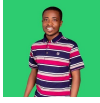


npm Uninstall - How to Remove a Package



Kolade Chris

The Node Package Manager (NPM) provides various commands that let you work with packages.

And just as you can install a package from the npm library, you can uninstall it.

To uninstall a package, you can use the command provided by npm for the purpose – `npm uninstall` .

The way you uninstall a regular package or dependency is not the way you should uninstall a global package and a dev dependency, though.

In this article, I will show you how to uninstall a regular package, a global package, and a dev dependency.

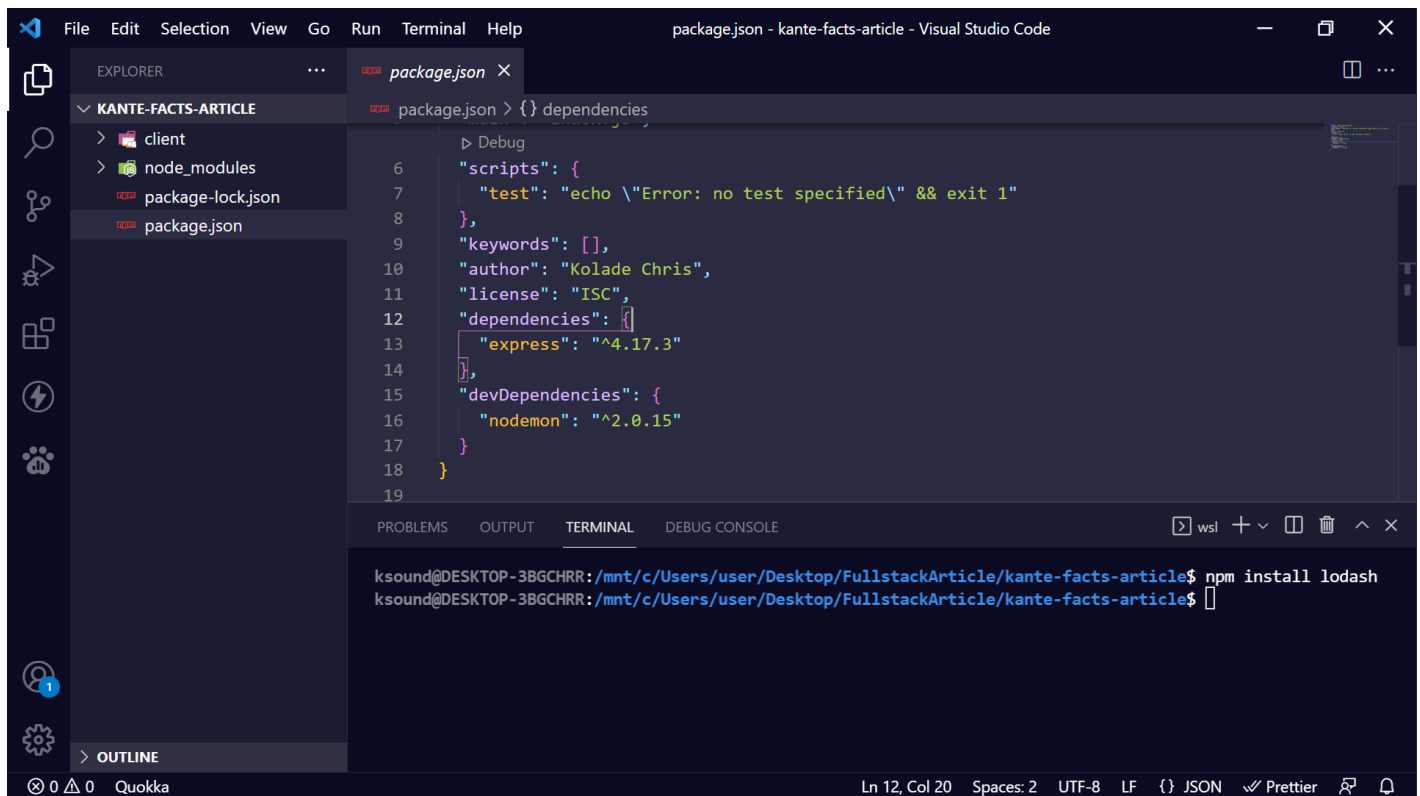
How to Remove a Package with npm Uninstall

To remove a package with the `npm uninstall` command, you can use the syntax `npm uninstall package-name` in the directory

where the package is located.

