

ICSE'24, IDE Workshop

# Developing IDE Plugins

Zarina Kurbatova  
Researcher at JetBrains



# Why develop IDE plugins?

- **Increase research impact**

- Plugins can be easily integrated into developers workflows

- **Extend behaviour of your favorite IDE in different ways**

- Integration with external services like OpenAI
- Support of third party tools such as Spring
- Additional UI elements such as menus or tool windows

- **Educate next generation of software developers**

- JetBrains Academy plugin provides possibilities for creating educational courses inside IDE

# What is the IntelliJ Platform?

A platform for building IDEs and language-aware developer tools

- Code analysis
  - PSI (Program Structure Interface) responsible for parsing code and building syntactic trees
- UI Toolkit (Tool Windows, popup menus, dialogs, ...)
- Code transformations
  - Refactorings
  - Quick fixes
- Syntax highlighting, code folding, code completion, ...
- Integration with Git

# Program Structure Interface (PSI)

A layer responsible for parsing files and creating syntactic and semantic models

All tree elements implement a base interface **PsiElement**

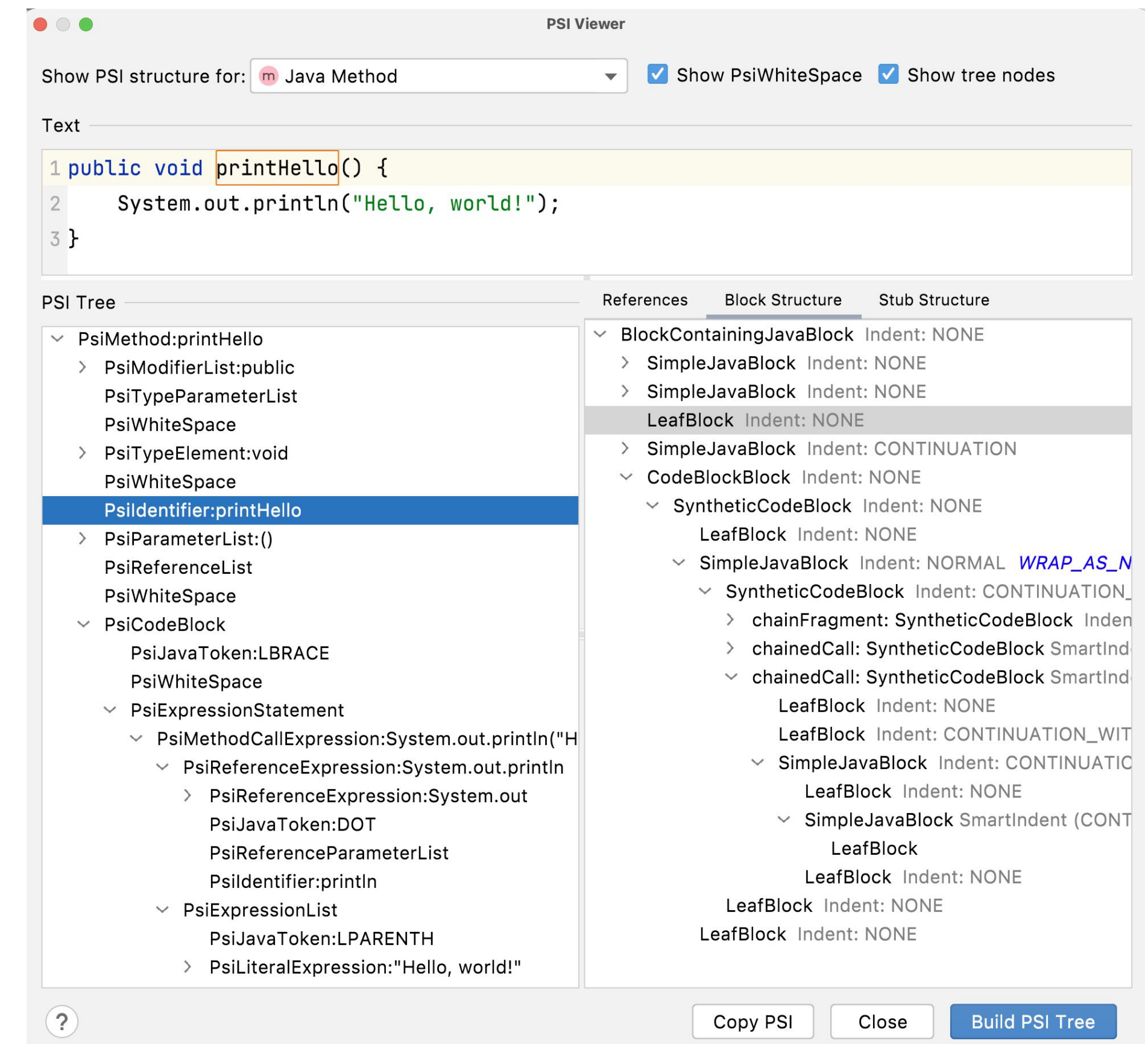
Each language has its own implementation of PSI elements

