About GitHub Desktop

GitHub Desktop helps you work with projects hosted on GitHub.

GitHub Desktop is a free, open source application that helps you to work with files hosted on GitHub or other Git hosting services.

You can use GitHub Desktop alongside any tools you need to contribute to a project. For example, a typical workflow would be to use GitHub Desktop to download a GitHub repository to your computer and create a new branch, use an editor such as Visual Studio Code to make changes to the code, then return to GitHub Desktop to commit and push the changes to GitHub.

Like any tool for contributing changes to repositories on GitHub, GitHub Desktop is built around the version control software Git. If you're new to Git and GitHub, you may find it easier to get started with GitHub Desktop than you would using Git on the command line. Because GitHub Desktop has a graphical user interface, it simplifies many of the aspects of Git that can be challenging for new users, such as memorizing commands and visualizing the changes you're making.

Even if you have experience with command-line Git, you may benefit from incorporating GitHub Desktop into your work. If you frequently need to look up syntax for less common Git commands, such as choosing which changed lines to include in a commit or adding a co-author to a commit, you may benefit from switching to GitHub Desktop to perform these commands.

Because GitHub Desktop makes commands like these easy to find, and helps you visualize the changes you're introducing with an integrated diff view, it encourages best practices and helps you to create an accurate and easy-to-follow commit history so other collaborators on a project can easily review your work.

Unlike other Git clients, GitHub Desktop is specifically designed for use with GitHub, so it can make you more productive when working with repositories on GitHub. For example, you can authenticate to GitHub.com or GitHub Enterprise Server quickly, without needing to use a separate credential manager, and you can check out a pull request to run checks without needing to open your browser.

GitHub Desktop is available for Windows and macOS. For information about installing and getting started with GitHub Desktop, see "Getting started with GitHub Desktop."

If you're interested in the open source GitHub Desktop project, you can see the roadmap, contribute to the project, or open an issue to provide feedback in the `desktop/desktop` repository.

Further reading

- "About Git"

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