The package I will be using to demonstrate how a package is uninstalled is Express – a NodeJS framework.

In the screenshot below, you can see that Express is listed as a dependency in the `package.json` file.



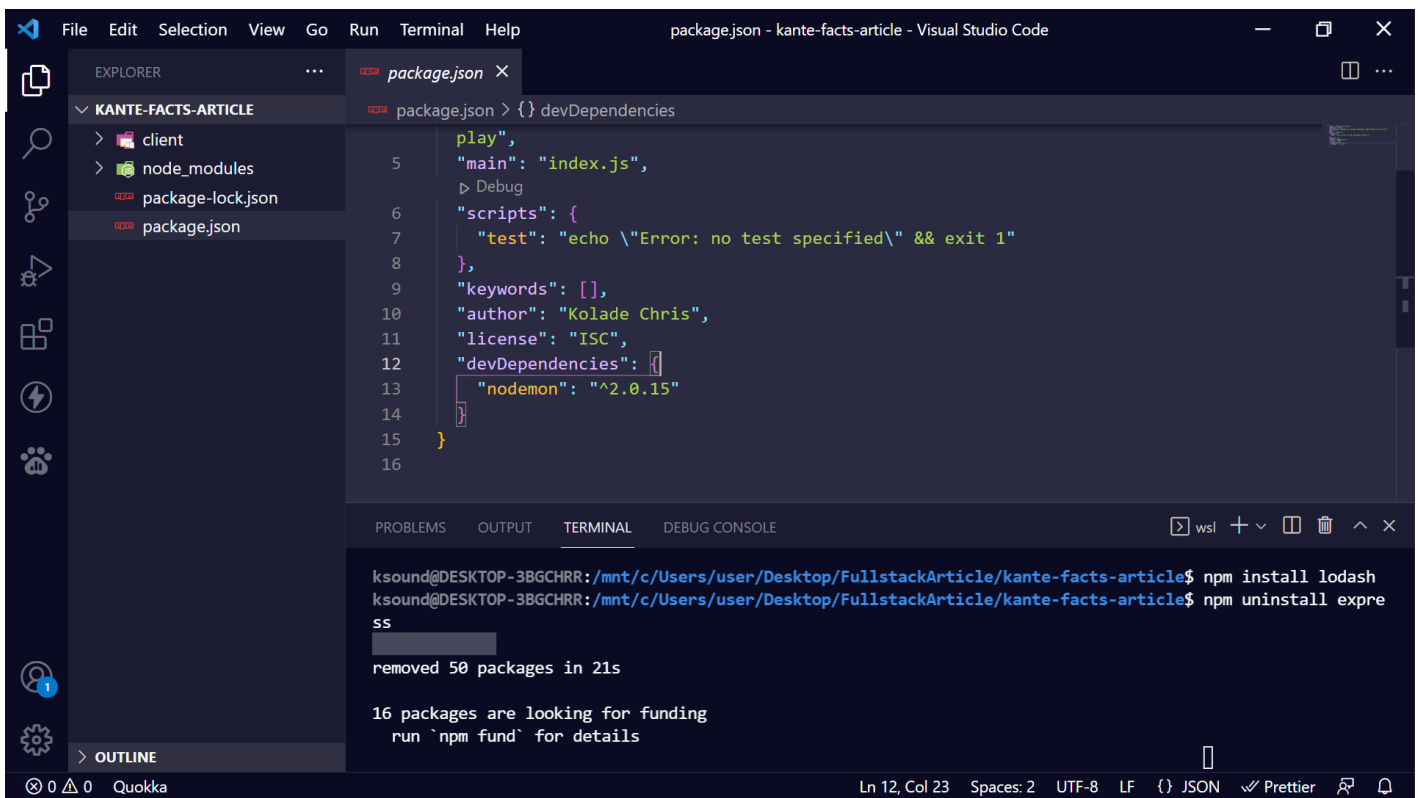
The screenshot shows the Visual Studio Code interface. The Explorer panel on the left shows the project structure for 'KANTE-FACTS-ARTICLE', including 'client', 'node_modules', 'package-lock.json', and 'package.json'. The main editor displays the 'package.json' file with the following content:

```
6  "scripts": {
7    "test": "echo \"Error: no test specified\" && exit 1"
8  },
9  "keywords": [],
10 "author": "Kolade Chris",
11 "license": "ISC",
12 "dependencies": {
13   "express": "^4.17.3"
14 },
15 "devDependencies": {
16   "nodemon": "^2.0.15"
17 }
18 }
```

The bottom panel shows the Terminal with the following commands and output:

```
ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$ npm install lodash
ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$
```

But after I run `npm uninstall express`, you won't see Express listed as a dependency again:



You can see there's no Express anymore. There's even no dependency key anymore because there is no dependency.

