

Can This Be Used for Collaboration?

A note on using such sharing services for collaboration: while it is possible for multiple parties to work off of a single .scriv file hosted on a shared network folder, extra caution will need to be exercised in order to keep the project data safe. At the very least, this section of the manual should be distributed to all parties concerned, and good lines of communication should be established so that everyone knows when a person is actively working in a project. Guideline #2 above deserves to be reiterated: **never open a project for editing if another person is currently editing the project.**

[Return to chapter](#) ↗

14.2 Working with Scrivener for iOS

This chapter will *not* go into how to use the iOS version of Scrivener, save for where its usage intersects with the macOS or Windows versions. We've prepared a tutorial/reference for you, built right into the iOS app. If you'd like to learn how to use it, that's the place to go!

As for here, we'll dig in to the ramifications of what iOS now means from the perspective of using your computer, whether you wish to use the mobile version to edit your own projects, or if you intend to work with others who use it. You should find things won't have changed much when it comes to using Scrivener on your laptop or desktop. We hope you find the transition to be easy to use and liberating (that is, if you're the one walking around with your manuscript in your back pocket).

14.2.1 Basic Usage

The Scrivener project format has been designed to support seamless mobile usage between device and computer. The iOS app comes with Dropbox integration built-in—which will make for the most convenient option—but the syncing system was specifically built to withstand all forms of file transfer (seeing as how Dropbox is a file-based system, this is no mere side-effect!). You can package the project up by exporting it from the app, send it to yourself via email, AirDrop or even copy the project to a thumb drive and send it to a colleague through the post. Syncing happens when projects are opened, the rest is up to you.

Upgrading from Scrivener 2

If you've just been faced with the question of updating your existing Scrivener project to 3.0, and are wondering if the new format is supported by your version of Scrivener for iOS: yes! In fact the iOS version of Scrivener has been working with the new format since its very launch—there just hasn't been any 3.0 users to try. It supports the new styles and stylesheets ([section 15.6](#)) system as well as project bookmarks ([section 10.3](#)).

When sync occurs, every change made with the mobile version will be in turn made to the main project, effectively merging them together. From your point of view, the effect will be to simply pick up right where you left off on your iPad, moments ago, right down to the last document you were working on being shown in the main editor.

Meanwhile all iOS devices share the same mobile data within the project. Keeping an iPhone and iPad synced together is easy, and for some people that might be more common than syncing a laptop and iPhone together.

This does all mean that syncing must be done whenever you switch devices. If you edit the same project from two locations at once, or overlap editing sessions without syncing intermediate changes, you will most likely need to resolve some conflicts. We'll get in to that later, but don't fret, it's just a way of letting you decide which copies to use, or which parts within those copies should be merged into the best version you meant to write.

First, we'll discuss how to get projects from point A to point B, and then we'll talk about what happens once you've copied them ([section 14.2.1](#)).

Sync with Dropbox

This should probably go without saying, but there are two basic ingredients you'll need to get this all working:

- First thing you will want to do is set up Scrivener for iOS so that it is hooked up to your Dropbox account. If you are unsure of how to do that, please consult the built-in tutorial on your device, or tap on the circular arrow icon in the main project screen and walk through the setup screens.
- On your computer, you'll need Dropbox installed and running in the background.

In the process of setting up sync in mobile Scrivener, you will be asked where you wish to save your projects. By default this will be to the Dropbox/Apps/Scrivener folder (one will be created for you if it does not already exist). Where this is relevant to your computer is that once you select or create that folder, you can simply navigate to it and open projects in Scrivener ([subsection 5.1.3](#)), directly, as you would open any other file from your Dropbox folder. You can

also drag projects on your computer into this folder and then sync them to your device once they have finished uploading to Dropbox. It is also possible to create this folder on your computer first, somewhere within the Dropbox folder, and then point the iOS app to it later.

While on your computer, you can organise your projects into subfolders *within* this chosen sync folder. This will change nothing on the mobile side, there are no “folders” in the project management screen, but if you’d like to keep your projects organised you can safely do so.

The sync folder isn’t for general storage

Try to limit the files you put into this sync folder to the special settings files listed in this chapter, and Scrivener projects. Although putting other types of files into this folder will not harm anything, given how Dropbox syncing works, everything will be downloaded to your mobile device, even if it does not show up in the project list. If many files are placed here, it could significantly slow down sync, or even eat up your device’s storage space or bandwidth allocation.

The basic ideas to employ here are:

- Projects you create and sync to Dropbox, from your devices, will appear in the designated folder on your computer where they can be opened and worked with like normal projects. Once you’ve done that, they *are* normal projects.
- Projects you place into that folder can be synced and edited remotely, even if you leave it open on your computer.

If that’s all you want to do, you could probably stop reading this chapter right now! But before doing so, I’d urge you read up on Avoiding and Resolving Conflicts ([subsection 14.2.2](#)).

Using Multiple Sync Folders

Although we do not recommend switching sync folders frequently (you will need to download everything all over again every time you switch), if you need it, you’ve got it. This may be useful if you’re collaborating with another person over Dropbox, or if you use your device for personal writings as well as using a shared work folder, and wish to keep the two separate.