## PSI allows to:

- Extract entities of the specific type
- Resolve types
- Search for usages of some entity

[PSIViewer](#) - plugin that visualizes PSI structure of code

[Documentation](#)

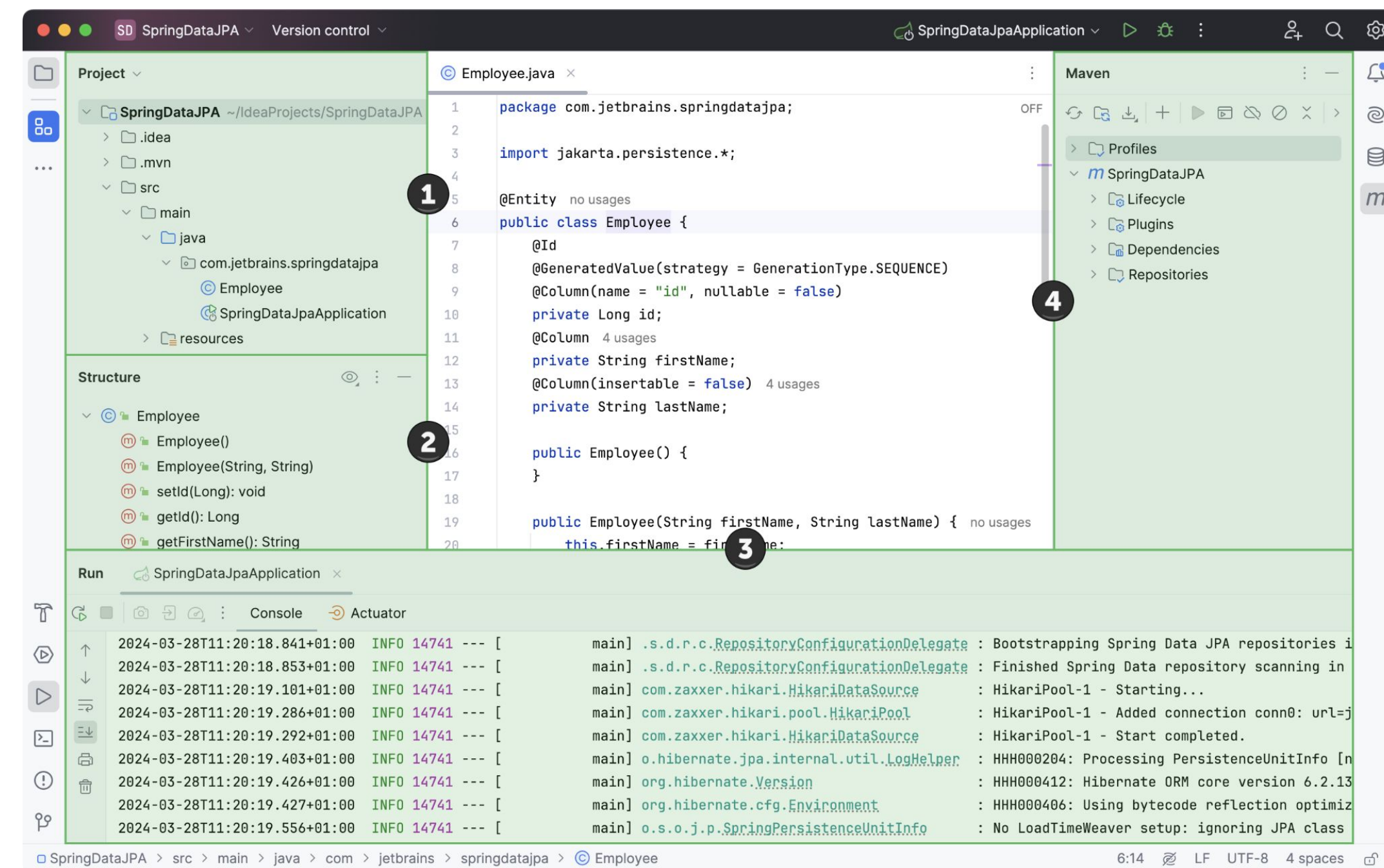




# Extensions

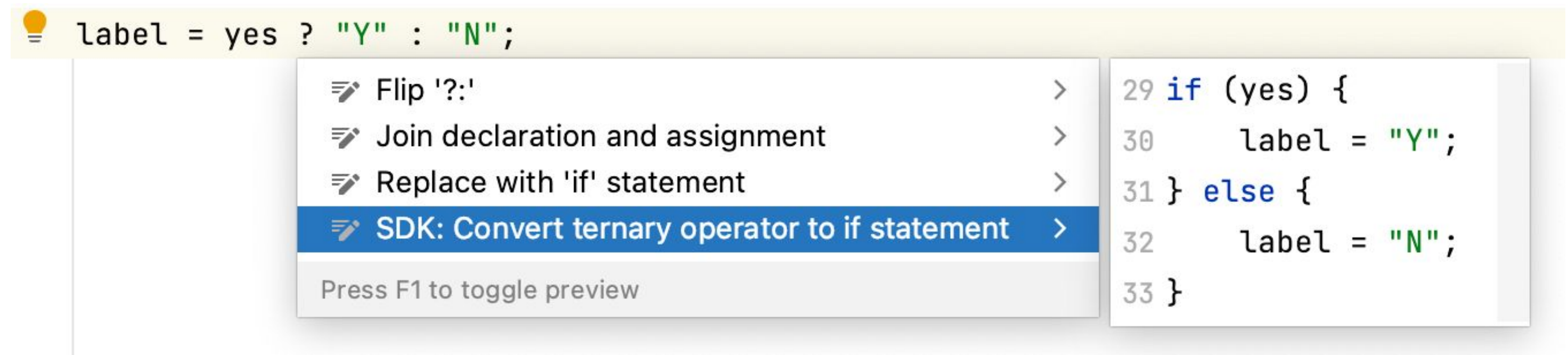
The most common way to extend IDE functionality

- [1500+ extension points](#)
- Should be registered in `plugin.xml` in `<extensions>` section
- For example, the `com.intellij.toolWindow` extension point allows to add `tool windows` (panels displayed at the sides of the IDE user interface)



# Intention actions

- Analyzes the currently opened file and suggests code improvements
- Should be implemented using **IntentionAction** interface and registered in the **plugin.xml** in **<extensions>** section using the **com.intellij.intentionAction** extension point



The screenshot shows a code editor with a yellow highlight on the line `label = yes ? "Y" : "N";`. A context menu is open over this line, listing several intention actions:

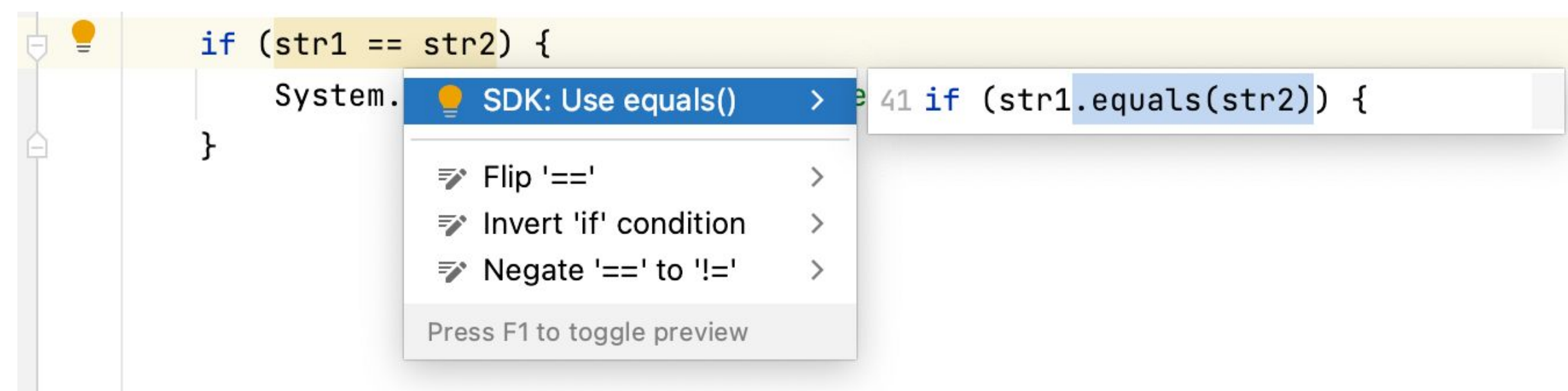
- Flip '?'
- Join declaration and assignment
- Replace with 'if' statement
- SDK: Convert ternary operator to if statement** (highlighted)

Below the menu items, it says "Press F1 to toggle preview". To the right of the menu, a preview window shows the resulting code after the selected action:

```
29 if (yes) {
30     label = "Y";
31 } else {
32     label = "N";
33 }
```

# Inspections

- Run static analysis on the code in the background mode
- Highlight the code that has some problems and suggest automatic quick-fixes
- Scope is configurable (file, package, project)
- Should be implemented using `LocalInspectionTool` and registered in `plugin.xml` in `<extensions>` section using `com.intellij.localInspection` extension point