How to Remove a Dev Dependency with npm Uninstall

A dev dependency is a package used during development only.

To remove a dev dependency, you need to attach the `-D` or `--save-dev` flag to the npm uninstall, and then specify the name of the package.

The basic syntax for doing this is `npm uninstall -D package-name` or `npm uninstall --save-dev package-name`

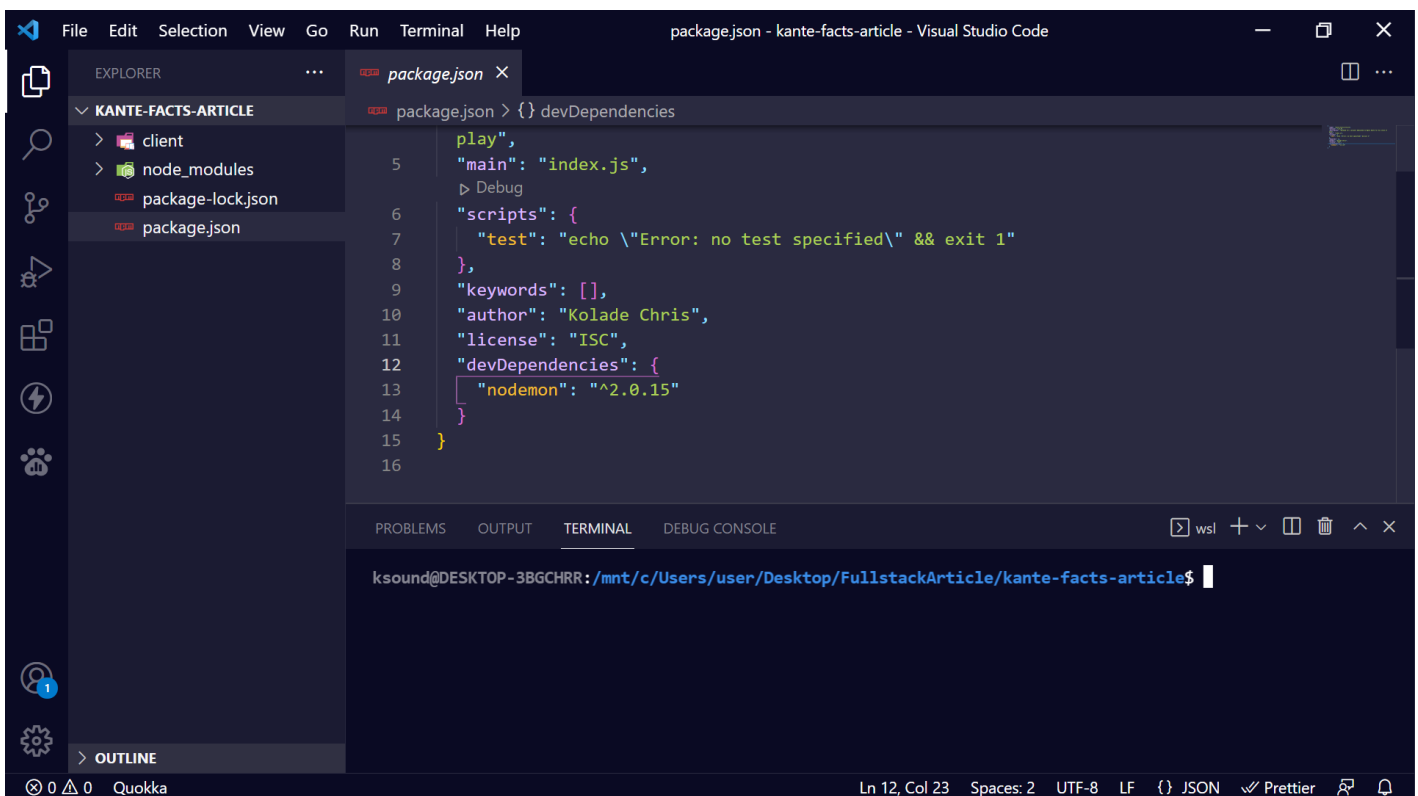
You must run the command in the directory (folder)

where the dependency is located.

