PDF Content Search

User Manual

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Contents

PDF Content Search

Supported File Formats

Getting Started

Installation · Adding Folders · Starting Your First Search

Search

Basic Search · Where the Search Looks · Phrase Search · Excluding Words · Combined Search · Filter Panel · Sorting · Spelling Variants · Automatic Number Search · Partial Word Search · Search Settings

Document View

Navigation · Zoom · Text Recognition (Manual) · QuickLook and Finder · Open Document Externally · Info Panel · Metadata Editor (Images)

Apple Mail

Setting Up Apple Mail · Searching Mail · Attachments · Settings

User Interface

Sidebar · Path Bar · Status Display

Settings

Appearance · Search · Sharing & Scanner App · Apple Mail · Integrations · More

Keyboard Shortcuts

Mobile App for iOS and Android

Requirements · Connecting · Synchronization · Device Management · AI File Naming · In-App PDF Editor · Export to Cloud Storage · Android

API & Automation

REST API · Authentication · MCP (Model Context Protocol) · MCP Tools (Overview) · Set up Claude Desktop (one click) · Use Cases

Technical Details

Search Index · System Requirements · Supported File Formats · OCR Engine · Digital Text Enrichment · Privacy · Localization · Spotlight Integration · Finder Tags

FAQ

How long does initial processing take? · Can I search multiple folders at once? · Are password-protected PDFs supported? · What happens when I move or delete files? · Where is the index data stored? · My Mac slows down during processing — what can I do? · Can I search my emails as well? · From which version can the scanner app be paired with the Mac? · Is PDF. Scanner. available for Android? · What does AI naming in the scanner app cost?

PDF Content Search

User Manual — Version 1.59

PDF Content Search is a macOS app for full-text search in scanned documents. The app uses OCR (Optical Character Recognition) to extract text from PDFs, images and other document types, making them fully searchable. On request it also searches your Apple Mail messages including attachments. Indexing, text recognition and search run locally on your Mac; documents only leave it if you turn on the optional conversion of Office files on our server.

Supported File Formats

- **PDF** (including scanned documents without a text layer)
- **Images** (JPEG, PNG, HEIC, TIFF, GIF, BMP, PSD, EPS, PCX, RAW)
- **Text files** (TXT, RTF, RTFD, Markdown)
- **Office documents** (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Pages, Numbers, Keynote, OpenDocument, CSV) — only with conversion on our server turned on
- **Emails** from Apple Mail including attachments

Getting Started

Installation

PDF Content Search is available on the Mac App Store, on Setapp or as a direct download. The app requires **macOS 14 Sonoma** or later.

The direct-download build regularly checks for new versions at launch. You can also trigger a check manually via **PDF Content Search → Check for Updates…**. App Store and Setapp builds receive updates exclusively through the Mac App Store or Setapp.

Adding Folders

1. Launch the app and select **File → Add Searchable Folder** (⌘N)
2. Choose a folder containing your documents
3. The app automatically begins text recognition on all files

While the app is working, the busy indicator at the bottom of the window shows a progress bar. Clicking it opens the **Data Processing** window with the file count, processed files and new OCR pages per folder. Depending on the number and size of your documents, initial processing may take some time.

You can also drag folders from Finder directly onto the sidebar to add them.

Starting Your First Search

Once processing is complete (or even while it's still running), you can use the search field in the upper right corner (⌘F). Enter a search term — results appear instantly in the list.

Search

Basic Search

Enter one or more words into the search field. The app searches the entire recognized text of all documents in the checked folders (see Where the Search Looks), as well as file names and paths. All entered words must appear in the document. The search is not case-sensitive.

Words with fewer than three characters are not searched. Find short terms together with a longer word or as a phrase in quotation marks (e.g. `"AB 12"`).

Press **Return** to jump from the search field to the result list, and **Esc** to cancel the search.

Where the Search Looks

As soon as you start a search, the sidebar lists all added folders and, if set up, **Apple Mail**, each with a checkbox. The search covers every checked entry, each folder including its subfolders. Click an entry to check or uncheck it; the search then runs again right away.

- The entry you had selected in the sidebar before the search is checked automatically when the search starts, **Apple Mail** included
- All other checkboxes stay as you last set them, even after restarting the app. If no folder is checked when a search starts, the app checks all folders
- Apple Mail is searched only when it is checked
- A subfolder you currently have open in the list does not narrow the search
- The line **Searching inside:** at the top of the sidebar names the checked entries; if there are more than three, the first three are followed by an ellipsis
- Path means the full location: a word from the name of a parent folder matches every document in it

End the search with the x icon at the top of the sidebar, with Esc in the search field, or by right-clicking in the sidebar and choosing **Cancel Search**. Selecting another folder with ⌘1 to ⌘9 also ends the search.

Phrase Search

Enclose multiple words in quotation marks to search for exactly this sequence of words:

```
"invoice from January"
```

The last word of the phrase counts as the beginning of a word: `"invoice from Jan"` also finds "invoice from January".

Supported quotation marks: `"..."`, `'...'`, `«...»`, `„...“`, `“...”`

Excluding Words

Place a minus sign before a word to exclude documents containing that word:

```
invoice –cancelled
```

Finds all documents containing "invoice" that do not contain "cancelled".

Every document that contains the character sequence is excluded, even as part of a longer word: `–cancel` also excludes documents containing "cancellation". Exclusions with fewer than three characters are ignored.

Combined Search

Phrases and exclusions can be combined:

```
"lease agreement 2024" –termination utilities
```

Finds documents with the exact phrase "lease agreement 2024" and the word "utilities", but without "termination".

