pgn2scid User Manual

pgn2scid 1.7

Rev 1.7.b

Contents

1 What is pgn2scid?

pgn2scid basically is a convenient GUI wrapper (a graphical user interface for command line tools) for pgnscid and scmerge, two programs to convert PGN files to native Scid database files and to merge a number of Scid files with an existing Scid database. Both tools should be part of a standard Scid vs. PC installation.

But there is more! In detail ***pgn2scid*** can:

- run on multiple platforms
- keep your database up to date automatically by downloading the PGN game collections kindly provided by www.theweekinchess.com (in short TWIC).
- keep track of your downloads so that only the latest files which haven't already been downloaded are selectable.
- process PGN files from other sources, let's say from your last OTB tournament or games played on a chess server. All you have to do is to copy those files into ***pgn2scid***'s working directory
- automatically uncompress zipped PGN files
- automatically merge a number of PGN files into one single file
- convert any number of PGN files to the native Scid database format without the hassle of using command line tools
- create a zipped backup of an existing Scid database before executing any database merge operations
- add any number of Scid files to an existing database also without to use a command line tool
- every step described above is optional
- store all settings in an initialisation file so pgn2scid is already preconfigured next time it is started

2 Licensing

3 3rd party tools

pgn2scid makes use of the tools pgnscid and scmerge, both of which had been developed by Shane Hudson and which have been released under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL).

4 Questions, comments, bugs . . .

If you have any questions or comments regarding ***pgn2scid*** please don't hesitate to send an email to andreaskreisig@gmail.com. You can also use this email address to report bugs. If you have a GitHub account you can use the GitHub issue tracker for bug reports as well. You can find the project website on https://github.com/CasualPyDev/pgn2scid.

5 Before you start

Although ***pgn2scid*** is more or less self-explanatory you should read on to understand the internal workflow of ***pgn2scid***. This manual covers short descriptions of every section of ***pgn2scid*** as well as the prerequisites to install and run this software.

To avoid naming confusions, the command line tool *pgnscid* (as well as all other program names) is printed in italic while ***pgn2scid***, the software which is the subject of this manual, is printed in italic and bold. A <BUTTON> you can click on is set in capitals and it is enclosed in angle brackets. General commands are printed in a `typewriter font`.

The structure of this manual follows the structure of the program. All images have been taken from the Linux version. While the visual appearance might slightly differ on other operating systems, the functionality remains the same.

6 General prerequisites for all supported platforms

pgn2scid is a cross-platform tool that runs on Unix-like operating systems as well as on MS Windows. It requires the programming language Python, version 3.4 or newer. It is recommended to download the latest stable release of Python which you can get for free on www.python.org. As of version 1.7, ***pgn2scid*** also requires the installation of additional libraries. For more information please refer to the installation instruction below.

To take full advantage of ***pgn2scid*** you also need a proper installation of the chess database *Scid vs. PC*, for the sake of simplicity hereinafter just referred to as *Scid*. This database is also available for free on http://scidvspc.sourceforge.net/. You also need some tools bundled with this database, namely *pgnscid* and *scmerge*. ***pgn2scid*** might also work with other data compatible chess databases. Maybe you then have to install *scmerge* and *pgnscid* manually as they are not necessarily a part of those databases.

> The 2.7 branch of Python, which is pre-installed on most Linux distributions, will not work. You can safely install both, the 2.7 and the 3.x version of Python on the same machine.

6.1 Using the executable with MS Windows

If you use MS Windows, it's not necessary to download and install the Python programming language first as there's a pre-build executable available for this operating system. In this case you just have to download the file `pgn2scid_win_amd64_executable.zip`. If you have problems running this pre-build executable you can always use the `pgn2scid.pyw` file as a fallback solution. In this case you have to take care of the general prerequisites described above.

7 Installation instructions for all supported platforms

The steps in this paragraph are only necessary when you don't use the Windows executable! Furthermore they require the Python package installer *pip*, which usually comes with your Python installation. First you have to copy the files `pgn2scid.pyw and requirements.txt` into a dedicated sub folder where you have full read / write access to. You shouldn't copy it into your hard disks root folder, though because ***pgn2scid*** itself will create some sub folders and additional files during operation which then can get a bit messy when they get mixed up with other files and folders.

To install the additionally required libraries, open a terminal or, if you use Microsoft Windows, a DOS prompt, and change the directory to the folder, where your copy of `requirements.txt` resides. You then have to type:

```
pip install -r requirements.txt
```

All libraries will then be downloaded and installed automatically. You can copy the file `requirements.txt` into any folder, you just have to remember where it is. It's part of the ***pgn2scid*** software distribution.

7.1 Installing the Windows executable

If you want to use the pre-build executable of ***pgn2scid*** all you have to do is to unzip the file `pgn2scid_win_amd64_executable.zip`. After unzipping you will find a new subfolder called 'pgn2scid' which contains the `pgn2scid.exe` file and, depending on your version of ***pgn2sid***, some additional files and folders which are necessary to run pgn2scid. Included is also this manual and the license text.

