`commit` -ment issues with Git: investigating & archiving y'alls work

Sarah Nguyen, Vicky Steeves (Presenting)
& Genevieve Milliken

csv,conf,v5 | 2020.05.14

Slides: osf.io/uftkn

#IASGE

About IASGE

(ice-age)

Who are we?

New York University, Division of Libraries!

In addition to the core team (below), this project wouldn't be possible without the time and efforts of colleagues in Digital Library Technology Services

Vicky Steeves
Project Lead

Genevieve Milliken
Research Scientist

Sarah Nguyen
Research Scientist

Project overview

An Alfred P. Sloan Foundation funded project, IASGE (pronounced `ice-age`) has two main streams of work:

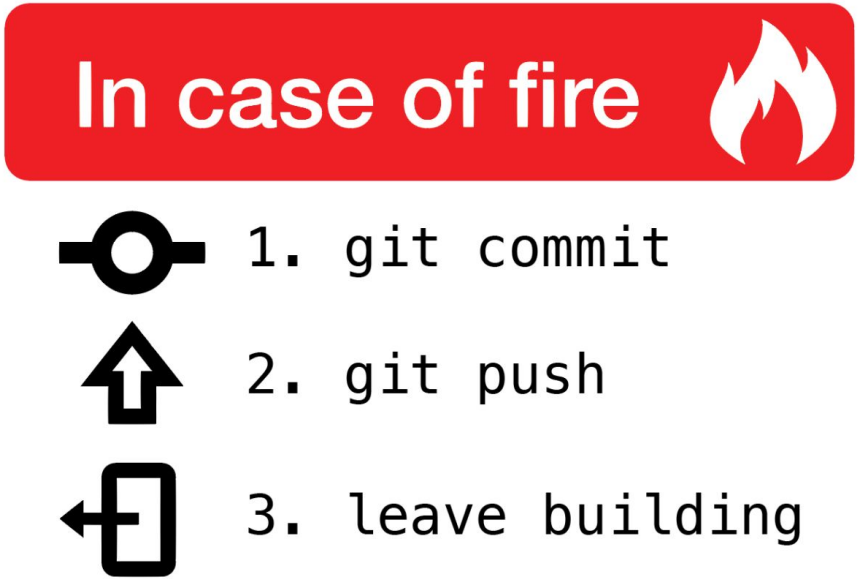
1) Study how academics/folks in academia are using Git and Git hosting platforms and how these tools could be better aligned with their needs
2) Evaluate the extent to which the scholarship on Git hosting platforms is being preserved by professionals, and write an archival spec

The results of this project aim to inform the way code and annotations on Git hosting platforms move from a phase where they are highly active and collaborative, to a state where they are stable, permanently citable, and under **active, professional preservation**.

What is Git?

- Git is a revision control system, a program to manage your source code history
- It is strictly a command-line tool
- Revision control systems let us compare, restore, and merge changes to our [plain-text] stuff

This is hugely important for collaboration and transparency!



What are “Git Hosting Platforms”

Literally, places that host git repositories on the web

They are NOT the same as Git, but rather are places where you can upload Git repositories with some additional features

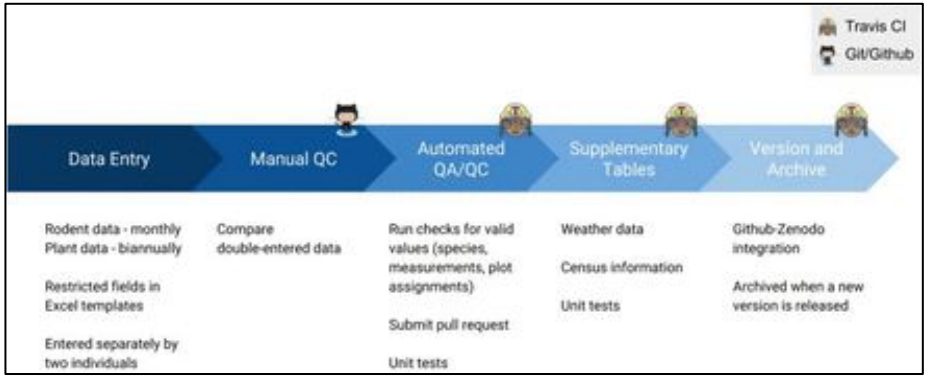
The most popular include:

1. GitHub
2. GitLab
3. Bitbucket
4. Sourceforge

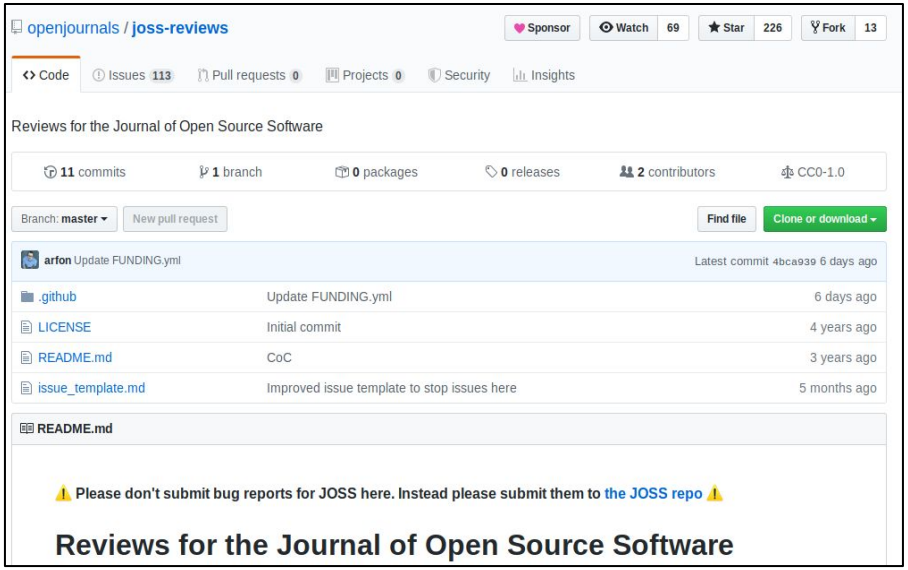
Name	Manager	Established	Server side: all free software	Client side: all-free JS code
Assembla	Assembla, Inc	2005	No	Unknown
Azure DevOps Services	Microsoft	2012[1]	No	No
Bitbucket	Atlassian	2008	No	No
Buddy	Buddy, LLC.	2015	No	No
CloudForge	CollabNet	2012	No	Unknown
Gitea	Gitea organization (open source community)[4]	2016	Yes	Yes
GForge	The GForge Group,Inc. [5]	2006	Partial	Yes
GitHub	GitHub, Inc	2008-04	No	No
GitLab	GitLab Inc.	2011-09[6]	Partial[7]	Yes[8]
GNU Savannah	Savannah Administration	2001-01	Yes	Yes
Helix TeamHub	Perforce Software	1995	No	No
Launchpad	Canonical	2004	Yes	No
OSDN	OSDN K.K. (Q11237954)	2002–04	Unknown	Yes
Ourproject.org	Comunes Collective	2002	Yes	Yes
OW2 Consortium	OW2 Consortium	Unknown	Unknown	No
Phabricator	Phacility, Inc	2010	Yes	Yes
Rosetta Code	Unknown	2007	Unknown	Unknown
SEUL	Unknown	1997-05	Unknown	No
SourceForge	BizX LLC	1999-11	Yes[14][15]	Yes

Examples of “scholarly Git” usage

1. Publishing code and data as supplementary materials
2. Quality assurance workflows for data analysis
3. Journal infrastructure with peer review



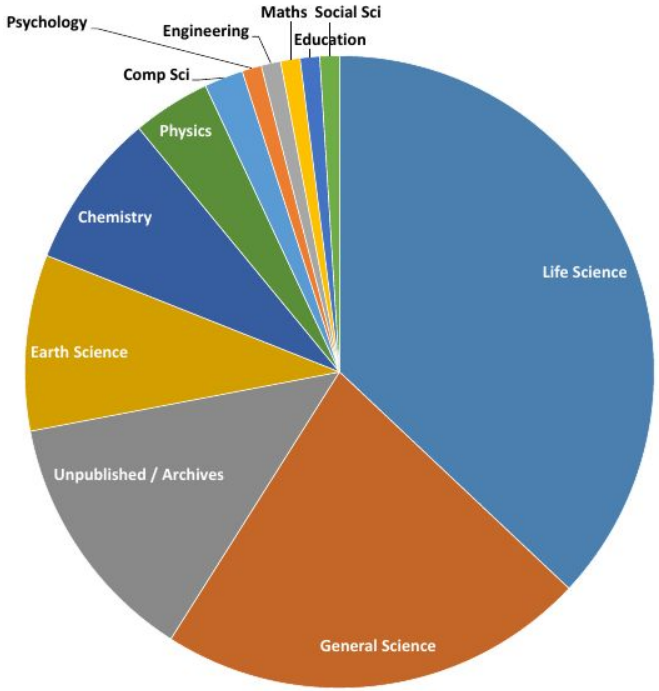
https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/344804v2.full



Estimated scope of scholarship in GHPs

"Over 5,000 Github software repositories have been identified as research software according to the criteria explained previously: either a research publication referenced the software repository, or the software repository referenced a research publication."

