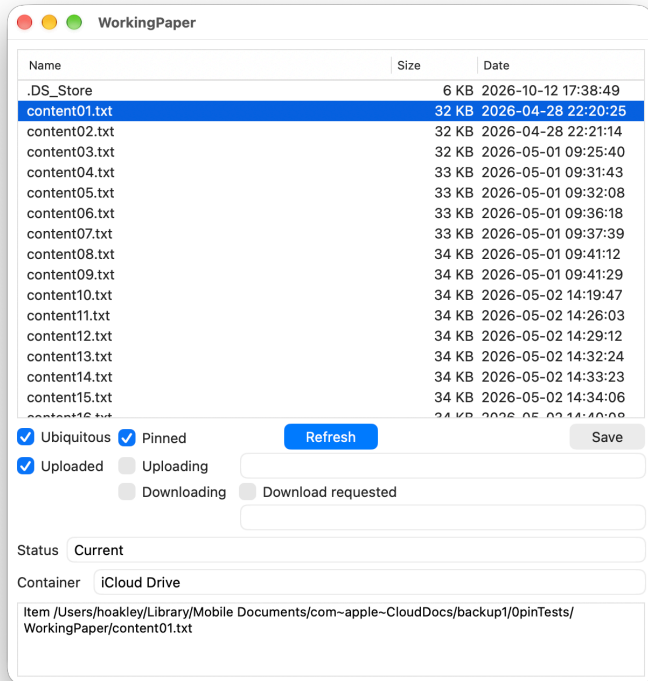


Start

→ [Start](#)



In 2018, Cirrus was the first utility to give users the power to download and evict files in iCloud Drive. Since then, iCloud Drive has changed beyond all recognition as it has adopted the File Provider API. This new version removes old features that are no longer available, and could now cause their own problems. Its focus is on aids to diagnosing problems, with its browser to reveal the full status of files, a crawler to discover those that are pinned, a simple upload test, and log extracts.

To help you get started, there's an introduction to how → [iCloud Drive](#) works, and details of the → [File browser](#).

When you first use Cirrus, you may be prompted to allow it access to iCloud Drive, and agreeing to that should add it to the Files & Folders list in Privacy & Security settings. It shouldn't require Full Disk Access, though.

If you want to view log extracts in Cirrus, you'll need to run it as an admin user. Without that, it won't be allowed access to the log.

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iCloud Drive

iCloud Drive operates in one of two modes, depending on whether Optimise Mac Storage (OMS) is turned on in iCloud settings.

If it's **off**, then all files in iCloud Drive are stored both locally in your Mac, and in the iCloud servers. The task for your Mac is then to ensure that both copies are kept in sync.

When Optimise Mac Storage is **on**, files in iCloud Drive can be in one of three states:

- A copy of that file is stored locally in your Mac, and synced with a copy stored in the iCloud servers, just as when OMS is turned off.
- Although that file exists in your Mac, that local copy is dataless, so occupies little local storage. The file's complete data is only saved in iCloud, as that file has been **evicted** by removing its download, a command in the Finder's contextual menu. This isn't allowed when OMS is turned off.
- An intermediate state, while the file's data is being downloaded from the servers to your Mac.

The Finder shows distinctive icons for files and folders to indicate they have been evicted with their download removed, are being synced or downloaded, or have been pinned to keep them downloaded at all times.

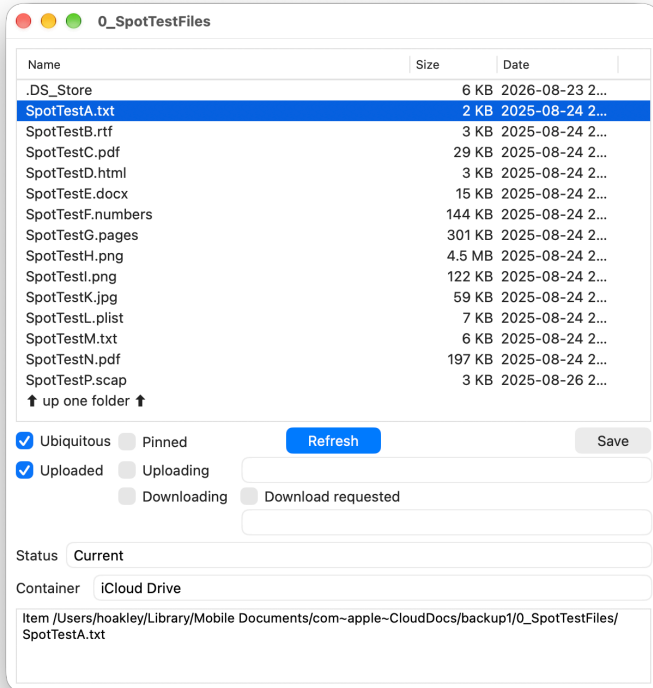
Although you can still use Cirrus when OMS is off, and all iCloud files are stored on and synced with your Mac, it's most useful when OMS is on, particularly when there appear to be problems uploading, downloading or otherwise syncing files.