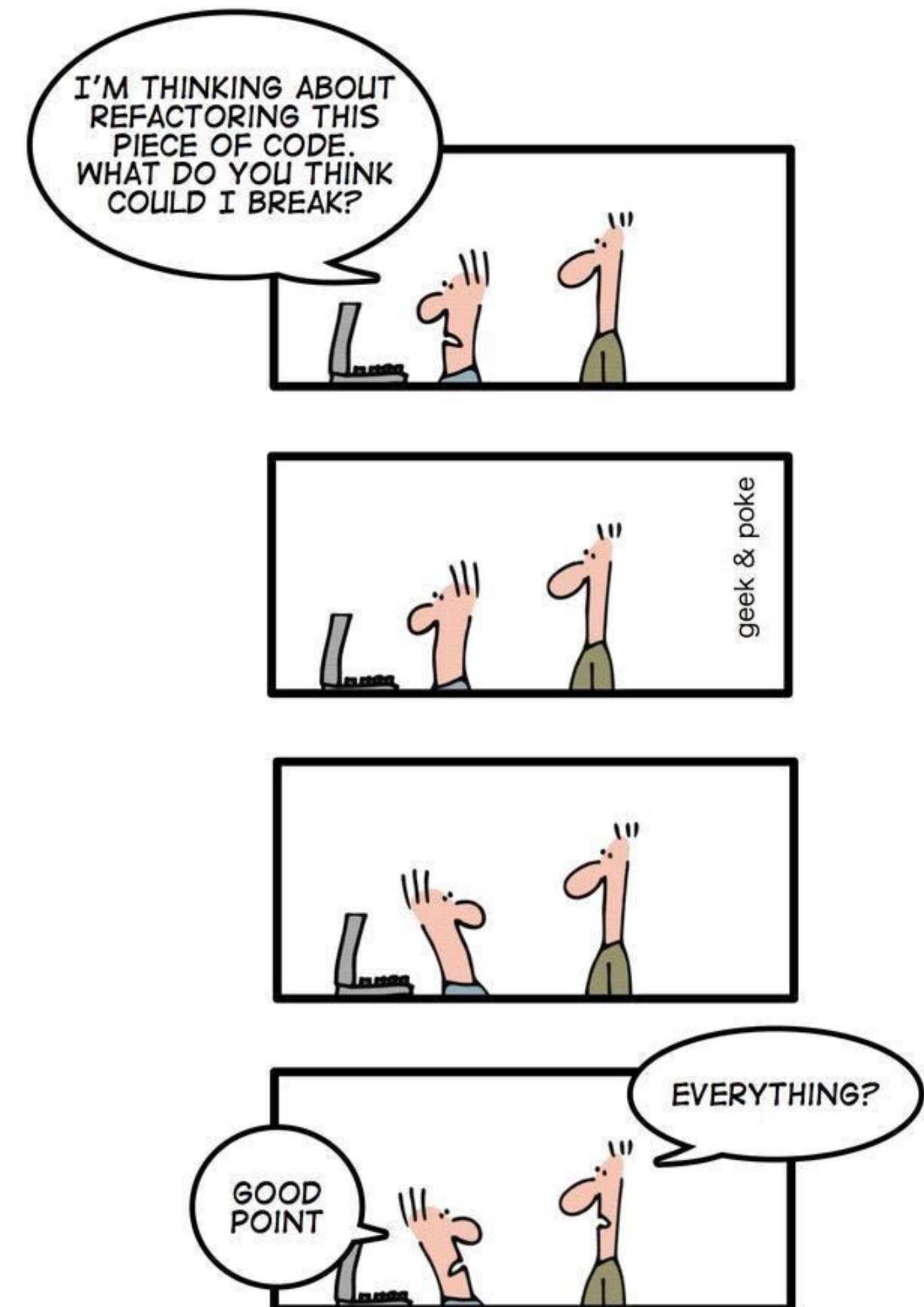


# Refactorings

The are already implemented refactorings

See package `com.intellij.refactoring`

- Move Method/Class
- Extract Method/Class/Variable
- Rename Method/Variable/Class
- Inline Method/Variable
- Pull Up Method
- Push Down Method