Filter Panel

Click the filter icon next to the search results to open a movable filter panel. This allows you to narrow down search results by various criteria:

- **File type**: Filter by PDF, image, text file etc.
- **Finder Tags**: Filter by macOS Finder color tags
- **File size**: Set minimum and maximum file size
- **Date range**: Narrow results to a specific time period
- **Page count**: Filter by number of pages in the document
- **Folders**: Restrict the results to some of the searched folders (appears when the results come from at least two folders). The filter only hides results; which folders are searched is set by the

checkboxes in the sidebar
- **Match count**: Only show documents with a minimum number of matches

A badge on the filter icon shows the number of active filters. Use the reset button in the panel or right-click the filter icon to reset all filters.

Sorting

Use the sort button in the header of the result list to choose the order of the matches: **New - Old**, **Old - New**, **Relevance** or **Recently Added**. In the same menu, **Cancel Search** ends the current search.

Spelling Variants

The search automatically evens out common spelling variants:

- **German umlauts and ß**: "Müller" finds "Mueller" and vice versa, "Straße" finds "Strasse"
- **Accents** are ignored: "cafe" finds "café"
- **Comma and period** are treated alike: "12,50" finds "12.50"
- **Cyrillic look-alikes**: letters that look like Latin ones and can be confused by text recognition count as the Latin letters

The search does not correct typos. If matches are missing, check the spelling or search for the beginning of the word only.

Automatic Number Search

Search queries containing three or more digits automatically search the number database as well. It compares only the digits, regardless of how the number is grouped in the document. This finds IBANs, invoice numbers, phone numbers and similar numeric sequences even when they are written with spaces, periods or hyphens.

If the query contains text besides the number (e.g. `invoice 2024`), both must match: only documents that contain the text and whose digits match are shown.

Partial Word Search

Every search term counts as the beginning of a word. The search term "ship" will also find "shipping" or "shipment". Parts from the middle of a word are not found: "ship" does not find "friendship".

Search Settings

The following options can be adjusted in the settings under **Search** (⌘, → Search tab):

- **Start search after … Characters**: Sets how many typed characters trigger the search (1–5, default: 3). Single words with fewer than three characters are not searched even at 1 or 2.
- **Show coloured search results on details page**: Highlights matches in the document preview (color customizable)
- **Animate search results**: Highlights matches with an animation in its own color
- **Scale animation**: Briefly enlarges the matches; only applies with five matches or fewer
- **Limit number of search results to**: Speeds up search by limiting the number of results (25, 100, 250, 500, 1000, or unlimited; default: 250)
- **Show checkbox for 'edited'**: Mark search results you have already reviewed, with customizable background color

Document View

Navigation

Click on a search result in the list to open the document in the detail view. Matches are highlighted in color.

Action	Shortcut
Next result	⌘G
Previous result	⌘⇧G
Next page	⌥↓ or Page Down
Previous page	⌥↑ or Page Up
Last page	⌘↓
First page	⌘↑

Zoom

Hold the ⌥ **key** to zoom with the mouse wheel or trackpad. To move an enlarged document, drag while holding ⌘ or ⌥, or drag with the right mouse button.

Action	Shortcut
Zoom in	⌘+
Zoom out	⌘-
Fit height	⌘Ä
Fit width	⌘#

Text Recognition (Manual)

Draw a rectangle on any document to start text recognition for that area. An existing rectangle can be moved by dragging it. The recognized text appears in the transcript column on the right.

The transcript column has two parts. One lists the matches of the current search grouped by page; "Page 3, Found 2" means two matches on page 3. Click an entry to jump to that page. The other collects the results of your manual text recognitions, newest first, for all documents. With **Clear Transcript on Quit**, the list is empty after a restart.

⌘**T** cycles through three states: hits and recognized text (the state at first launch), hits only, hidden. The app remembers the state; a manual text recognition switches back to both parts. ⌘**G** and ⌘⇧**G** jump to the next or previous page with hits; after the last page they continue with the first. For documents, both shortcuts only work while the transcript column is visible.

QuickLook and Finder

- **Space**: QuickLook preview of the selected document
- **Return** in the result list: Opens the document in its default app (like a double-click); for an email, Return reveals the mail file in Finder
- **Show in Finder**: via the info panel (⌘I) or the context menu

Open Document Externally

Press ⌘**O** to open the selected document in the default app (e.g. Preview for PDFs). Via **Open with** in the result list's context menu or the **File** → **Open With** submenu, you can open the document in another compatible app.

Info Panel

Press ⌘**I** to open the info panel for the selected document. It shows file type, size, location, creation and modification dates, page count and OCR status. Action buttons in the panel let you open the document directly, reveal it in Finder or copy the file path.

Metadata Editor (Images)

For image files (including JPEG, HEIC, TIFF, PNG and common camera RAW formats), PDF Content Search includes a built-in editor for EXIF, IPTC and GPS metadata. Open it from an image's context menu (**Edit Metadata…**) or from **File** → **Batch Edit Metadata…** for multiple files.

- **Camera** (make, model, lens)
- **Exposure** (aperture, ISO, exposure time, focal length)
- **Date & Time** — including “Shift all by” to move all timestamps together
- **GPS Location** with “Show on Map”
- **Description & Copyright** (title, description, keywords, creator, copyright)

- **Rating & Label** (stars, color label)

Modified fields are marked with a **Modified** badge. Use **Revert** to discard individual changes. Use **Strip…** to remove **GPS only** or **all metadata**. Frequently used value sets can be saved as a **Preset** and applied to other files.