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File browser

Open the file browser using the **Open Browser** command at the top of the Window menu.



Rows contain:

- **files**, listed by name, with their size and date of creation
- **folders** with a folder emoji, which you can enter by double-clicking; sizes shown are shallow and don't include those of enclosed folders
- **symbolic links**, marked with a chain emoji, which you can follow
- the final **navigation row**, which you double-click to move up to the enclosing folder.

Navigate between rows using the up and down arrow keys.

Items you select may show:

- **Ubiquitous** – the item is in iCloud Drive
- **Pinned** – that file has been pinned and will remain downloaded
- **Uploaded** – it has been uploaded to iCloud Drive
- **Uploading** – it's currently being uploaded, and the box to the right should show any related errors
- **Downloading** – it's currently being downloaded, with any errors shown to the right
- **Download requested** – the requested download hasn't started yet
- **Status** – the downloading status
- **Container** – this should normally be iCloud Drive, unless in another app's container.

Click on the **Refresh** button or press Return to refresh the status of that item. Click on the **Save** button to write details for all the items shown (not just that selected) to a text file.

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Test upload

To perform a test upload from your Mac to iCloud Drive, use the **Test Upload** command in the Window menu.

This creates a 1 MB test file consisting of the byte 0x88 repeated throughout, and saves it to ~/Library/Preferences/co.eclecticlight.Cirrus.data. It then copies that file to the top level of your iCloud Drive, to ~/Library/Mobile Documents/com~apple~CloudDocs/co.eclecticlight.Cirrus.data.

When you have finished with that file, the **Clean Up Test** command will remove the test files from iCloud Drive and ~/Library/Preferences.

Those commands have keyboard shortcuts of Command-1 and Command-2 to help you perform them at a precise time, then to observe what takes place in a log extract in Cirrus's Log Browser.

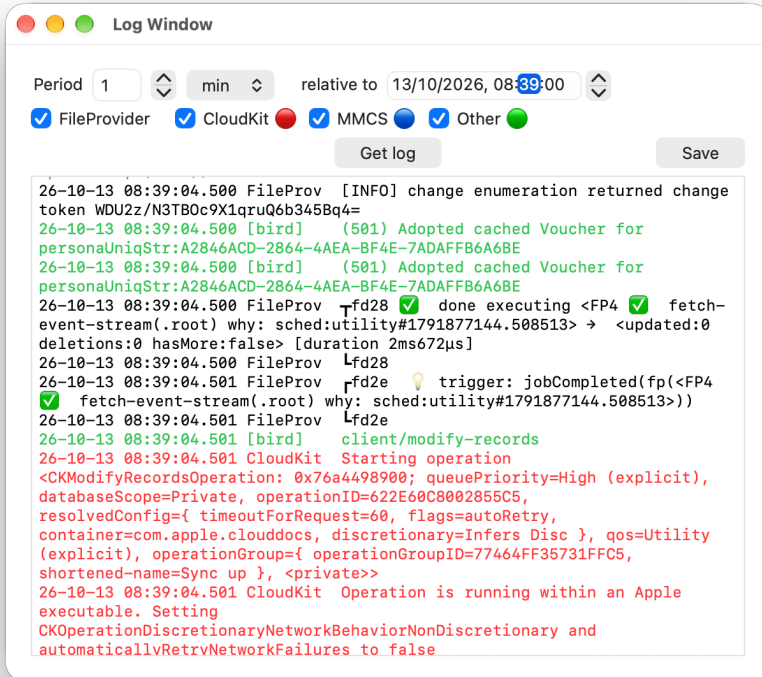
One good way to observe this test is to arrange a Finder window to show iCloud Drive, then bring Cirrus to the front and when the Mac's clock ticks to 00 seconds, press Command-1. Watch for the brief appearance of the iCloud sync icon in the Finder window. Once that has finished, note the time on the clock, then open the Log Browser window and set its start time to moment you started the test upload, and its period to include the seconds between that and completion in the Finder.

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Log browser

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Open a log browser using the **Open Log Window** command in the Window menu.



Set the date and time to start or end the log extract in the **relative to** date picker, then set the period for the extract in the **Period** box at the left. If that's a negative number, entries will be collected for that period *before* the set date and time; if it's positive, the collection will start at the date and time and last for that period afterwards.

