

# What Is a GitHub Repo?

How to save, search, and share your work

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From Nolan Law Firm — [nemolegal.com/tools](https://nemolegal.com/tools)

## What a Repo Is

A repository — repo for short — is a folder that Git tracks. Everything in the folder is versioned: every file, every change, every deletion. On GitHub, that folder lives in the cloud, has a public URL, and can be public (anyone can see it) or private (only you and people you invite).

**One-line version:** A repo is a project folder with a complete history of every change ever made to it.

## How to Create One

On GitHub: click the + icon in the top right → New repository. Give it a name, choose public or private, check “Add a README”, click Create. That’s it — you have a repo.

To link it to a folder on your computer:

```
# In your project folder:  
  
git init # turn this folder into a Git repo  
  
git remote add origin https://github.com/yourusername/your-repo.git  
  
git add .  
  
git commit -m "Initial commit"  
  
git push -u origin main # push to GitHub
```

## How to Save Your Work (The Commit Cycle)

Saving to GitHub is a three-step process. This trips up beginners because it’s not like saving a Word document.

Step	Command	What It Does
1. Stage	git add .	Tell Git which changes to include

2. Commit	<code>git commit -m "describe what changed"</code>	Save a snapshot with a message
3. Push	<code>git push</code>	Upload the snapshot to GitHub

The commit message is important. Write it as a description of what you changed, not what you did. “Fix calendar auth bug” is useful. “Updated files” is not.

## How to Search GitHub

The search bar at the top of GitHub searches across all public repositories. It's one of the most underused tools in software.

```
# Search examples (type these in GitHub's search bar):

n8n webhook stripe # find n8n workflows with Stripe

jinja2 legal template # find Jinja2 legal document templates

docker-compose wordpress # find WP docker-compose examples

# Filter to specific things:

language:python webhook stripe # Python only

stars:>100 docker-compose wordpress # popular results only

user:pattalkslaw-del # search within a specific account
```

You can also search within a specific repo using the search box on that repo's page. Useful for finding a specific function, variable, or config key in a large codebase.

## How to Share a Repo

**Public repos:** Anyone can view, clone, or fork them. The URL is all they need. Share it like any web link.

**Private repos:** Go to Settings → Collaborators → Add people by GitHub username or email. They get an invitation. Once accepted, they can pull and push.

**Cloning someone else's repo:** The green Code button on any repo gives you the clone URL. Run `git clone [url]` in your terminal to get a local copy.

```
git clone https://github.com/NousResearch/hermes-agent.git
```

```
# Downloads the entire repo to your current folder
```

## The README File

Every repo should have a README.md in its root folder. GitHub displays it automatically on the repo's main page. It's your project's front door — what it is, how to install it, how to use it. A repo without a README tells the world you don't care if anyone else uses it.

**Using AI to Help With This** You don't have to fully understand this to use it. Here are prompts that work:

```
"I have a folder of scripts on my computer. Walk me through turning it into a GitHub repo, pushing it, and making sure sensitive files are not included."
```

```
"Search GitHub for [specific thing] and summarize what the top results are doing and which looks most useful for my situation: [describe situation]."
```

```
"Write a README.md for my project. Here is what it does: [describe]. Include sections for what it is, requirements, how to install, and how to use it."
```