

Presentation Converter user guide

Presentation Converter turns **Keynote, PowerPoint, Google Slides, ODP and Canva decks into PDFs with a presenter-notes sidecar**. It ships as a CLI, a GUI and a Nextcloud app.

Status: in development, tagged at v0.1.1. The screenshots here are real captures of the running app, produced by its own screenshot script.

The problem it actually solves

A deck's slide count and its PDF's page count usually **disagree**, because every exporter silently drops hidden or skipped slides.

Convert a 4-slide deck whose third slide is hidden and you get a 3-page PDF — so a naive tool puts slide 3's notes on page 3, **and every note from there on is one page out**.

This tool reads the PDF back, reconciles the two, and records what it did:

```
"alignment": "adjusted"    // hidden slides accounted for; mapping is trustworthy
"alignment": "exact"      // counts agreed
"alignment": "mismatch"    // couldn't reconcile – notes emitted, but flagged as suspect
```

Check alignment on anything that matters. A `mismatch` is surfaced in the CLI, in the GUI and in the sidecar's `warnings` rather than being quietly wrong — but it is still emitted, so nothing stops you using it.

Installing

Requires **Node.js 20+**.

```
git clone https://github.com/stoatworks-labs/presentation-converter.git
cd presentation-converter
npm install
npm run build
```

For PowerPoint and ODP files, install [LibreOffice](#); on macOS, Keynote can stand in for it.

Find out what your machine can actually do before you need it to:

```
node packages/cli/dist/index.js doctor
```

Converting

```
# some files
presentation-converter convert "Q3 Review.key" "Keynote Address.pptx"

# a whole tree
presentation-converter batch ~/Decks --out-dir ~/PDFs

# a folder, continuously
presentation-converter watch ~/Dropbox/Incoming --out-dir ~/PDFs

# the GUI and worker API, at http://127.0.0.1:4747
presentation-converter serve
```

Presentation Converterv0.1.0 · PDF + presenter-notes sidecar

Individual files

Whole folder

Watch folder

Settings

WATCH FOLDER

Folder to watch

/Volumes/Show/Incoming

Browse...

New and changed presentations are converted automatically.

Output folder (optional)

/Volumes/Show/PDFs

Browse...

Leave empty to write each PDF next to its source.

