

calibredb

calibredb command [options] [arguments]

calibredb is the command line interface to the calibre database. It has several sub-commands, documented below.

calibredb can be used to manipulate either a calibre database specified by path or a calibre Content server running either on the local machine or over the internet. You can start a calibre Content server using either the **calibre-server** program or in the main calibre program click Connect/share → Start Content server. Since **calibredb** can make changes to your calibre libraries, you must setup authentication on the server first. There are two ways to do that:

- If you plan to connect only to a server running on the same computer, you can simply use the **--enable-local-write** option of the content server, to allow any program, including calibredb, running on the local computer to make changes to your calibre data. When running the server from the main calibre program, this option is in Preferences → Sharing over the net → Advanced.
- If you want to enable access over the internet, then you should setup user accounts on the server and use the **--username** and **--password** options to **calibredb** to give it access. You can setup user authentication for **calibre-server** by using the **--enable-auth** option and using **--manage-users** to create the user accounts. If you are running the server from the main calibre program, use Preferences → Sharing over the net → Require username/password.

To connect to a running Content server, pass the URL of the server to the **--with-library** option, see the documentation of that option for details and examples.

- Global Options
- list
- add
 - Adding From Directories
- remove
- add_format
- remove_format
- show_metadata
- set_metadata
- export
- catalog
 - Epub Options
- saved_searches
- add_custom_column
- custom_columns
- remove_custom_column
- set_custom
- restore_database
- check_library
- list_categories
- backup_metadata

- `clone`
- `embed_metadata`
- `search`

Global Options

--help, -h

show this help message and exit

--library-path, --with-library

Path to the calibre library. Default is to use the path stored in the settings. You can also connect to a calibre Content server to perform actions on remote libraries. To do so use a URL of the form: http://hostname:port/#library_id for example, <http://localhost:8080/#mylibrary>. `library_id` is the library id of the library you want to connect to on the Content server. You can use the special `library_id` value of `-` to get a list of library ids available on the server. For details on how to setup access via a Content server, see <https://manual.calibre-ebook.com/generated/en/calibredb.html>.

--password

Password for connecting to a calibre Content server. To read the password from standard input, use the special value: `<stdin>`. To read the password from a file, use: `<f:/path/to/file>` (i.e. `<f:` followed by the full path to the file and a trailing `>`). The angle brackets in the above are required, remember to escape them or use quotes for your shell.

--username

Username for connecting to a calibre Content server

--version

show program's version number and exit

list

```
calibredb list [options]
```

List the books available in the calibre database.

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: `"/some path/with spaces"`

--ascending

Sort results in ascending order

--fields, -f

The fields to display when listing books in the database. Should be a comma separated list of fields. Available fields: `author_sort`, `authors`, `comments`, `cover`, `formats`, `identifiers`, `isbn`, `languages`, `last_modified`, `pubdate`, `publisher`, `rating`, `series`, `series_index`, `size`, `tags`, `timestamp`, `title`, `uuid` Default: `title,authors`. The special field `"all"` can be used to select all fields. In addition to the builtin fields above, custom fields are also available as `*field_name`, for example, for a custom field `#rating`, use the name: `*rating`

--for-machine

Generate output in JSON format, which is more suitable for machine parsing. Causes the line width and separator options to be ignored.

--limit

The maximum number of results to display. Default: all

--line-width, -w

The maximum width of a single line in the output. Defaults to detecting screen size.

--prefix

The prefix for all file paths. Default is the absolute path to the library folder.

--search, -s

Filter the results by the search query. For the format of the search query, please see the search related documentation in the User Manual. Default is to do no filtering.

--separator

The string used to separate fields. Default is a space.

--sort-by

The field by which to sort the results. Available fields: author_sort, authors, comments, cover, formats, identifiers, isbn, languages, last_modified, pubdate, publisher, rating, series, series_index, size, tags, timestamp, title, uuid Default: id

add

```
calibredb add [options] file1 file2 file3 ...
```

Add the specified files as books to the database. You can also specify directories, see the directory related options below.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--authors, -a

Set the authors of the added book(s)

--cover, -c

Path to the cover to use for the added book

--duplicates, -d

Add books to database even if they already exist. Comparison is done based on book titles.

