Datashare - Nextcloud - macOS - setup of service
14.07.2025 22:36:28

Kategorie:	Datenspeicher & Datenablage::Datashare	Bewertungen:	0
Status:	öffentlich (Alle)	Ergebnis:	0.00 %
Sprache:	en	Letzte Aktualisierung:	08:44:56 - 20.03.2025

Schlüsselwörter

Datashare, Usage

Lösung (öffentlich)

Installation and configuration of the Desktop App

The desktop app is offered free of charge by the Nextcloud developers and can be obtained from the [1]official nextcloud website.

When starting the software for the first time, a login procedure must first be performed on the ZIH Datashare server.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: Start page when opening the for the first time

For this purpose, "https://datashare.tu-dresden.de" must be used as the server address.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: Entering the server address

Before the connection can be established, the appropriate access must be granted.

 Screenshot browser: Granting account access

Afterwards the software asks for the <ZIH-Login> (lower case, without addition "@tu-dresden.de" etc.) and the corresponding password.

 Screenshot browser: Entering the ZIH account data

Under "Local folder", the drive path of the folder that is to be synchronized with the ZIH cloudstore must be selected.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: Setting synchronization behavior and destination folder

In addition, a selection can be made as to which data (with or without confirmation) should be synchronized.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: Advanced selection of folders to synchronize

After the folder has been successfully connected to the ZIH Datashare, it will be synchronized for the first time.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: App interface after first synchronization   Using the desktop app

The status of the desktop app can be found as a small icon in the menu bar of the respective operating system. A click on it shows the current status of the synchronization. All files stored in the ZIH cloudstore can also be saved offline or shared via the macOS Finder, shared with other ZIH accounts or get deleted.

By clicking on the account name in the upper left corner of the program window it is possible to log out the active account, add more accounts, or delete accounts.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: Account and program settings drop-down menu

A click on "Settings" leads to the current overview of the status of the synchronization and the storage capacity. The "Add folder synchronization" button can be used to create additional folders to be synchronized. It is possible to select which subfolders are to be synchronized.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: Settings with overview of synchronized folders and storage usage

In this way, it is possible to make data from the online storage available split across different locations on the hard disk. It should be noted that this function is only available if the data is synchronized and stored locally.

 Screenshot Finder: Splitted Nextcloud folders

The "General" and "Network" buttons, at the top right of the Nextcloud settings window, can be used to specify further configurations of your Nextcloud application.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: General app behavior settings

For slower network connections, limiting the upload and download bandwidth can be useful to avoid generating too much traffic.

 Screenshot nextcloud app: Network settings   File view

The file view is via the Finder , under the path Macintosh HD > Users > 'Username' > Nextcloud, unless not changed during account login.

Screenshot Finder: Appearance of synchronized Nextcloud folder

Alternatively, you can jump directly to the cloudstore folder via the folder icon at the top right of the program interface. The button to the right opens a drop-down menu that takes you directly to the online storage (selection: "Files"), or to the activity history of the online storage (selection: "Activity").

Screenshot nextcloud app: Drop-down menu with links to the synchronized folder in the macOS Finder as well as to the online storage

Creating and uploading files

The Desktop app is used via the Finder under MacOS. Files or folders copied to the synchronized directory are automatically synchronized with the ZIH cloudstore and marked accordingly with two blue arrows. The actions "Cut" and "Delete" also work as usual.

When the synchronization is complete, the following symbolism appears:

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A cloud means that the file or folder is available virtually, so no physical disk space is consumed. The files are only downloaded when they are used. Alternatively, "Right-click mouse ► Nextcloud ► Open in browser" can be used to open the file online.

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A green check mark (✓) means that the file or folder is also stored locally. This is advantageous if you want to work offline.

File sizes

Datashare allows uploading files up to 30 GByte. The time limit for uploading a file is 10 hours. However, limits are also set by the operating system. For example, you cannot manage files larger than 2 GB with 32Bit operating systems.

Deleting and restoring files

Deleting files is done in MacOS Finder as usual via "Mouse right-click ► Move to bin", or via the key combination "[cmd] + [Backspace]". Deleted files will be moved to the Recycle Bin of the online storage as well as to the Recycle Bin of computer. Via the option "Deleted files" at the bottom of the left side of the screen in the browser, they can be accessed and restored.

Files are kept in the trash for a maximum of 30 days and up to a maximum of half the user's quota, and are permanently deleted when one of the limits is exceeded.

Sharing files or folders (also password protected)

Another important functionality of Datashare is sharing files or folders with other people. You can share files/folders with individual TUD members or external users, but also with a group and protect them with a password.

With a mouse right-click on the file, or folder, and then "Nextcloud ► Share options", a menu appears in which the sharing can be set up step by step.

The person then sees the share in the "Shared" folder. Content you shared yourself can be viewed online in the browser under the "Shares" menu item on the left side of the screen.

Screenshot Finder: Accessing the sharing options   Sharing with TUD members:

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The first available field can be used to enter the first and/or last name or the mail address of a TUD member with whom the file is to be shared.

Screenshot: Selection of users with whom files should be shared

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Sharing options: These can be managed via the three dots next to the names of the people added in step 1. It can be selected whether the person can only view files, as well as upload and/or edit them. The sharing can also be cancelled here, or provided with a password protection or a note (Note: Some functions are only enabled for folders, some only for files).

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In some cases, it makes sense to set a time limit for the release - for this purpose, you can also set an expiration date here.

Screenshot: Setting access rights and setting an expiration date for file sharing

Sharing with non-TUD members:

If the target person is not a member of TU-Dresden, the link can be shared using the "Share link" function in the sharing options. The link can then be sent to the person in question via various channels (e.g.: e-mail).

Allow upload by external person:

A special case is the upload of files by external persons (not members of the

TU Dresden). Since external persons do not have a ZIH login, the exchange/upload takes place via a folder of a TUD user. These TUD users are therefore also legally responsible for the data of the external persons (see also [2]Terms of Use Datashare).

To create an approval for sharing, a new folder should be created. In the sharing options for this folder (see chapter Sharing files or folders), another option "Allow upload and editing" appears. This function should not be used without password protection and the password should not be communicated in the same way as the link (e.g. mail for the link, phone for the password).

 Screenshot: Setting access rights and setting an expiration date, as well as password for filesharing via the "Share link" option

By clicking on the link, the use will first be asked for the password:

 Screenshot browser: Password prompt for shared links

The contents of the shared Datashare folder will then appear, with the option to download or upload files.

 Screenshot browser: View shared files via a shared link   Conflicts with editing files at the same time

Datashare is not optimized for simultaneous editing of files - for that, you should rather use the ZIH service [3]Sharepoint.

When two clients (e.g. laptop and PC or two different users in a shared directory) synchronize files via Datashare, then the user(s) simultaneously modify the same file on their local system.
The first client then synchronizes its modified file with the Datashare server. When the second client now also wants to synchronize, he notices that the file on the server is no longer the original file that he had synchronized before the change. Therefore, he creates a so-called conflict file on the server: 'filename_conflict-date' Only the second client sees this file. The users are responsible for resolving the conflict (e.g. inserting the changes of the second into the first version of the file).

[1] http://nextcloud.com/install/#install-clients
[2] http://cloudstore.zih.tu-dresden.de/impressum/
[3] http://tu-dresden.de/zih/dienste/service-katalog/zusammenarbeiten-und-forschen/groupware/sharepoint