1. On your iOS device, return to the main project screen.
2. Tap the **Edit** button at the top of the project list (in the sidebar on an iPad).
3. Tap the  button at the bottom of the list.

4. Select “Dropbox Settings”. At this point you would select your preferred sync folder.

At the conclusion of this process, you can choose to keep the projects you’ve been syncing (they will be moved to the device, not uploaded to the new sync folder), or to remove the local copies. **Neither option will touch Dropbox.** If you keep local copies and later switch back to the first sync folder you may end up with duplicate copies of the projects, those stored on your device and those in the sync area. It will be up to you to sort out which to keep.

Where is iCloud Support?

If iCloud were compatible with the format we use to store your project, we’d support it, that’s the simple fact. At this time, Apple’s interface for working with iCloud is designed around a model which presumes one single file stores all of the information needed to open and save the document. To be fair, in most cases this is a safe assumption! Scrivener’s format, designed with the capacity to store gigabytes of research data, uses a special folder-based format used by your Mac. A single project may require dozens, maybe even thousands of files, to all be working together in unison as a single “format”. Until such a time as iCloud supports this form of working with data, we will be unable to provide that method for synchronisation.

While syncing is out, we do support importing from your iCloud Drive; you’ll be able to download PDFs and other materials into your projects. If you are unwilling or unable to use Dropbox for full syncing, please refer to Managing Projects Directly (iTunes) ([section 14.2.1](#)).

Managing Projects Directly (iTunes)

Dropbox may not work for all of your projects, or you might be unable or unwilling to use it at all. No fear! You still get all of the goodies, but you’ll need to handle copying projects to and fro.

iTunes and other file managers

The easiest option will be with the iTunes software itself, using its “File Sharing” to access documents stored by the various apps on your device. With Scrivener’s document list loaded, you can copy projects directly onto the device over WiFi or USB cable, and copy updated projects down to your computer in the same way, with drag and drop to or from the Finder.

1. With your device plugged in or connected via WiFi, open iTunes.
2. Select your device.
3. Select “File Sharing” in the sidebar.

4. Select Scrivener in the “Apps” list.
5. Click the **Add...** button in iTunes and select your Scrivener project folder (ending in “.scriv”) using the file dialog box. This will add the project to the “Documents” list in iTunes. You can also drag and drop into the “Scrivener Documents” list.
6. To copy a project from your device back to the computer, select it in the “Scrivener Documents” list and click on **Save...**, selecting a folder to save the project to. Drag and drop into a Finder window should also work.

Third-party iOS device managers may provide more features as well as better ways of working with files. If you don’t like how iTunes works, there are plenty of choices on both platforms.

Third-party sync

You may also find that other cloud services with an iOS app work, albeit in a manual fashion (more like copying than “syncing”), as a way of transferring projects on or off the device. If the iOS sync app lets you send folders to other apps on your device, then try sending the project folder, ending in “.scriv”, to Scrivener for iOS, from that app.

Export as Zip

Finally you can export projects from your device by sharing them as Zip files:

1. On the device, from Scrivener’s main project screen, tap the Edit button.
2. Select the project you wish to send.
3. Tap the “Share” button at the bottom of the project list.

At this point a number of services are available to you, depending upon what you have installed on your device. At a basic level you’ll be able to email a copy of the project. Other programs may allow you to store the .zip locally, as a backup, or sync it to another cloud service.

Using AirDrop to Transfer Projects

AirDrop can be used to easily copy projects between an iOS device and your Mac. To copy a project to your mobile device:

1. Enable AirDrop on your iOS device (by default you can swipe up from the bottom of the screen, tap the AirDrop button below the volume slider, and select your privacy setting).
2. Now open the AirDrop window on your Mac, using the Finder’s **Go ▸ / AirDrop** menu command (⇧⌘R).

3. You should see your iOS device appear as an avatar, to send the project, drag and drop it onto the avatar in the AirDrop window, then accept the file transfer on your device.
4. Once it has transferred, you may be asked which program you wish to load the project in, choose Scrivener (naturally!).
5. If you are using Dropbox otherwise, you will be asked whether to import the project into the cloud sync area or to the local device.

To copy a project from your device to your Mac:

1. Open the AirDrop window on your Mac, using the Finder's **Go ▸ AirDrop** menu command (**⇧⌘R**), and ensure "Allow me to be discovered by:" is set so that your Mac can be seen.
2. On the device, from Scrivener's main project screen, tap the **Edit** button.
3. Select the project you wish to send.
4. Tap the "Share" button at the bottom of the project list.
5. You should find your Mac's avatar as an option in the share panel, tap on it.
6. From the Mac, accept the file transfer.
7. The project will be saved to your Downloads folder, as a .zip file. Double-click the .zip file to extract the project (you can discard the zip if you wish) and then drag it wherever you'd like.