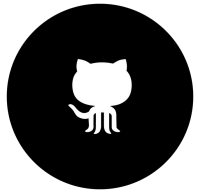
-- Hasselbring, Wilhelm, et al. "FAIR and Open Computer Science Research Software." ArXiv:1908.05986 [Cs], Aug. 2019. http://arxiv.org/abs/1908.05986.



Research areas of publications cited from Github repositories from arXiv: 1909.05986

What's the problem we want to solve

- Researchers use a variety of scholarly tools on the web during the research process, which includes designing, developing, and refining (through versioning) source code
- This source code is contextualized by the "scholarly ephemera" associated with it (e.g. issue disc.)
- No project currently captures both source code and scholarly ephemera

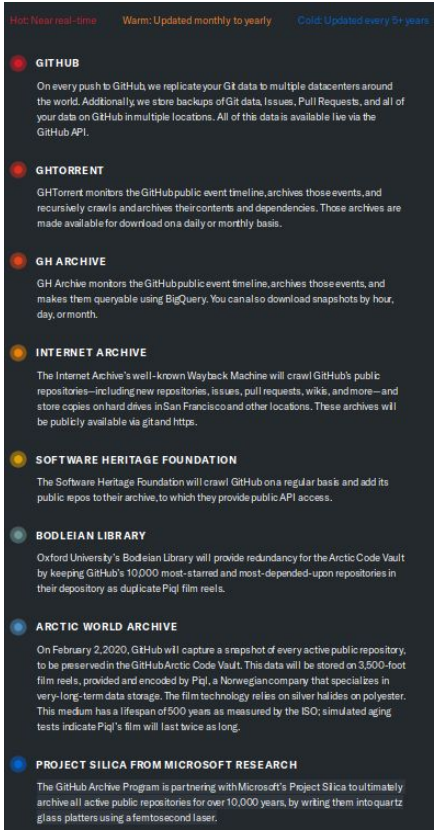


in the room: GitHub's Archiving Program

There are a lot of open questions about GitHub's Archive Program which are probably shared by people in this room

The fact remains that none of the partners or solutions here capture the ephemera + source code reliably together, which we posit as important for usability in the long-term

Also, read DSHR's takedown: blog.dshr.org/2019/11/seeds-or-code.html



Gap Analysis to Understand Scholars Using Git

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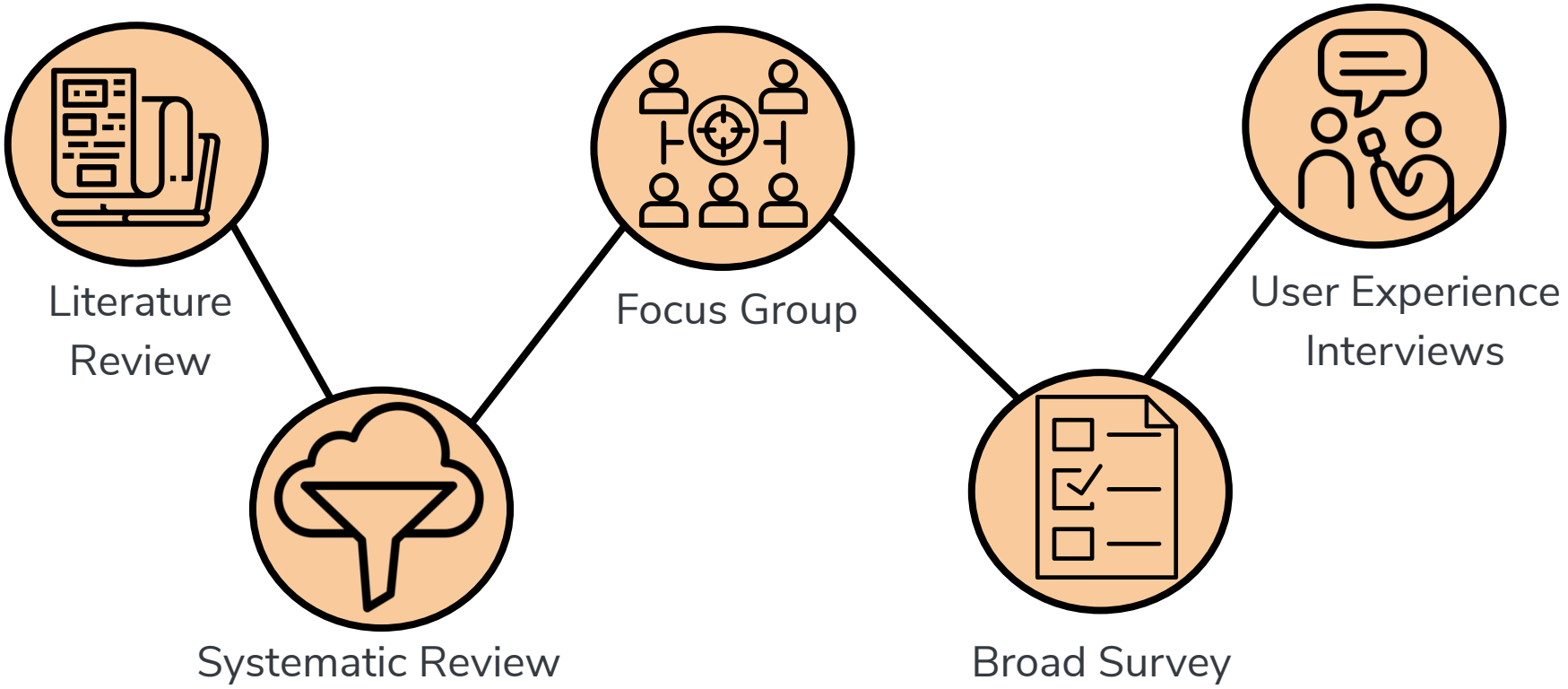
Researching the Scholarly Git Experience

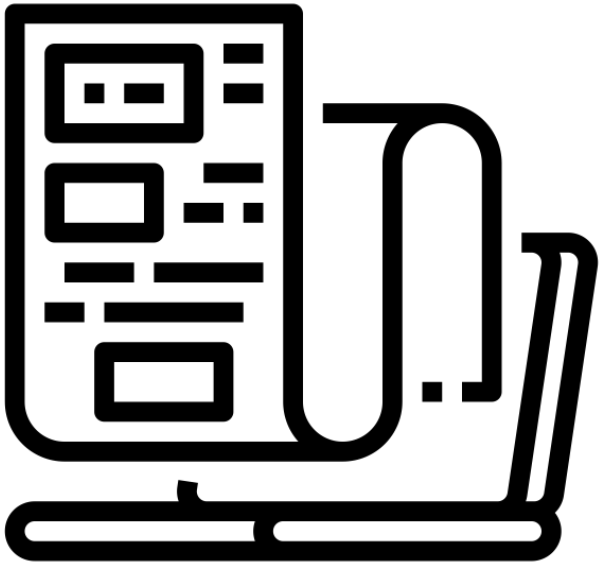


Research Questions

How are scholars currently using this toolkit of Git + GHPs?

How can features in Git + GHPs serve scholarship?

How can we improve teaching Git for minimal users?



