackageReference Include="ReportGenerator" Version="5.1.19" />
dotnet-patch-automation-sample (ca97a99) [!] via .NET v7.0.202
```



- .NET global tool CLI application
- Published via NuGet package
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```
PowerShell Core
dotnet-patch-automation-sample on / main via .NET v7.0.203
> dotnet outdated --upgrade --version-lock Major --include "Microsoft.AspNetCore."
No outdated dependencies were detected
Elapsed: 00:00:03.5705699
dotnet-patch-automation-sample on / main via .NET v7.0.203 took 4s
```



- .NET global tool CLI application
- Published via NuGet <u>package</u>
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```
$eligiblePackages = "${{ inputs.include-nuget-packages }}".Split(',')
$includePackages = @()
foreach ($package in $eligiblePackages) {
  $includePackages += "--include"
  $includePackages += $package
dotnet outdated `
  --upgrade
  --version-lock Major
  --output $updatesPath
  $includePackages
$dependencies = @()
if (Test-Path $updatesPath) {
  $dependencies = `
    Get-Content -Path $updatesPath |
    ConvertFrom-Json |
    Select-Object -ExpandProperty projects |
    Select-Object -ExpandProperty TargetFrameworks |
    Select-Object -ExpandProperty Dependencies | `
    Sort-Object -Property Name -Unique
```

- .NET global tool CLI application
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```
$commitLines = @()
$sdkVersion = "${{ steps.update-dotnet-sdk.outputs.sdk-version }}"
if ($deps.Count -eq 1) {
 $commitLines += "Bump $($deps[0].Name) from $($deps[0].ResolvedVersion) to $($deps[0].LatestVersion)"
  $commitLines += ""
  $commitLines += "Bumps $($deps[0].Name) from $($deps[0].ResolvedVersion) to $($deps[0].LatestVersion)."
} else {
  $commitLines += "Bump .NET NuGet packages"
  $commitLines += ""
  $commitLines += "Bumps .NET dependencies to their latest versions for the .NET $sdkVersion SDK."
  $commitLines += ""
  foreach ($dep in $deps) {
   $commitLines += "Bumps $($dep.Name) from $($dep.ResolvedVersion) to $($dep.LatestVersion)."
$commitLines += ""
$commitLines += "---"
$commitLines += "updated-dependencies:"
foreach ($dep in $deps) {
 $commitLines += "- dependency-name: $($dep.Name)"
 $commitLines += " dependency-type: direct:production"
  $commitLines += " update-type: version-update:semver-$($dep.UpgradeSeverity.ToLowerInvariant())"
$commitLines += "..."
$commitLines += ""
$commitLines += ""
$commitMessage = $commitLines -join "`n"
```



- .NET global tool CLI application
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- Checks NuGet for package updates
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```
✓ Bump Shouldly from 4.2.0 to 4.2.1

Bumps [Shouldly](https://github.com/shouldly/shouldly) from 4.2.0 to 4.2.1.

    [Release notes](https://github.com/shouldly/shouldly/releases)

- [Changelog](https://github.com/shouldly/shouldly/blob/master/BREAKING%20CHANGES.txt)
- [Commits](shouldly/shouldly@4.2.0...4.2.1)
updated-dependencies:
- dependency-name: Shouldly
  dependency-type: direct:production
 update-type: version-update:semver-patch
Signed-off-by: dependabot[bot] <support@github.com>
```

dependabot[bot] committed yesterday (Verified



dotnet outdated global tool

- .NET global tool CLI application
- Published via NuGet <u>package</u>
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- Updates <PackageReference> and <PackageVersion> tags

```
Bump .NET NuGet packages
Bumps .NET dependencies to their latest versions for the .NET 7.0.203 SDK.
Bumps Microsoft.AspNetCore.Mvc.Testing from 7.0.0 to 7.0.5.
```

updated-dependencies:

- dependency-name: Microsoft.AspNetCore.Mvc.Testing dependency-type: direct:production

update-type: version-update:semver-patch

dependency-name: Microsoft.EntityFrameworkCore.Sqlite

Bumps Microsoft. EntityFrameworkCore. Sqlite from 7.0.0 to 7.0.5.

dependency-type: direct:production

update-type: version-update:semver-patch

. .



- Uses another GitHub app to approve and auto-merge
- Only runs for PRs from the expected updater GitHub app
- Parses the commit messages to check only the expected changes have been made
- Copies approach from Dependabot's <u>fetch-metadata</u> action
- Leverages the <u>GitHub CLI</u> to perform API requests

```
name: approve-and-merge

on:
    pull_request:
        branches: [ main ]

