What Is GitHub, and What Is It Used For?[[1]](#footnote-1)

To understand GitHub, you must first have an understanding of Git. Git is an open-source version control system that was started by Linus Trovalds—the same person who created Linux. Git is similar to other version control systems—Subversion, CVS, and Mercurial to name a few.

We’ve established that Git is a version control system, similar but better than the many alternatives available. So, what makes GitHub so special? Git is a command-line tool, but the center around which all things involving Git revolve is the hub—GitHub.com—where developers store their projects and network with like minded people.

**Repository**

A repository (usually abbreviated to “repo”) is a location where all the files for a particular project are stored. Each project has its own repo, and you can access it with a unique URL.

**Forking a Repo**

“Forking” is when you create a new project based off of another project that already exists. This is an amazing feature that vastly encourages the further development of programs and other projects. If you find a project on GitHub that you’d like to contribute to, you can fork the repo, make the changes you’d like, and release the revised project as a new repo. If the original repository that you forked to create your new project gets updated, you can easily add those updates to your current fork.

**Pull Requests**

You’ve forked a repository, made a great revision to the project, and want it to be recognized by the original developers—maybe even included in the official project/repository. You can do so by creating a pull request. The authors of the original repository can see your work, and then choose whether or not to accept it into the official project. Whenever you issue a pull request, GitHub provides a perfect medium for you and the main project’s maintainer to communicate.

1. <https://www.howtogeek.com/180167/htg-explains-what-is-github-and-what-do-geeks-use-it-for/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)