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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:



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



What could that mean?



git unlink

edited Feb 8 '17 at 14:00



109 184

asked Dec 8 '10 at 16:32



**7** 24 59

- 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 <u>Unlink of file failed</u> BartoszKP May 11 '15 at 14:26

## 33 Answers





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

16 80 135 answered May 20 '11 at 19:35



Melissa **6.632** 1

12 3

- On Windows, use ProcessExplorer to find which process has the file open. Dave C Mar 16 '12 at 14:43
- 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 🖍
- In my case that was Visual Studio and its Git plugin. Michał Powaga May 11 '15 at 8:39
- 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
- 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



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

256



edited Nov 19 '15 at 19:54



Nikita G.

**5.102** 1

answered Oct 7 '14 at 6:16



- 53 This error actually happens when running git gc for me... Joe Phillips Mar 4 '16 at 16:24
- 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 /
- While running git gc i got the same error again when gc was in progress Prakash K Oct 25 '16 at 13:33
- "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



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.

ا ۲

I tried git gc and it resolved my problem.



edited Nov 19 '15 at 19:45



**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:

16

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









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:



- 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 67

answered Sep 29 '17 at 17:10





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.



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 <u>doc</u>, 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





I tried git gc and it resolved my problem.

9



answered Jul 20 '18 at 11:27





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

8 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





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

6

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



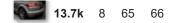


I got this problem in Windows. I closed my IDE (Android Studio) and selected YES in git shell. It worked.

6

vovahost







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.

5

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





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



**)81** 1 17

answered Sep 15 '14 at 19:01



blueberries 71 1 3



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



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 colution works or wish to thank the outbox of that answer places do not next an answer to do so. After you goin some more reputation, you will https://stackoverflow.com/questions/4389833/unlink-of-file-failed-should-i-try-again

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



I was able to solve this by opening Powershell as Administrator and from there git checkout <branch\_name>

4

answered Jan 7 at 15:04



**Bar Horing** 

**1,441** 1 12 1



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

2

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

**995** 4 34 54



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.

2



answered Sep 5 '17 at 13:54



100r

1 9 2



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





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





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



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



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



**20.9k** 17 105 148



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

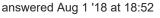
6 1



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 unkink 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.





1,134

3 18 38



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





On Windows, saw this error on a git clone of a (fairly large) repo. Closed <u>SmartGit</u> 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



**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"

C



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

0



answered Jan 4 at 6:48



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



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



1 2 next

## protected by doelleri Sep 24 at 17:41

Thank you for your interest in this question. Because it has attracted low-quality or spam answers that had to be removed, posting an answer now requires 10 reputation on this site (the association bonus does not count).

Would you like to answer one of these unanswered questions instead?