Follow our IASGE blog for updates

investigating-archiving-git.gitlab.io/updates/

Examples of scholarly Git* usage

Git Experiences	Related GHP Feature	Related Git Commands
Version control	- Commit logs - Branches	`git log` `git diff`

Community & collaboration	- Issue Tracker
	- Pull requests
		`git add <files>`
		`git commit -m "[message]"`
		`git push`

Method tracking	- README - Wiki - Posts - Commit logs	`git commit logs`

Education	- README
	- Wiki
	- Issue Tracker
	- Pull requests
		`open-issues`
		`close-issues`
		`list-issues`
		`check-review`

Data processing	- Continuous integration	(various)
Reproducibility	- README - Continuous integration	`git clone` `git pull`
Publishing	- Pages services - README	(various)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1139/facets-2019-0020

A graduate student perspective on overcoming barriers to interacting with open-source software

Published Online: 7 May 2020 | Views: 858

Oihane Cereceda ✉, Danielle E.A. Quinn ✉

PDF Citation (RIS) Citation (BibTeX)

Perspective

Integrative Sciences

Science and Society

Science Education

open-source software

graduate students

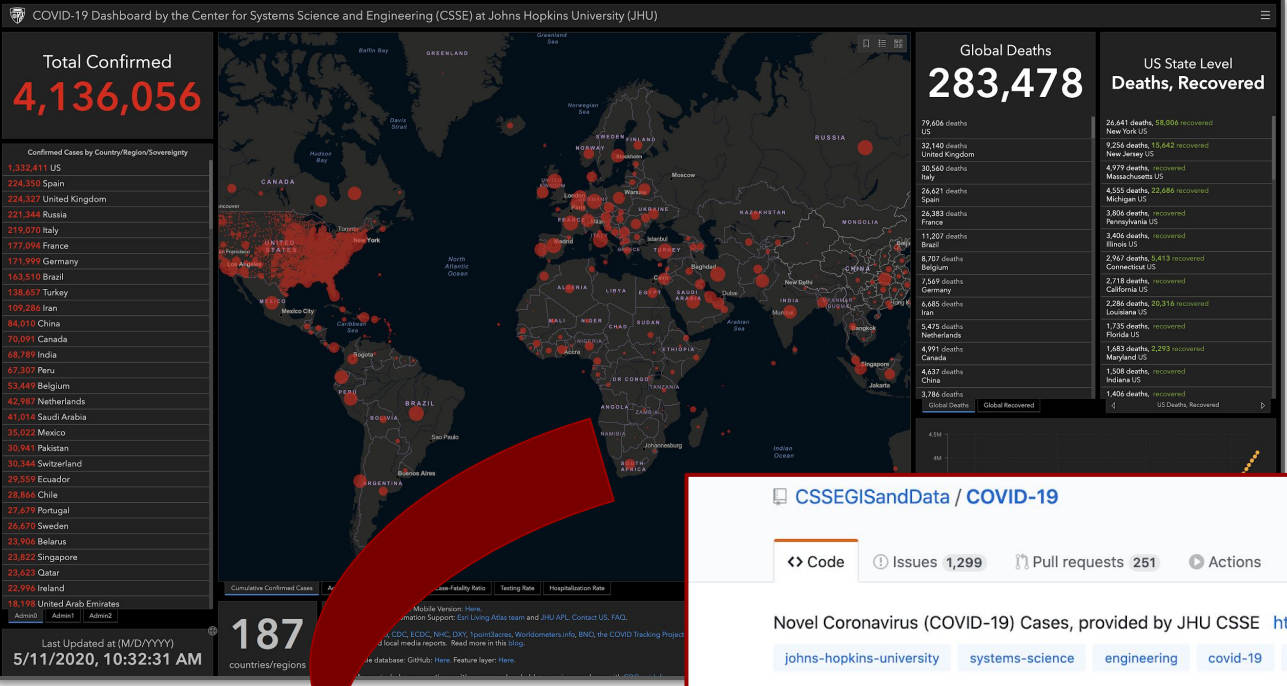
computational research

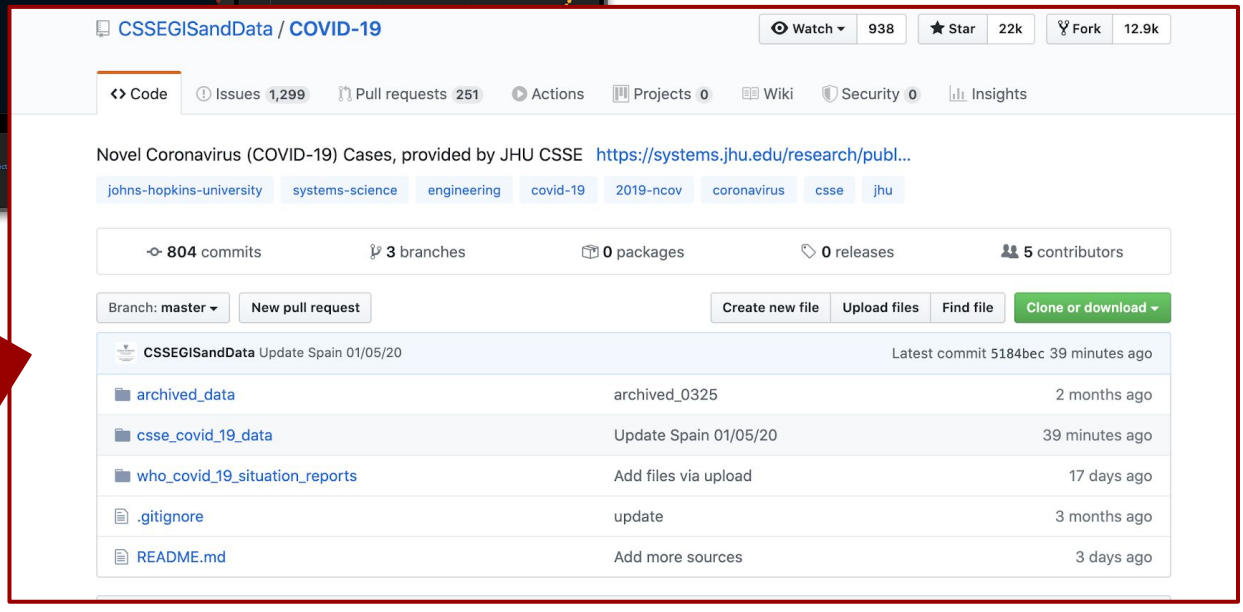
academic culture

Abstract

Computational methods, coding, and software are important tools for conducting research. In both academic and industry data analytics, open-source software (OSS) has gained massive popularity. Collaborative source

Many academic institutions are using GitHub to share COVID-19 Data





Johns Hopkins University's Center for Systems Science & Engineering

Academic institutions are using GitHub to share COVID-19 models

Report 9: Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand

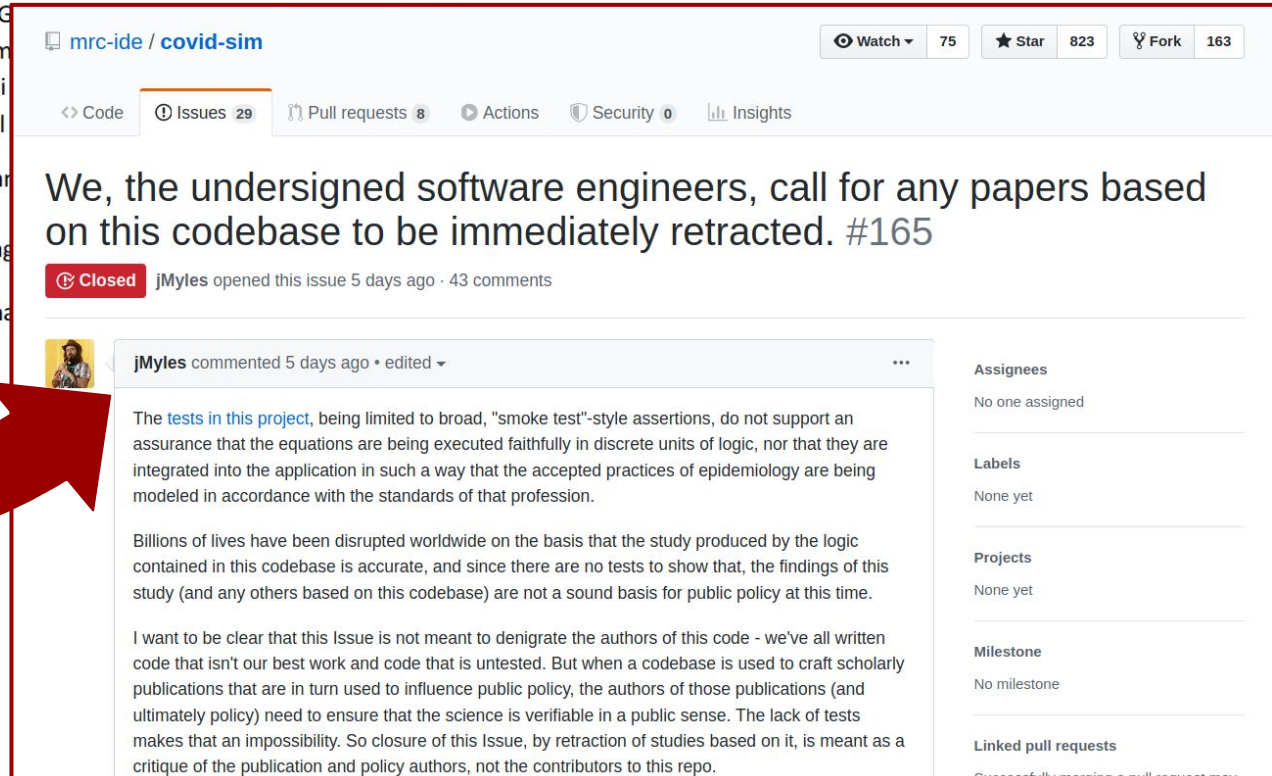
Neil M Ferguson, Daniel Laydon, Gemma Nedjati-Gilani, Natsuko Imai, Kylie Ainslie, Marc Baguelin, Sangeeta Bhatia, Adhiratha Boonyasiri, Zulma Cucunubá, G Dorigatti, Han Fu, Katy Gaythorpe, Will Green, Arran Ham Elsland, Hayley Thompson, Robert Verity, ik Volz, Haowei Caroline Walters, Peter Winskill, Char aker, Christl

