

Handy GitHub Resources

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BY NICKY BLEIEL | STC Associate Fellow

GITHUB IS A Web-based service that hosts code and other content in Git repositories and provides version control, project management, and social features.

There are a variety of resources available to learn about GitHub, including quick reference guides, tutorials, videos, books, and webinars. Create a free GitHub account (<https://help.github.com/categories/setup/>) and take a look.

Learning GitHub

The GitHub Help is excellent. I recommend you read the GitHub Glossary before starting any tutorials to familiarize yourself with the terminology. The GitHub Guides are short (< 10 min) tutorials, and include a “Hello World” project—always a good place to start.

- ▶ GitHub Help, <https://help.github.com>
- ▶ GitHub Glossary, <https://help.github.com/articles/github-glossary>
- ▶ GitHub Guides, <https://guides.github.com>
- ▶ Video GitHub Training and Guides, <https://www.youtube.com/c/githubguides>
- ▶ GitHub Services (try the free 15 minute “Learn the basics of Git in 15 minutes” tutorial), <https://services.github.com/>. Also sign up for a

free introductory webinar, <https://services.github.com/training>

- ▶ GitHub Workflow, <https://help.github.com/articles/what-is-a-good-git-workflow>
- ▶ Guide to Contributing to Open Source Projects, <https://guides.github.com/activities/contributing-to-open-source>

Mastering Markdown

The GitHub READMEs, comments, wikis, Gists, and more are written in Markdown, a lightweight markup language that can be converted to HTML easily.

- ▶ Markdown Quick Reference Guide: “Mastering Markdown” from GitHub Guides, <https://guides.github.com/features/mastering-markdown>

Books

- ▶ Bell, Peter, and Brent Beer. *Introducing GitHub*. Sebastopol, CA: O’Reilly Media, 2014. <http://shop.oreilly.com/product/0636920033059.do>
- ▶ Chacon, Scott, and Ben Straub. *Pro Git*. Apress, 2014. <https://git-scm.com/book/en/v2>

Projects of Interest

GitHub hosts many projects that may be of interest to technical communicators. For example:

- ▶ Dynamic Information Model (an implementation of an intelligent


style guide) project by oXygen XML editor and Comtech Services, <https://github.com/oxygenxml/dim>.

- ▶ W3C HTML Specification, <https://github.com/w3c/html>
- ▶ DITA Open Toolkit, <https://github.com/dita-ot/dita-ot>
- ▶ WordPress, <https://github.com/WordPress/WordPress>
- ▶ Typography Handbook by Kenneth Wang, <https://github.com/kennethwang14/TypographyHandbook>

Fun Stuff

The Octodex includes the original Octocat and variations created by the community. The Octocat is the official GitHub Mascot and was created by Simon Oxley, the same artist who created the original Twitter bird.

GitHub supports Emoji; the Emoji Cheat Sheet will introduce you to a variety of emoji you can use in your Readmes, comments, and more. The “Ship It Squirrel” (:shipit:) is used in GitHub comments to indicate that you believe a change is ready to ship. And where else can you read the Apollo 11 source code?

- ▶ GitHub Octodex, <https://octodex.github.com/>
- ▶ Andersson, Arvid. *Emoji Cheat Sheet*, www.emoji-cheat-sheet.com
- ▶ Apollo 11 Guidance Computer (AGC) source code, <https://github.com/chrislgarry/Apollo-11/>. (For more information, <http://qz.com/726338/the-code-that-took-america-to-the-moon-was-just-published-to-github-and-its-like-a-1960s-time-capsule/>.) 



This column is a quick reference guide exploring “essential” technical communication topics. Please send questions or comments to Nicky Bleiel at nableiel@us.ibm.com. Follow her on Twitter: [@nickybleiel](https://twitter.com/nickybleiel).