FreezeText

User Manual

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FreezeText

User Manual — Version 1.12

FreezeText is a macOS utility for capturing text from anywhere on your screen. Press a single keyboard shortcut to freeze the display, select an area, and instantly recognize text using Apple's Vision framework. Text recognition happens locally on your Mac — captured content is never sent to the cloud. An internet connection is required for purchase, activation and license checks.

Use Cases

- **Scanned documents** — extract text from PDFs without a text layer
- **Images and screenshots** — copy text from photos, diagrams, or screenshots
- **Video content** — freeze a frame and capture visible text
- **Hover elements** — capture tooltips, popups, and menus that disappear on click
- **Any application** — works system-wide with any app on your Mac

Getting Started

Installation

Download the DMG file and drag FreezeText to your Applications folder. FreezeText can be tried free for 14 days; after that a license is required (€19.00 incl. VAT, one-time purchase).

Screen Recording Permission

On first launch, FreezeText requests Screen Recording permission. This is required for the app to capture screen contents and recognize text.

1. macOS shows a permission dialog — click **Open System Settings**
2. Enable the toggle next to **FreezeText** under **Privacy & Security** → **Screen Recording**
3. Restart FreezeText for the permission to take effect

Your First Text Capture

1. Press ⌘⇧**7** (Command + Shift + 7) — the screen freezes
2. Drag a rectangle around the desired text area with your mouse
3. The recognized text is automatically copied to the clipboard

That's it! The captured text can now be pasted into any application with ⌘V.

Terms of Use

On the very first launch, FreezeText displays the terms of use and privacy policy. These must be accepted before the app can be used.

Text Capture

Global Hotkey

The default hotkey is ⌘⇧**7** (Command + Shift + 7). It works system-wide in any application. The hotkey can be customized in settings under **General**.

Area Selection

After pressing the hotkey, the screen freezes and is slightly dimmed. A hint text appears briefly: "Select area · ESC to cancel".

- **Drag**: Hold the mouse button and drag a rectangle around the desired area
- **Size indicator**: While dragging, the current size of the selection rectangle is displayed
- **Cancel**: Press **ESC** to cancel the capture

OCR Processing

Once the area is selected, text recognition starts automatically. Processing typically takes less than 0.3 seconds. The recognized text is:

1. Cleaned up according to text processing settings (line breaks, whitespace, hyphenation)
2. Shown in the text editor (if enabled) or copied directly to the clipboard
3. Saved to history (if enabled)

Multi-Display Support

FreezeText supports multiple displays. When you press the hotkey, all connected monitors are frozen simultaneously. You can select an area for text recognition on any screen.

QR Code and Barcode Detection

In addition to text, FreezeText automatically detects QR codes and barcodes in the selected area. The contained text or link is copied to the clipboard along with the recognized text.

OCR Languages

Recognition languages can be configured in settings under **OCR**. By default, German and English as well as system languages are active. Additional languages improve recognition for foreign-language texts.

macOS Services Integration

FreezeText integrates into the macOS Services menu. In any application (e.g. Finder), you can select images and use **Services** → **FreezeText: Extract Text** to recognize the contained text via OCR. The recognized text is copied to the clipboard and optionally saved to history.

History

History Sidebar

The history sidebar shows all previous text captures. It can be opened in two ways:

- **Push the mouse to the screen edge** — the sidebar opens automatically (position left or right, sensitivity configurable)
- **Menu bar icon → History** — via the FreezeText menu

The sidebar width can be freely adjusted by dragging the resize handle on the inner edge.

History Entries

Each entry shows a text preview (up to 2 lines) and a relative timestamp (e.g. "2 hours ago"). Hovering reveals the following actions:

- **Screenshot** — shows the captured screen area
- **Copy** — copies the text to the clipboard
- **Insert** — pastes the text directly into the active app (Direct Insert must be enabled)
- **Edit** — opens the text in the editor; while an entry is being edited, a colored bar marks the corresponding row
- **Delete** — removes the entry from history

Clipboard Preview

When **Clipboard Preview** is enabled in settings, the sidebar shows the current clipboard contents at the top. Clicking the save button adds the text as a new history entry — useful for quickly preserving text that was not captured via OCR.

Direct Insert

Direct Insert adds an insert button to every history row. Instead of first copying the text to the clipboard and then manually pasting with ⌘V, FreezeText pastes the entry directly into the currently active app. The first time you enable it, macOS will prompt for Accessibility permission.

Color Tags

History entries can be tagged with colors for categorization. Available colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple. Color tags can be assigned or removed via the context menu (right-click).

Search History

The sidebar includes a search field for full-text search through your history. The number of matches is displayed next to the search field.

Reorder Entries

History entries can be reordered via drag & drop. Drag an entry to the desired position in the list.

Export History

The entire history can be exported as **JSON** or **CSV**. Export functions are available in settings under **History**.

Auto-Delete

History can be cleaned up automatically. In settings under **History** you can configure:

- **Maximum entries**: 10 to 100 (default: 50)
- **Auto-delete after**: 7, 14, 30 or 90 days — or never

Text Processing

FreezeText can automatically clean up recognized text before copying it to the clipboard. These options are configurable in settings under **Text Processing**.

