

# Managing dependencies is more than running “composer update”



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<https://packagist.com>

# What are Dependencies?

- Services
  - APIs
  - Client-side Integrations (OAuth / External JS / Analytics / ...)
- Software
  - Libraries
  - Programs / Tools
- External Assets

# What is Dependency Management?

- Assembly
- Dependency Change Management
- Risk Analysis & Reduction

May happen at build time or at runtime

# Dependency Assembly

- Installation of Libraries, Tools, etc.
  - composer install
  - apt-get install foo
  - Application of Configuration Management (Puppet, Chef, Ansible, Salt, ...)
- Configuration for Connections to Services, external APIs
  - Authentication
  - Glue Code
- Connection to Services (usually at Runtime)

# Dependency Assembly

Past:

- Step-by-Step installation instructions
- Readmes, Delete and reinstall individual packages

Today:

- Description of a system state (e.g. composer.json, top.sls)
- Tools to move the system into the state (e.g. composer, salt)

# Dependency Change Management

- Dependency Change
  - Adding, Removing, Updating, Replacing of Libraries
  - Replacing APIs
  - composer update
- Dependency Change Management
  - Balance Risks, Consequences, Cost & Advantages
  - Architecture Decisions which enable “Change”
    - Example: Abstraction to replace concrete service

# Risk Analysis: Availability

Affects Assembly

Examples:

- Open Source Library deleted
- Payment Service unavailable
- EU VATId Service out of order
- Jenkins not accessible

# Risk Reduction: Availability

- Software is available when you have a copy
  - composer cache
  - Forks
  - Private Packagist or Satis
- Services are available depending on external factors
  - Can the service be called asynchronously?
    - e.g. run VATId check after payment
    - e.g. Private Packagist inits package in worker, no GitHub access in controller
  - Are errors clearly presented to users?
    - e.g. low timeouts, error messages when external Service X not available



# Risk Analysis: Compatibility

Affects Change Management

Examples:

- BC Break in Library Update
- API Semantics change:
  - Payment API no longer supports credit card tokens, only payment tokens valid for Apple Pay etc., too

# Risk Reduction: (New) Dependencies

## Quality Criteria for software libraries (and services)

- Number of Maintainers / Developers
- Actively Developed?
- How many users?
  - Packagist shows installation count
- Where is a library being installed from?
  - GitHub, self-hosted svn server? -> Availability
- Alternatives / how easy to replace? Complexity?
  - Could you take over maintenance?

# Risk Reduction: Compatibility

Semantic Versioning (Semver) promises Compatibility

**x.y.z**

- Must be used consistently
- Only valuable if BC/Compatibility promise formalized
  - See <http://symfony.com/doc/current/contributing/code/bc.html>
- Otherwise choose narrower Version Constraints, check more frequently
  - e.g. ~1.2.3 instead of ^1.2.3

# Risk Reduction: Compatibility

- Automated
  - Tests
  - Static Analysis
- Manual
  - Read Changelogs (and write them!)
  - Experience which libraries break BC

# Risk Reduction: Compatibility

- “composer update”
  - no isolation of problems unless run very frequently
- “composer update <package...>”
  - explicit conscious updates
- “composer update --dry-run [<package...>]”
  - Understanding and preparing effects of updates

# How do partial updates work?

```
{  "name": "zebra/zebra",  
  "require": {  
    "horse/horse": "^1.0"  }}
```

```
{  "name": "giraffe/giraffe",  
  "require": {  
    "duck/duck": "^1.0"  }}
```

# How do partial updates work?

```
{  "name": "horse/horse",  
  "require": {  
    "giraffe/giraffe": "^1.0"  }}
```

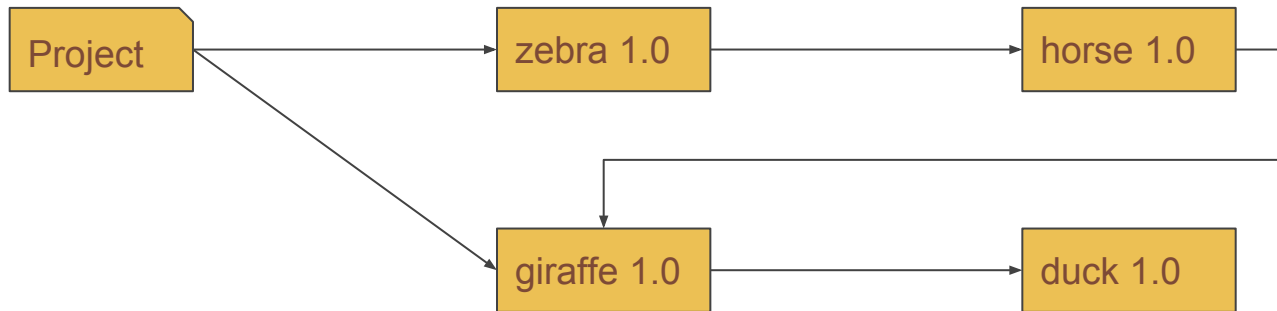
```
{  "name": "duck/duck",  
  "require": {}}
```