The period can be set between **-60** and **+60**, with units of seconds or minutes set in the popup menu. When you're ready, click on the **Get log** button and wait for entries to be displayed below.

Log extracts show entries in different colours according to their subsystems or processes:

black/white for CloudDocs and FileProvider

red for CloudKit

blue for MMCS, the chunking service for data transfers

green for cloudd, bird and the kernel.

Each colour group can be shown or hidden in the log record using its checkbox control.

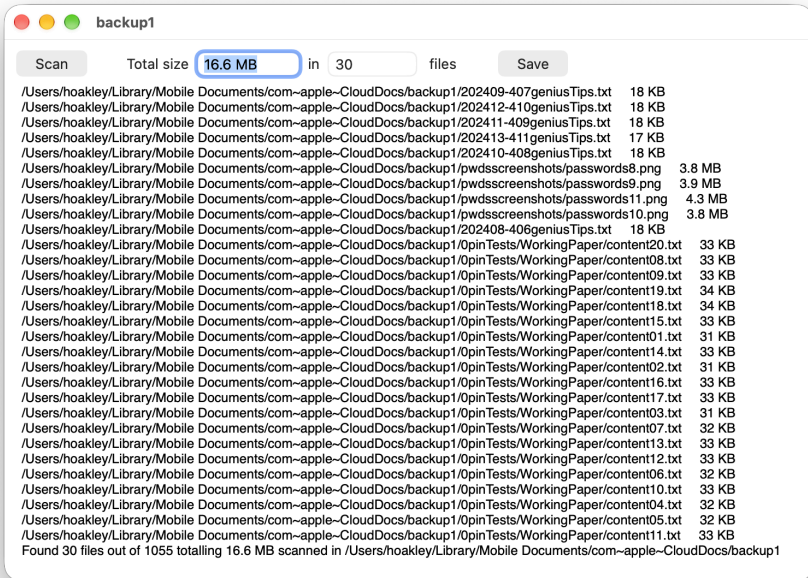
To save the current log extract click on the **Save** button, and it will be written to a Rich Text document.

Times are given in YY-MM-DD HH:MM:SS.sss format, followed by the subsystem in square brackets, and the message.

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Pinned crawler

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Pinning was introduced to iCloud Drive in macOS Sequoia. When Optimise Mac Storage is enabled and items are pinned, they can't be evicted and removed from local storage.

Although pinning gives you the best of both worlds – OMS saves space by evicting rarely used files, and pinning lets you keep important files downloaded and ready for use – it has some strange behaviours.

Pinned folders and files are distinguished in the Finder by a filled circle containing a downward arrow. But you can't find out how many files you have pinned, nor their total size. The pinned crawler can help.

Open this using the **Open Pinned Crawler** command in the Window menu. Click on the **Scan** button and select the folder you want to scan, and it lists all pinned files and gives their total size.

There's just one snag, though. If you pin a folder, every file and folder inside that will also be pinned, but none of those are tagged as being pinned, just that top-level folder. Pinning folders has other strange behaviours, and if you value your sanity, you should avoid it as much as possible, and pin individual files, or groups of files. Totals given in the pinned crawler can't include items in pinned folders, I'm afraid. Similarly, files within pinned folders aren't shown as being pinned in the browser.

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Technical Information

Text reports saved from the browser start each line giving character to indicate properties of that item:

- **i** at the start indicates the item is 'ubiquitous', i.e. held in iCloud Drive
- **U** in the second position indicates the item is uploaded to iCloud Drive
- **u** in the third position indicates the item is uploading to iCloud Drive
- **D** in the fourth position indicates the item is downloading from iCloud Drive
- **d** in the fifth position indicates the item has been requested to be downloaded from iCloud Drive
- a pin emoji in the sixth position indicates that item is individually pinned.

When Cirrus is opened, it checks to see if an update is available, and offers to download that through your browser if there is. You can change that behaviour by changing its `updateCheckInt` or `noUpdateCheck` preference settings using the `defaults` command. For example,

```
defaults write co.eclecticlight.CirrusMac updateCheckInt '43200'
```

sets the interval between checks to its default of 43,200 seconds, or 12 hours.

The predicate used to obtain log extracts is

```
subsystem == "com.apple.FileProvider" OR subsystem == "com.apple.cloudkit" OR subsystem ==  
"com.apple.mmcs" OR processImagePath CONTAINS[c] "cloudd" OR processImagePath CONTAINS[c]  
"bird" OR processID = 0
```

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Change list

1.17:

- removed redundant File/Open commands
- added pinning indicator to browser
- modernised log browser controls
- rewrote Help file to use PDF book.

13 October 2026.