If you prefer a fast startup speed you should consider using a Python installation in conjunction with the `pgn2scid.pyw file`. Although some optimisations have been applied to the windows executable, the solution mentioned above will always start faster.

8 Unix-like operating systems only

To make ***pgn2scid*** executable on a Unix-like operating system, you have to open a terminal, change the directory to the location where your copy of ***pgn2scid*** resides and run the `chmod` command. Let's assume the file `pgn2scid.pyw` is located in the directory 'pgn2scid' which, in turn, resides in your home directory.

To enter the pgn2scid directory, type:

```
cd ~/pgn2scid
```

Now, to make the file pgn2scid.pyw executable, type:

```
chmod +x pgn2scid.pyw
```

8.1 Mac OS X

pgn2scid hasn't been tested on OS X systems yet. Generally it should work, but there are some things to consider before using ***pgn2scid***. Tcl/Tk, or, to be more precise, the 'Tk' part of it, is necessary to run ***pgn2scid*** because the Python GUI toolkit, which is called tkinter, sits on top of it. Here is an important note, quoted from the Python website:

> **If you are using a Python from any current python.org Python installer for macOS (3.7.2+, 3.6.8, or 2.7.16+)**, no further action is needed to use IDLE or tkinter. A built-in version of Tcl/Tk 8.6 will be used.
>
> **If you are using macOS 10.6 or later**, the Apple-supplied Tcl/Tk 8.5 has serious bugs that can cause application crashes. If you wish to use IDLE or Tkinter, do not use the Apple-supplied Pythons. Instead, install and use a newer version of Python from python.org or a third-party distributor that supplies or links with a newer version of Tcl/Tk.

For more information please visit https://www.python.org/download/mac/tcltk/

For an alternative version of Tcl/Tk please visit
https://www.activestate.com/products/activetcl/downloads/

Keep in mind that this version, albeit free of charge for the community edition, is covered by a proprietary ActiveState license.

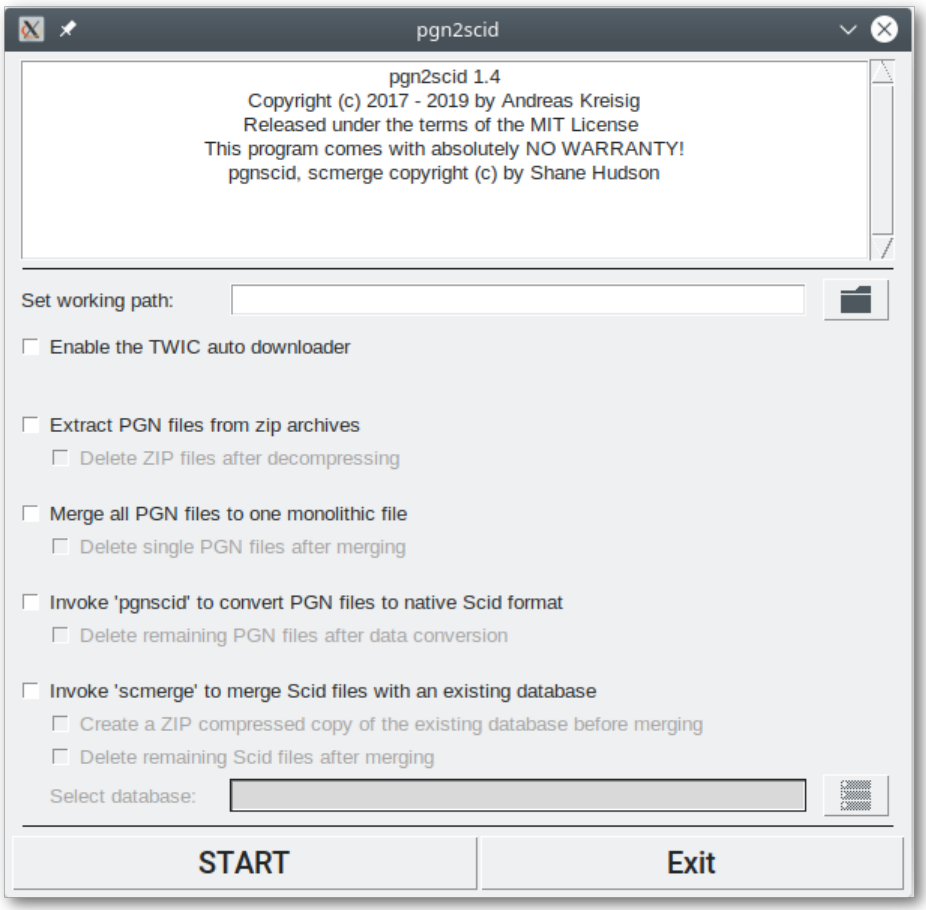
9 How to update

As soon as there's a new version available, ***pgn2scid*** opens an update notification window. When you click on >>Info<<, your browser opens up and loads the changelog on the project's website on GitHub. Clicking on >>Download<< points you to the download section. There you can download either the source code to use it with your Python installation or you can download the Windows executable.