Batch Editing

The **Batch Edit Metadata** window lets you add any number of images via **Add Files…**. Activate the checkbox per field to limit which fields are written — a status line shows **n fields enabled**. Keywords can be either **merged** with existing keywords or **replaced**. After **Apply to All**, a summary lists the saved files.

Apple Mail

On request, PDF Content Search also searches your emails from **Apple Mail** — subject, message body and attachments. The app reads the messages Apple Mail has stored on your Mac. Indexing and search run entirely locally; the message text, sender and subject never leave your Mac.

Setting Up Apple Mail

1. Choose **File** → **Enable Apple Mail** from the menu (or use the sidebar's context menu)
2. The **Add Apple Mail to search** dialog explains what is read. Click **Next**
3. macOS protects the Mail folder. Click **Choose Mail folder…**, select the folder `~/Library/Mail` and confirm with **Grant Access**. The permission is remembered across restarts
4. Choose the accounts to search (default: **All accounts**) and click **Enable Apple Mail**

Apple Mail then appears as its own entry in the sidebar, and the app starts indexing. You can turn mail search off at any time via **File** → **Disable Apple Mail**.

Searching Mail

Select **Apple Mail** in the sidebar before searching, or check it during a search, and enter your search term. Emails appear together with the results from the checked folders; to see emails only, uncheck the folders. The search covers the subject, the message body and the text of attachments. The search syntax is the same as for documents: phrases in quotation marks and exclusions with `-word` work here too. One difference: in emails, `-word` only excludes words that begin with this character sequence.

Clicking a match shows the email with the matches highlighted. If a match is inside an attachment, the app shows the relevant page of the attachment with the match highlighted. ⌘**G** and ⌘⇧**G** jump to the next or previous match across the message body and attachments.

- **Attachments (n)**: Lists the email's attachments; open individual attachments, or use **Save All…** to save them all at once
- **Open in Apple Mail**: Opens the email in Apple Mail
- **Show in Finder** or **Return** in the result list: Reveals the mail file in Finder

Emails or attachments that Apple Mail has not fully downloaded to the Mac yet are marked **Not yet downloaded by Apple Mail**. Open the email once in Apple Mail; it then becomes searchable.

Attachments

- **PDF attachments**: By default the first 20 pages are read; optionally all pages
- **Image attachments** (PNG, JPG, HEIC): text is recognized via OCR
- **Text attachments** (RTF, TXT, CSV, HTML, JSON, XML) and forwarded `.eml` messages
- **Office attachments** (DOCX, XLSX, PPTX, Pages, Numbers): only when conversion on our server is turned on (see Settings → More). Only the attachment goes to the server, never the text of the email

Settings

Under **Settings** → **Apple Mail** you decide what is indexed:

- **Index Apple Mail**: Turns mail search on or off
- **OCR size limit per attachment**: 25, 50, 100 or 200 MB (default: 50 MB). Larger PDF and image attachments are skipped and cannot be found by search; the email itself remains searchable
- **Make OCR text from image attachments (PNG/JPG/HEIC) searchable** (default: on)
- **Scan all pages of PDF attachments (instead of only the first 20)** (default: off)
- **Index text attachments (RTF, TXT, CSV, HTML, JSON, XML)** (default: on)
- **Recursively index forwarded .eml messages** (default: on)
- **Search Office attachments** (default: on; only takes effect with conversion on our server turned on)
- **Reconfigure accounts…**: Reopens the setup to change which mailboxes are indexed
- **Clear mail index**: Removes all indexed mail content; on the next start the app re-reads your mail

A status box shows the indexing progress, the number of searchable attachments and, if any, emails without content that the app retries in the background.

User Interface

Sidebar

The sidebar shows all added folders and allows quick switching between different document collections. Depending on your use, it also contains the documents recently scanned with the scanner app, the **Apple Mail** entry, and groups and separators you created. Use ⌘1 to ⌘9 to select the first nine folders directly. Show/hide with ⌥⌘1. Folders can be dragged from Finder onto the sidebar. Press Backspace/Delete to remove the selected item (with confirmation). Press Enter to rename a group. During a search, the sidebar lists the folders with checkboxes (see Search); right-click in the sidebar and choose **Cancel Search** to end the search.

Path Bar

At the bottom, the path bar shows the location of the selected document. The path bar can also be used for navigation. It is on by default and can be hidden in the settings under **Appearance**.

Status Display

While the app is processing documents, the busy indicator at the bottom of the window shows a progress bar. Clicking it opens the **Data Processing** window. For each folder it shows:

- File count
- Processed files
- New OCR pages
- Completed (number of fully processed files)

Settings

Settings are organized into six tabs: **Appearance**, **Search**, **Sharing**, **Apple Mail**, **Integrations**, and **More**. Open settings via **PDF Content Search → Preferences…** (⌘,). In the settings window, press **1** to **6** (or ⌘1 to ⌘6) to switch tabs; ⌘W or Esc closes the window.

Appearance

Theme

- **Appearance**: Light, Dark, or Auto (system setting)

Path Bar & Status Display

- **Show Bottom Path Bar**: Shows the location of the selected document at the bottom of the window (default: on)
- **Show Bottom Busy Indicator**: Progress bar at the bottom of the window while the app is working
- **Always Show Bottom Busy Indicator**: Keeps the indicator visible even when no processing is active

Transcript

- **Ocr Rect Color**: Color of the rectangles you draw for manual text recognition (with color picker)
- **Show Transcript Item Numbers**: Numbers each recognized text block
- **Toggle Transcript automatically**: Shows and hides the transcript column depending on the content
- **Clear Transcript on Quit**: Removes all transcript entries when the app quits

List View

- **Show indicator for not processed files**: Shows an "M" next to files that are not fully processed yet
- **Busy Indicator**: Opens the "Data Processing" window while processing is running
- **Show Path in List Header**: Shows the folder path in the file list header; you can also switch folders there
- **Show File Type Icons**: Displays icons for the file type (PDF, image, text, etc.)