# How do partial updates work?

```
{  
  "name": "my-project",  
  "require": {  
    "zebra/zebra": "^1.0",  
    "giraffe/giraffe": "^1.0"  
  }  
}
```

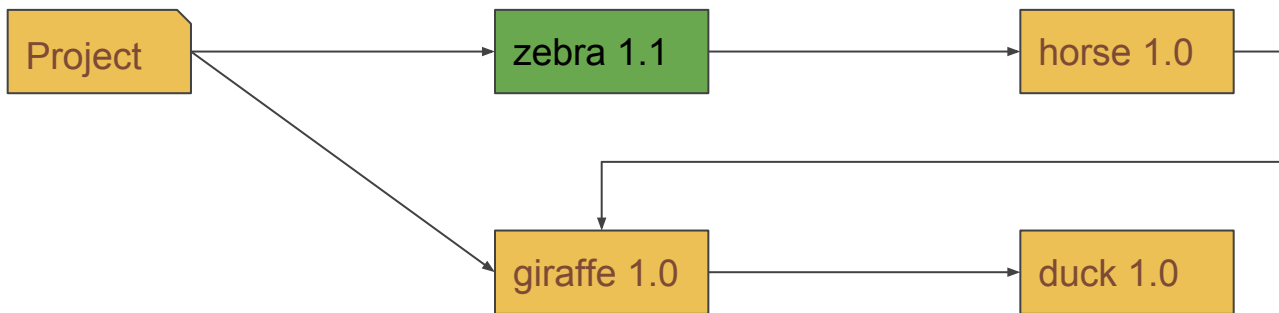


# How do partial updates work?



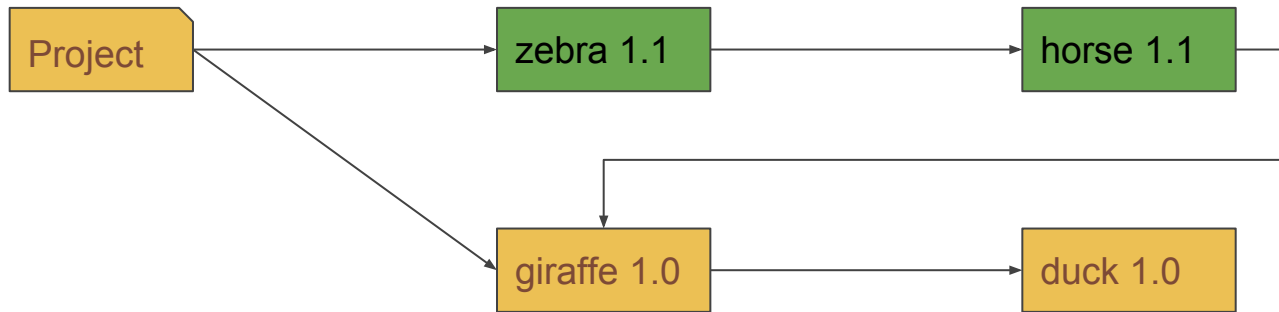
Now each package releases 1.1

# How do partial updates work?



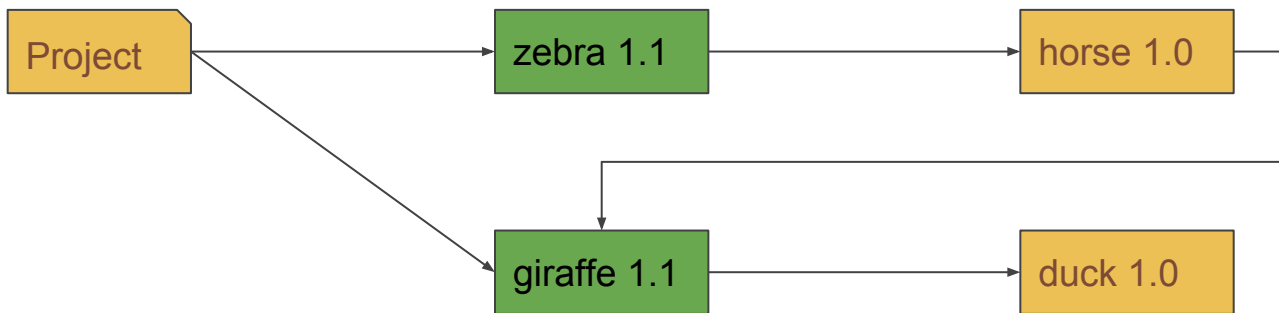
```
$ composer update --dry-run zebra/zebra  
Updating zebra/zebra (1.0 -> 1.1)
```