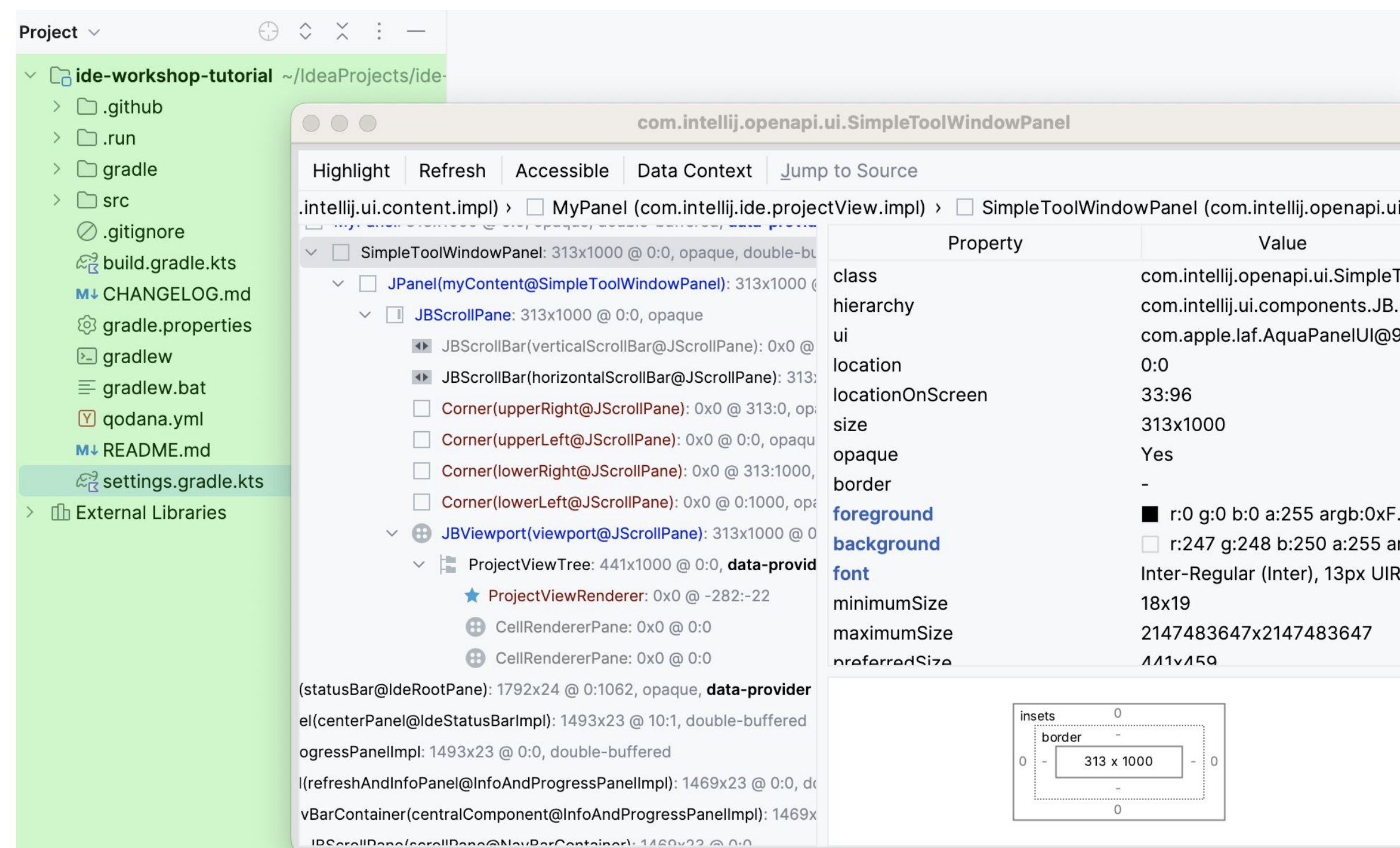




# UI Toolkit

## Add custom UI elements to IDE

- The IntelliJ Platform has a lot of custom Swing components that you can reuse in your plugin
- Menus, Tool Windows, Popups, Notifications, and so on
- [UI Inspector](#) allows to inspect existing UI component of IDE
- [Platform UI guidelines](#) provides tips on how to create consistent user interfaces



# Run ML models in plugins

- [KInference](#) library allows to execute ML models written in ONNX format
- [KotlinDL](#) - is a high-level Deep Learning API written in Kotlin and inspired by [Keras](#)
  - uses TensorFlow Java API and ONNX Runtime API for Java
- [ONNX Runtime Java API](#) allows to inference ML models written in ONNX format
- [Tribuo](#) is a machine learning library written in Java
  - provides tools for classification, regression, clustering, model development, and [more](#)

# Educational plugins

Wrap your educational course into an IDE plugin

- Several types of tasks: **theory, coding, quizzes**
- Testing system
- Share a course on [Marketplace](#)
- [Course creator start guide](#)
- [Introduction to IDE Code Refactoring in Kotlin](#)

The screenshot displays the IntelliJ IDEA interface. On the left, a 'Course' sidebar shows a tree view of sections: Introduction to IDE Code Refactoring in Kotlin (5/50), Introduction, Section 1: Refactoring and its purpose, Section 2: Code style and Formatting, Section 3: Renaming code, Section 4: Moving code, Section 5: Extracting code, Section 6: Inlining code, Section 7: Refactoring to Design Patterns, and Section 8: Conclusion. The 'Code schemas and EditorConfig' section is expanded, showing 'Task.kt' and '.editorconfig'. The main editor shows a Kotlin file with the following code:

```
1 package jetbrains.refactoring.course.formatting
2
3 fun funWithCodeStyleIssues() {
4     println("What is the indent size in this file?")
5     println("What indent size should be according to .editorconfig?")
6     for ( i in 1 .. 10) {
7         println("Please, fix me!")
8     }
9 }
10
```

On the right, a 'Description' panel for 'Task 1/3: Code schemas and EditorConfig' provides instructions. It states: 'IntelliJ IDEA provides two ways to comply with the project's code style guidelines: **code schemas** and **editor configs**. In this lesson, we will talk about both of them.'

**Code schemas**

There are two predefined code schemas:

- **Project scheme:** you configure settings for one specific project, they're stored in the codeStyles folder under **.idea** and are shared through the VCS together with the project.
- **Default scheme:** you configure the settings that could be applied to all the projects you work on in the IDE that have the Default schema selected.

