

How to create a new empty branch for a new project



291



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We are using a git repository to store our project. We have our branches departing from the original branch. But now we want to create a small new project to track some documentation. For that we would want to create a new empty branch to start storing our files, and I would want other users of the network to clone that branch.

How can we do that?

I tried some things, but they didnt work.

```
$ mkdir proj_doc; cd proj_doc
$ git init
$ git add .
$ git commit -m 'first commit'
$ git br proj_doc
$ git co proj_doc
$ git br -d master
$ git push origin proj_doc
```

It seems to push the branch ok, but when I do a fetch or pull, it downloads information from other branches, and then I also get some extra files from other projects. What's the best solution?

[git](#)[branch](#)[git-branch](#)

edited Mar 22 '13 at 19:25



[Matt Fenwick](#)

32.9k 14 105 175

asked Dec 20 '12 at 9:34



[fazineroso](#)

2,931 6 25 35

- 8 Why do you need to store this in a branch? Branches are usually for some deviations from the same code base. Maybe just starting a new repository would be a better solution. – [Benjamin Bannier](#) Dec 20 '12 at 9:38
- 1 Well, we did it before, IIRC, and I would like to do it again, so I'm curious ;) – [fazineroso](#) Dec 20 '12 at 9:44

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3 possible duplicate of [In git, is there a simple way of introducing an unrelated branch to a repository?](#) – Don Kirkby Jul 23 '15 at 20:54

5 Answers



You can create a branch as an orphan:

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```
git checkout --orphan <branchname>
```



This will create a new branch with no parents. Then, you can clear the working directory with:



```
git rm --cached -r .
```

and add the documentation files, commit them and push them up to github.

A pull or fetch will always update the local information about all the remote branches. If you only want to pull/fetch the information for a single remote branch, you need to specify it.

edited Apr 30 '14 at 23:44



Alter Lagos

6,963 1 46 71

answered Dec 20 '12 at 9:57



Hiery Nomus

13.2k 2 33 30

17 Nice answer, but it's kind of annoying that the new branch starts out with all of the files (from the previous branch) staged. – Matt Fenwick Nov 11 '13 at 15:08

12 When issueing `git checkout --orphan <branch>` ; I don't see any listing of <branch> in `git branch .` – Santosh Kumar Jul 25 '15 at 4:43

40 After `git checkout --orphan` one can use `git reset --hard` to delete left over files. – Ilya Kozhevnikov Mar 31 '16 at 9:52

15 The reason why you don't see the branch after `git checkout --orphan <branch>` is because it does not have any commits yet. After the first commit `git branch` prints the new branch. – Krøllebølle Apr 7 '16 at 10:34

6 `git clean -fd` removes untracked files. – stefgosselin Feb 15 '17 at 17:36

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Before starting, upgrade to the latest version of GIT. To make sure you're running the latest version, run

```
which git
```

If it spits out an old version, you may need to augment your PATH with the folder containing the version you just installed.

Ok, we're ready. After doing a `cd` into the folder containing your git checkout, create an orphan branch. For this example, I'll name the branch "mybranch".

```
git checkout --orphan mybranch
```

Delete everything in the orphan branch

```
git rm -rf .
```

Make some changes

```
vi README.txt
```

Add and commit the changes

```
git add README.txt
git commit -m "Adding readme file"
```

That's it. If you run

```
git log
```

you'll notice that the commit history starts from scratch. To switch back to your master branch, just run

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```
git checkout mybranch
```

edited Aug 31 '14 at 15:00



Qantas 94 Heavy

12.4k 15 56 74

answered Sep 30 '13 at 0:15



Sid Jain

659 5 4

-
- 13 Link-only answers are not encouraged. If the link is moved or removed, your answer becomes worthless. Consider adding essential parts straight into this very answer. Pay special attention to those issues not covered with prior answers. – [bytebuster](#) Sep 30 '13 at 0:43
-
- 3 The link is not valid anymore, unfortunately. – [Alexey](#) Jan 16 '17 at 10:07
-
- 1 [Archives](#) are a wonderful thing. – [lucid_dreamer](#) Aug 13 '17 at 17:14
-
- 2 It's DANGEROUS to just remove everything in the working directory, because any non-trivial project will have untracked files (configuration, environment, cache, etc). – [Slava Fomin II](#) Aug 29 '17 at 11:18
-

▲ Make an empty new branch like this:

10

```
true | git mktree | xargs git commit-tree | xargs git branch proj-doc
```

▼ If your proj-doc files are already in a commit under a single subdir you can make the new branch this way:

```
git commit-tree thatcommit:path/to/dir | xargs git branch proj-doc
```

which might be more convenient than `git branch --orphan` if that would leave you with a lot of `git rm` and `git mv` ing to do.

Try

```
git branch --set-upstream proj-doc origin/proj-doc
```

and see if that helps with your fetching-too-much problem. Also if you really only want to fetch a single branch it's safest to just specify it

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This worked wonderfully for me, thanks~ – [Parziphal](#) Jan 31 '14 at 5:19

This answer is interesting because it allows you to start another branch/root with totally empty first commit. – [Stéphane Gourichon](#) Dec 30 '18 at 19:15

Another way to make an empty branch if you don't mind switching to it is `git checkout --orphan new-branch; git reset --hard` – [jthill](#) Apr 30 at 20:33

Let's say you have a `master` branch with files/directories:

6

```
> git branch
master
> ls -la # (files and dirs which you may keep in master)
.git
directory1
directory2
file_1
..
file_n
```

Step by step how to make an empty branch:

1. `git checkout --orphan new_branch_name`
2. *Make sure you are in the right directory before executing the following command:*
`ls -la |awk '{print $9}' |grep -v git |xargs -I _ rm -rf ./_`
3. `git rm -rf .`
4. `touch new_file`
5. `git add new_file`
6. `git commit -m 'added first file in the new branch'`

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Once you're done, you can easily switch between your branches:

```
git checkout master
git checkout new_branch
```

edited Nov 8 '18 at 23:13



Cris Luengo

26.3k 6 24 58

answered Oct 10 '16 at 10:21



user1723157

69 1 2

if git version does not have --orphan option, this method should be use;

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```
git symbolic-ref HEAD refs/heads/<newbranch>
rm .git/index
git clean -fdx
```

After doing some works

```
git add -A
git commit -m <message>
git push origin <newbranch>
```

answered Sep 9 '14 at 12:46



cyb0k

1,185 17 19

1 Be careful, `git clean` can delete files you don't want to delete! Run `git clean -ndx` first to see what files it will delete before you run it for real with the `-f` option. – [Lassi](#) Oct 17 '18 at 20:08

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