On behalf of the Imperial College Response Tea

WHO Collaborating Centre fo us Disease Modelling
MRC Centre for Global Infec ease Analysis
Abdul Latif Jameel Institute ease and Emergency Ana
Imperial College London

Correspondence: neil.fergus @imperial.ac.uk

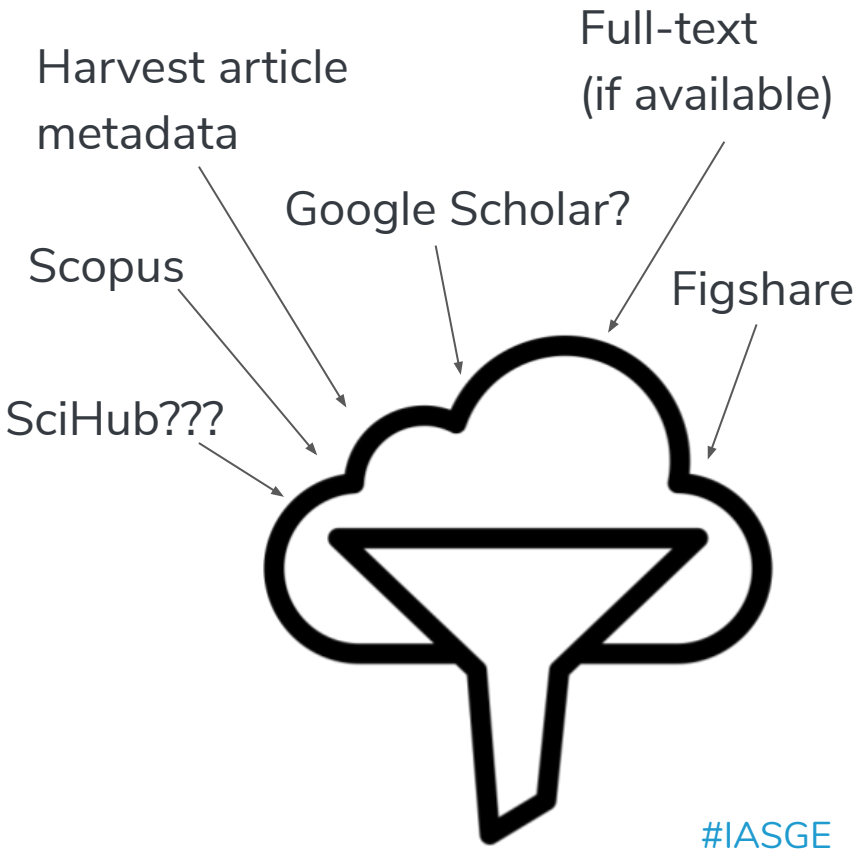
Imperial College of London's MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analysis (MRC GIDA)



Part I: Systematic Review (Quant)

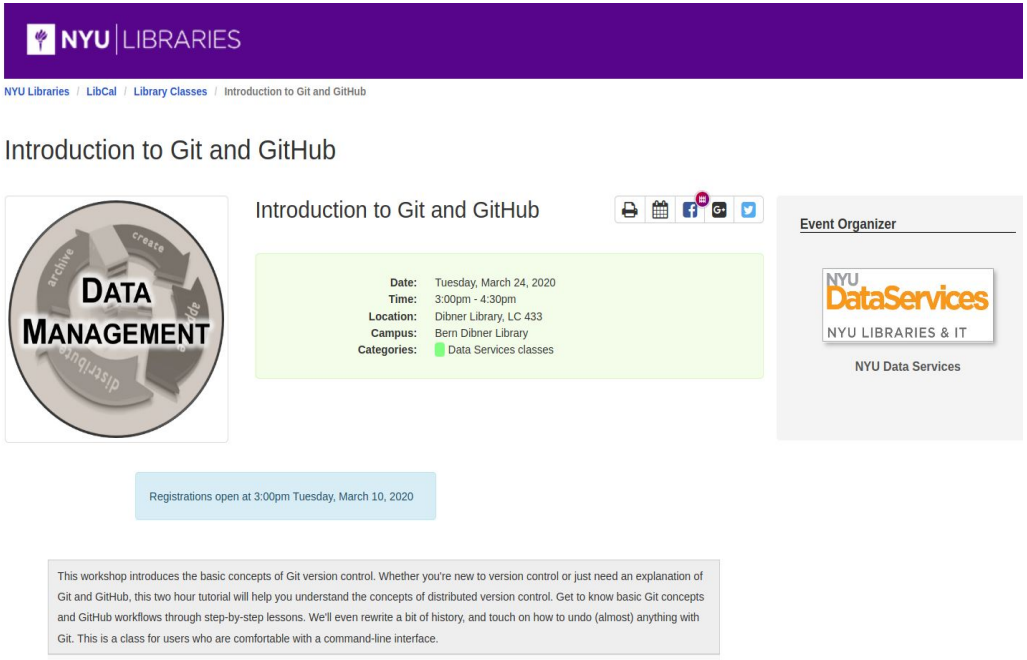
An approach to understand the landscape of published scholarly articles that reference Git repositories.

“All our source code is available on [GitLab], to allow community to reproduce our results, from the training of the networks, until the statistical analyses.” (Perez, 2019)



Part II: Focus Group (Qual)

. . . teachers were surprised by how overwhelming the student enthusiasm is for adopting VCS, [but] they also discovered that they lacked understanding about the system or having confidence in their ability to use it effectively beyond the course.



—Glassey, R. (2019). Adopting Git/Github Within Teaching: A Survey of Tool Support. *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Global Computing Education*, 143–149. https://doi.org/10.1145/3300115.3309518

Kirstie Whitaker @kirstie_j · 2h

I've done this a few times in the last month and it really makes me happy. A GitHub pull request is truly one of the biggest barriers to more folks working collaboratively online. We have these great tools, but we don't teach them often or compassionately enough.

2 1 10

Part III: Survey (Quant)

Target population:
Scholars who use Git across all disciplines & statuses

Goal:
To gather a wide-ranging & comparable census

Please participate & share widely!
bit.ly/3aO0ykQ

Closes June 22nd

Themes

- ❑ Learning Git
- ❑ Teaching Others
- ❑ Daily Use
- ❑ Features on hosting platforms
- ❑ Scholarship
- ❑ Follow-up

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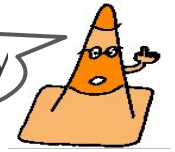
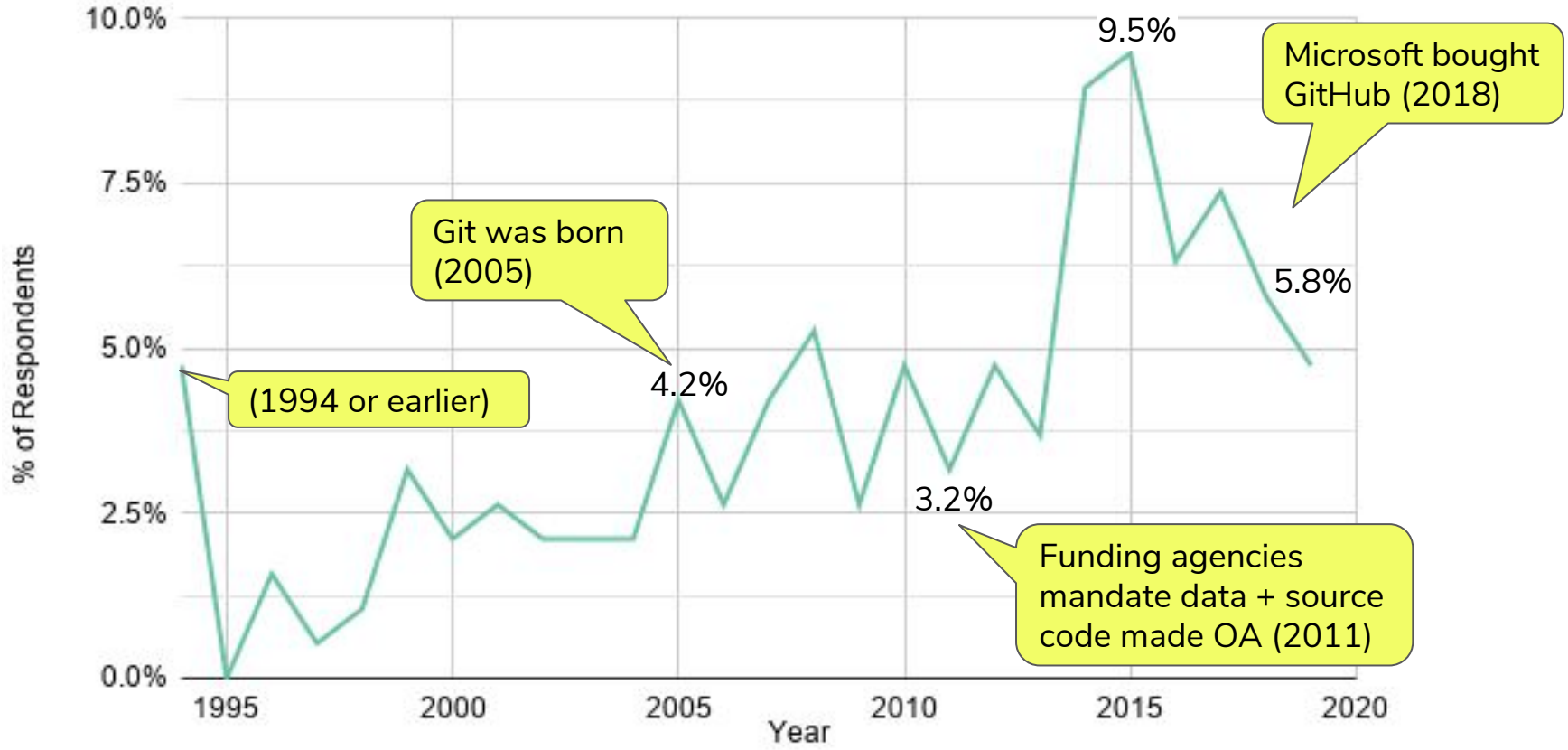
Survey - Preliminary Findings