# How do partial updates work?



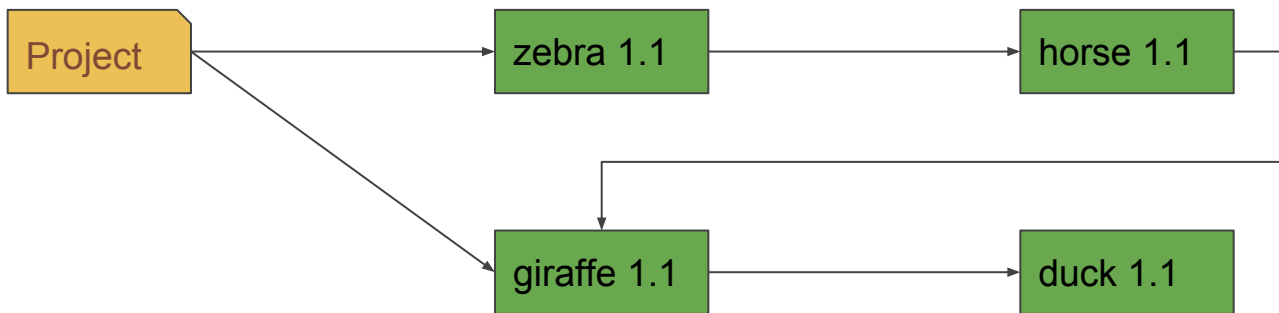
```
$ composer update --dry-run zebra/zebra --with-dependencies  
Updating horse/horse (1.0 -> 1.1)  
Updating zebra/zebra (1.0 -> 1.1)
```

# How do partial updates work?



```
$ composer update --dry-run zebra/zebra giraffe/giraffe  
Updating zebra/zebra (1.0 -> 1.1)  
Updating giraffe/giraffe (1.0 -> 1.1)
```

# How do partial updates work?



```
$ composer update zebra/zebra giraffe/giraffe --with-dependencies
Updating duck/duck (1.0 -> 1.1)
Updating giraffe/giraffe (1.0 -> 1.1)
Updating horse/horse (1.0 -> 1.1)
Updating zebra/zebra (1.0 -> 1.1)
```

# The Lock File

- Contents
  - all dependencies including transitive dependencies
  - Exact version for every package
  - download URLs (source, dist, mirrors)
  - Hashes of files
- Purpose
  - Reproducibility across teams, users and servers
  - Isolation of bug reports to code vs. potential dependency breaks
  - Transparency through explicit updating process

# Commit The Lock File

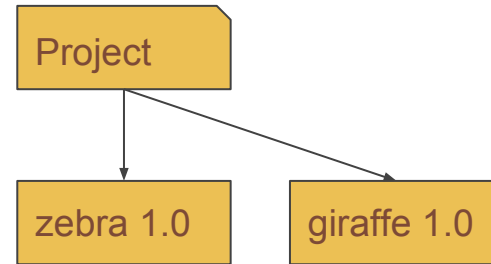
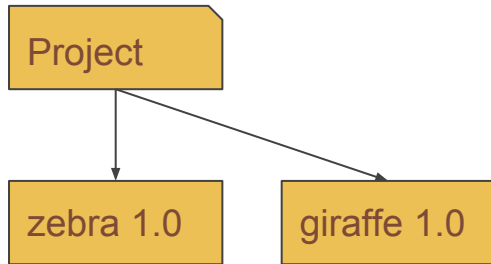
- If you don't
  - composer install without a lock file is a composer update
  - Affects Assembly
    - Conflict can randomly occur on install
    - You may not get the same code
  - You no longer manage change  
Change is managing you!
- The lock file exists to be committed!