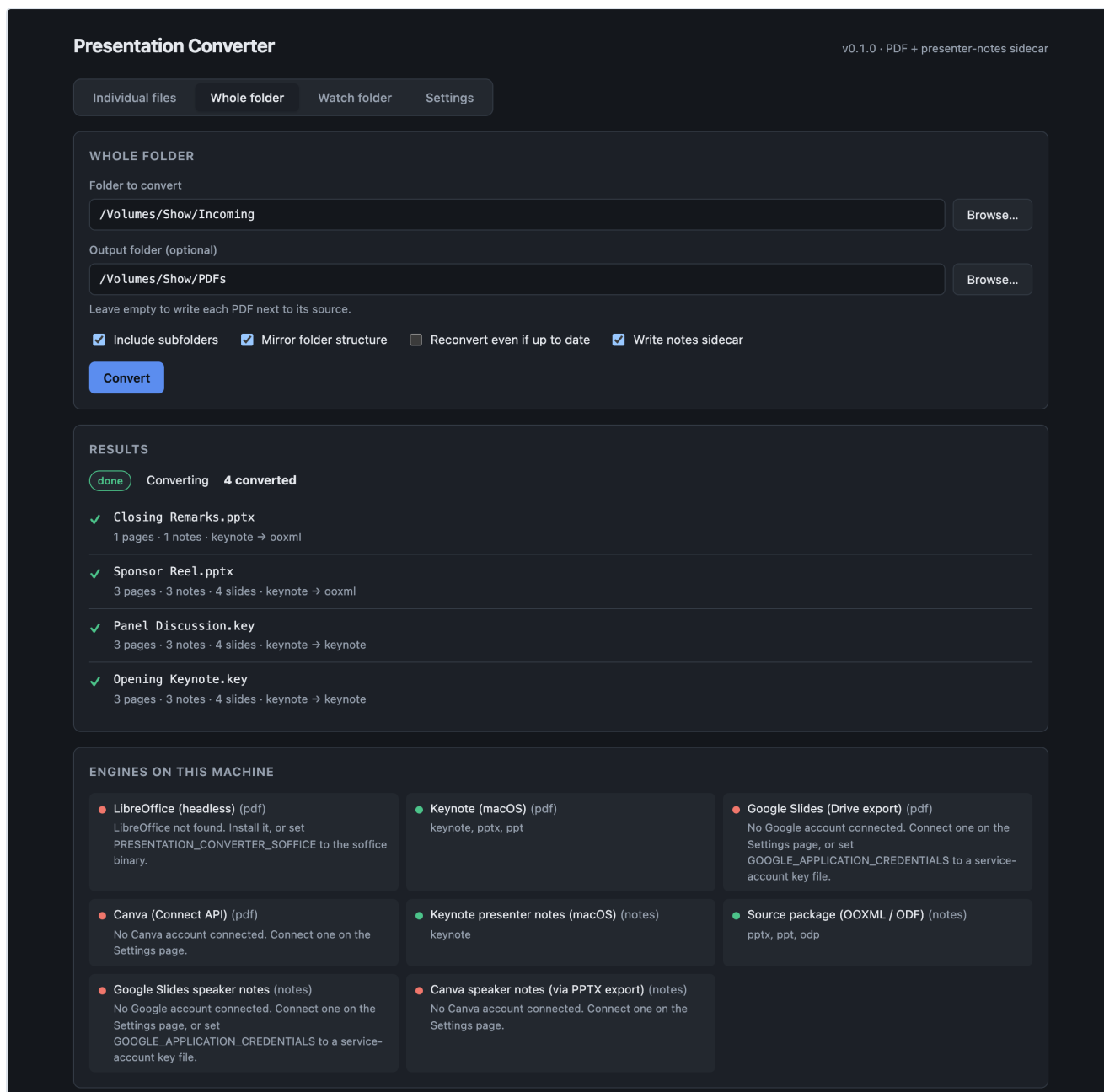
☒ Include subfolders

☒ Mirror folder structure

☐ Reconvert even if up to date

☒ Write notes sidecar

Start watching



Everything takes `--json` for scripting, and **exits non-zero if any file failed**.

Re-runs are incremental: a deck whose PDF and sidecar are already newer than it is skipped, so a repeat batch over an unchanged folder takes milliseconds. Use `--force` to override.

Options worth knowing

Flag	Effect
<code>--out-dir <dir></code>	Write PDFs here instead of beside the source; the folder tree is mirrored
<code>--flat</code>	Don't mirror subfolders — everything lands in one directory
<code>--force</code>	Reconvert even when the output is already newer than the source
<code>--no-sidecar</code>	Write only the PDF
<code>--pdf-engine <id></code>	Force <code>keynote</code> , <code>libreoffice</code> , <code>google-slides</code> or <code>canva</code>
<code>--exclude <text...></code>	Skip any path containing this text
<code>--dry-run</code>	(batch) List what would be converted, then stop

What converts with what

Notes extraction is deliberately independent of PDF rendering. For Office and ODF files the notes are read straight out of the source package's XML, so they are the author's exact text regardless of which engine drew the PDF — and that part works **headless, with no application installed**.

Format	PDF rendered by	Notes read from
<code>.key</code>	Keynote (macOS only)	Keynote
<code>.pptx</code>	LibreOffice, or Keynote on macOS	the <code>.pptx</code> package (OOXML)
<code>.ppt</code>	LibreOffice	promoted to <code>.pptx</code> , then the package
<code>.odp</code>	LibreOffice	the <code>.odp</code> package (ODF)
Google Slides	Drive export	Slides API
Canva	PPTX export, rendered locally	the exported <code>.pptx</code> (OOXML)

Keynote cannot run on Linux, so a Linux host needs a paired Mac for `.key` files — see [nextcloud.md](#).