--empty, -e

Add an empty book (a book with no formats)

--identifier, -I

Set the identifiers for this book, for e.g. -I asin:XXX -I isbn:YYY

--isbn, -i

Set the ISBN of the added book(s)

--languages, -l

A comma separated list of languages (best to use ISO639 language codes, though some language names may also be recognized)

--series, -s

Set the series of the added book(s)

--series-index, -S

Set the series number of the added book(s)

--tags, -T

Set the tags of the added book(s)

--title, -t

Set the title of the added book(s)

Adding From Directories

Options to control the adding of books from directories. By default only files that have extensions of known e-book file types are added.

--add

A filename (glob) pattern, files matching this pattern will be added when scanning directories for files, even if they are not of a known e-book file type. Can be specified multiple times for multiple patterns.

--ignore

A filename (glob) pattern, files matching this pattern will be ignored when scanning directories for files. Can be specified multiple times for multiple patterns. For e.g.: *.pdf will ignore all pdf files

--one-book-per-directory, -1

Assume that each directory has only a single logical book and that all files in it are different e-book formats of that book

--recurse, -r

Process directories recursively

remove

```
calibredb remove ids
```

Remove the books identified by ids from the database. ids should be a comma separated list of id numbers (you can get id numbers by using the search command). For example, 23,34,57-85 (when specifying a range, the last number in the range is not included).

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--permanent

Do not use the recycle bin

add format

```
calibredb add_format [options] id ebook_file
```

Add the e-book in ebook_file to the available formats for the logical book identified by id. You can get id by using the search command. If the format already exists, it is replaced, unless the do not replace option is specified.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--dont-replace

Do not replace the format if it already exists

remove_format

```
calibredb remove_format [options] id fmt
```

Remove the format `fmt` from the logical book identified by `id`. You can get `id` by using the search command. `fmt` should be a file extension like LRF or TXT or EPUB. If the logical book does not have `fmt` available, do nothing.

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: `"/some path/with spaces"`

show_metadata

```
calibredb show_metadata [options] id
```

Show the metadata stored in the calibre database for the book identified by `id`. `id` is an `id` number from the search command.

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: `"/some path/with spaces"`

--as-opf

Print metadata in OPF form (XML)

set_metadata

```
calibredb set_metadata [options] id [/path/to/metadata.opf]
```

Set the metadata stored in the calibre database for the book identified by `id` from the OPF file `metadata.opf`. `id` is an `id` number from the search command. You can get a quick feel for the OPF format by using the `--as-opf` switch to the `show_metadata` command. You can also set the metadata of individual fields with the `--field` option. If you use the `--field` option, there is no need to specify an OPF file.

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: `"/some path/with spaces"`

--field, -f

The field to set. Format is `field_name:value`, for example: **--field** tags:tag1,tag2. Use **--list-fields** to get a list of all field names. You can specify this option multiple times to set multiple fields. Note: For languages you must use the ISO639 language codes (e.g. `en` for English, `fr` for French and so on). For identifiers, the syntax is **--field** identifiers:isbn:XXXX,doi:YYYYY. For boolean (yes/no) fields use `true` and `false` or `yes` and `no`.

--list-fields, -l

List the metadata field names that can be used with the **--field** option

export

```
calibredb export [options] ids
```

Export the books specified by `ids` (a comma separated list) to the filesystem. The **export** operation saves all formats of the book, its cover and metadata (in an opf file). You can get `id` numbers from the search

command.

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: `"/some path/with spaces"`

--all

Export all books in database, ignoring the list of ids.

--dont-asciiize

Normally, calibre will convert all non English characters into English equivalents for the file names. WARNING: If you turn this off, you may experience errors when saving, depending on how well the filesystem you are saving to supports unicode. Specifying this switch will turn this behavior off.

--dont-save-cover

Normally, calibre will save the cover in a separate file along with the actual e-book files. Specifying this switch will turn this behavior off.

--dont-update-metadata

Normally, calibre will update the metadata in the saved files from what is in the calibre library. Makes saving to disk slower. Specifying this switch will turn this behavior off.

--dont-write-opf

Normally, calibre will write the metadata into a separate OPF file along with the actual e-book files. Specifying this switch will turn this behavior off.

--formats

Comma separated list of formats to save for each book. By default all available formats are saved.

--progress

Report progress

--replace-whitespace

Replace whitespace with underscores.

