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# **django-simple-history Documentation**

***Release 1.5.4***

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django-simple-history stores Django model state on every create/update/delete.



## 1.1 Quick Start

### 1.1.1 Install

This package is available on [PyPI](#) and [Crate.io](#).

Install from PyPI with `pip`:

```
$ pip install django-simple-history
```

### 1.1.2 Configure

#### Settings

Add `simple_history` to your `INSTALLED_APPS`

```
INSTALLED_APPS = [  
    # ...  
    'simple_history',  
]
```

The historical models can track who made each change. To populate the history user automatically you can add middleware to your Django settings:

```
MIDDLEWARE_CLASSES = [  
    # ...  
    'simple_history.middleware.HistoryRequestMiddleware',  
]
```

If you do not want to use the middleware, you can explicitly indicate the user making the change as documented in `recording_user`.

## Models

To track history for a model, create an instance of `simple_history.models.HistoricalRecords` on the model.

An example for tracking changes on the `Poll` and `Choice` models in the Django tutorial:

```
from django.db import models
from simple_history.models import HistoricalRecords

class Poll(models.Model):
    question = models.CharField(max_length=200)
    pub_date = models.DateTimeField('date published')
    history = HistoricalRecords()

class Choice(models.Model):
    poll = models.ForeignKey(Poll)
    choice_text = models.CharField(max_length=200)
    votes = models.IntegerField(default=0)
    history = HistoricalRecords()
```

Now all changes to `Poll` and `Choice` model instances will be tracked in the database.

## Existing Projects

For existing projects, you can call the `populate` command to generate an initial change for preexisting model instances:

```
$ python manage.py populate_history --auto
```

### 1.1.3 Integration with Django Admin

To allow viewing previous model versions on the Django admin site, inherit from the `simple_history.admin.SimpleHistoryAdmin` class when registering your model with the admin site.

This will replace the history object page on the admin site and allow viewing and reverting to previous model versions. Changes made in admin change forms will also accurately note the user who made the change.

Django administration
Welcome, **admin**. Change password / Log out

Home > Polls > Polls > Do you like cake? > History

### Change history: Do you like cake?

Choose a date from the list below to revert to a previous version of this object.

Object	Datetime	Comment	Changed by
<a href="#">Do you like cake?</a>	April 13, 2014, 11:54 p.m.	Changed	<a href="#">admin</a>
<a href="#">Question 1</a>	April 13, 2014, 11:51 p.m.	Created	<a href="#">admin</a>

Clicking on an object presents the option to revert to that version of the object.

**Django administration** Welcome, **admin**. Change password / Log out

Home > Polls > Historical polls > Question 1 > History > Revert poll

### Revert Question 1

Press the save button below to revert to this version of the object.

**Question:**

**Date published:** Date:  Today | Time:  Now |

(The object is reverted to the selected state)

**Django administration** Welcome, **admin**. Change password / Log out

Home > Polls > Polls

✓ The poll "Question 1" was changed successfully.

### Select poll to change

+

Action:   0 of 1 selected

<input type="checkbox"/>	Poll
<input type="checkbox"/>	Question 1

1 poll

Reversions like this are added to the history.

**Django administration** Welcome, **admin**. Change password / Log out

Home > Polls > Polls > Question 1 > History

### Change history: Question 1

Choose a date from the list below to revert to a previous version of this object.

Object	Datetime	Comment	Changed by
Question 1	April 13, 2014, 11:55 p.m.	Changed	admin
Do you like cake?	April 13, 2014, 11:54 p.m.	Changed	admin
Question 1	April 13, 2014, 11:51 p.m.	Created	admin

An example of admin integration for the Poll and Choice models:

```
from django.contrib import admin
from simple_history.admin import SimpleHistoryAdmin
from .models import Poll, Choice

admin.site.register(Poll, SimpleHistoryAdmin)
admin.site.register(Choice, SimpleHistoryAdmin)
```

Changing a history-tracked model from the admin interface will automatically record the user who made the change (see `recording_user`).

