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Unlink of file Failed. Should I try again?

Asked 8 years, 10 months ago Active 28 days ago Viewed 243k times

Something wrong is going on with one of the files in my local git repository. When I'm trying to change the branch it says:

504 Unlink of file 'templates/media/container.html' failed. Should I try again? (y/n)

What could that mean?

★

48

git

unlink

edited Feb 8 '17 at 14:00



Jim Fell

5,864 28 109 184

asked Dec 8 '10 at 16:32



Pol

9,237 24 59 83

- 1 Check out [this question](#) – RDL Dec 8 '10 at 16:47
- 1 Also check that the git process has write permissions on that file. – boileau May 13 '14 at 7:52
- 5 possible duplicate of [Unlink of file failed](#) – BartoszKP May 11 '15 at 14:26

33 Answers

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next

This could mean that another program is using the file, which is preventing git from "moving" the file into or out of the working directory when you are attempting to change branches.

650 I have had this happen on Windows Vista where eclipse is the program "using" the file. The file may not be actually open in eclipse but may have been opened by a process run by eclipse.



In this event, try closing the file in any applications that might have used it. If that doesn't work, completely exit any applications which may have opened the file.

edited Jan 20 '17 at 13:59



Liam

17.4k

16

80

135

answered May 20 '11 at 19:35



Melissa

6,632

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12

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44 On Windows, use ProcessExplorer to find which process has the file open. – Dave C Mar 16 '12 at 14:43

2 Is there a way to write a script like "if this file cannot be deleted (e.g. the file just does not exists), just skip the file". – 2xMax Apr 28 '14 at 14:34 ✎

13 In my case that was Visual Studio and its Git plugin. – Michał Powaga May 11 '15 at 8:39

2 thanks @dave-c, use Process Explorer Search (Process Explorer > ctrl + F > file name) find PID using your file and kill it – Guillaume Vincent May 28 '15 at 8:07

6 On Windows, if you don't have ProcessExplorer available or don't want to download it, you can run (Windows + R) "resmon", go to the CPU tab and search the file name in the "Associated Identifiers" textbox. – Raphael Oct 16 '17 at 17:51



256



I had this issue and solved it by the command : `git gc` The above command remove temp and unnecessary files. (Garbage collector.)

edited Nov 19 '15 at 19:54



Nikita G.

5,102

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42

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answered Oct 7 '14 at 6:16



khilo

2,595

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53 This error actually happens when running `git gc` for me... – Joe Phillips Mar 4 '16 at 16:24

37 `git pull` initiated `git gc` automatically, and gc tried to access some .pack and .inx files. These were hold by "windows git" process, that owned `git pull` command. Running `git gc` manually and than - `git pull` really resolves the issue. – Nikita Apr 27 '16 at 10:23 ✎

3 While running `git gc` i got the same error again when `gc` was in progress – Prakash K Oct 25 '16 at 13:33

3 "Running git gc manually and than - git pull really resolves the issue." This helped. Thank you Nikita. – sangam Jan 3 at 8:35



76

this solution from [here](#) worked for me:

This is a Windows specific answer, so I'm aware that it's not relevant to you... I'm just including it for the benefit of future searchers.

In my case, it was because I was running Git from a non-elevated command line. "Run as Administrator" fixed it for me.

edited May 23 '17 at 12:26



Community ♦

1 1

answered Feb 21 '15 at 8:06



sepehr

3,401 1 23 30

2 Worked for me. Ran VS as admin and then launched the command prompt from VS – [Sentinel](#) Jan 4 '16 at 14:54

3 I: typed `Ctrl+C` to terminate the very long list of unlinkable files; exited gitbash, my IDE, and the GitHub Windows application; restarted gitbash in elevated "Run as Administrator" mode; and ran `git gc --aggressive`. Took a while to complete, but made it through with no errors. –

[Mark McClelland](#) Jul 22 '16 at 16:49 ✎

2 @Liam This question is older but this answer was only on the other question, and there isn't only one answer to this question which makes it harder to just set one as duplicate. – [sepehr](#) Jan 21 '17 at 11:14

I encountered this issue while doing a `git pull`.