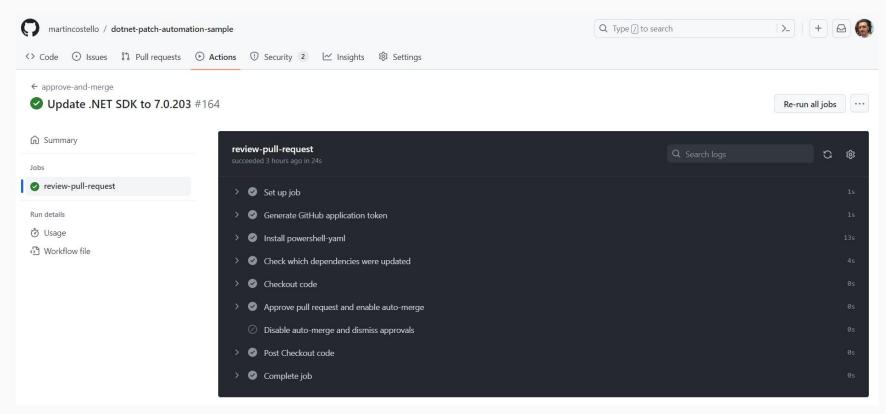
permissions:
    contents: read

jobs:
    review-pull-request:
        runs-on: ubuntu-latest

    if: ${{ github.event.pull_request.user.login == vars.GIT_COMMIT_USER_NAME }}
```

Approve and Merge with a GitHub app





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```
$commits = qh api `
 --jq '.[] | { author: .author.login, message: .commit.message }' | ConvertFrom-Json
$expectedUser = "${{ vars.GIT_COMMIT_USER_NAME }}"
$onlyDependencyUpdates = $True
$onlyChangesFromUser = $True
dependencies = @()
foreach ($commit in $commits) {
 if ($commit.Author -ne $expectedUser) {
   $onlyChangesFromUser = $False
  match = [Regex]::Match(scommit.Message, '(?m)^-{3}\s(?<dependencies>[\S|\s]*?)\s^\.{3}\s')
  if ($match.Success -eq $True) {
   $metadata = ($match.Value | ConvertFrom-Yaml -Ordered)
   $updates = $metadata["updated-dependencies"]
   if ($updates) {
     foreach ($update in $updates) {
       $dependencies += @{
         Name = $update['dependency-name'];
         Type = $update['update-type'];
  else {
   $onlyDependencyUpdates = $False
$isPatch = $dependencies.Length -gt 0
$onlyTrusted = $dependencies.Length -gt 0
$trustedPackages = $env:INCLUDE_NUGET_PACKAGES.Split(',')
foreach ($dependency in $dependencies) {
 $isPatch = $isPatch -And $dependency.Type -eq "version-update:semver-patch"
 $onlyTrusted = $onlyTrusted -And
     ($dependency.Name -eq "Microsoft.NET.Sdk") -Or
     (($trustedPackages | Where-Object { $dependency.Name.StartsWith($_) }).Count -gt 0)
$isTrusted = (($onlyTrusted -And $isPatch) -And $onlyChangesFromUser) -And $onlyDependencyUpdates
"is-trusted-update=$isTrusted" >> $env:GITHUB_OUTPUT
```

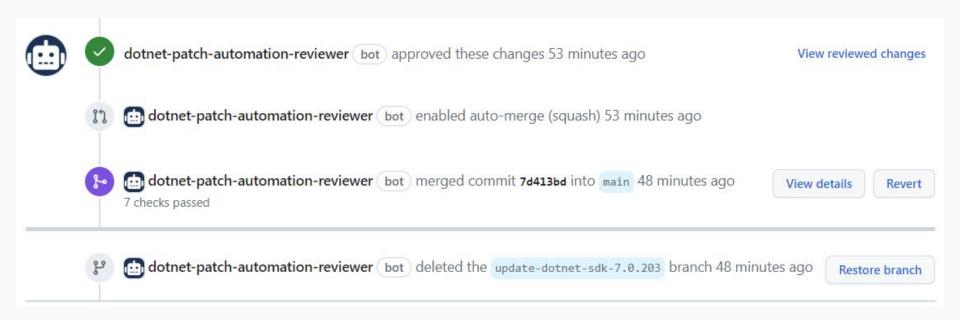


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```
$approvals = gh api /repos/${{ github.repository }}/pulls/${{ github.event.pull_request.number }}/reviews | ConvertFrom-Json
$approvals = $approvals | Where-Object { $_.user.login -eq $env:REVIEWER_LOGIN }
$approvals = $approvals | Where-Object { $_.state -eq "APPROVED" }

if ($approvals.Length -eq 0) {
    gh pr checkout "$env:PR_URL"
    gh pr review --approve "$env:PR_URL"
    gh pr merge --auto --squash "$env:PR_URL"
}
else {
    Write-Host "PR already approved.";
}
```

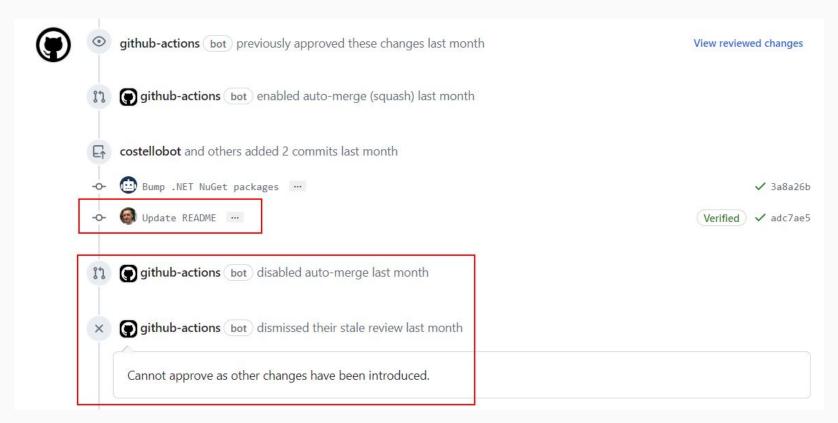






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In Summary



- Create two GitHub apps:
 - Updater
 - Reviewer
- Add two workflow files:
 - o <u>Update</u>
 - Approve and merge
- Wait until Patch Tuesday



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Links

- Sample code <u>martincostello/dotnet-patch-automation-sample</u>
- Update .NET SDK Action <u>martincostello/update-dotnet-sdk</u>
- .NET Outdated <u>dotnet-outdated/dotnet-outdated</u>

Pull requests welcome!

- @martin_costello
- @martincostello



Questions?

@martin_costello

@martincostello

careers.justeattakeaway.com