Remove Line Breaks

Joins multi-line text into a continuous paragraph. Useful when capturing text from a PDF or image where the layout has wrapped text across multiple lines.

Before:

```
This is a
long text that
spans multiple
lines.
```

After:

```
This is a long text that spans multiple lines.
```

Cleanup Whitespace

Removes extra whitespace that frequently occurs during OCR recognition. Multiple spaces are collapsed into a single space.

Default: Enabled

Fix Hyphenation

Removes hyphens at line ends and joins the separated word parts. Especially useful for text from books, magazines, or formatted documents.

Before:

```
steam-
ship company
```

After:

```
steamship company
```

Default: Enabled

User Interface

Menu Bar

FreezeText runs as a menu bar app. The icon (text recognition symbol) is located in the macOS menu bar at the top right. The following actions are available from the menu:

- **Capture Text** — starts a new capture
- **History** — opens the history sidebar
- **Preferences...** — opens settings
- **Check for Updates…** — checks for a newer version and offers to install it
- **Quick Start** — shows the onboarding wizard again
- **Info & Legal** — legal notice, terms of use, privacy policy

Capture Overlay

After pressing the hotkey, a fullscreen overlay is displayed on all screens. The background is slightly dimmed. The selection rectangle shows:

- White border with shadow effect
- Rounded corners
- Real-time size indicator (width × height) below the rectangle
- The selected area is shown clearly, the rest remains dimmed

Text Editor

After capture, a translucent text editor window is shown where you can review and edit the recognized text.

- Translucent window design with monospace font
- Text is selected by default for easy copying
- **Auto-save** — text is automatically saved when the window is closed or loses focus
- **Recapture** — discards the text and starts a new capture
- **Save** (⌘S) — copies the text to the clipboard
- **ESC** — closes the editor without saving
- Freely movable and resizable

Settings

Settings are accessible via the menu bar icon → **Preferences...**

General

- **Global Hotkey**: Key combination to start capture (default: ⌘⇧7)
- **Capture window shadows**: Includes window shadows in the screen capture
- **Show capture hint**: Shows "Select area · ESC to cancel" when starting a capture
- **Launch at Login**: Automatically open FreezeText when your Mac starts (macOS 13+)

OCR

- **Recognition languages**: Select languages for text recognition (default: system languages + German + English)
- **QR/barcode detection**: Automatic detection of QR codes and barcodes (always active)

Text Processing

- **Remove line breaks**: Joins multi-line text into a paragraph (default: off)
- **Cleanup whitespace**: Removes extra whitespace (default: on)
- **Fix hyphenation**: Removes hyphens at line ends (default: on)

History

- **Enable history**: Saves captured texts in history (default: on)
- **Sidebar position**: Left or right edge of the screen (default: right)
- **Sensitivity**: How far the mouse must "push" past the screen edge to open the sidebar — High (fast, 150 px), Medium (300 px, default) or Low (slow, 500 px)
- **Show clipboard preview**: Show the current clipboard contents in the sidebar for quick saving (default: off)
- **Direct insert**: Show an insert button to paste text directly into the active app (default: off, requires Accessibility permission)
- **Maximum entries**: 10 to 500 (default: 50)
- **Auto-delete after**: 7, 14, 30 or 90 days — or never (default: never)
- **Clear all**: Removes all history entries (with confirmation dialog)

- **Export**: Download history as JSON or CSV

API

- **Enable API server**: Starts the local HTTP server (default: off)
- **Port**: HTTP port of the server (default: 9876)
- **API token**: Optional Bearer token for authentication

Keyboard Shortcuts

* The global hotkey can be customized in settings under **General**.

Function	Shortcut
Capture text (global)	⌘⇧7 *
Cancel capture	ESC
Open history sidebar	Push mouse to right edge
Close sidebar	ESC
Save text in editor	⌘S
Close editor	ESC

HTTP API

FreezeText provides a local HTTP API for automation and integration with other applications. The API must be enabled in settings under **API**.

Setup

1. Open Settings → **API**
2. Enable **Enable API server**
3. Optional: Generate an API token for authentication
4. The server is available at `http://localhost:9876`

Authentication

If an API token is configured, every request must include the token as a Bearer token in the Authorization header:

```
Authorization: Bearer <your-token>
```

Endpoints

Capture & OCR

Endpoint	Method	Description
`/status`	GET	Server status, version, history count
`/capture`	GET/POST	Start text capture
`/capture/cancel`	POST	Cancel ongoing capture
`/capture/region`	POST	Capture and OCR a specific screen region
`/ocr`	POST	Perform OCR on a provided image
`/ocr/languages`	GET/PUT	Get/update OCR languages

History

Endpoint	Method	Description
`/history`	GET	List all entries (filter by color, sorting)
`/history/search?q=`	GET	Full-text search in history
`/history`	POST	Add new entry
`/history/reorder`	POST	Reorder entries (drag & drop)
`/history/:id`	GET	Get single entry
`/history/:id`	PUT	Update entry text
`/history/:id`	DELETE	Delete entry
`/history`	DELETE	Clear all entries
`/history/:id/screenshot`	GET	Get entry screenshot
`/history/export/json`	GET	Export history as JSON
`/history/export/csv`	GET	Export history as CSV

