

# How to open 2 Visual Studio instances, with same Git projects and different branches



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I am needing to open 2 Visual Studio instances, one will be opened for me to just look the code of the Project X /Branch 1. Another, will be used to code in the Project X / Branch 2. How to do that and don't loose changes in commit operation?

git

visual-studio

asked Apr 17 '16 at 19:32



Ewerton

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**migrated** from [programmers.stackexchange.com](http://programmers.stackexchange.com) Apr 18 '16 at 7:13

This question came from our site for professionals, academics, and students working within the systems development life cycle.

14 clone the repo twice to different directories – [Ewan](#) Apr 17 '16 at 20:36

3 Buy a second computer. – [Sjoerd](#) Apr 18 '16 at 0:41

Huh? That's the *whole point* of using version control in the first place, isn't it? Why would you even lose changes? – [Jörg W Mittag](#) Apr 18 '16 at 1:27

Do you know that you can diff branches directly? `git difftool branch1..branch2 -- /path/to/file.c` will do that. Also possible: if you checked out branch1, you could directly `git difftool branch2` to diff all files between 1 and 2. Or `git diff --name-only branch2` lists you all files that are different between branch1 and branch2 ... – [eckes](#) Apr 18 '16 at 9:48

[stackoverflow.com/questions/2048470/...](http://stackoverflow.com/questions/2048470/...) could answer this question perhaps – [Maryam](#) Jul 17 '17 at 1:07

## 2 Answers

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With git you can only have one branch checked out at a time, but wait there is a solution! By utilising the `git worktree` command you can create a second worktree for the same repository in a different directory. You can then open that work tree in visual studio to have two different branches checked out.



Say you have "C:\projects\the\_project" and you want to make a new work tree at say "C:\projects\the\_project\_2", open git bash, navigate to the project's directory and run `git worktree add ../the_project_2 <branch>` where is the branch you want checked out in the new work tree.

This will create a new directory ("C:\projects\the\_project\_2") and checkout the branch into it, without having to re-clone the repository.

For more information see the [git worktree documentation](#).

Note: Earlier versions of visual studio do not know how to treat additional work trees, and will not recognise them as git repositories.

edited Apr 25 at 9:07

answered Dec 10 '18 at 13:20



Ripp\_

278 3 10

If you need to open the code in Visul Studio it is necessary to checkout the branch. As you can't checkout two different branches in the same directory at the same time, you can't avoid to checkout each branch in a separate directory.

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But you can set the remote of one directory to the other git directory, so that you can synchronize locally and don't Need to have any external.

Assume you want to have both branches as subdirectories of a root common directory ProjectX:

```
cd ProjectX
git clone -b branch1 <remote repo of project X> directory_branch1
git clone -b branch2 directory_branch1 directory_branch2
```

**Update May 2019:** As git woorktree is now working and supported by GUI based tooling, this is probably the solution to use today.

edited May 8 at 9:22

answered Mar 25 '18 at 15:14



milbrandt

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