Connecting accounts

Presentation Converter

v0.1.0 · PDF + presenter-notes sidebar

Individual files

Whole folder

Watch folder

Settings

GOOGLE SLIDES

● Not connected

Connect an account to convert Google Slides presentations.

Sign in with Google

Service account

Create an OAuth client of type **Desktop app** (or Web application) in the [Google Cloud console](#), enable the *Google Drive API* and *Google Slides API*, then paste its id and secret here. Add this redirect URI to the client:

http://127.0.0.1:4747/api/google/callback

Client ID

...apps.googleusercontent.com

Client secret

G0CSPX-...

Save client

Connect Google account

Save a client id and secret before connecting.

CANVA

● Not connected

Connect an account to convert straight from a Canva link.

Optional. **Canva decks already convert without this** — in Canva choose *Download* → *PPTX* and convert that file; the speaker notes are inside it. Connecting an account only saves you the manual download, letting you convert from a Canva link directly.

Create an integration in the [Canva developer portal](#) with the design:content:read and design:meta:read scopes, and add this redirect URL to it:

http://127.0.0.1:4747/api/canva/callback

Client ID

0C-AZ...

Client secret

cnvca...

Save client

Connect Canva account

Save a client id and secret before connecting.

Credentials are stored in your user config directory with `0600` permissions, and the page shows the exact path. **Environment variables, when set, take precedence over anything saved here.**

Google Slides

Pass a share URL, a file id, or a `.gslides` shortcut:

```
presentation-converter convert "https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/FILE_ID/edit" -o ~/PDFs
```

Connect an account either in **Settings** (sign in, or paste a service-account key) or by environment variable, which is best for servers:

```
export GOOGLE_APPLICATION_CREDENTIALS=/path/to/service-account.json
```

Either route needs **both the Google Drive API and the Google Slides API** enabled on the project. Two limits that catch people:

- **A service account can only see presentations shared with its email address.**
- **Drive refuses to export presentations over 10 MB.**

Canva

```
presentation-converter convert "https://www.canva.com/design/DAFxyz123/edit" -o ~/PDFs
```

Or with no setup at all: export from Canva with **Download → PPTX** and convert that file like any other PowerPoint deck — Canva embeds the speaker notes in it.

The Canva engine exports PPTX, never PDF, and renders that file locally. Canva's API exposes no notes field, so a PPTX has to be fetched anyway; taking the pages from the same artefact halves the API cost and guarantees the notes and the pages describe the same version of the deck. **That does mean LibreOffice or Keynote is required.**

See [canva.md](#).

Troubleshooting

Symptom	Cause
Notes are one slide out	Check <code>alignment</code> in the sidecar. A <code>mismatch</code> means it could not reconcile the counts.
Slide count $\neq$ page count	Normal — exporters drop hidden slides. That is what the reconciliation is for.
<code>.key</code> file won't convert	Keynote is macOS-only. A Linux host needs a paired Mac.
<code>.pptx</code> or <code>.odp</code> won't convert	LibreOffice isn't installed or isn't found. Run <code>doctor</code> .
Nothing happened on a re-run	Incremental skip — the outputs are newer than the source. Use <code>-force</code> .
Google: "file not found" with a service account	The deck has not been shared with the service account's email address.
Google: export fails on a big deck	Drive refuses presentations over 10 MB.
Canva converts but needs LibreOffice	By design — it exports PPTX and renders locally.
Saved credentials seem to be ignored	An environment variable is set, and it takes precedence.

See also

- [sidecar-format.md](#) — the notes sidecar, including the `alignment` field
- [canva.md](#) — the Canva engine and why it exports PPTX
- [nextcloud.md](#) — the Nextcloud app, and the paired-Mac arrangement for Keynote
- [README](#) — full option list and downloads