## 1.1.4 Querying history

### Querying history on a model instance

The `HistoricalRecords` object on a model instance can be used in the same way as a model manager:

```
>>> from polls.models import Poll, Choice
>>> from datetime import datetime
>>> poll = Poll.objects.create(question="what's up?", pub_date=datetime.now())
>>>
>>> poll.history.all()
[<HistoricalPoll: Poll object as of 2010-10-25 18:03:29.855689>]
```

Whenever a model instance is saved a new historical record is created:

```
>>> poll.pub_date = datetime(2007, 4, 1, 0, 0)
>>> poll.save()
>>> poll.history.all()
[<HistoricalPoll: Poll object as of 2010-10-25 18:04:13.814128>, <HistoricalPoll:
↳ Poll object as of 2010-10-25 18:03:29.855689>]
```

### Querying history on a model class

Historical records for all instances of a model can be queried by using the `HistoricalRecords` manager on the model class. For example historical records for all `Choice` instances can be queried by using the manager on the `Choice` model class:

```
>>> choice1 = poll.choice_set.create(choice_text='Not Much', votes=0)
>>> choice2 = poll.choice_set.create(choice_text='The sky', votes=0)
>>>
>>> Choice.history
<simple_history.manager.HistoryManager object at 0x1cc4290>
>>> Choice.history.all()
[<HistoricalChoice: Choice object as of 2010-10-25 18:05:12.183340>,
↳ <HistoricalChoice: Choice object as of 2010-10-25 18:04:59.047351>]
```

## 1.2 Common Issues

- `fields.E300`:

```
ERRORS:
custom_user.HistoricalCustomUser.history_user: (fields.E300) Field defines a
↳ relation with model 'custom_user.CustomUser', which is either not installed, or
↳ is abstract.
```

Use `register()` to track changes to the custom user model instead of setting `HistoricalRecords` on the model directly. See [History for a Third-Party Model](#).

The reason for this, is that unfortunately `HistoricalRecords` cannot be set directly on a swapped user model because of the user foreign key to track the user making changes.

- `HistoricalRecords` is not inherited

Allowing `HistoricalRecords` to be inherited from abstract models or other parents is a feature we would love to add. The current contributors do not have a need for that feature at this point, and need some help understanding how this feature should be completed. Current work is in [#112](#).

## 1.3 Advanced Usage

### 1.3.1 Database Migrations

By default, Historical models live in the same app as the model they track. Historical models are tracked by migrations in the same way as any other model. Whenever the original model changes, the historical model will change also.

Therefore tracking historical models with migrations should work automatically.

### 1.3.2 Locating past model instance

Two extra methods are provided for locating previous models instances on historical record model managers.

#### `as_of`

This method will return an instance of the model as it would have existed at the provided date and time.

```
>>> from datetime import datetime
>>> poll.history.as_of(datetime(2010, 10, 25, 18, 4, 0))
<Poll: Poll object as of 2010-10-25 18:03:29.855689>
>>> poll.history.as_of(datetime(2010, 10, 25, 18, 5, 0))
<Poll: Poll object as of 2010-10-25 18:04:13.814128>
```

#### `most_recent`

This method will return the most recent copy of the model available in the model history.

```
>>> from datetime import datetime
>>> poll.history.most_recent()
<Poll: Poll object as of 2010-10-25 18:04:13.814128>
```

### 1.3.3 History for a Third-Party Model

To track history for a model you didn't create, use the `simple_history.register` utility. You can use this to track models from third-party apps you don't have control over. Here's an example of using `simple_history.register` to history-track the `User` model from the `django.contrib.auth` app:

```
from simple_history import register
from django.contrib.auth.models import User

register(User)
```

### 1.3.4 Recording Which User Changed a Model

To denote which user changed a model, assign a `_history_user` attribute on your model.

For example if you have a `changed_by` field on your model that records which user last changed the model, you could create a `_history_user` property referencing the `changed_by` field:

```
from django.db import models
from simple_history.models import HistoricalRecords

class Poll(models.Model):
    question = models.CharField(max_length=200)
    pub_date = models.DateTimeField('date published')
    changed_by = models.ForeignKey('auth.User')
    history = HistoricalRecords()

    @property
    def _history_user(self):
        return self.changed_by

    @_history_user.setter
    def _history_user(self, value):
        self.changed_by = value
```

Admin integration requires that you use a `_history_user.setter` attribute with your custom `_history_user` property (see [Integration with Django Admin](#)).

