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Thread: [downloading download-protected google drive original files](#)

jimbobstrupt - June 15, 2025, 9:18 am

Hi,

I have a bunch of Google Drive links to PDF files. I can view the documents on the browser, but these files are shared with a download protection activated and I cannot make copies of the documents or download the docs: no option in the web UI, API failure when trying via API.

I've come across some projects that re-create a PDF by seemingly re-assembling the visual data from the browser, but I'd like to retrieve the original files.

I've managed to download the original PDF files via my rooted smartphone: I was able to find all the cached PDF files in

`/data/data/com.google.android.apps.docs/app_cello/my_user@gmail.com/content/``. I've managed to achieve what I wanted right now, but that was tedious (I had to manually rename my 20~30 files, as cached files get all renamed).

Can you think of a way to retrieve the original PDF files, in a clean, convenient, systematic way?

Thank you!

Sphynx - June 16, 2025, 9:36 am

those PDF viewer protections in Google Drive are largely enforced through the UI, not encryption. The real Systematic Solution would be using adb pull

`/data/data/com.google.android.apps.docs/app_cello/<your_user>/content/ ./pdf_dump/` using that in cli with a rooted device will give you each file

jimbobstrupt - June 17, 2025, 1:20 am

Thanks. Your response is pretty much exactly what I stated initially though :)

My question was more like, is there a more convenient way to achieve this? Particularly, avoiding going through a smartphone (or smartphone in VM, same), or avoiding having to rename files manually? Ideally just through scripting (but, no interacting with Android, unless there really is no other way).

I mean, the Drive Android app can download the original PDF file. So surely, http calls should be able to retrieve the original PDF file?