Font Size

Controls the font and icon size across the whole app (list, sidebar, transcript, info panel and more). Use the slider to adjust the size between **10 and 24 pt** (default: **13 pt**). Use the **Default** button to reset to 13 pt.

Colors

- **Tint Color**: The primary color of the app interface (buttons, selections, sliders, etc.)
- **Text Color**: Optionally set a custom text color
- **Reset All Colors to Default**: Resets all colors including tint, text and OCR highlight colors to their factory defaults

Search

- **Start search after … Characters**: Sets how many typed characters trigger the search (1–5, default: 3)
- **Show coloured search results on details page**: Highlights matches in the document preview (color customizable)
- **Animate search results**: Highlights matches with pulsing in a separate animation color
- **Scale animation**: Briefly enlarges the matches; only with five matches or fewer
- **Limit number of search results to**: Speeds up search (25, 100, 250, 500, 1000, or unlimited; default: 250)
- **Show checkbox for 'edited'**: Mark reviewed search results with customizable background color

Sharing & Scanner App

Share Folders

Each added folder can be individually shared for syncing with the scanner app. Toggle the switch next to the desired folder to enable sharing.

Connect a Mobile Device (Pairing)

1. Open the scanner app **PDF. Scanner.** on your iPhone, iPad or Android device
2. The app displays a **9-digit pairing code**
3. Enter this code in the **Enter the code from the mobile device** field for the shared folder and click **Connect**
4. After a successful connection, the device appears in the list of connected devices

Pairing with a code is available from PDF Content Search 1.14. See the Mobile App for iOS and Android chapter for details.

Manage Connected Devices

Below each shared folder, connected mobile devices are shown with their name and connection date. Use the ✕ button to remove a device and revoke its access.

Additional Options

- **Show recent scan items**: Shows files recently scanned with the scanner app in the sidebar
- **Download Scanner App**: QR code and a download link via Messages or email. The link leads to store.juergenkoller.software/apps/pdf-scanner; from there, iPhone and iPad go straight to the App Store, Android devices to Google Play
- **Show trashed items**: Opens the folder containing files deleted in the scanner app

Apple Mail

In the **Apple Mail** tab you turn on mail search and choose which attachments are indexed. All options are described in the Apple Mail chapter.

Integrations

The **Integrations** tab connects AI assistants via MCP. Below it, collapsed at first, are the settings of the built-in REST API server and troubleshooting. Each option has a short explanation underneath.

AI assistants (MCP)

A status line shows whether connected AI assistants can search your documents. If they cannot, it names the reason and the next step, such as a missing token or a server that only runs after restarting the app.

- **Set up Claude Desktop**: Automatically adds the app to `claude_desktop_config.json`, enables the API server and generates a token. The bundled helper `pdf-content-search-mcp` from the app bundle serves as the stdio bridge.
- **Update Claude Desktop entry**: The button's name after setup; it rewrites the entry. The status line reports an outdated entry when the app's location, the token or the port has changed, for example after moving the app or generating a new token
- **Remove from Claude Desktop**: Removes the entry again
- **Other apps → Set up connection…**: Turns on the API server if needed and shows the MCP endpoint plus an HTTP and a stdio configuration to copy. Clients such as Claude Code or Cursor

that support HTTP talk to the server directly.

- **Allow file upload and download via MCP/API**: Lets connected apps with the token store files in your search folders (not in AI folders; existing files are never overwritten) and download the original files of indexed documents. Off by default. You confirm turning it on in a dialog; no restart is needed.
- **Learn More about MCP**: Opens further information about MCP

For developers: REST API and server

- **Enable server**: Starts the API server. Setting up Claude Desktop or another app turns it on when needed; toggled by hand, the change takes effect after restarting the app
- **Port**: TCP port for the server (default: 44477, range: 1024–65535). If the port is in use, the app falls back to one of the default ports 44477 to 44479
- **Allow access from the local network**: Binds the server to 0.0.0.0 so it can be reached from other devices on your LAN. When disabled, the server only listens on 127.0.0.1 (localhost). Before enabling it, the app warns you that the server does not encrypt traffic. Changing this requires an app restart. While the option is on, this section opens expanded.
- **Token**: Access token for API requests. It cannot be entered by hand; create it with **Generate** and take it over with **Copy**. A new token disconnects all connected apps until you set them up again
- **Open API documentation**: Opens the interactive API documentation in the browser (only when the server is running)

Troubleshooting

- **Save MCP diagnostics…** / **Copy MCP diagnostics**: Provides a diagnostic report for support; a line counts requests, tool calls, rejected logins (401) and errors. The report contains neither the token nor document contents

More

Processing

- **Low resolution images**: Stores preview images at a lower resolution; saves disk space but may make results less accurate
- **Ignore small images**: Skips very small images during OCR processing (e.g., icons or logos)
- **Slow Hard Drive**: Reduces concurrent read/write operations for slower storage media; takes effect after restarting the app

Convert Office Files on Our Server

The app cannot read Office files by itself. To make them searchable, they can be converted to text on our server **DocPort**. Supported formats include Word (DOC, DOCX), Excel (XLS, XLSX), PowerPoint (PPTX), Pages, Numbers, Keynote, OpenDocument (ODT, ODS, ODP) and CSV. Conversion is **off** by default; indexing, text recognition and search then run entirely locally.

