

Linkano User Manual

Version 1.2 · early access

This manual describes how Linkano works on macOS for everyday use. For installation, building from source, and release engineering, see the [README](#) and [RELEASE](#).

1. What is Linkano?

Linkano is a **menubar app** that helps you save **contextual links** between things you work with on your Mac:

- Files and folders in Finder
- **PDFs in Preview** (with optional page numbers)
- Web pages in your browser
- Mail messages
- Calendar events ([Calendar.app](#) or Fantastical)
- Contacts
- Obsidian notes
- DEVONthink items
- CodeRunner documents

Each saved item gets a stable internal ID. You can **link** items to each other (like a personal knowledge graph), **search** your library, **open** targets again, and **copy** links you paste into notes, task managers, or other apps.

Linkano is **local-first**: your library is stored in SQLite on your Mac. **iCloud sync** is optional and only syncs **metadata** (not full file contents).

2. Core concepts

Saved item (link)

A row in your library with:

- **Title** and **type** (file, web, mail, ...)
- **Locator** — URL, path, `message://` ID, app-specific reference, etc.
- Optional **notes** and **tags**
- For files: identity hints (bookmark, size, content fingerprint) so Linkano can find the file after a rename or move

PDF page links

PDFs saved from Preview (or entered manually) can include a **page** in the locator:

```
file:///Users/you/Documents/report.pdf#page=12
```

The fragment `#page=N` (or `#page=N` after normalization) makes that saved item **page-specific**. Linkano treats a PDF without a page and a PDF with `#page=12` as **different** items, so you can link to both the whole document and a specific page.

When you copy Markdown for a PDF with a page, the title includes the page (e.g. `Report, p. 12`). Opening the item tries to jump to that page in Preview.

Relation

A **bidirectional** connection between two saved items. If you link “Project brief.pdf” to “Kickoff email”, each item can show the other as a related neighbor. Removing a relation does **not** delete either item.

Suggested relations (in the graph) are hints only — dashed edges based on shared tags, same folder, same domain, or similar app context. Accept them when you agree; they are not stored until you confirm.

Backlinks

When you view linked items for a saved entry, you see everything connected to it. The **context graph** shows the same network visually, with scopes and filters for exploration.

Linkano URL

Every saved item has a stable link of the form:

```
linkano://open/<uuid>
```

Paste that URL anywhere Linkano or macOS can open a custom URL scheme. Linkano resolves the UUID through your library and opens the current target (file, page, message, etc.). The UUID is authoritative; path or title in other tools are hints only.

3. Getting started

Menubar

Linkano lives in the **menu bar** (chain icon). Click it for:

Menu item	Default shortcut
Open Linkano	⌘L
Open Graph	⌘G
Preferences...	⌘,
Check for Updates...	—
Quit Linkano	⌘Q

When the **active app** (browser tab, Finder selection, mail message, Preview page, etc.) already matches something in your library, the menubar icon can show a **green highlight** — a quick signal that Linkano has links for what you are looking at.

First-run permissions

macOS may ask for:

Permission	Why
Automation	Read the active tab, Mail message, DEVONthink item, Preview PDF, etc. via Apple Events
Calendar	Capture calendar / Fantastical events

Contacts	Link contact cards
Accessibility	Fallback when AppleScript is not enough (e.g. CodeRunner, Preview PDF page detection)

Grant only what you need. You can change permissions later in **System Settings → Privacy & Security**.

Hide Dock icon

Settings → General → Hide Dock icon (default: on) keeps Linkano in the menubar only. The app still runs in the background for global shortcuts and context detection.

4. The Linkano panel

Open with **⌘L** (configurable in **Settings → Keyboard**) or **menubar → Open Linkano**.

The panel is keyboard-first: type to search, use arrow keys to move, **Return** to act.

Search mode (default)

- **Type** to search titles, URLs, types, notes, and tags.
- **↑ / ↓** — move selection.
- **Return** — open the selected saved item (or capture/open flow below).
- **⌘N** — add a new item manually (title, locator, notes, tags).
- **⌘K** — start linking from the selected item.
- **⌘B** — show backlinks for the selected item.
- **⌘C** — copy using your **default copy format** (Settings → General).
- **⌘↵** (Command + Return) — action menu (Open, Copy, Copy as..., Link, Backlinks, Delete, Remove relation).
- **⌘⌫** or **⌘Delete** — delete the selected **link** (with confirmation).
- **⌘⇧⌫** or **⌘⇧Delete** — remove the **relation** to the selected neighbor (with confirmation; only in linked/backlink views).
- **Esc** — close the panel (or cancel a pending delete).

Capturing the active context

When Linkano can see what you are working on (empty search or top of results), you get **capture** actions:

1. Work in a supported app (e.g. highlight a file in Finder, open a Safari tab, read a page in **Preview**).
2. Open Linkano (**^⌘L**).
3. Select the capture row (often at the top) and press **Return**.

Linkano saves the item and may show a short instruction banner (e.g. for Obsidian). You can dismiss banners with **⌘**; reset dismissed tips in **Settings → General → Show Dismissed Instruction Banners Again**.