I will be using Nodemon to demonstrate how to remove a dev dependency.

Nodemon lets your NodeJS app reload automatically any time it detects a change in a file or folder during development.

In the screenshot below, you can see that Nodemon is listed as a dev dependency.



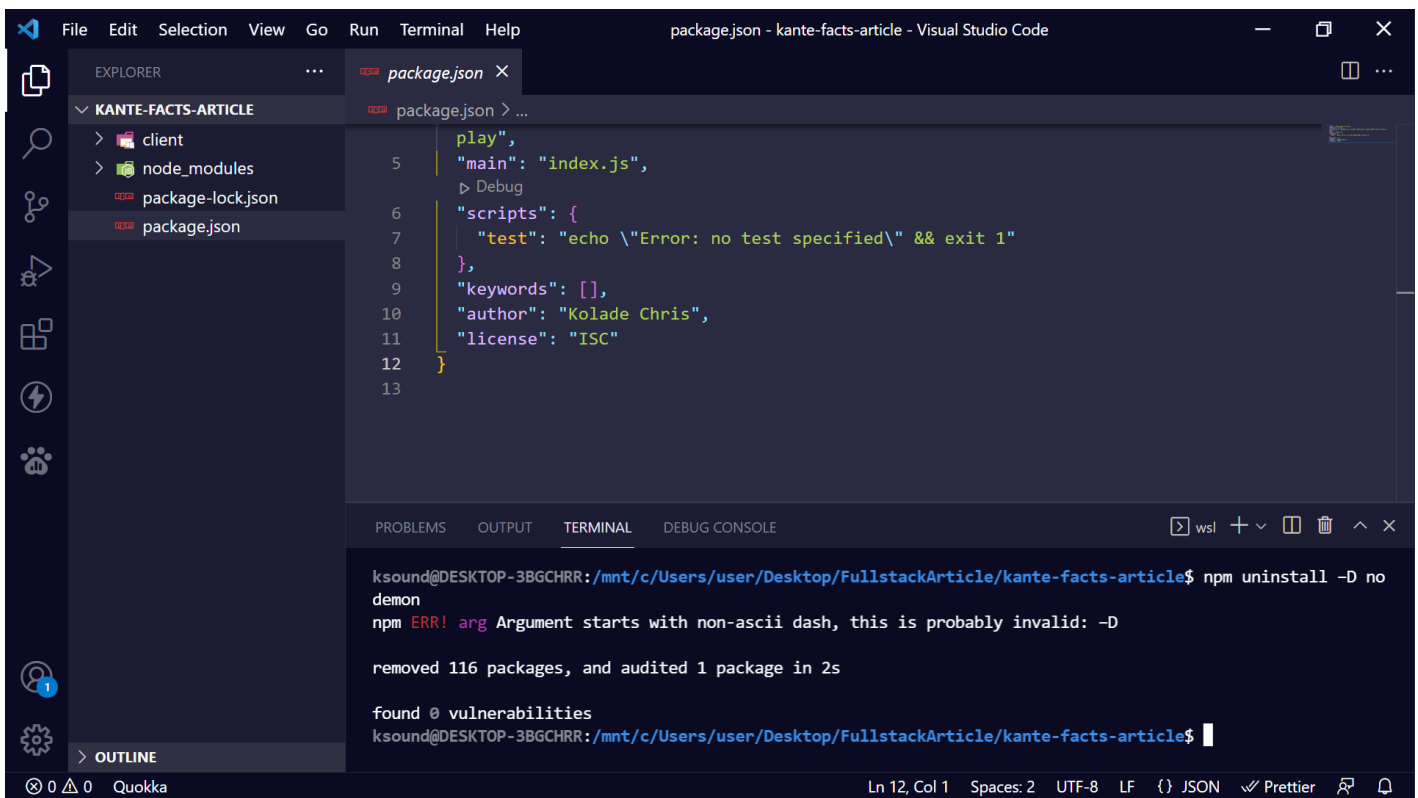
The screenshot shows the Visual Studio Code interface. On the left, the Explorer sidebar shows a project named 'KANTE-FACTS-ARTICLE' with files 'client', 'node_modules', 'package-lock.json', and 'package.json'. The 'package.json' file is open in the editor. The code in the editor is as follows:

```
package.json > {} devDependencies
5   "play",
6   "main": "index.js",
7   > Debug
8   "scripts": {
9     "test": "echo \"Error: no test specified\" && exit 1"
10  },
11  "keywords": [],
12  "author": "Kolade Chris",
13  "license": "ISC",
14  "devDependencies": {
15    "nodemon": "^2.0.15"
16  }
}
```