- **Turn on conversion …**: Shows the terms; after your consent, Office files and Office attachments are transferred to DocPort for conversion
- **Show terms**: Shows the terms again
- **Turn off and withdraw consent**: Stops the conversion

If the conversion of individual files fails, the folder's context menu in the sidebar offers **Retry Failed Cloud Items**.

App Data Folder

The app data folder holds all index and cache data. Use **App Data Folder** to choose an alternative storage location (e.g., an external hard drive); **Default** restores the default location. A restart is required after changing this setting, and the existing index has to be rebuilt.

Additional Functions

- **Show Store & License**: Opens the store with license status and purchasable items
- **Feedback & Support**: Write to us directly from the app; new replies are shown with a counter
- **Reset App Data**: After a double confirmation, deletes all indexed data, OCR results and folder bookmarks and closes the app. Useful if the search index is corrupt

Keyboard Shortcuts

Function	Shortcut
Search	⌘F
Cancel search (in the search field)	Esc
From search field to result list	Return
Next result	⌘G
Previous result	⌘⇧G
QuickLook	Space
Open document (in the result list; for emails: reveal in Finder)	Return
Toggle sidebar	⌥⌘1
Select sidebar folder 1–9	⌘1 … ⌘9
Cycle transcript view	⌘T
Focus left	←
Focus right	→
Next page	⌥↓ or Page Down
Previous page	⌥↑ or Page Up
First page	⌘↑
Last page	⌘↓
Zoom in	⌘+
Zoom out	⌘-
Fit height	⌘Ä
Fit width	⌘#
Add searchable folder	⌘N
Open document externally	⌘O
Info panel	⌘I

Function	Shortcut
Remove sidebar element	⌫/Delete
Rename group	Return
Show main window	⌘0
Toggle full screen	^⌘F
Settings	⌘,

Mobile App for iOS and Android

With the free app **PDF. Scanner.** you scan documents on the go with your iPhone, iPad or Android device and transfer them to PDF Content Search on your Mac.

PDF. Scanner. is available on the App Store and Google Play. The quickest way to the app is store.juergenkoller.software/apps/pdf-scanner: the page takes phones straight to the right store and shows a QR code on the Mac. **Download Scanner App** under Settings → Sharing leads there as well.

Requirements

- **Mac:** PDF Content Search 1.14 or later (macOS 14 Sonoma or later). Older versions cannot be paired with the current scanner app — in that case, update the Mac app first.
- **iPhone and iPad:** iOS or iPadOS 16.4 or later.
- **Android:** Android 8.0 or later.
- **Internet:** pairing and transfer run via our server. Mac and mobile device need an internet connection for this, but no shared Wi-Fi.

Connecting

1. On your Mac, share the folder your scans should go to in PDF Content Search under **Settings → Sharing**
2. Open the scanner app and select "Connect to macOS" (Android: see below)
3. The app displays a 9-digit pairing code
4. On your Mac, enter this code under **Settings → Sharing** for the shared folder in the **Enter the code from the mobile device** field and click **Connect**
5. Once paired successfully, the device is shown as connected

If the code field is missing on your Mac, PDF Content Search is older than version 1.14. Update the Mac app and then pair again.

Synchronization

Scanned documents are automatically transferred to the Mac via real-time synchronization. If there are connection issues, the system falls back to periodic polling. New scans are indicated by a badge on the Dock icon and in the sidebar.

Device Management

Under **Settings** → **Sharing**, you can see all connected devices and revoke access for individual devices.

AI File Naming

The scanner app can generate file names automatically. In the scan options, define under **Rule** how the name is built. Date placeholders such as `[YYYY]`, `[MM]` or `[dd]` insert the current date. AI placeholders such as `[Company Name]`, `[Document Date]`, `[Document Type]` or `[AI_YYYY]` are filled in by the AI from the recognized text of the first page, e.g. `[AI_YY][AI_MM][AI_dd] [document type] [sender name]`.

AI naming is optional. Before the app sends text to the AI for the first time, it asks for your permission once ("Suggest file names with AI?"). If you allow it, it then suggests a name automatically after every scan. You can change your decision at any time in the app's settings under **AI File Names**. The iOS app asks from version 1.17, the Android app from version 1.1.0; older iOS versions create the AI name without asking as soon as the rule contains AI placeholders, as in the default setting.

For the suggestion, the recognized text of the first page goes to OpenAI (USA) via our server. Each suggestion costs 1 credit: you get free credits to start with and can buy more in the app. Rules that use only date placeholders work without AI and without credits.

In-App PDF Editor

Since version 1.12, the iOS app includes a built-in PDF editor based on Apple **PencilKit** and **PDFKit**. From a scan's detail view, tap **Edit | Sign | Modify Document** to annotate the PDF directly in the app with pen, highlighter, eraser, and text stamps — the previous roundtrip through the Files app is no longer required.

- **Color palette** including black and a custom color picker
- **Apple Pencil** support with pressure sensitivity
- Annotations are flattened (stamped) into the PDF on save
- Edited files are automatically synced back to the paired Mac

You can disable the editor in the iOS app's settings via the **Use in-app PDF editor (beta)** toggle — editing then falls back to the Files app as before.

Export to Cloud Storage

When saving a scan, use **Export to 'Files' App** to save the document to iCloud Drive, Google Drive, Dropbox or other storage locations configured in the Files app.

Android

PDF. Scanner. for Android is free on Google Play (Android 8.0 or later). The app works like the iOS app; some paths have different names:

- **Pairing:** in the settings under Connection, tap **Pair Device** and then **Start Pairing**. Enter the 9-digit pairing code on your Mac as described above.
- **WiFi only:** with this toggle in the settings, the app only transfers scans over Wi-Fi.
- **Disconnecting:** in the settings, tap the connected folder and choose **Disconnect**; the documents on the device are kept.
- **AI file names:** as described above, with the same question before the first suggestion and the **AI file names** toggle in the settings.

