Twitter Thread by Ben Orenstein



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Most commit messages are next to useless because they focus on WHAT was done instead of WHY.

This is exactly the wrong thing to focus on.

You can always reconstruct what changes a commit contains, but it's near impossible to unearth the reason it was done.

(thread)

Think about the last time you `git blame`d something.

You were almost certainly thinking "WHY is this like this?", not "What is a one-line summary of what happened in this commit?".

Here's the antidote: use this commit template (stolen from @joeferris).

```
[one line-summary of changes]

Because:
- [relevant context]
- [why you decided to change things]
- [reason you're doing it now]

This commit:
- [does X]
- [does Y]
- [does Z]
```

Leading with the WHY has tremendous value.

First, it captures context that will be near impossible to recover later. Trust me, this stuff is gold.

Secondly, if you train yourself to ask why you're making every change, you'll tend to make better changes.

Give this template a try for a while.

The first time you see a commit message like the above instead of "refactor OrderWidget", you'll be a convert.

For more thoughts on this topic, and details on setting up a commit message template, check out this post.

https://t.co/8e9p3x0zb0

Also! Here are a few examples of this commit message template in action:

https://t.co/KrOvHJPMXg

https://t.co/rnWpApDrTx

https://t.co/R7tAV3b8rx