Settings & UI

Endpoint	Method	Description
`/settings`	GET/PUT	Get/update settings
`/hotkey`	GET/PUT	Get/update hotkey
`/hotkey/reset`	POST	Reset hotkey to default
`/preferences`	GET/POST	Open preferences window (optional tab parameter)
`/sidebar`	GET	Sidebar visibility state
`/sidebar/show`	POST	Show sidebar
`/sidebar/hide`	POST	Hide sidebar
`/sidebar/toggle`	POST	Toggle sidebar visibility
`/about`	GET/POST	Show About window
`/onboarding`	GET/POST	Show onboarding wizard

Screenshots & Windows

Endpoint	Method	Description
`/windows`	GET	List all visible FreezeText windows
`/screenshot`	GET	Capture FreezeText windows as PNG
`/screen`	GET	Full screen capture as PNG
`/sidebar/screenshot`	GET	Capture sidebar as PNG
`/displays`	GET	List all connected displays
`/permissions`	GET	Permission status (Screen Recording, Accessibility)

Mouse & Keyboard (requires Accessibility permission)

Endpoint	Method	Description
`/mouse/position`	GET	Current mouse position
`/mouse/move`	POST	Move mouse cursor
`/mouse/click`	POST	Perform mouse click
`/mouse/drag`	POST	Perform drag operation
`/keyboard/type`	POST	Type text character by character
`/keyboard/key`	POST	Press single key
`/keyboard/hotkey`	POST	Press key combination

Miscellaneous

Endpoint	Method	Description
`/clipboard`	GET/POST	Read or set the clipboard contents
`/editor`	GET	Text editor popup status
`/editor/open`	POST	Open text editor with text
`/editor/close`	POST	Close text editor
`/editor/text`	POST	Set the text inside the editor
`/editor/selection`	GET/POST	Get or set the text selection
`/legal/:type`	GET	Legal texts (impressum, terms, privacy, accessibility)
`/logs`	GET/DELETE	Get/clear logs
`/docs`	GET	Swagger UI documentation
`/openapi.json`	GET	OpenAPI specification
`/quit`	POST	Quit application

Example

```
# Start text capture via API
curl http://localhost:9876/capture

# Get history
curl http://localhost:9876/history

# With authentication
curl -H "Authorization: Bearer my-token" \
     http://localhost:9876/history
```

Technical Details

OCR Engine

FreezeText uses Apple's Vision framework (`VNRecognizeTextRequest`) at the highest accuracy level. Text recognition works entirely locally — captured content is never sent to external servers.

Processing time is typically under 0.3 seconds, depending on the size of the selected area and the amount of text.

Screen Capture

Screen capture uses CoreGraphics (`CGDisplayCreateImage`). All connected displays are captured simultaneously. The overlay is displayed as a fullscreen window at the highest window level to create the "freeze" effect.

QR Code and Barcode Detection

In addition to text recognition, FreezeText automatically performs QR code and barcode detection in the selected area. Both recognitions run in parallel via the Vision framework.

macOS Services Integration

FreezeText registers as a macOS Service and accepts image files from Finder or other applications. OCR is performed directly on the provided images without requiring a screen capture.

Privacy

- Text recognition is 100% local — captured content is never transmitted
- Account and internet connection only for purchase, activation and license checks
- No analytics or tracking data
- OCR via Apple's Vision framework directly on your Mac
- History data stored locally at `~/Library/Application Support/FreezeText/`

System Requirements

Operating System	macOS 12 (Monterey) or later
Permission	Screen Recording (required)
Disk Space	approx. 4 MB
Architecture	Native Swift (Apple Silicon & Intel)

FAQ

Why does FreezeText ask for Screen Recording permission?

FreezeText needs to capture the screen contents to recognize displayed text via OCR. Without this permission the app cannot function. The capture is processed entirely locally — screen contents are never transmitted.

Can I change the global hotkey?

Yes. Open settings via the menu bar icon and click the hotkey button under "General". Press your desired key combination. Use "Reset" to return to the default (⌘⇧7) at any time.

Does FreezeText work with multiple displays?

Yes. When you press the hotkey, all connected displays are frozen simultaneously. You can select an area on any monitor.

Where is the history data stored?

History is stored locally at ~/Library/Application Support/FreezeText/. This data is removed when you uninstall the app.

Is my data sent to the cloud?

Captured content is not. OCR processing uses Apple's Vision framework directly on your Mac; screen contents and recognized text never leave your Mac. Only the data required for purchase, activation and license checks is transmitted — that part needs an internet connection.

What can I do if the hotkey doesn't work?

Check if another app is using the same hotkey. Change the hotkey in FreezeText settings. Also make sure Screen Recording permission is granted in System Settings.

Contact & Support

For questions or issues, please contact support at: info@juergenkoller.software

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FreezeText — Capture text from anywhere on your screen.