Note that code schemas are language-specific.

To configure the **code schema**,

1. Press **\***, (macOS) or **Ctrl+Alt+S** (Linux/Windows) to open the IDE settings and select Editor | Code Style.
2. Select **Kotlin** programming language.
3. Select the code schema you would like to configure (Project or Default).
4. Configure code style settings, such as tabs and indents, import settings (using single name import or import with **\***), and many others.

The bottom of the panel shows a 'Done' status and a 'Next' button.



# Distributing your plugins

## Marketplace – official JetBrains plugin repository

- Free and paid plugins
- **6.3M** monthly plugin downloads
- **86%** of JetBrains IDEs users have at least one plugin installed
- **8000+** plugins
- Automatic compatibility verification

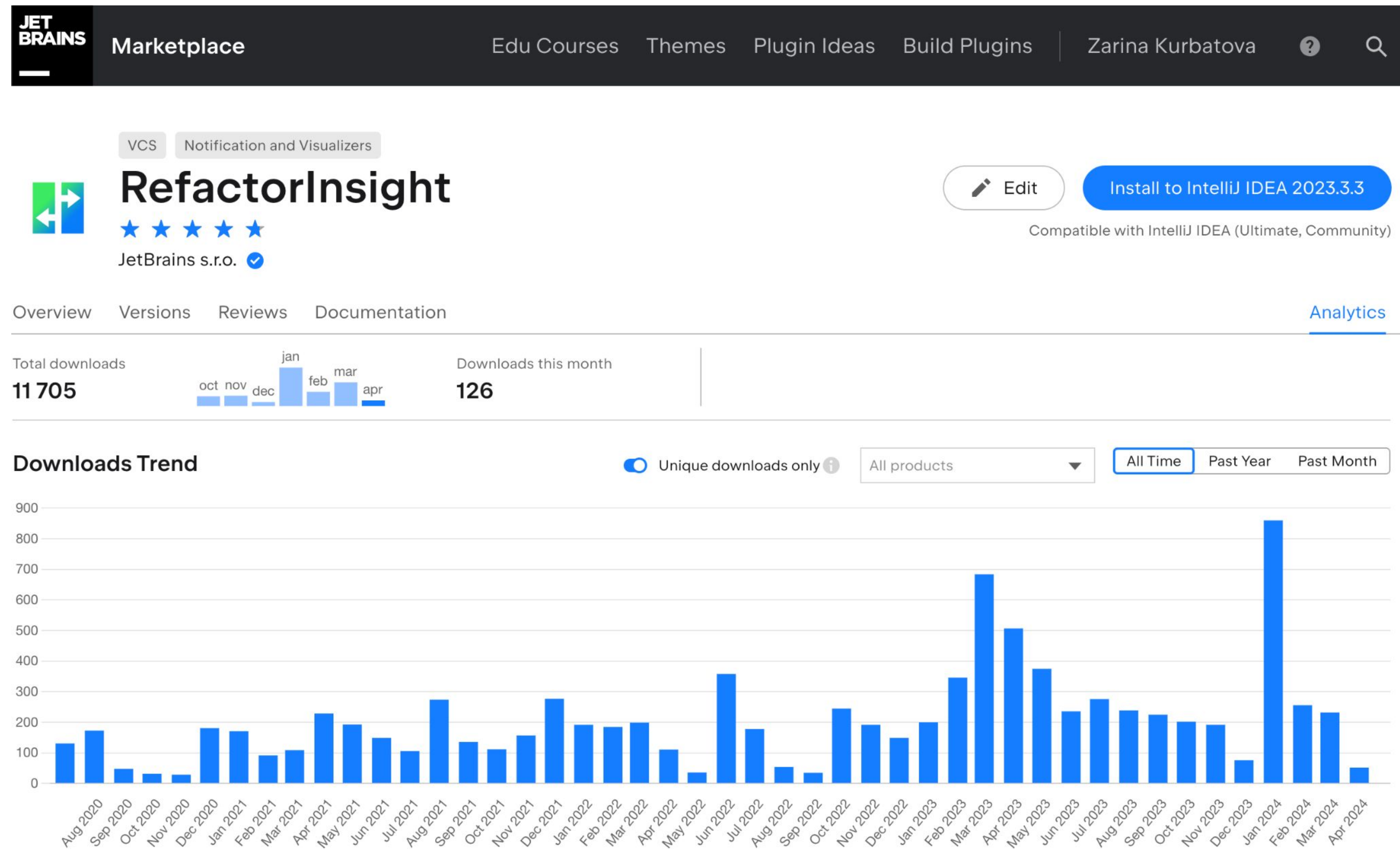
The screenshot shows the JetBrains Marketplace website. The header includes the JetBrains logo, 'Marketplace', and navigation links for 'Edu Courses', 'Themes', 'Plugin Ideas', 'Build Plugins', and a user profile 'Zarina Kurbatova'. The main content area features a large heading 'Explore Plugins for JetBrains Products' and a subheading 'Personalize your developer experience with JetBrains Marketplace plugins adding even more features to your favorite JetBrains IDE and team tools.' Below this is a search bar with a dropdown menu set to 'IDEs' and the text 'Search all 8093 IDEs plugins'. The 'Staff-picked IDE Plugins' section displays three featured plugins:

Plugin Name	Rating	Downloads	Price
Test Automation	★★★★★	501,568	Free
Laravel Idea	★★★★★	926,781	Free trial
Full Line Code Completion	★★★★★	108,139	Free



# Downloads statistics

- Downloads trends
- Downloads by product (IntelliJ IDEA Ultimate/Community Edition)
- Plugin page visitors
- Page visits by country/region
- Page referrals



# Where to start

Use [IntelliJ Platform Plugin Template](#)

- Already configured Gradle project
- CI setup
- Sample code

The screenshot shows the GitHub repository page for 'intellij-platform-plugin-template' by JetBrains. The repository is a public template with 104 watchers, 559 forks, and 2.8k stars. A red box highlights the 'Use this template' button. The repository contains a table of files and folders with their commit history:

File/Folder	Commit Message	Commit Date
hsz Dependencies (GitHub Actions) - upgrade actions/cache to 4	Dependencies (GitHub Actions) - upgrade actions/cache...	3 weeks ago
.github	Dependencies (GitHub Actions) - upgrade actions/cache...	3 weeks ago
.idea	Remove gradleJvm property from the .idea/gradle.xml file	10 months ago
.run	Run Configurations - Run Qodana runs the qodanaScan Gra...	last month
gradle	Dependencies - upgrade org.jetbrains.qodana to 2023.3...	last month
src	MyBundle: remove SpreadOperator suppression	8 months ago
.gitignore	Qodana integration	3 years ago
CHANGELOG.md	Dependencies (GitHub Actions) - upgrade actions/cache...	3 weeks ago
CODE_OF_CONDUCT.md	Added CODE_OF_CONDUCT	4 years ago
LICENSE	Update LICENSE file	3 years ago
README.md	Inspections fixes	6 months ago
build.gradle.kts	Gradle - Removed Qodana Gradle Plugin configuration to ...	last month
gradle.properties	1.13.0	last month
gradlew	Upgrade Gradle Wrapper to 8.4	6 months ago
gradlew.bat	Upgrade Gradle Wrapper to 8.6	2 months ago
qodana.yml	Inspections fixes	6 months ago
settings.gradle.kts	Plugin publication: fix the channel selector (#444)	last month

The right sidebar shows repository statistics: 2.8k stars, 104 watching, 559 forks, and 41 releases. The latest release is v1.13.0, published 3 weeks ago. There are 45 contributors listed.

# Demo

# Useful links

- [IntelliJ Platform Plugin SDK](#)
  - Official documentation on plugin development for JetBrains IDEs
- [JetBrains Platform Slack](#)
  - Community of plugin developers
- [Busy Plugin Developers](#) blog
  - News about the IntelliJ Platform, Marketplace, webinars
- [People Behind Plugins](#) series
  - Interviews with IDE plugin developers
- [“The IntelliJ Platform: a Framework for Building Plugins and Mining Software Data”](#) paper
- **Demo plugin from the IDE workshop:** <https://github.com/JetBrains-Research/ide-workshop-tutorial>



Demo plugin