Preview PDF: Linkano detects the open PDF and, when possible, the **current page** via Apple Events, with an Accessibility fallback if the page is not exposed reliably. After you open Linkano with the global hotkey, Linkano keeps a short memory of the Preview window so capture still works when Linkano becomes frontmost.

If several apps could apply, Linkano lists multiple capture candidates — pick the right one.

Linking two items

1. Select a saved item.
2. Press **⌘K** (or use the action menu → **Link to Another Item**).
3. Search or pick the **destination** item.
4. Press **Return** to create the relation.

The panel closes when linking completes successfully.

Viewing linked items and backlinks

- From a selected item, use the list of **linked neighbors** or press **⌘B** for **backlinks** mode.
- **Return** opens the selected neighbor.
- **⌘K** from a neighbor can start a new link from that item.

Manual add (⌘N)

Use when there is no capture row (or you want full control):

- Enter title, locator (path or URL; for PDF pages use `file:///...pdf#page=N`), notes, tags.

- Save to add to the library.

File match prompt

If you search while a **file** is active in Finder and Linkano finds a strong match, you may see a prompt to treat the Finder item as that saved link – useful after renames without duplicating entries.

5. Context graph

Open with **⌘G** or **menubar → Open Graph**.

The graph is a **context graph**: saved items are **nodes**, confirmed relations are **solid edges**, and **suggested** links appear as **dashed edges** until you accept them. The toolbar floats over the canvas with a translucent material so the graph stays visible underneath; the canvas is clipped so nodes do not draw over the header.

Pan and zoom with the toolbar or trackpad. The graph adapts to **light and dark mode**.

Scope modes

Use the scope control in the toolbar to change what you see:

Scope	What it shows
All	Full library graph (subject to filters below)
Context	Neighborhood around the current active context (what you were just working on)
Orphans	Items with no relations
Weak	Items with only one relation
Suggested	Items that have at least one suggested link

The toolbar title and status line summarize counts (e.g. visible nodes, relations, suggestions).

Filters

Open the filter menu to narrow by:

- **Link type** (file, web, mail, ...)
- **Source app** (Finder, Safari, Preview, ...)
- **Tag**

Checked filters are active; use **Clear Filters** to reset. Multiple filters combine (AND).

Node health and legend

A compact **legend** (bottom-right when relevant) explains:

Marker	Meaning
Dashed line	Suggested relation (not saved yet)
Orange dot	Weak link — only one relation
Gray dot	Orphan — no relations

Hover a node for a short health tooltip (connected, weak, or orphan).

Toolbar actions (selection)

When a node is selected:

- **Link** — start linking from that node (pick destination, **Return** to confirm).
- **Remove relation** — menu of neighbors to unlink.
- **Open** — open the underlying item.
- **Delete** — remove the saved link (with confirmation).

Reload (arrow) syncs iCloud if enabled and rebuilds the graph layout.

Context menu (right-click)

On a node:

- **Open**
- **Link from Here**
- **Create Suggested Relation** — submenu of dashed-edge candidates with reasons (#tag, same folder, same domain, same app context)
- **Remove Relation** — per neighbor
- **Delete Link**

Keyboard

Key	Action
↑ ↓ ← →	Move selection between nodes
Return	Open selected node
← → (when navigating relations)	Preview relation on the focus node
↑	Follow previewed relation (move focus along edge)
↓	Step back along relation navigation
⌘⌘	Delete selected link (with confirmation)
Esc	Cancel linking / pending delete, or close window

On-screen hints: empty graph guidance; relation navigation “←→ *preview* ↑ *follow* ↓ *back* *Return opens*”.

6. Opening items

When you open a saved item, Linkano uses the best current locator:

- **Web** — default browser
- **Files / folders** — Finder or default app; may reconcile path after move
- **PDF** — Preview (or default PDF handler) with **page jump** when `#page=N` is set
- **Mail** — `Mail.app` with `message://` when possible
- **Calendar / contacts** — appropriate reveal behaviour
- **Obsidian / DEVONthink / CodeRunner** — app-specific handlers

If a **file** moved and automatic matching is uncertain, Linkano may ask you to pick among candidates when opening, or you can use **Settings → Advanced → File Repair** (see below).

Opening `linkano://` links

With Linkano installed, `linkano://open/<uuid>` links open the app and resolve the item. Works from cold start or when Linkano is already running.

7. Copy formats

Settings → **General** → **Default copy format** sets what **⌘C** does in the panel.

Format	Typical use
URL	Plain <code>https://</code> , <code>file://</code> , or locator string (includes <code>#page=N</code> for PDFs)
Markdown	<code>[title](url)</code> — PDF titles include <code>, p. N</code> when a page is set
Linkano link	<code>linkano://open/<uuid></code>
Linkano Markdown	Markdown with Linkano URL

⌘↔ → **Copy** uses the default; **Copy as** submenu picks another format once.

8. Settings

Open **Preferences...** from the menubar (**⌘**, when the menu is focused).