Please participate & share widely
bit.ly/3aO0ykQ



Q: When did you first start using a version control system?



Survey - Preliminary Findings

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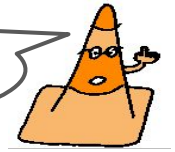

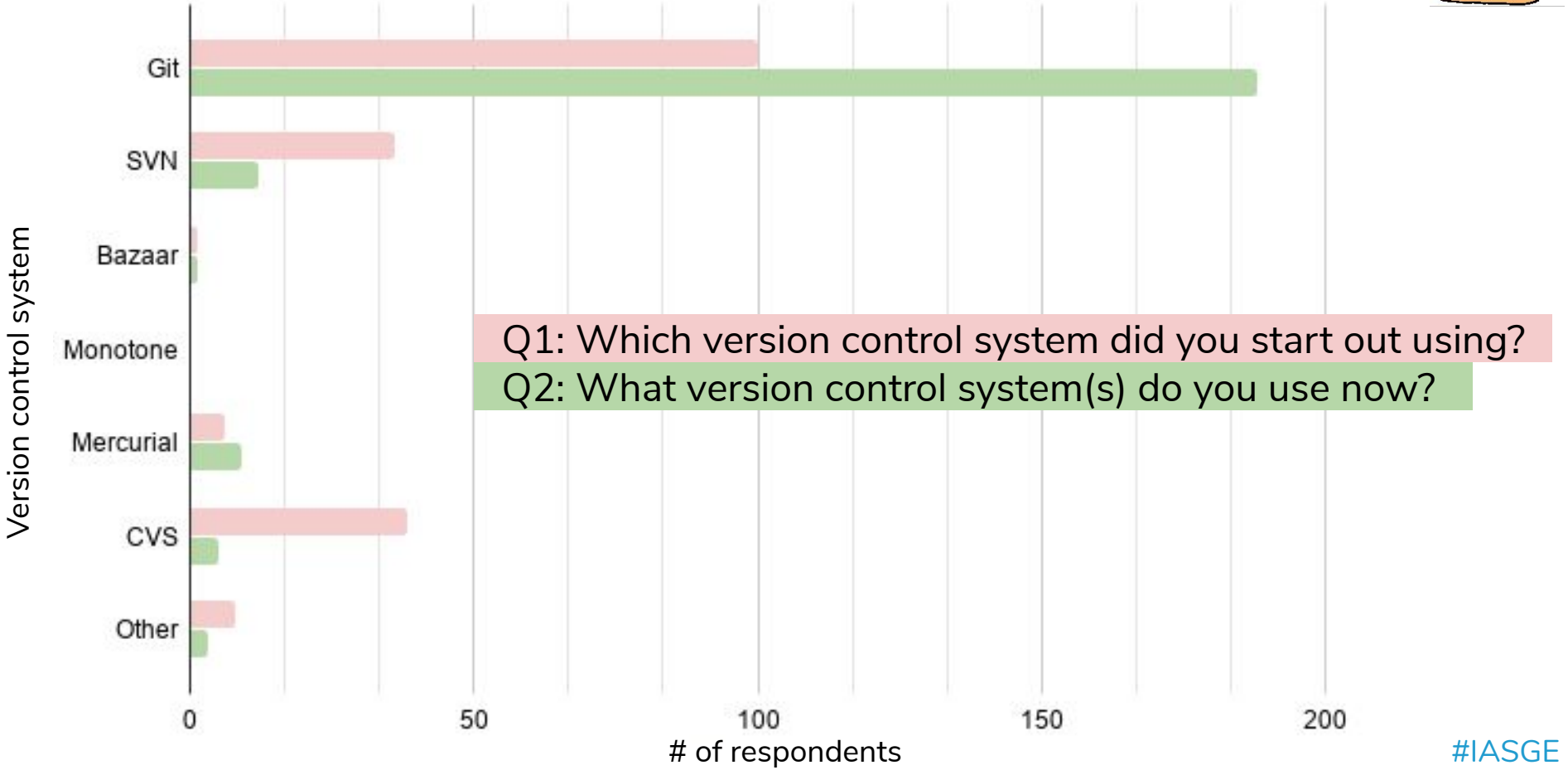

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Survey - Preliminary Findings

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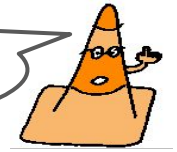
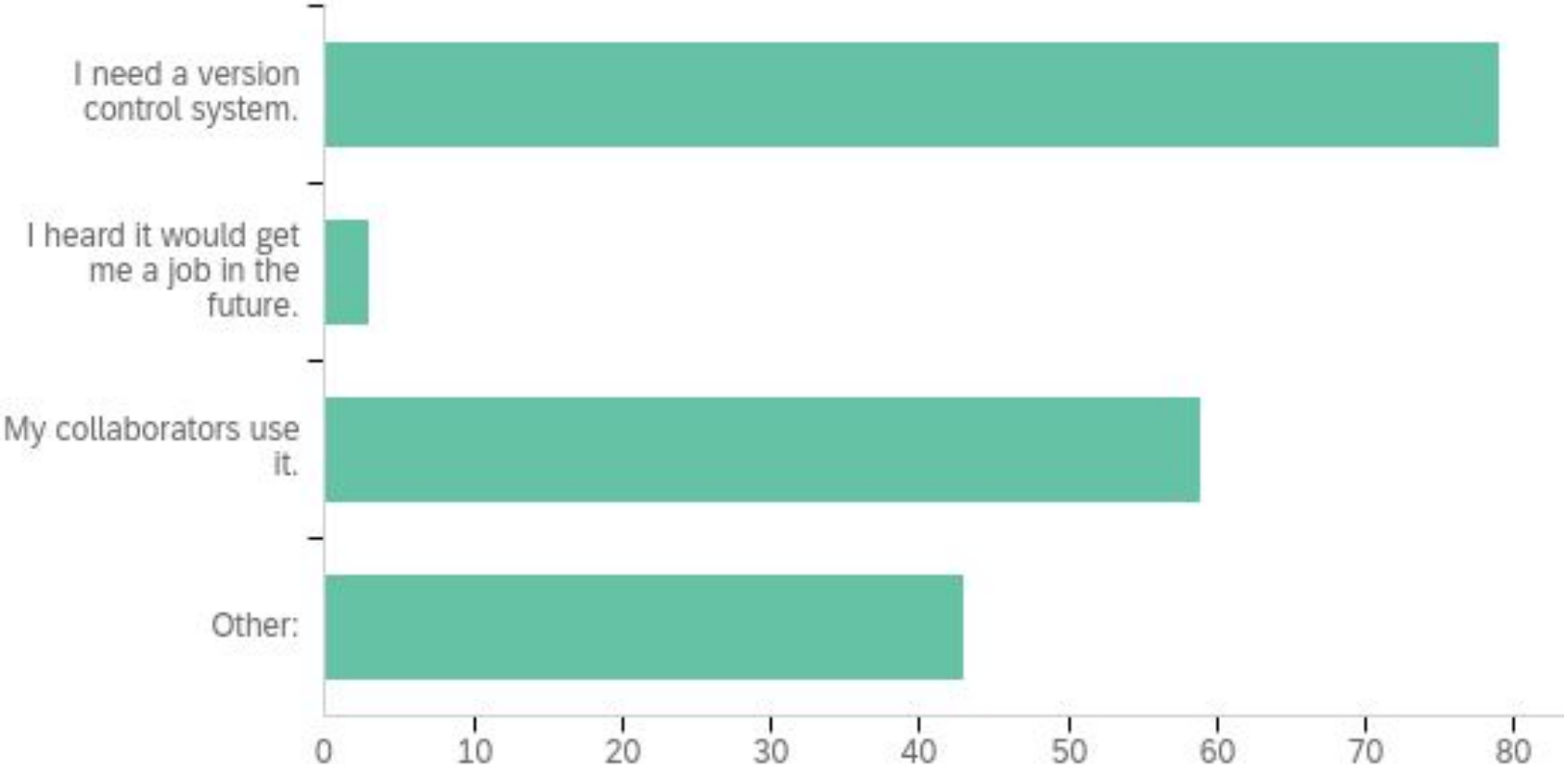


Q: Why did you first enter the world of git and version control?