# How to resolve lock merge conflicts?

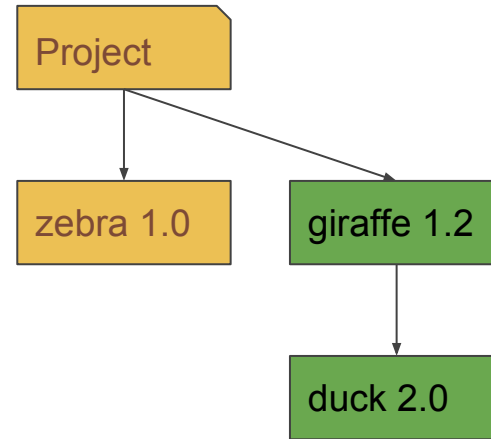
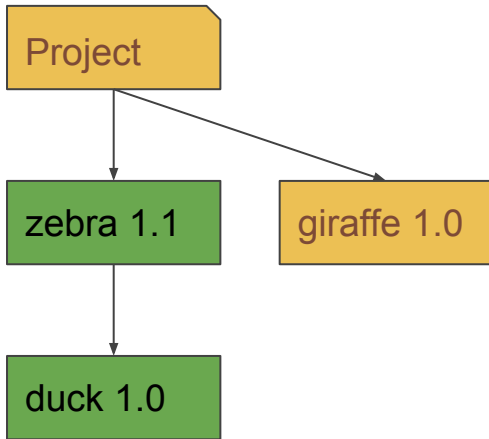
- composer.lock cannot be merged without conflicts
  - contains hash over relevant composer.json values
- `git checkout <refspec> -- composer.lock`
  - `git checkout master -- composer.lock`
- Repeat: `composer update <list of deps>`
  - Store parameters in commit message
  - Separate commit for the lock file update



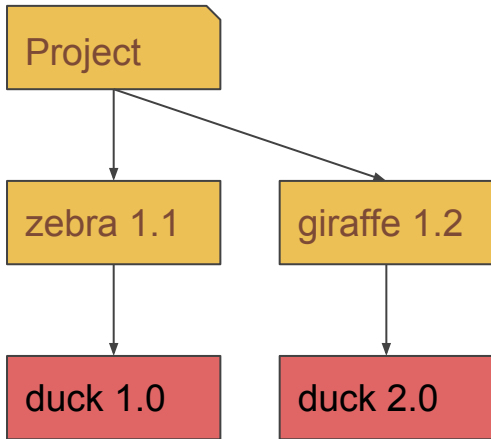
# How to resolve lock merge conflicts?



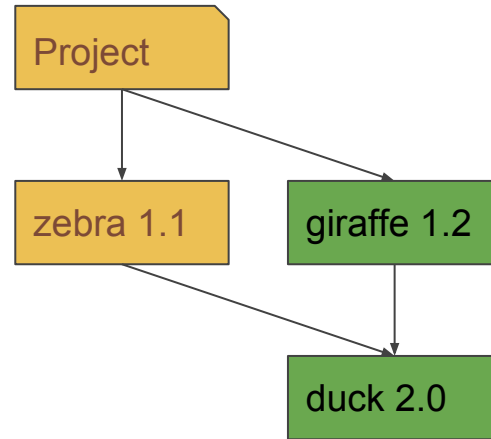
# How to resolve lock merge conflicts?



# How to resolve lock merge conflicts?



Merge results in invalid dependencies



Rerunning update is safe

# Risk Analysis: Compliance / Legal

Affects Change Management

Examples:

- Viral Copy-Left License not compatible with proprietary product
- Terms of Service
  - May I use an API for my services?  
Cloudflare / packagist.org
  - How much time do I have when a supplier terminates the service?
  - SLA with sufficient support?

# Risk Minimization: Compliance / Legal

- Software dependency license must fit product license or customer requirements
  - composer licenses
  - Private Packagist License Review
- Terms of Service / SLA / Contracts
  - Criteria for selection
  - Negotiable
  - Strong dependencies justify financial expenses to create security

# Assessing & Managing Risk

- Formulate a Plan B
- Identify problems which are probable and which have great effects
- **Dependencies are great!** They can save tons of money and time
- Only spend resources on reducing risk until the risk is acceptable

# Summary

- composer update [--dry-run] <package>
- git checkout <branch> -- composer.lock
- Formalize BC promises for users of your libraries
- SemVer: Don't be afraid to increase the major version
- Document changes to dependencies
- Have a plan B
- Don't waste resources on potential problems which are unlikely to occur or have insignificant effects
- **Dependencies are great!**  
Benefit usually greater than cost

Developers must consider dependency management from a business perspective  
Business / Management must not ignore risk from software dependencies

# Thank you!

## Questions / Feedback?

<https://packagist.com>

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