API & Automation

PDF Content Search provides a comprehensive programming interface for integration with automation scripts, AI assistants and custom applications.

REST API

The built-in HTTP server provides over 70 endpoints at `http://127.0.0.1:44477/api/v1/`. The API covers the following areas:

- **Search**: Full-text search, document text, metadata, batch export
- **Folders**: List folders, view contents, processing status
- **Documents**: Metadata, thumbnails, OCR bounding boxes, reprocessing
- **Settings**: Read and modify app settings
- **UI Control**: Navigation, zoom, page switching, filters, sorting, screenshot
- **Mobile Sync**: Connected device status, trigger synchronization
- **Cloud**: Status and control of Office conversion
- **Mail**: Apple Mail search, mail content, attachments and index status
- **License**: Query and refresh the license status

The full API documentation is available interactively at `http://127.0.0.1:44477/api/v1/docs`. The OpenAPI specification can be retrieved at `http://127.0.0.1:44477/api/v1/openapi.yaml`.

Authentication

Every request needs a Bearer token. Create it under **Settings → Integrations → For developers: REST API and server** with **Generate** and take it over with **Copy**. Only `/api/v1/health`, `/api/v1/docs` and `/api/v1/openapi.yaml` are accessible without a token. If port 44477 is in use, the app falls back to 44478 or 44479.

```
curl -H "Authorization: Bearer YOUR_TOKEN" \
     http://127.0.0.1:44477/api/v1/search \
     -d '{"query": "invoice 2024"}'
```

MCP (Model Context Protocol)

For integration with AI assistants like Claude, the app supports the Model Context Protocol (MCP) via JSON-RPC 2.0 at the `/mcp` endpoint. The most important tools at a glance; the complete list follows in the next section:

Category	Tools
Search	search_documents, get_document_text, get_document_metadata, export_documents
Folders	list_folders, list_folder_contents, get_processing_status
UI Control	ui_navigate, ui_select_document, show_in_app, ui_search, get_ui_state, get_search_state, ui_screenshot
Files	open_in_finder, open_document_external, get_document_thumbnail
Processing	reprocess_document, rescan_folder
Config	get_app_status, get_settings
Mail	search_mail, list_inbox, get_mail_body, create_mail_draft
License	get_license_status, refresh_license
Manual	search_manual, get_manual_section

MCP uses the same Bearer token authentication as the REST API.

Attachments for mail drafts from another machine. `create_mail_draft` creates the draft on the Mac the app runs on, so a file path only works there. If the AI assistant runs on another machine, for example in a virtual machine, it uploads the file first: `POST /api/v1/mail/attachments?filename=<name>` with the raw bytes as the body and the same token. The response contains an `attachment_id`, which it then passes as the attachment. An upload is kept for 30 minutes, up to 20 MB per file, and is used up by the draft.

```
curl -H "Authorization: Bearer YOUR_TOKEN" --data-binary @package.zip \
     "http://YOUR-MAC.local:44477/api/v1/mail/attachments?filename=package.zip"
```

MCP Tools (Overview)

The overview below lists every MCP tool of the app, grouped by area. Tools marked “(requires confirmation)” change data irreversibly or touch license/pairing state and require `confirm: true`.

Search & Documents

Tool	Function
`search_documents`	Full-text search across all indexed documents and Apple Mail messages, independent of the checkboxes in the app; narrow it with `folders` (paths of added folders) and `source_types`
`get_document_text`	Get a document's full OCR text, by page
`get_document_metadata`	Document metadata (name, path, pages, state)
`get_document_thumbnail`	PNG thumbnail of a document page (base64)
`get_document_ocr_rects`	OCR bounding boxes of a document
`get_document_by_path`	Find the indexed document for an absolute file path (ID, processing state)
`export_documents`	Export OCR text and metadata for multiple documents
`reprocess_document`	Re-queue a document for OCR
`delete_document`	Delete a single document from the index (requires confirmation)
`bulk_delete_documents`	Delete multiple documents at once (requires confirmation)

Folders & Processing

Tool	Function
`list_folders`	List all indexed folders
`list_folder_contents`	List documents in a folder (paginated)
`get_folder_stats`	Aggregate stats for a folder
`get_folder_processing_status`	OCR processing status of a folder
`add_folder`	Add a folder to the index by absolute path
`delete_folder`	Remove a folder from the index (requires confirmation)
`rescan_folder`	Rescan a folder for new or changed files
`get_processing_status`	OCR statistics across all documents and folders
`get_processing_progress`	Live OCR processing progress

Scans

Tool	Function
`list_recent_scans`	List recently scanned items
`get_unread_scan_count`	Count of unread recent scans
`mark_scan_as_read`	Mark a recent scan as read