--single-dir

Export all books into a single directory

--template

The template to control the filename and directory structure of the saved files. Default is `"{author_sort}/{title}/{title} - {authors}"` which will save books into a per-author subdirectory with filenames containing title and author. Available controls are: `{author_sort}`, `authors`, `id`, `isbn`, `languages`, `last_modified`, `pubdate`, `publisher`, `rating`, `series`, `series_index`, `tags`, `timestamp`, `title`

--timefmt

The format in which to display dates. `%d` - day, `%b` - month, `%m` - month number, `%Y` - year. Default is: `%b, %Y`

--to-dir

Export books to the specified directory. Default is `.`

--to-lowercase

Convert paths to lowercase.

catalog

`calibredb catalog /path/to/destination.(csv|epub|mobi|xml...) [options]`

Export a **catalog** in format specified by path/to/destination extension. Options control how entries are displayed in the generated **catalog** output. Note that different **catalog** formats support different sets of options.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--ids, -i

Comma-separated list of database IDs to catalog. If declared, **--search** is ignored. Default: all

--search, -s

Filter the results by the search query. For the format of the search query, please see the search-related documentation in the User Manual. Default: no filtering

--verbose, -v

Show detailed output information. Useful for debugging

Epub Options

--catalog-title

Title of generated catalog used as title in metadata. Default: 'My Books' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--cross-reference-authors

Create cross-references in Authors section for books with multiple authors. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--debug-pipeline

Save the output from different stages of the conversion pipeline to the specified directory. Useful if you are unsure at which stage of the conversion process a bug is occurring. Default: 'None' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--exclude-genre

Regex describing tags to exclude as genres. Default: '[.+]|^+\$' excludes bracketed tags, e.g. '[Project Gutenberg]', and '+', the default tag for read books. Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--exclusion-rules

Specifies the rules used to exclude books from the generated catalog. The model for an exclusion rule is either ('<rule name>','Tags','<comma-separated list of tags>') or ('<rule name>','<custom column>','<pattern>'). For example: (('Archived books','#status','Archived'),) will exclude a book with a value of 'Archived' in the custom column 'status'. When multiple rules are defined, all rules will be applied. Default: " (('Catalogs','Tags','Catalog'),)" Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--generate-authors

Include 'Authors' section in catalog. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--generate-descriptions

Include 'Descriptions' section in catalog. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--generate-genres

Include 'Genres' section in catalog. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--generate-recently-added

Include 'Recently Added' section in catalog. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--generate-series

Include 'Series' section in catalog. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--generate-titles

Include 'Titles' section in catalog. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--genre-source-field

Source field for 'Genres' section. Default: 'Tags' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--header-note-source-field

Custom field containing note text to insert in Description header. Default: " Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--merge-comments-rule

#<custom field>:[before|after]:[True|False] specifying: <custom field> Custom field containing notes to merge with Comments [before|after] Placement of notes with respect to Comments [True|False] - A horizontal rule is inserted between notes and Comments Default: '::' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--output-profile

Specifies the output profile. In some cases, an output profile is required to optimize the catalog for the device. For example, 'kindle' or 'kindle_dx' creates a structured Table of Contents with Sections and Articles. Default: 'None' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--prefix-rules

Specifies the rules used to include prefixes indicating read books, wishlist items and other user-specified prefixes. The model for a prefix rule is ('<rule name>','<source field>','<pattern>','<prefix>'). When multiple rules are defined, the first matching rule will be used. Default: " (('Read books','tags','+','✓'),('Wishlist item','tags','Wishlist','×'))" Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--preset

Use a named preset created with the GUI catalog builder. A preset specifies all settings for building a catalog. Default: 'None' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--thumb-width

Size hint (in inches) for book covers in catalog. Range: 1.0 - 2.0 Default: '1.0' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

--use-existing-cover

Replace existing cover when generating the catalog. Default: 'False' Applies to: AZW3, EPUB, MOBI output formats

saved searches

```
calibredb saved_searches [options] (list|add|remove)
```

Manage the saved searches stored in this database. If you try to add a query with a name that already exists, it will be replaced.

Syntax for adding:

```
calibredb saved_searches add search_name search_expression
```

Syntax for removing:

calibredb **saved_searches** remove search_name

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

add custom column

```
calibredb add_custom_column [options] label name datatype
```

Create a custom column. label is the machine friendly name of the column. Should not contain spaces or colons. name is the human friendly name of the column. datatype is one of: bool, comments, composite, datetime, enumeration, float, int, rating, series, text

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--display

A dictionary of options to customize how the data in this column will be interpreted. This is a JSON string. For enumeration columns, use **--display**{\ "enum_values\ ":[\ "val1\ ", \ "val2\ "]} There are many options that can go into the display variable. The options by column type are: composite: composite_template, composite_sort, make_category, contains_html, use_decorations datetime: date_format enumeration: enum_values, enum_colors, use_decorations int, float: number_format text: is_names, use_decorations The best way to find legal combinations is to create a custom column of the appropriate type in the GUI then look at the backup OPF for a book (ensure that a new OPF has been created since the column was added). You will see the JSON for the "display" for the new column in the OPF.