### 1.3.5 Custom `history_date`

You're able to set a custom `history_date` attribute for the historical record, by defining the property `_history_date` in your model. That's helpful if you want to add versions to your model, which happened before the current model version, e.g. when batch importing historical data. The content of the property `_history_date` has to be a datetime-object, but setting the value of the property to a `DateTimeField`, which is already defined in the model, will work too.

```
from django.db import models
from simple_history.models import HistoricalRecords

class Poll(models.Model):
    question = models.CharField(max_length=200)
    pub_date = models.DateTimeField('date published')
    changed_by = models.ForeignKey('auth.User')
    history = HistoricalRecords()
    __history_date = None

    @property
    def _history_date(self):
        return self.__history_date

    @_history_date.setter
    def _history_date(self, value):
        self.__history_date = value
```

```
from datetime import datetime
from models import Poll
```

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```
my_poll = Poll(question="what's up?")
my_poll._history_date = datetime.now()
my_poll.save()
```

### 1.3.6 Change Base Class of HistoricalRecord Models

To change the auto-generated HistoricalRecord models base class from `models.Model`, pass in the abstract class in a list to `bases`.

```
class RoutableModel(models.Model):
    class Meta:
        abstract = True

class Poll(models.Model):
    question = models.CharField(max_length=200)
    pub_date = models.DateTimeField('date published')
    changed_by = models.ForeignKey('auth.User')
    history = HistoricalRecords(bases=[RoutableModel])
```



## CHAPTER 2

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Code

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Code and issue tracker: <https://github.com/treyhunner/django-simple-history>

Pull requests are welcome.



#### 3.1 1.5.4 (2015-01-03)

- Fix a bug when models have a `ForeignKey` with `primary_key=True`
- Do NOT delete the history elements when a user is deleted.
- Add support for `latest`

#### 3.2 1.5.3 (2014-11-18)

- Fix migrations while using `order_with_respect_to` (gh-140)
- Fix migrations using `south`
- Allow history accessor class to be overridden in `register()`

#### 3.3 1.5.2 (2014-10-15)

- Additional fix for migrations (gh-128)

#### 3.4 1.5.1 (2014-10-13)

- Removed some incompatibilities with non-default admin sites (gh-92)
- Fixed error caused by `HistoryRequestMiddleware` during anonymous requests (gh-115 fixes gh-114)
- Added workaround for clashing related historical accessors on `User` (gh-121)
- Added support for MongoDB `AutoField` (gh-125)

- Fixed CustomForeignKeyField errors with 1.7 migrations (gh-126 fixes gh-124)

### **3.5 1.5.0 (2014-08-17)**

- Extended availability of the `as_of` method to models as well as instances.
- Allow `history_user` on historical objects to be set by middleware.
- Fixed error that occurs when a foreign key is designated using just the name of the model.
- Drop Django 1.3 support

### **3.6 1.4.0 (2014-06-29)**

- Fixed error that occurs when models have a foreign key pointing to a one to one field.
- Fix bug when model `verbose_name` uses unicode (gh-76)
- Allow non-integer foreign keys
- Allow foreign keys referencing the name of the model as a string
- Added the ability to specify a custom `history_date`
- Note that `simple_history` should be added to `INSTALLED_APPS` (gh-94 fixes gh-69)
- Properly handle primary key escaping in admin URLs (gh-96 fixes gh-81)
- Add support for new app loading (Django 1.7+)
- Allow specifying custom base classes for historical models (gh-98)

### **3.7 1.3.0 (2013-05-17)**

- Fixed bug when using `django-simple-history` on nested models package
- Allow history table to be formatted correctly with `django-admin-bootstrap`
- Disallow calling `simple_history.register` twice on the same model
- Added Python 3 support
- Added support for custom user model (Django 1.5+)

### **3.8 1.2.3 (2013-04-22)**

- Fixed packaging bug: added admin template files to PyPI package

### **3.9 1.2.1 (2013-04-22)**

- Added tests
- Added history view/revert feature in admin interface

- Various fixes and improvements

### 3.10 Oct 22, 2010

- Merged setup.py from Klaas van Schelven - Thanks!

### 3.11 Feb 21, 2010

- Initial project creation, with changes to support ForeignKey relations.