General

- **Launch at login** — start Linkano when you log in.
- **Hide Dock icon** — menubar-only presence.
- **Default copy format** — see [Copy formats](#).
- **Link found sound** — optional sound when the active context matches a saved link (volume and cooldown).
- **Show Dismissed Instruction Banners Again** — reset capture tips in the panel.

Keyboard

Record global shortcuts for:

- **Linkano** (open panel) — default **⌘L**
- **Graph** — default **⌘G**

Click a field, hold modifiers (shown as **⌘ ⌥ ⌘**), press the key. Linkano checks for conflicts with macOS and the other Linkano shortcut. Re-pressing the same shortcut keeps the current binding.

Sync

- **iCloud sync** — off by default. When enabled, metadata syncs via your private CloudKit database (iCloud.nl.mjanssen.linkano).
- Manual **Sync now** and status messages.
- With iCloud on, Linkano syncs on launch, periodically, when the app becomes active, and when you open the panel or graph.
- **Danger Zone** (Advanced) can erase local and remote data when sync is on — use with care.

File contents are **not** uploaded. Bookmarks and inode-like IDs stay on each Mac.

Files

Search folders (known roots) — folders you approve for file resolution:

- **Add Folder to Search** — pick directories (Documents, project roots, etc.).
- Linkano scans **only** these paths when reconciling moved files or running repair — never the whole disk silently.

Use the same folders for cross-Mac repair hints and the repair queue in Advanced.

Updates

- **Check for Updates** — Sparkle (when an appcast entry exists).
- Automatic update checks can be toggled here.

About

- Version and build number.
- **Start Here** — quick workflow summary.
- **Privacy & Data** — short facts; links to privacy policy, in-app privacy details, terms, and **Contact Support** (linkano@anon.mjanssen.nl).

Advanced

Backup

- **Export Library...** — JSON backup (links, tags, relations, notes, portable fingerprints).
- **Import Library...** — preview counts, then **Merge** or **Replace Local Library** (destructive replace empties local data first; with iCloud on, remote erase may run first).

File Repair

For links whose files may have moved on **this Mac**:

1. Add **known roots** (or use folders from **Settings → Files**).
2. Click **Scan Repairs**.
3. Review each issue: status (missing, multiple matches, needs confirmation, etc.), **confidence** badge, and **evidence** (bookmark, hash, name, size, ...).
4. **Confirm** the correct candidate to relink — Linkano stores updated local file identity.

Linkano does not auto-relink ambiguous matches; you stay in control.

Danger Zone

- **Erase All Linkano Data** — empty library on this Mac (and iCloud when enabled), with progress and verification.

Always **export** before large erase, import, sync experiments, or bulk repair.

9. Library backup (export / import)

Export

1. **Settings → Advanced → Export Library...**
2. Choose a `.json` file location.

The file includes links, relations, tags, notes, and portable file fingerprints. It does **not** include machine-local bookmarks or volume/inode evidence.

Import

1. **Settings → Advanced → Import Library...**
2. Choose a previously exported `.json` file.
3. Review the dialog: counts of links/relations and how many already exist locally.
4. Choose **Merge** (upsert by ID) or **Replace Local Library** (erase local library first, then import).

Replace is irreversible except by importing another backup.

10. Tips and limitations

Works well when you...

- Use the same Mac for most work and grant the integrations you need.
- Export backups before risky operations.
- Use `linkano://` links in notes instead of raw paths that break on rename.
- Add **search folders** before expecting file repair to find moved files.
- Capture PDFs from Preview when you care about the **current page**.
- Treat relations as lightweight “see also” edges, not formal dependencies.

Known limitations (early access)

- Integrations depend on third-party apps and macOS permissions – behaviour can change after app updates.
- Preview page detection is **best effort** (Apple Events + Accessibility); not every PDF UI state exposes the page.
- **iCloud sync** requires schema setup in CloudKit and testing on multiple Macs.
- **Sparkle** updates need a hosted appcast and notarized builds.
- Linkano is not a sync replacement for Obsidian vaults, Git, or full-disk backup.
- Extremely sensitive data should not be stored in titles, notes, or URLs.

Support and legal

- **Support:** linkano@anon.mjanssen.nl
- **Privacy policy:** <https://micro.mjanssen.nl/privacy-policy/>
- **In-repo drafts:** [PRIVACY.md](#), [TERMS OF USE.md](#)

Quick reference – panel shortcuts

Shortcut	Action
<code>⌘L</code>	Open Linkano (global, default)
<code>↑ / ↓</code>	Move selection
Return	Open / capture / finish linking
<code>⌘←</code>	Action menu
<code>⌘C</code>	Copy (default format)
<code>⌘N</code>	Add item manually

⌘K	Link from selection
⌘B	Backlinks
⌘⌫	Delete link
⌘⇧⌫	Remove relation
Esc	Close / cancel

Global graph shortcut: **^⌘G** (default).

Customize Linkano and Graph shortcuts in **Settings → Keyboard**.