At the bottom, the Terminal panel shows the command prompt for a WSL environment:

```
ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR: /mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$
```

To remove it, I will run `npm uninstall -D nodemon`



The screenshot shows the Visual Studio Code interface. The Explorer panel on the left shows the file structure of a project named 'KANTE-FACTS-ARTICLE', with files like 'client', 'node_modules', 'package-lock.json', and 'package.json'. The main editor displays the 'package.json' file with the following content:

```
5   "play",
6   "main": "index.js",
7   "scripts": {
8     "test": "echo \"Error: no test specified\" && exit 1"
9   },
10  "keywords": [],
11  "author": "Kolade Chris",
12  "license": "ISC"
13 }
```

The terminal panel at the bottom shows the command `npm uninstall -D no demon` being executed. The output indicates an error: `npm ERR! arg Argument starts with non-ascii dash, this is probably invalid: -D`. Below the error, it states `removed 116 packages, and audited 1 package in 2s` and `found 0 vulnerabilities`. The terminal prompt is `ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$`.

You can see there's no Nodemon anymore in the package.json file.

How to Remove a Global Package with npm Uninstall

A global package is a package that is installed globally on your machine, so you don't have to reinstall it every you need it.

To remove a global package, you need to attach the `-g` flag to `npm uninstall`, and then specify the name of the package.

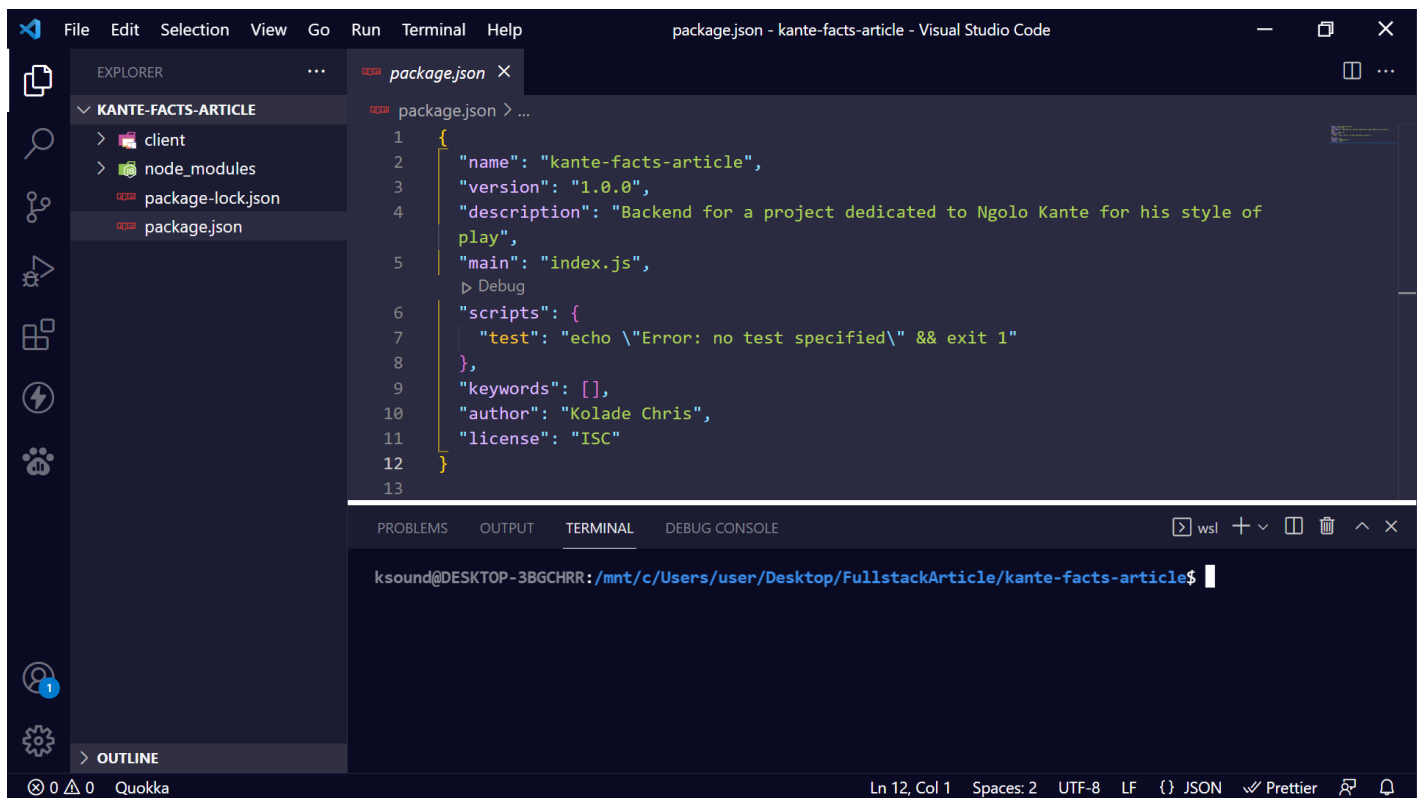
The basic syntax for doing this is `npm uninstall -g package-name`.

