



Computer Systems and Networks

ECPE 170 – Jeff Shafer – University of the Pacific

Version Control

Lab Schedule

- Today
 - **Lab 2 – Version Control**

- Next Week
 - Intro to C (for C++ programmers)
 - **Lab 3 – Build Tools**

- Deadlines
 - **Lab 1 Report – Sept 5th, 2015 by 5am**
 - Submit via Canvas
 - **Lab 2 Report – Sept 7th, 2015 by 5am**
 - Submit via version control

Before Version Control

1. <Report.doc>
2. <Report.doc.bak>
3. <Report-1.doc>
4. Email off to partner...
5. <Report-2.doc>
6. Partner responds with doc
(that is missing the changes you
just made)
7. <Report-2a.doc>
8. <Report-2a-WITH-
REFERENCES.doc>
9. Email off to partner...
Partner responds with new doc
<Report-3.doc>
10. <Report-3-FINAL.doc>
11. <Report-3-FINAL-OOPS-FIXED-
TYPO-FINAL.doc>

Version Control Features

- Project history tracking
- Concurrent file editing (merges)
- Non-linear program history (branches)
- Naming scheme for program releases (tags)

Motivation for Version Control

- **Why would a single programmer (working alone) use version control?**
 - Backup files
 - Roll-back to earlier (working) version
 - See changes made between current (broken) code and earlier (working) code
 - Maintain multiple versions of a single product
 - Experiment with a new feature
 - Try a risky change in a “sandbox”
 - If it works, you can merge it into the regular code. If it fails, you can throw it away.

Motivation for Version Control

- **Why would a small group of developers use version control?**
 - All the reasons a single programmer would, plus...
 - Merging different changes made by different developers into the same file
 - Add a new function at the bottom? Safe to automatically merge in
 - Re-write a function at the same time another developer is also editing it? Version control will catch this and ask you to decide which edits should “win”
 - Blame – who wrote this buggy code?!?

Motivation for Version Control

- Why would a large group of developers use version control?
- Different question: Could you develop the Linux kernel, Adobe Photoshop, Google Chrome, etc... using:
 - A single shared “folder of code”?
 - Emailing code snippets between developers?
 - Everyone sits around and shares one keyboard?

Version Control Basics

- **What kind of files should I keep in version control?**
 - Program source code (*obviously*)
 - VHDL / Verilog files (from digital design class)
 - Matlab scripts
 - HTML files
 - Server configuration files
 - Imagine you work at Livermore National Labs, and your job is to manage Linux cluster computers with 100,000+ machines (nodes)...
 - **Anything that is plain text!**

Version Control Basics



➤ What kind of files should I not keep in version control?

- *These aren't "rules", so much as "guidelines"...*
- **Binary data**
 - How do you *merge* two different binary files together? No general-purpose way to do this
- **Anything auto-generated by the compiler**
 - Object files or executable file
 - Wastes space on useless junk that can be re-created automatically
- **Text editor temp files (e.g. `main.c~`)**

Version Control Basics

- **Big risk in putting the executable in version control**
 - If you forget to compile before a commit, the executable may not be **in sync** with the attached source code!
 - **Big headache if you ever roll back to this version!**
- **In ECPE 170, all our executable files can be produced in under 5 seconds with one command. There's no need to include them in your repository**

Distributed Version Control

- **Why do they call Mercurial a distributed version control system?**
 - Conventional systems (e.g., Subversion or “svn”) have a centralized server hold the “master” copy
 - Distributed version control – each copy is its own full-fledged master! (But you can still push changes from one person’s copy to another)
 - Allows version control to work offline
 - Allows version control to work with ad-hoc groups

Version Control in ECPE 170

- Version control **required** for this class
 - Used to distribute boilerplate code for labs
 - Used to turn in assignments when finished

Version Control in ECPE 170

- ➔ *If you only do one check-in at the very end of your project, you've missed the whole point of version control, and turned a valuable tool into an obstacle to completing the assignment*
- ➔ **Check-in code on a regular basis!**