Mail & Attachments

Tool	Function
`search_mail`	Full-text search in Apple Mail messages only (subject, body, attachments)
`list_inbox`	List the emails in the inbox (all accounts)
`get_mail_body`	Fetch the complete text of a mail with its link targets
`get_mail_raw`	Fetch the original source of a mail (RFC 822) with all headers
`create_mail_draft`	Create a draft or reply in Apple Mail; never sends
`get_mail_message_metadata`	Header/mailbox metadata of a mail (message-id)
`open_in_apple_mail`	Open a mail in Apple Mail (same Mac only)
`get_mail_index_status`	Apple Mail indexer status
`get_mail_recent`	List most recently indexed mails
`get_mail_mailboxes`	List mailboxes from the Apple Mail index
`setup_apple_mail`	Configure and enable Apple Mail indexing
`disable_apple_mail`	Disable Apple Mail indexing
`clear_mail_index`	Clear the mail index and reset the cursor
`reindex_apple_mail`	Trigger an indexer run
`get_mail_full_index_status`	Counters across all mail records (completeness)
`list_incomplete_mails`	List mails not successfully indexed
`retry_incomplete_mails`	Retry indexing of incomplete mails
`cleanup_stale_mail_meta`	Garbage-collect stale mail records
`list_mail_cloud_jobs`	List Office-attachment cloud jobs
`retry_failed_mail_cloud_jobs`	Retry failed cloud jobs
`cancel_pending_mail_cloud_jobs`	Cancel pending cloud jobs
`tick_mail_cloud_worker`	Trigger an immediate cloud-worker tick
`get_mail_detail`	Full detail of an indexed mail

Tool	Function
`get_mail_by_rowid`	Get an indexed mail by rowid
`reveal_mail_in_finder`	Reveal the .emlx file in Finder (same Mac only)
`list_mail_attachments`	List attachments of an indexed mail
`get_mail_attachment`	Fetch a single attachment of a mail

Settings

Tool	Function
`get_settings`	Get current app settings
`patch_settings_search`	Update search settings
`patch_settings_processing`	Update OCR/processing settings
`patch_settings_appearance`	Update appearance settings
`patch_settings_sharing`	Update mobile-sharing settings

UI Control

Tool	Function
`get_ui_state`	Get current UI state
`get_search_state`	Get animated OCR hits in the preview
`ui_search`	Trigger a search in the app UI (covers the folders checked in the app)
`ui_navigate`	Navigate within the document list
`ui_select_document`	Select a document in the list
`show_in_app`	Show a document in the app: brings the app to the front, runs the search with highlights, opens the page with the match
`ui_screenshot`	Screenshot of the main window
`open_in_finder`	Reveal a document in Finder (same Mac only)
`open_document_external`	Open a document externally (same Mac only)
`ui_list_items`	List items currently shown in the list
`ui_get_zoom`	Get the preview zoom state
`ui_set_zoom`	Set the preview zoom
`ui_get_page`	Get the current preview page
`ui_set_page`	Navigate the preview page
`ui_get_transcript`	Get the transcript panel state
`ui_set_transcript`	Show/hide the transcript panel
`ui_get_sort`	Get the current sort order
`ui_set_sort`	Set the list sort order
`ui_get_filters`	Get active list filters
`ui_set_filters`	Set list filters
`ui_get_popups`	List open popups/sheets
`ui_dismiss_popup`	Dismiss a popup/sheet
`ui_list_alerts`	List open alerts

Tool	Function
`ui_dismiss_alert`	Dismiss alerts

License

Tool	Function
`get_license_status`	Get current license status
`refresh_license`	Re-sync license status with the server
`activate_license`	Activate a license key, direct-download version only (requires confirmation)
`deactivate_license`	Deactivate the current license, direct-download version only (requires confirmation)
`request_trial`	Request a trial key by email, direct-download version only (requires confirmation)

`activate_license` expects `license_key`, `email` and `owner_name`, i.e. the details from the purchase or trial email. `request_trial` expects `email` and `owner_name`; the license server sends the trial key to that address, at most one email every two minutes. You then activate the key via the link in the email or with `activate_license`. Both tools require `confirm: true` and only work after you have selected **Agree to terms and conditions** in the app's license window.

Cloud

Tool	Function
`get_cloud_status`	Get cloud-service status
`list_cloud_items`	List cloud-service items
`cloud_sync`	Control the cloud service (toggle, cleanup)

Mobile

Tool	Function
`get_mobile_sync_status`	Mobile-sync status
`list_mobile_devices`	List folders shared with mobile devices
`mobile_sync`	Trigger a mobile sync
`confirm_mobile_pairing`	Confirm device pairing with a 9-digit code (requires confirmation)

App Status

Tool	Function
`get_app_status`	App status, version, uptime and port

Manual

Tool	Function
`search_manual`	Search the built-in user manual (German or English)
`get_manual_section`	Fetch the full text of one manual section

Set up Claude Desktop (one click)

PDF Content Search ships with a one-click installer for Claude Desktop. It takes care of the entire configuration — no need to edit JSON files by hand.

Prerequisite: Claude Desktop is installed (claude.ai/download).

1. In PDF Content Search: **Settings → Integrations → section "AI assistants (MCP)"**
2. Click **"Set up Claude Desktop"**
3. Confirm the explanation dialog with **"Continue"** (macOS asks for one-time permission to write Claude's configuration file)
4. In the Finder window, select the already highlighted file `claude_desktop_config.json` and click **"Grant Access"**
5. Restart Claude Desktop; the app offers this directly with **"Restart now"**

Behind the scenes, the app automatically enables the API server, generates a secure access token, adds the server entry to `~/Library/Application Support/Claude/claude_desktop_config.json`, and points to the bundled helper `pdf-content-`

`search-mcp` inside the app bundle that bridges Claude Desktop's stdio transport with the app's HTTP MCP endpoint. If the app later moves to a different location or the token or port changes, the status line says so; then click **“Update Claude Desktop entry”**.

Existing entries under `mcpServers` or other top-level keys are preserved — the installer performs a clean JSON merge. A **“Remove from Claude Desktop”** button in the same section removes the entry.

Other MCP clients (e.g. Claude Code or custom integrations that support HTTP transport) can still talk to the server directly over HTTP. The app shows the address and both configurations (HTTP and stdio) under **“Other apps”** with **“Set up connection…”**.