33

I tried `git gc` and it resolved my problem.

edited Nov 19 '15 at 19:45



cgmb

3,381 3 27 55

answered Aug 18 '15 at 5:05



Rahul Chandran

331 3 2

In my case there are no processes touching the file or directory. Maybe it happens if the path is very long, because an operating system restriction (windows). Try enabling the longpath support flag in the global git configuration as indicated below:

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```
git config --global core.longpaths true
```

or try to setting the yes/no answer flag if it is not conflictive for you

```
set GIT_ASK_YESNO=false
```

If the path is too long, I've not found a successful solution.

edited Jan 20 '17 at 13:57



Liam

answered Aug 13 '14 at 13:26



andhala



Liam

17.4k

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anurag

699

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4 I do not know why but setting "git config --global core.longpaths true" was helpful for me. – Maxim Sep 27 '14 at 12:25

This might be useful for someone; if all the above didn't work for you, follow these steps:

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1. Close your IDE (mine was Eclipse, not sure if it applies to IntelliJ and others) or any other app that might be using git.
2. Open git from the command line (in my case I had git bash) and run `git gc` as mentioned by others.

This did the magic for me.

edited Sep 29 '17 at 17:34



Martin Evans

31.2k

14

41

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answered Sep 29 '17 at 17:10



papigee

1,551

13

19

As i am using [gitkraken](#) and command prompt, i ran into the same issue. And then i run `git gc` command it resolved my problem. So i am happy and want share some of the points which might be helpful.

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What `git gc` will do ?

`git gc` removing unreachable objects which may have been created from prior invocations of git add.

When to run `git gc` ?

From [doc](#), users are encouraged to run this task on a regular basis within each repository to maintain good disk space utilization and good operating performance.

How to make it auto-configurable?

Some git commands may automatically run `git gc`; see the `--auto` flag below for details. If you know what you're doing and all you want is to disable this behavior permanently without further considerations, just do

```
git config --global gc.auto 0
```

answered May 29 '18 at 13:40



Ramesh Papaganti

2,521 3 19 24



I tried `git gc` and it resolved my problem.

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answered Jul 20 '18 at 11:27



Mukesh Yadav

199 1 5



In my case (Win8.1, TortoiseGit running), it was the process called "TortoiseSVN status cache" that was locking the file.

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Killing it allowed me to run "git gc" without any more problems. The above process is fired up by TortoiseGit, so there is no need to manually restart it.

answered Jul 31 '15 at 4:39



nickD

111 1 3



I had this kind of issue on Windows 7 and it turned out to be due to some orphaned `git.exe` process.

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To solve it, open Task Manager and kill all `git.exe` processes.

Since `git` commands are short-lived, you should normally never see any `git.exe` in Task Manager. When they are there, it usually means something is wrong, and you should kill those processes.

answered Jun 16 '15 at 8:36



jakub.g

21.9k 6 57 100



I got this problem in Windows. I closed my IDE (Android Studio) and selected YES in git shell. It worked.

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answered May 18 '16 at 13:50



vovahost



13.7k

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▼
- On Windows 8: I ran git gc and it said git gc was already running, I ran git gc --force and the garbage collector ran.

I could then switch branches and merge without any issues, try git gc --force.

Perhaps the gc process didn't stop gracefully for one reason or another.

answered Jan 21 '16 at 9:49



Mark Howard

161 1 6

- ▲

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▼
- I had this issue with .tmp files in /.git/objects/pack folder. I think something had failed during a push or pull, so I removed these temporary files and reset the HEAD to my last commit. Not sure if this is advised but it worked for me. Also git count-objects -v gave me a list of the .tmp files that didn't belong in the pack folder.

Or to suppress the y/n messages in windows git open cmd.exe and run:

```
SETX GIT_ASK_YESNO false
```

seen here: <https://twitter.com/petercamfield/status/494805475733807104>

edited Oct 19 '16 at 19:55



mistaeco

2,081 1 17 18

answered Sep 15 '14 at 19:01



blueberries

71 1 3

- ▲

4

▼
- I faced same issue while doing 'git pull'. I tried manual housekeeping git command 'git gc' and it resolved my problem.

answered Nov 8 '16 at 11:04



doitright

82 2 5

3 While this **is** an attempt at an answer, it doesn't add anything that isn't already covered by other answers (such as [this one](#)). If you are trying to confirm that this solution works, or wish to thank the author of that answer, please do not post an answer to do so. After you gain some more [reputation](#), you will

that this solution works, or wish to thank the author of that answer, please do not post an answer to do so. After you gain some more [reputation](#), you will gain sufficient [privileges](#) to [upvote](#) answers you like, which is the Stack Overflow way of saying thank you. – [Scott Weldon](#) Nov 10 '16 at 16:25



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I was able to solve this by **opening Powershell as Administrator** and from there `git checkout <branch_name>`

answered Jan 7 at 15:04

[Bar Horing](#)

1,441 1 12 14



2



After trying various solutions finally `git clean -f` helped me.

EDIT: I hit the problem again few times - closing all processes dependent on git seems to help (like gitbash, Eclipse IDE, etc.)

edited Apr 26 '16 at 16:17

answered Feb 2 '16 at 12:47

[FazoM](#)

2,995 4 34 54



2



As stated above, something else is holding the files. Thing is that program doesnt look suspicious for us. I was trying to do a git pull from console, while having GitKraken opened. Closing GitKraken fixed the problem.

answered Sep 5 '17 at 13:54

[100r](#)

826 1 9 23



1



This may be a separate gitk window running to see some git history.

Just close that window to fix that problem.

answered Jan 13 '15 at 8:22

[weinerk](#)

296 2 7



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I ran into this issue running git Bash and Eclipse EGit at the same time. Solution: close Eclipse. Also wouldn't hurt to run `git gc` as @khilo mentioned.

answered Feb 5 '15 at 19:52



jhyry

51 6



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After none of the above answers seemed to work, running `git fetch -p` did the job for me.

<https://git-scm.com/docs/git-fetch>

answered Apr 20 '16 at 11:26



Jamie Wade

204 2 18



1



I ran into this issue in Windows, you might want to run the git bash as an administrator and then perform the desire commands, that solved the issue for me.

answered May 17 '16 at 15:02



Pablo Fallas

364 2 5 16



1



After run command

```
git rm -rf foo.bar
```

I see error

```
Unlink of file 'foo.bar' failed. Should I try again? (y/n)
```

Because **another program is using this file**. For example, when I run Java web application in debug model or run web application on server, I can't delete log file. Turn off application sever (or turn off debug process), re-try


```
git rm -rf foo.bar
```

I see file has been deleted.

answered Dec 25 '17 at 3:22



[Do Nhu Vy](#)

20.9k

17

105

148



1



If you are developing a web application, a common reason is to forget shutting down the server. For example this could be a simple Node.js process, or on windows your IIS process running more unobtrusive as background process.

answered Mar 9 '18 at 8:49



[alex3683](#)

688

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16



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I tried every single tip on this page and nothing helped. I was doing a `git fetch` and a `git reset --hard origin/development` gave me the unlink error. I couldn't reset to the latest commit.

What helped was checking out another branch and then checking out the previous branch. Very strange but it solved the problem.

answered Aug 1 '18 at 18:52



[T3rm1](#)

1,134

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18

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If closing your IDE and running various git commands listed here won't help, try manually killing all running Java processes. I had a Java process probably left over from eclipse that somehow kept a configuration file open.

answered Mar 12 at 7:22



[Marc.S](#)

21

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On Windows, saw this error on a `git clone` of a (fairly large) repo. Closed [SmartGit](#) and paused my backup software (CrashPlan), and after that it worked. Not sure which of the 2 did the trick, but if running either, this might do it for you too.



answered Oct 2 '17 at 20:44

[Frederik Struck-Schøning](#)**10.3k** 7 49 57

I had the same issue while doing a git pull and as stated above, it was because of a program that was holding those files and was not allowing a git pull. Closing the program helped. Usually, the IDE (like Eclipse) from where the files are being checked-in will be holding it in the background. Closing the same and re-running git pull solved the problem for me.



answered Oct 16 '17 at 14:14

[Somesh Rao](#)**1**

I had this same error and closing the app which had the file open solved it. I was able to go back and press "Y"



answered Feb 8 '18 at 1:50

[Paul McDaniel](#)**143** 5

in my case there was a copy or replace window for that particular file open and hence the unlink error. i closed it and there is no unlink error



answered Jan 4 at 6:48

[schin chan](#)**36** 3

If you're using Docker and running Windows 10, you may want to stop the container(s) where the file may be running at. To show the



statuses of your containers, run

0

```
docker ps -a
```



To stop them, simply run

```
docker stop <container name or container id>
```

This worked for me as I am running my local files using a .sh file

answered Apr 25 at 1:48



[Razor's Edge](#)

65 1 9

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next

protected by [doelleri](#) Sep 24 at 17:41

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