Survey - Preliminary Findings

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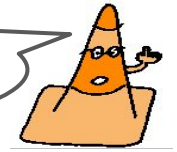
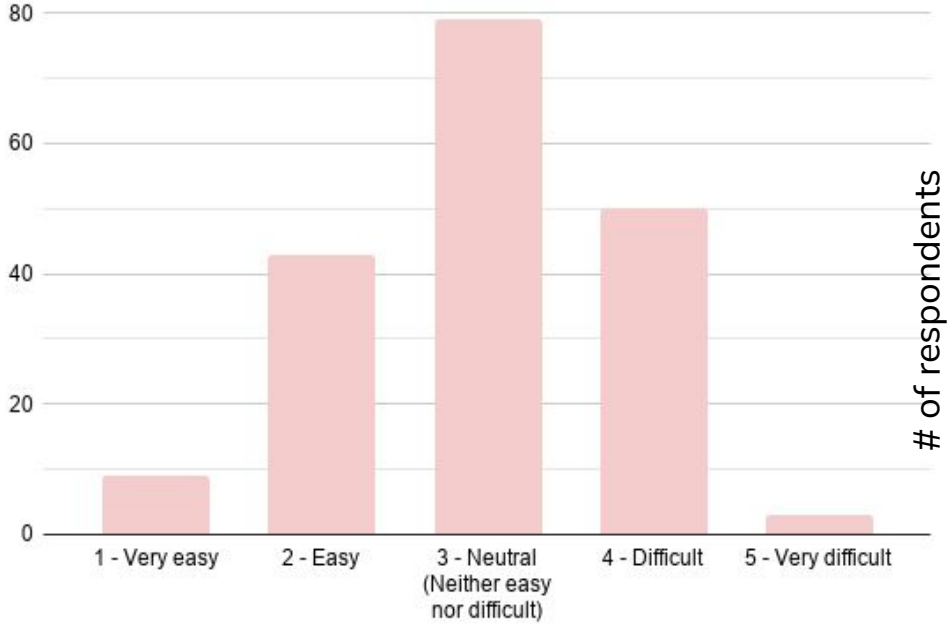
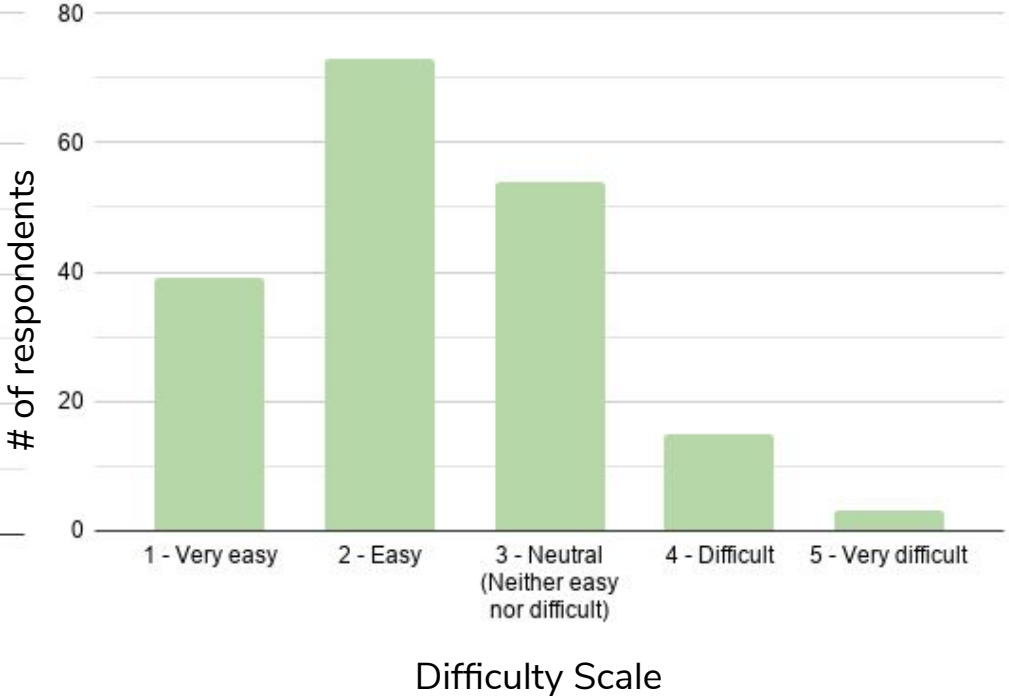


Q1: How difficult was it for you to learn how to use git on your local computer?



Q2: How difficult was it for you to learn how to use the git hosting platform?



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Survey - Preliminary Findings

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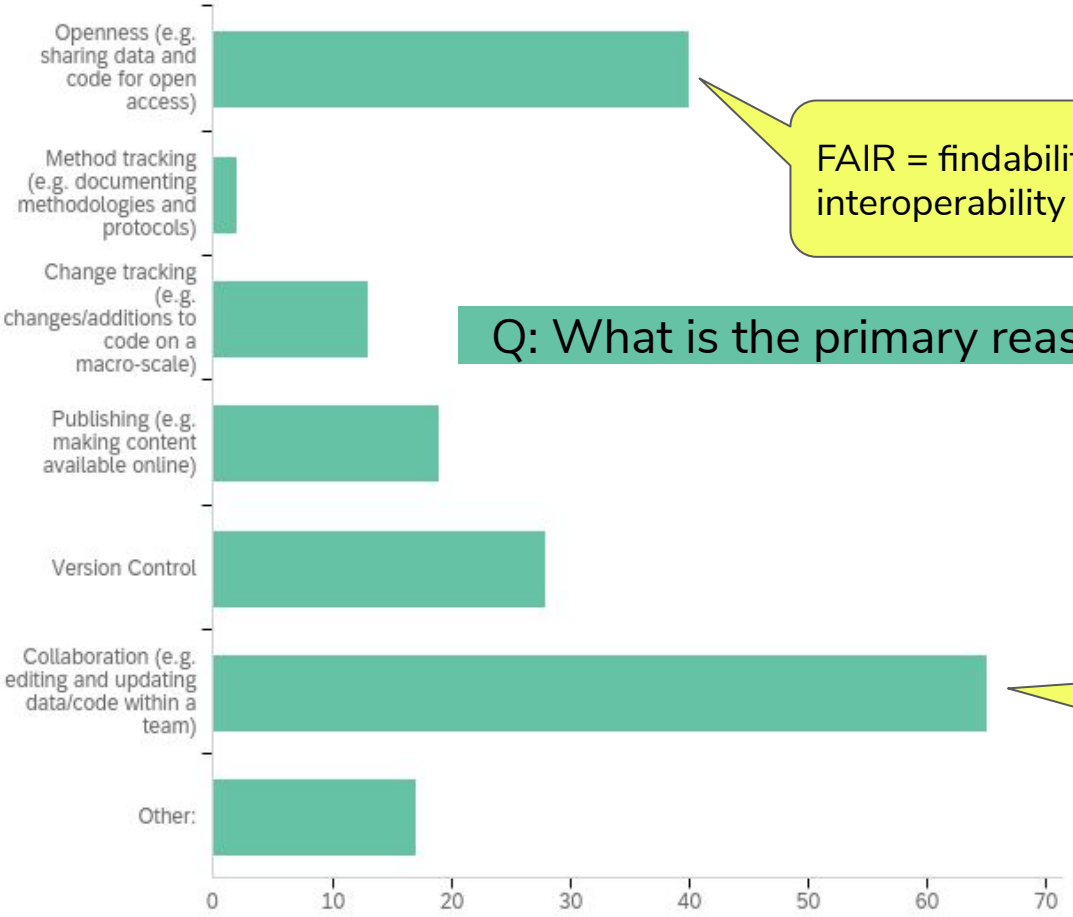

FAIR = findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability

Q: What is the primary reason you use git hosting platforms?