To show you how to remove a global package, I will be using a package called CORS (Cross-origin Resource

Sharing).

CORS blocks the Same Origin Policy (SOP) of browsers so you can make requests from one browser to another.

In the screenshot below, you can see that CORS is not listed as a package in the `package.json` file:

A screenshot of the Visual Studio Code editor interface. The Explorer sidebar on the left shows a project named 'KANTE-FACTS-ARTICLE' with subfolders 'client' and 'node_modules', and files 'package-lock.json' and 'package.json'. The main editor area displays the 'package.json' file with the following content:

```
1 {
2   "name": "kante-facts-article",
3   "version": "1.0.0",
4   "description": "Backend for a project dedicated to Ngolo Kante for his style of
5   play",
6   "main": "index.js",
7   "scripts": {
8     "test": "echo \\\"Error: no test specified\\\" && exit 1"
9   },
10  "keywords": [],
11  "author": "Kolade Chris",
12  "license": "ISC"
13 }
```

The bottom panel shows the TERMINAL with the command prompt 'ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR: /mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article\$'. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Ln 12, Col 1', 'Spaces: 2', 'UTF-8', 'LF', 'JSON', and 'Prettier'.

CORS is not listed because it is installed globally on my machine, not in the directory of a project.

If you install a package globally and you want to see it, run `npm list -g`

```
package.json > {} scripts > test
1 {
2   "name": "kante-facts-article",
3   "version": "1.0.0",
4   "description": "Backend for a project dedicated to Ngolo Kante for his style of
5   play",
6   "main": "index.js",
7   "scripts": {
8     "test": "echo \"Error: no test specified\" && exit 1"
9   },
10  "keywords": [],
11  "author": "Kolade Chris",
12  "license": "ISC"
13 }
```

