

PDF Mirror

Curio can publish a mirror or replica of your project in PDF form to a specified location.

This is very different than a normal PDF export in that each idea space is converted into an unscaled PDF image, with no page breaks or fit-to-page scaling, then all the resulting images are merged into a single PDF document. In addition, this published PDF can include clickable file links as any embedded or aliased assets can optionally be exported into a folder hierarchy alongside the PDF document.

This publishing event can occur either manually via a File > Update PDF Mirror command, or automatically every time an updated project is closed.

This can be useful for several reasons including for backup purposes or, if published to a Dropbox or similar synced folder, a method for you to access your project while on your iPad, iPhone, or another computer.

Please note that the resulting PDF mirror is not password protected even if your project is password protected.

PDF Outline

The PDF generated by PDF Mirror includes embedded PDF document outline for easy navigation using PDF viewers that support that standard PDF feature. In Apple's Preview app, for example, choose View > Table of Contents to see the PDF's hierarchical document outline.

The PDF outline is part of the PDF standard so most standards-following PDF readers should support it. Zengobi has tested it with the macOS Preview and Adobe Reader apps as well as the following iOS apps: Dropbox, Readdle's PDF Export and PDF Viewer, Good.iWare's GoodReader, Branchfire's iAnnotate PDF, and LiquidText.

Clickable Links

When you export idea spaces via Export as PDF or PDF Mirror, the resulting PDF will have clickable links for:

- Weblink figures, like a URL dropped from a browser into an idea space.
- Figures with URL actions.
- Weblinks and figure URL actions that are inner project hyperlinks (ex: curio:///ideaspace=062...).
- Idea space links to other inner project idea spaces.
- Jump anchors to inner project locations.
- Figures with jump actions to inner project locations.
- Figures with first, last, previous, or next idea space jump directions.
- For PDF Mirror, you have the option of exporting assets as well, such as images and documents, so those figures would have links to their corresponding exported asset files. See the note below for compatibility details.

Limitations

Curio doesn't generate PDF links for a selection of text within a text figure that has a link attribute. This is a tricky one to solve as (a) Curio would have to scan all text figures when exporting to find any NSAttributedString attributes which could be very slow, (b) the resulting selection may consist of wrapped lines of text complicating the generation of potential PDF annotation link(s).

Supported PDF Viewers

The generated PDF's have been tested using a number of PDF viewers on both macOS and iOS. Here are some notes regarding their ability to handle various PDF features.

Text

In general, all PDF viewers, regardless of platform, should display the PDF itself just fine, with text being rendered beautifully. Text should be searchable and selectable allowing you to quickly find and access information anywhere in your project.

Figure Notes

All PDF viewers should also provide some ability to view figure note annotations usually via a hover, click, or tap of the figure's note adornment. In Preview, for example, you can hover over a note adornment or bring up the Inspector window (via Tools > Show Inspector) then click the Annotations tab to see all note annotations.

Web Links

Likewise, all PDF viewers should allow you to launch any web links associated with Curio web link figures or web link actions.

Clickable Asset Links

Producing clickable assets is a bit tricky. The file links within the PDF are relative links, which means they are relative to the current location of the PDF document itself and should continue to work even if the document is moved to another location/platform either manually or via sync.

Here are some notes about specific apps both on macOS and iOS:

Clickable Asset Links - Mac Apps

[PDF Expert](#) from Readdle works very well with file links.

Acrobat and Acrobat Reader on the Mac both support relative file links. We recommend the following modify file link paths preferences: URL encode. Alternatively, if you wish to also be compatible with iOS readers which don't support URL encoding yet you may use these instead: Strip all potentially unsafe characters, Convert characters to ASCII only, Convert spaces to underscores. For images they will open in a browser window, otherwise Acrobat simply reveals the file in a Finder window. Presumably for security purposes it doesn't automatically launch the file.

Apple Preview on the Mac doesn't appear to support file links of any kind, perhaps for security reasons.

Skim on the Mac doesn't appear to support relative file links.

Clickable Asset Links - iOS Apps

Important Note about Synced PDF Export Folders on iOS

If your designated PDF Mirror export folder is synced via a cloud service like Dropbox, iCloud Drive, Box, etc, then iOS PDF viewing apps are limited by Apple's API so they can't dynamically fetch a clicked-on file link, presumably for security reasons. The only way file links will work is if all the files in local storage — not simply downloaded but *On My iPad/iPhone*. To do this, use the iOS Files app to select your PDF Mirror cloud-based sync folder and tap *Copy* to copy it to *On My iPad/iPhone* which downloads all the files and places them within local storage. You can then use the Files app to go to *On My iPad* and open the PDF file there and relative file links will work.

[PSPDFKit](#) is the leading PDF framework used by many iOS apps for PDF viewing including their own class-leading [PDF Viewer](#) app, as well as Dropbox, Box, Evernote, and much more. Their framework works very well with file links.

[PDF Expert](#) from Readdle works very well with file links.

[GoodReader](#) works relatively well with file links. Unfortunately, however, they only support opening other PDF files or plain text files. Additionally, they require a file:// scheme for these relative links which, technically, should only be used for absolute paths. We have been in contact with their developers so this may change. We recommend the following modify file link paths preferences: Strip all potentially unsafe characters, Convert characters to ASCII only, Convert spaces to underscores, Prefix asset links with file:// scheme.

iAnnotate PDF doesn't appear to support relative file links.