Updating Projects with Mobile Changes

When you open a project that either originated from iOS or has been modified by it, loading the project may take a little longer than it ordinarily would. This is because Scrivener is going through all of the changes that have been made *in both directions*, and doing its best to build a cohesive merged copy out of the two. At that point, all necessary changes will be made to the project, potentially building out dozens of binder items and populating them with thousands of words of text, if you've been on the road for a while.

The first time this process concludes, you will be asked whether you'd like to have changed documents listed in a yellow Collection ([section 10.2](#)) called "Synced Documents".⁴ The previous contents of this collection (in subsequent syncs) will be replaced with the listed items from the latest sync, so if you plan

⁴ If you change your mind later on, you can adjust whether this list is created with the "Place documents affected by sync into a "Synced Documents" collection" checkbox, in the Sharing: Sync preference pane ([subsection B.7.3](#)). Additionally you can choose whether or not this collection is shown after syncing.

to review them, do so before the next sync, or change the name of this collection so that Scrivener will create a new one instead of replacing it.

In most cases, at this point you're all done! To sync a project you need only open it.

If the project was already open on your computer, when you switch back to the window, Scrivener will check for mobile changes and alert you if it needs to sync before you can safely continue. **Use this opportunity to double-check and make sure Dropbox isn't actively working**, if it is, it may still be downloading parts of your project and syncing right now would make a mess. Once Dropbox has stopped working, click the button to update your project. It will need to reload in order to do so, and by default a backup will be created before syncing.

Sometimes you might leave the project open and its window active. Scrivener won't constantly check the disk to see if there are mobile changes available, it only does so when loading or activating the project window. To initiate a sync from an active project window you can click the mobile sync button in the main application toolbar, or use the **File ▸ Sync ▸ with Mobile Devices** menu command. You can also try using this if for any reason you think sync should be happening but isn't. If no mobile changes are found, nothing will be done, so it is safe to try.

14.2.2 Avoiding and Resolving Conflicts

Although we'd like to say that sync is magic and never gets anything wrong (and that we as humans never misuse it!), reality often sticks a wrench into the works. A conflict is typically nothing to be too concerned with. All it means is that particular aspects of the project were edited in two or more locations without keeping them in sync, and in such a way that Scrivener can't figure out which is best. For example if you step away from your computer, sync properly to your iPhone and make a change to a particular binder item, but forget to save your changes from the phone back to Dropbox, then editing that same text file on the computer later on would mean *both* machines might now have valuable work you wouldn't want to lose, once they finally do sync.

We do our best to warn you when it looks like a sync really should happen before you start working, but not all situations can be detected automatically. Your first warning will be when conflicts are detected. We give you a chance to wait and make sure Dropbox is done working. After proceeding past that checkpoint, the project will be synced.

If any conflicts were found, a second copy of the item will be created within a folder called "Conflicts", added to the top level of the Binder. The original binder title of the conflicted item will be used for each, with "(Conflicted Copy)" appended to their titles. Additionally a document bookmark ([section 10.3](#)) will be added to the conflicted copy in the inspector, pointing back to the original version in the binder that it conflicts with. To view the two copies side-by-side for comparison, right-click on the bookmark to the original and select "Open in

Other Editor”, or “View on Current Editor’s Copyholder”.⁵

Of course the best way to handle conflicts is to avoid getting into the situation in the first place! These simple rules should help you stay out of trouble:

- Remember to sync your device when you’re done using it. Think of it like saving, the more you do it, the safer you’ll be.
- Don’t edit your project from more than one device or computer at once.
- Pay attention to Dropbox status on your computer. Don’t start syncing with iOS until your computer has stopped uploading the most recent changes to the project.

In the other direction, even though you might have already synced the iPhone to Dropbox, that doesn’t mean your computer is instantly up to date. It may take a few seconds or minutes for your changes to fully download. Don’t risk it! Wait until Dropbox has stopped working for several seconds before syncing mobile changes into the project.

For additional protection against conflicts, consider enabling the “Take snapshots of updated documents” checkbox, in the Sharing: Sync preference tab. Be aware this option will, over a long period of time, generate quite a number of snapshots—the Snapshots Manager ([subsection 15.8.5](#)) can help in clearing out old unwanted sync snapshots.

14.2.3 Storing Settings and Fonts on Dropbox

You can store iOS compile appearance settings, custom fonts and formatting presets in your Dropbox folder, making them automatically available to every device hooked up to this sync folder. Whenever changing or adding files, you should sync your devices with the server, and to play it safe, restart Scrivener for iOS (press the Home button twice quickly, then swipe the Scrivener tile *up* to remove it from the running apps list, then tap on its icon to load it again).

- *Fonts*: instead of having to install your favourite writing fonts on each device, you can place them within a “Fonts” subfolder (create one if necessary) of your main Dropbox sync folder. For example, if you are using the default sync folder location, you would place your fonts into Dropbox/Apps/Scrivener/Fonts. Scrivener can read TrueType (TTF) and OpenType (OTF) font formats. Not all fonts may work as expected (see the following). For alternative methods of installing fonts that do not require a computer, refer to the iOS tutorial.

⁵ More options for quickly loading bookmarks are referenced in Opening and Using Bookmarks ([subsection 13.4.2](#)).