Community, collaboration, & peer production

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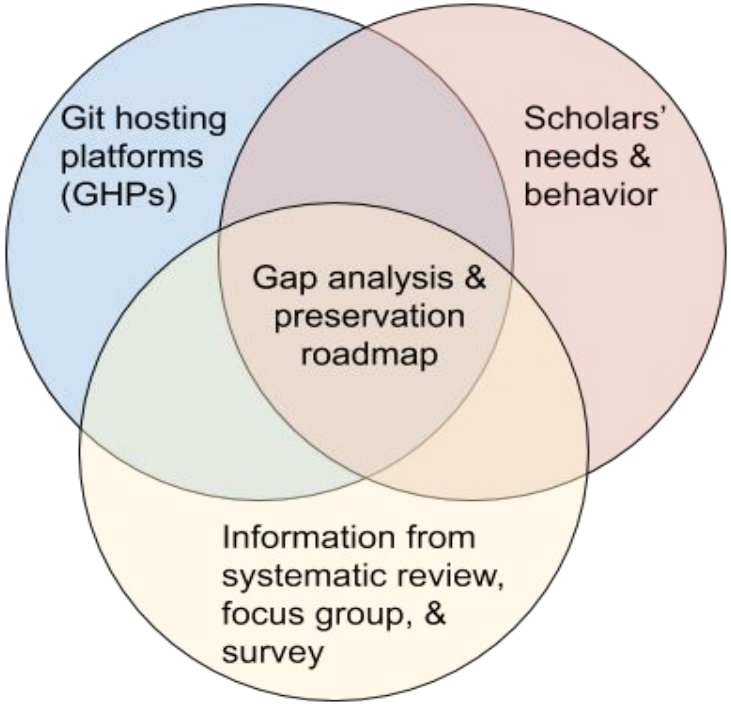
Part IV: User Experience Interviews (Qual)

Semi-structured interviews with 50 scholars to understand their behaviours

- Why did folks stop using Git & GHPs?
- If/how are they versioning their work without these toolkits?
- What features & workflows are in practice that we have not heard of before?



Current Archival Approaches

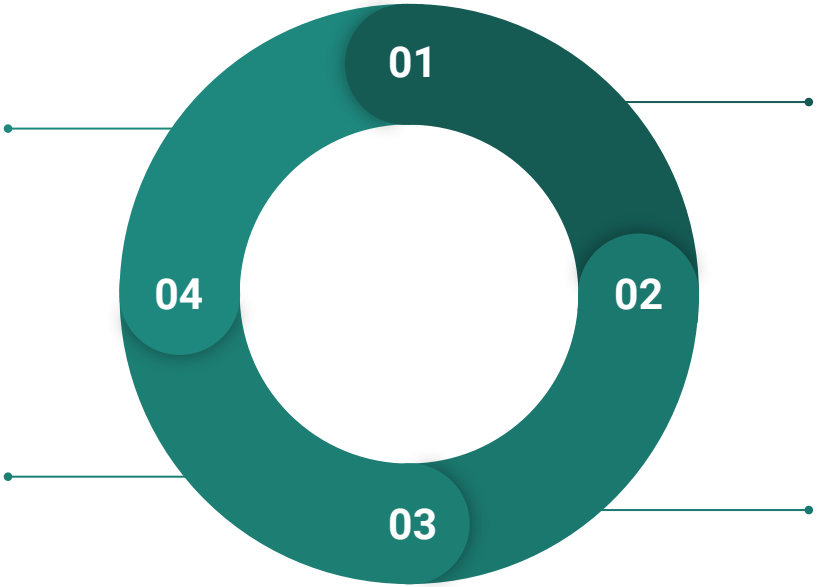
IASGE Environmental Scan

Software Preservation

Best practices, software curation and description

Programmatic Captures

large-scale archiving of GitHub API data; large-scale archiving of source code from Git hosting platforms; select archiving of repos



Web Archiving

State-of-the-art web archiving tools and technologies; Could they be used for software capture?

Self-Archiving

Motivations to self-archive; appeal of general repositories vs. institutional repositories

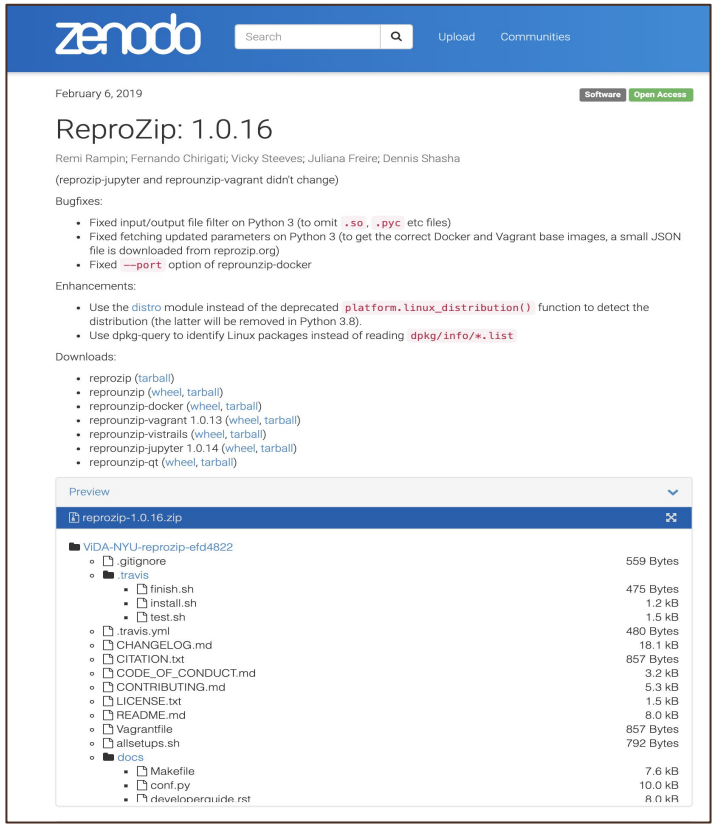
Web Archiving

- The use of web crawlers/software to capture web-based content
- Understand who, if anyone, is currently using this technology for code repositories

- Projects of Interest:
  - Archive-It
  - Webrecorder
  - Memento Tracer

Self-Archiving

1. Identify motivations for self-archiving in general repositories
2. Identify gaps regarding IRs and hosting/describing software
3. Understand platform integration (GitHub <> Zenodo)
4. Should we keep rehabbing IRs or move to more flexible models?



Software in Zenodo with Integrations with GitHub and indexed by OpenAIRE

Programmatic Captures

1. Software to capture software
2. The use of indexing, cloning, and APIs to capture software and contextual information
3. Scholarly ephemera in one place, software in another
4. Projects of interest
   a. Software Heritage
   b. GHTorrent and GH Archive
   c. SARA

SARA
SOFTWARE ARCHIVING OF RESEARCH ARTEFACTS

git GH Archive

Software Heritage
PRESERVING TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

The GHTorrent project

Software Preservation

1. Understanding current communities of practice
2. Software metadata & citation
3. Software curation
4. Projects of interest
    a. Software Preservation Network
    b. Software Emulation (e.g. EaaSI)
    c. Software Sustainability Institute
    d. US Research Software Sustainability Institute

Software Sustainability Institute

Towards an Archival Spec

Culmination of this research will be an archival spec that can be used by institutions.