--is-multiple

This column stores tag like data (i.e. multiple comma separated values). Only applies if datatype is text.

custom columns

```
calibredb custom_columns [options]
```

List available custom columns. Shows column labels and ids.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--details, -d

Show details for each column.

remove custom column

```
calibredb remove_custom_column [options] label
```

Remove the custom column identified by label. You can see available columns with the custom_columns command.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--force, -f

Do not ask for confirmation

set custom

```
calibredb set_custom [options] column id value
```

Set the value of a custom column for the book identified by id. You can get a list of ids using the search command. You can get a list of custom column names using the custom_columns command.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--append, -a

If the column stores multiple values, append the specified values to the existing ones, instead of replacing them.

restore database

```
calibredb restore_database [options]
```

Restore this database from the metadata stored in OPF files in each directory of the calibre library. This is useful if your metadata.db file has been corrupted.

WARNING: This command completely regenerates your database. You will lose all saved searches, user categories, plugboards, stored per-book conversion settings, and custom recipes. Restored metadata will only be as accurate as what is found in the OPF files.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--really-do-it, -r

Really do the recovery. The command will not run unless this option is specified.

check library

```
calibredb check_library [options]
```

Perform some checks on the filesystem representing a library. Reports are invalid_titles, extra_titles, invalid_authors, extra_authors, missing_formats, extra_formats, extra_files, missing_covers, extra_covers, failed_folders

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--csv, -c

Output in CSV

--ignore_extensions, -e

Comma-separated list of extensions to ignore. Default: all

--ignore_names, -n

Comma-separated list of names to ignore. Default: all

--report, -r

Comma-separated list of reports. Default: all

list categories

```
calibredb list_categories [options]
```

Produce a report of the category information in the database. The information is the equivalent of what is shown in the tags pane.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--categories, -r

Comma-separated list of category lookup names. Default: all

--csv, -c

Output in CSV

--dialect

The type of CSV file to produce. Choices: excel, excel-tab

--item_count, -i

Output only the number of items in a category instead of the counts per item within the category

--width, -w

The maximum width of a single line in the output. Defaults to detecting screen size.

backup metadata

```
calibredb backup_metadata [options]
```

Backup the metadata stored in the database into individual OPF files in each books directory. This normally happens automatically, but you can run this command to force re-generation of the OPF files, with the `-all` option.

Note that there is normally no need to do this, as the OPF files are backed up automatically, every time metadata is changed.

Whenever you pass arguments to calibredb that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--all

Normally, this command only operates on books that have out of date OPF files. This option makes it operate on all books.

clone

```
calibredb clone path/to/new/library
```

Create a **clone** of the current library. This creates a new, empty library that has all the same custom columns, virtual libraries and other settings as the current library.

The cloned library will contain no books. If you want to create a full duplicate, including all books, then

simply use your filesystem tools to copy the library folder.

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

embed metadata

```
calibredb embed_metadata [options] book_id
```

Update the metadata in the actual book files stored in the calibre library from the metadata in the calibre database. Normally, metadata is updated only when exporting files from calibre, this command is useful if you want the files to be updated in place. Note that different file formats support different amounts of metadata. You can use the special value ‘all’ for `book_id` to update metadata in all books. You can also specify many book ids separated by spaces and id ranges separated by hyphens. For example: `calibredb embed_metadata 1 2 10-15 23`

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--only-formats, -f

Only update metadata in files of the specified format. Specify it multiple times for multiple formats. By default, all formats are updated.

search

```
calibredb search [options] search expression
```

Search the library for the specified **search** term, returning a comma separated list of book ids matching the **search** expression. The output format is useful to feed into other commands that accept a list of ids as input.

The **search** expression can be anything from calibre’s powerful **search** query language, for example: `author:asimov title:robot`

Whenever you pass arguments to `calibredb` that have spaces in them, enclose the arguments in quotation marks. For example: “/some path/with spaces”

--limit, -l

The maximum number of results to return. Default is all results.