Use Cases

- **Automation scripts**: Search documents via REST API and process results further
- **AI assistants**: Claude or other LLMs can access your documents directly via MCP
- **Custom integrations**: Client libraries can be generated from the OpenAPI specification

Technical Details

Search Index

PDF Content Search uses its own search index based on SQLite Full-Text Search (FTS). The index is completely independent of macOS Spotlight and is managed exclusively within the app.

When a folder is added, every document is processed via OCR and the recognized text is stored in the local index. Changes to files are automatically detected and the index is updated accordingly.

System Requirements

PDF Content Search requires **macOS 14 Sonoma** or later. The scanner app **PDF. Scanner.** is available on the App Store and Google Play; pairing with a mobile device requires PDF Content Search 1.14 or later.

Supported File Formats

- **PDF**, including scanned PDFs without a text layer
- **Images**: JPEG, PNG, HEIC, TIFF, GIF, BMP, PSD, EPS, PCX, RAW
- **Text**: TXT, RTF, RTFD, Markdown (MD), Swift
- **Office** (only with conversion on our server turned on): Word (DOC, DOCX, DOTX), Excel (XLS, XLSX, XLSM), CSV, PowerPoint (PPTX), Pages, Numbers, Keynote, OpenDocument (ODT, ODS, ODP)
- **Emails** from Apple Mail including attachments (see the Apple Mail chapter)

OCR Engine

Text recognition uses Apple's Vision framework at the highest accuracy level. This works entirely locally — no data is sent to external servers.

Digital Text Enrichment

For PDFs with an existing text layer, the app automatically compares OCR-recognized text with the native PDF text. Missing words are added to the search index, improving search quality for digital PDFs.

Privacy

- Your documents and emails stay on your Mac; the search index is stored locally
- OCR processing runs locally via Apple's Vision framework
- Exception for Office files: only if you turn on **conversion on our server** (Settings → More) are Office files and Office attachments transferred to our DocPort server for conversion. This is off by default; the text, sender and subject of emails are never transferred
- With a licence from our store, the app needs an internet connection at least every 40 days for the licence check
- The direct-download version regularly checks for a new version at launch
- Crash reports: after a crash, the app asks whether it may send a report to support (also via **Help → Send Crash Report…**). It contains the app and macOS version and the place in the program where the error occurred, but no documents, file names or search terms. Nothing is sent without your consent
- No analytics or tracking data
- The optional AI file naming in the scanner app only transmits the recognized text of the first page, and only after your permission (in the iOS app from version 1.17), to our server, which uses OpenAI (USA) to generate the file name; each suggestion costs 1 credit

Localization

PDF Content Search is fully available in 23 EU languages.

Spotlight Integration

PDF Content Search operates independently of Spotlight. The app does not create or read a Spotlight index. The advantage: the app can also search scanned PDFs that Spotlight would only see as images.

Finder Tags

Finder Tags (color labels) are supported. In the filter panel, search results can be filtered by Finder color tags.

FAQ

How long does initial processing take?

This depends on the number and size of your documents. Clicking the busy indicator at the bottom of the window opens the "Data Processing" window: for each folder it shows the file count, processed files, new OCR pages and how much is completed. You can already search while processing is still running — results are updated continuously.

Can I search multiple folders at once?

Yes. Add as many folders as you like via File → Add Searchable Folder (⌘N), or drag them from Finder onto the sidebar. During a search, the sidebar lists all added folders with a checkbox. The search covers every checked folder including its subfolders. Click a folder to remove it from the search or add it back.

Are password-protected PDFs supported?

PDFs that can only be opened with a password cannot be processed; the app displays a notice. PDFs that are merely protected against printing or editing and open without a password are processed normally.

What happens when I move or delete files?

The app detects changes to the file system. Deleted files are removed from the index, moved files within the monitored folder remain searchable.

Where is the index data stored?

By default in the app data folder on your Mac (in the App Store version inside the app container under ~/Library/Containers, in the version from our website and in Setapp under ~/Library/Application Support/contentSearchData). Moving the app to the Trash does not make macOS delete this data. To remove everything, first use "Reset App Data" in the settings under More. Under More → App Data Folder you can also choose another location, such as an external hard drive.

My Mac slows down during processing — what can I do?

Enable "Slow Hard Drive" in the settings under More (takes effect after restarting the app). It reduces concurrent processing operations. Additionally, enabling "Low resolution images" can lower memory and CPU usage.

Can I search my emails as well?

Yes. On request, PDF Content Search searches your locally stored Apple Mail messages including PDF, image and text attachments. Turn on mail search via File → Enable Apple Mail. For emails to appear in the results, select Apple Mail in the sidebar before searching or check it during the search. See the "Apple Mail" chapter for details.

From which version can the scanner app be paired with the Mac?

From PDF Content Search 1.14 (macOS 14 Sonoma or later). The scanner app PDF. Scanner. shows a 9-digit code that you enter on your Mac under Settings → Sharing for the shared folder. If the code field is missing there, update the Mac app first.

Is PDF. Scanner. available for Android?

Yes, free on Google Play (Android 8.0 or later). The address store.juergenkoller.software/apps/pdf-scanner takes Android devices straight there. Pairing with the Mac works like on the iPhone, with a 9-digit code.

What does AI naming in the scanner app cost?

Each AI suggestion costs 1 credit; free credits come with the start, more are available in the app. AI naming is optional: the app asks for your permission once beforehand (in the iOS app from version 1.17), and rules with only date placeholders need neither AI nor credits.

Contact & Support

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PDF Content Search — Find every amount, every IBAN, every word.