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` / `-0`) → **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

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.

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

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 (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 -0 <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
```