ncdu Disk usage browser

START HERE

Up / **Down** Move the selection

r Rescan this directory

Enter Open a directory

q Quit

Left Back to the parent

d Delete the item

i Info on the item

n / **s** Sort by name / size

Scan ncdu <path> → **Export file** JSON or binary (-o / -O) → **Browse** read-only view (-f) → **Delete** live scan only (d)

CONCEPTS

Scan once, then dig down: the biggest entries sit on top, so open the top directory and repeat.

Imported scans cannot delete, refresh or spawn a shell; only a live scan can.

Sizes are disk usage (blocks) by default; press a to compare with apparent size, e.g. for sparse files.

NAVIGATE

Up / **Down** Move the selection

k / **j** Move up / down (vi keys)

Enter / **Right** Open the selected directory

Left / **h** Go to the parent directory

l Open the selected directory (vi key)

? Show help, keys and about

q Quit ncdu

SORT AND VIEW

s Sort by size; press again to reverse

SORT AND VIEW (cont.)

n Sort by name; press again to reverse

C Sort by item count

M Sort by newest child mtime

Needs a scan started with -e.

a Toggle disk usage / apparent size

g Cycle percentage and graph display

c Show item counts

m Show newest child mtime

Needs a scan started with -e.

t Directories first on or off

u Toggle shared / unique size column

Only shows when the listing has directories with shared hard links.

e Show or hide hidden and excluded items

They still count toward the totals.

ACT ON ITEMS

d Delete the selected item

Asks for confirmation unless --no-confirm-delete is set.

ACT ON ITEMS (cont.)

i Show details of the selected item

r Rescan the current directory

b Open a shell in this directory

Uses NCDU_SHELL, then SHELL, then /bin/sh. NCDU_LEVEL tells nested sessions apart.

Flags in the first column: ! unreadable, . error below, > other filesystem, @ symlink or special, H hard link counted already, e empty dir, < excluded.

SCAN OPTIONS

ncdu *<path>*
Scan a directory and browse it

ncdu -x *<path>*
Stay on one filesystem

ncdu -e *<path>*
Also record owner, mode and mtime

ncdu -t *<n>* *<path>*
Scan with n threads

ncdu -L *<path>*
Count the targets of symlinks

SCAN OPTIONS (cont.)

ncdu --exclude *<pattern>* *<path>*
Skip matching files (repeatable)

Excluded entries are still listed but not counted.

ncdu -X *<file>* *<path>*
Read exclude patterns from a file

ncdu --exclude-caches *<path>*
Skip dirs holding CACHEDIR.TAG

ncdu --exclude-kernfs /
Skip proc, sys and similar

ncdu --ignore-config
Skip the config files

DISPLAY OPTIONS

ncdu --si
Use kB / MB instead of KiB / MiB

ncdu --apparent-size
Start on apparent size

ncdu --sort *<col>*-desc
Pick the starting sort

Columns: disk-usage, name, apparent-size, itemcount, mtime.

ncdu --group-directories-first
Directories above files

DISPLAY OPTIONS (cont.)

ncdu --color dark
Use the dark colour scheme

Use dark-bg for a light terminal; the default is off.

ncdu -q
Update the screen less often

ncdu -2
Full-screen UI while scanning

The only mode that shows non-fatal scan errors.

ncdu -1
Progress text, no full-screen UI

ncdu -0
No output during the scan

EXPORT AND IMPORT

ncdu -o *<file>* *<path>*
Scan and save as JSON

ncdu -O *<file>* *<path>*
Scan and save in binary format

Compressed, browsable without loading it all into memory.

ncdu -f *<file>*
Browse a saved scan

ncdu -co- *<path>*
Write compressed JSON to stdout

ncdu -f-
Read a JSON scan from stdin

ncdu --compress-level *<n>*
Zstd level 1 to 19 for -O or -c

SAFETY AND CONFIG

ncdu -r *<path>*
Read-only: no delete

Give -r twice to also disable the shell.

ncdu --disable-delete
Turn off the delete key

ncdu --delete-command "gio trash --"
Trash instead of delete

The item's absolute path is appended; NCDU_DELETE_PATH is set too.

Put one option per line in ~/.config/ncdu/config (or /etc/ncdu.conf) to make flags permanent; command-line flags win.

RECIPES

Find what fills the root disk

```
sudo ncdu -x /
# s sorts by size, Enter dives in,
# -x skips other mounts and network shares
```

Scan a remote host, browse locally

```
ssh <user>@<host> ncdu -co- / | ncdu -f-
```

Save a scan, review it later

```
ncdu -1x0 scan.ncdu /
ncdu -f scan.ncdu
```

Browse a cleanup without deleting

```
ncdu -r -x --exclude node_modules ~/projects
```