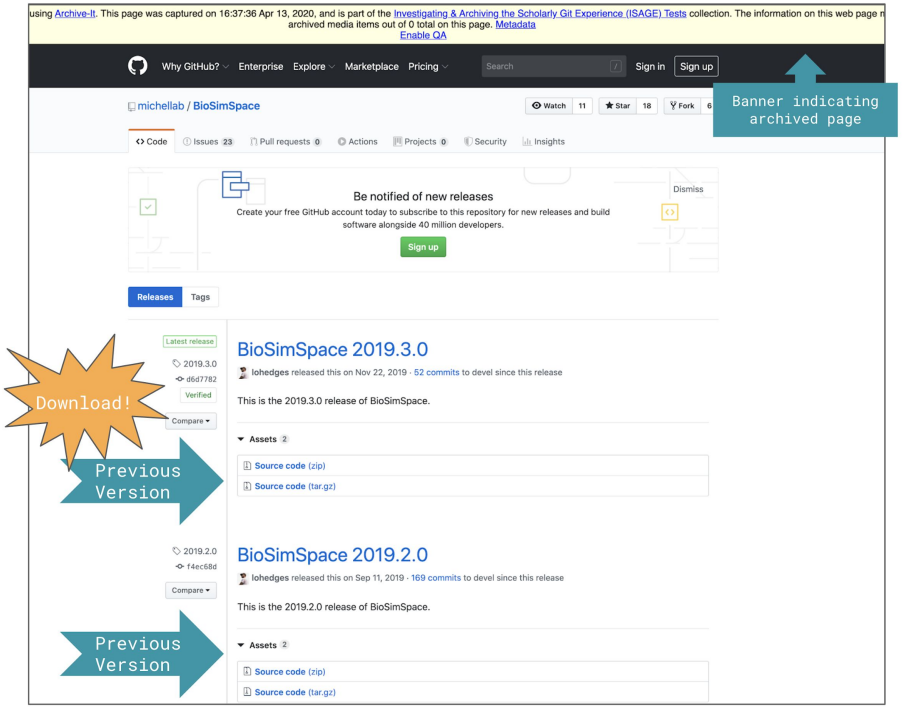
Details will include:

1. The capture of both source code and its ephemera (commit messages, merge requests, issues, wikis)
2. Description and curation
3. Sample preservation workflows

WA Tool Testing Phase - Preliminary Findings

Archive-It

a. Test crawl four git repositories using the standard crawler and Brozzler
b. Found issues with capturing GitLab (rendering issues) and Bitbucket (only got a white page!)
c. Promising results with standard crawler on GitHub
d. Limitations: patch crawling issues, time needed, and “uncharted territory” using this method

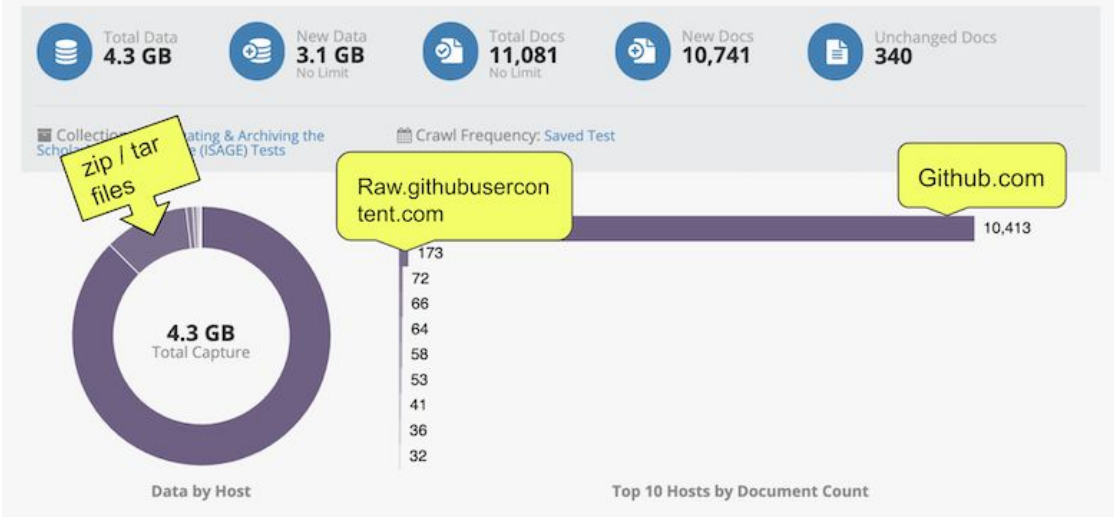


Read more: Lab Notes detailing Archive-it testing: investigating-archiving-git.gitlab.io/updates/lab-notes-archive-it

WA Tool Testing Phase - Preliminary Findings

What was captured:

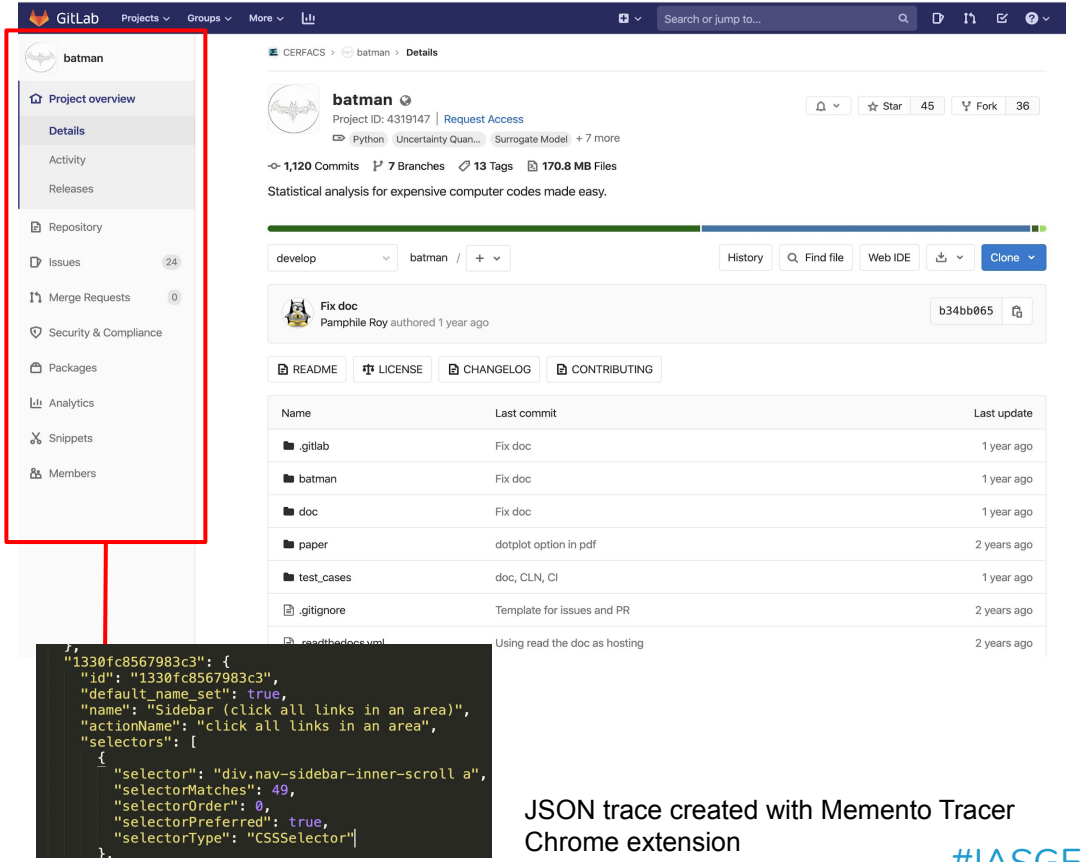
- Zip of source code with past versions
- 23 open issues (at time of capture) and 111 closed issues, and their labels.
- PRs and messages were also captured, except for indiv. Commit messages
- 4 pages of commits were saved, but older commit messages were missing



Screenshot of Archive-It crawl report using Standard crawler for single GitHub repository link from: investigating-archiving-git.gitlab.io/updates/lab-notes-archive-it/

What's next? Further testing!

- **Memento Tracer**
  - JSON traces serve as "instructions" for the crawler, which can be shared and reused
  - JSON file can be applied to any repositories on that domain (i.e. any repository on GitHub).
  - http://tracer.mementoweb.org/
- **Webrecorder**
  - Uses user interactions (clicking, scrolling) to create high quality captures
  - Limited scalability
  - Potential to create an Autopilot behaviors for GitHub? feature request ;-)
  - https://webrecorder.io/



JSON trace created with Memento Tracer Chrome extension

Summary, calls to action, & all our contact info!

- Code/software and the contextual ephemera are worth saving
- Scholarship in Git format & in Git hosting platforms is at risk because there is no preservation plan
- Understanding behaviour patterns of academics using GHPs will help in T&L and archiving work
- Be on the lookout for research-centered blog posts
- Send us feedback on posts and/or resources you think we should know about!

Project website:
https://investigating-archiving-git.gitlab.io

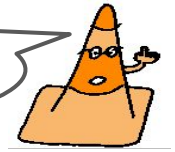
GitLab repo:
gitlab.com/investigating-archiving-git

Emails:
vicky.steeves@nyu.edu
genevieve.milliken@nyu.edu
sarahtnguyen@nyu.edu

Twitters:
@VickySteeves
@gen_milliken
@snewyuen

Survey - Preliminary Findings

Please participate & share widely!
bit.ly/3aO0ykQ



Summary

Q33 - Do you use git hosting platforms as a storage place to backup your code?

- % said Yes

Q37 - How is your research or scholarship funded? Check all that apply.

- Mostly public

Q42 - How often do you use git to collaborate on authoring code?

- Mostly daily

Q43 - When a new collaborator joins your team, is there an onboarding process or protocol specifically for introducing them to your coding practices and use of version control?

- Mostly No

Q47 - Do you copy your repositories to external long-term storage services or platforms (e.g. Zenodo, OSF, institutional repository)?

- Mostly No