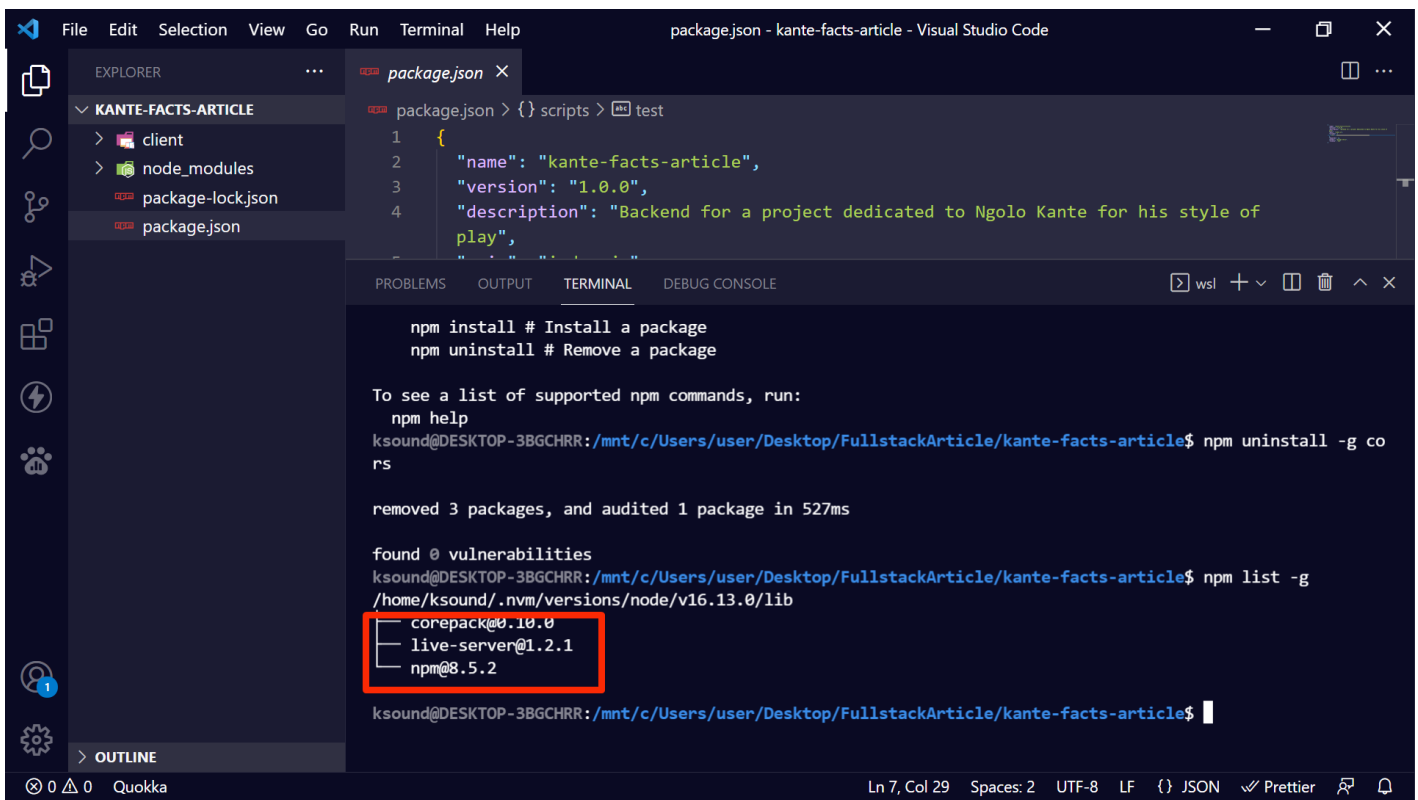
```
/home/ksound/.nvm/versions/node/v16.13.0/lib
├─ corepack@0.10.0
├─ cors@2.8.5
├─ live-server@1.2.1
└─ npm@8.5.2

ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-aksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt
ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$
```

You can see that CORS is listed as a global package now.

To uninstall CORS globally, I will now run `npm uninstall -g cors`.

After running the command, you can see there's no CORS anymore when I run `npm list -g`:



```
package.json > {} scripts > test
1 {
2   "name": "kante-facts-article",
3   "version": "1.0.0",
4   "description": "Backend for a project dedicated to Ngolo Kante for his style of
   play",
}

npm install # Install a package
npm uninstall # Remove a package

To see a list of supported npm commands, run:
npm help
ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$ npm uninstall -g cors

removed 3 packages, and audited 1 package in 527ms

found 0 vulnerabilities
ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$ npm list -g
/home/ksound/.nvm/versions/node/v16.13.0/lib
├─ corepack@0.10.0
├─ live-server@1.2.1
└─ npm@8.5.2

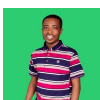
ksound@DESKTOP-3BGCHRR:/mnt/c/Users/user/Desktop/FullstackArticle/kante-facts-article$
```

Conclusion

In this article, you learned the various ways you can uninstall different kinds of NPM packages, so you can have more control over your codebase and remove unnecessary packages.

Thank you for reading.

If you find this article helpful, kindly share it so others can see it.



Kolade Chris

Web developer and technical writer focusing on frontend technologies. I also dabble in a lot of other technologies.

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