To update ***pgn2scid***, you just need to copy the downloaded file(s) into ***pgn2scid***'s root directory. If you want to use the Windows executable, you have to decompress the zip file first.

10 The main window

pgn2scid is a single window application, all settings are directly accessible within the main window. Some options are only available when the higher-level option has been selected.

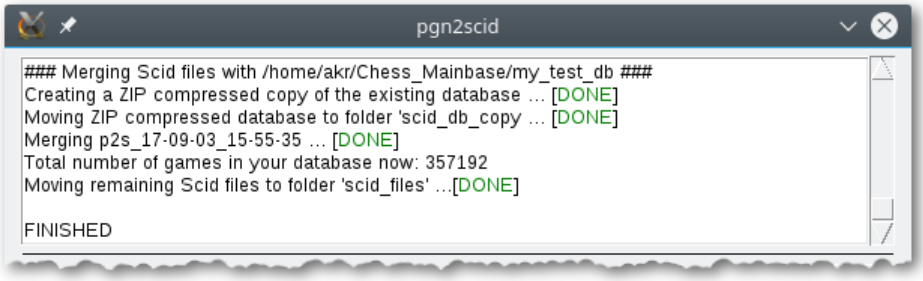


11 The status window

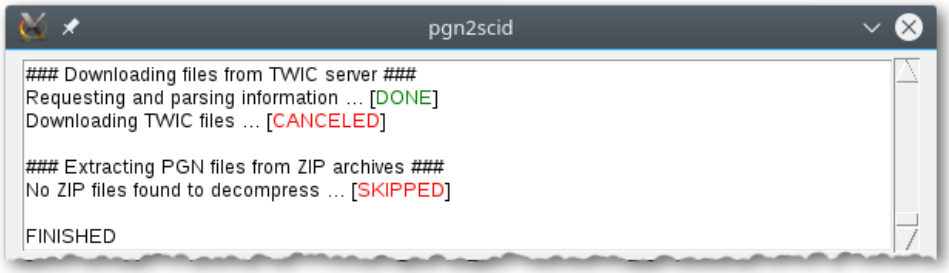
On top of the program there is the status window. After start up it displays some information about the author of ***pgn2scid***, the program version, some licensing information and some info about 3rd party tools used by ***pgn2scid***.

During data processing it shows status messages and warnings or errors. In fact, it informs you about almost every step ***pgn2scid*** is currently performing as well as

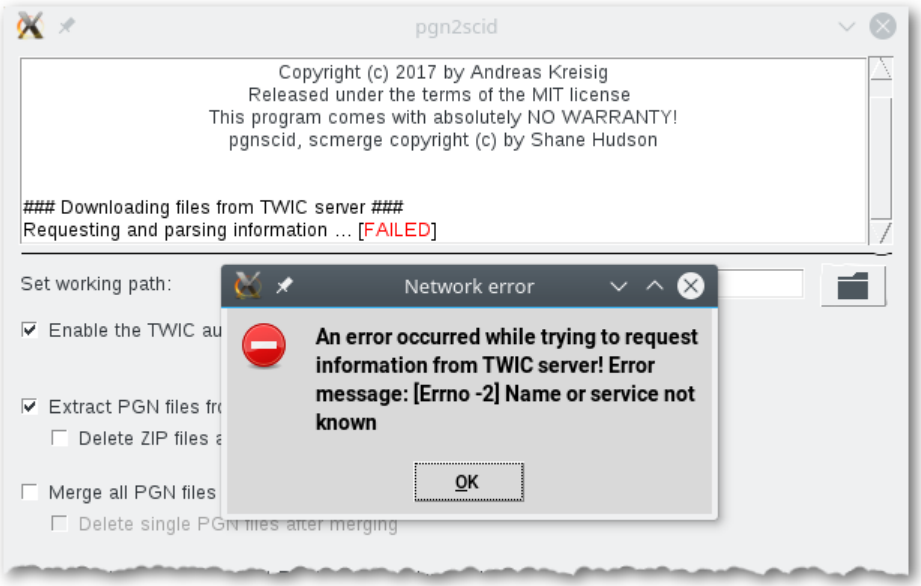
about the outcome of the step in question. A successfully finished step is indicated by the word [DONE], enclosed in square brackets.



Results printed in red means that something has been [CANCELED] and / or ***pgn2scid*** was not able to execute a certain step. For example, if ***pgn2scid*** can't perform a selected task due to missing files, the selected step is [SKIPPED] and an appropriate message is displayed in the status window. In this case ***pgn2scid*** continues the program flow and goes on to the next selected option, if available, or it stops accordingly.



On critical errors, indicated by the word [FAILED], ***pgn2scid*** displays an additional error message containing some information about the occurred error. In the example below ***pgn2scid*** runs into a network error, caused by a missing internet connection. In this case ***pgn2scid*** goes on to the next selected option, or, when there's no more option selected, it stops accordingly. In case of network errors, ***pgn2scid*** also adds an entry to a master log file named 'pgn2scid_error.log'. Please read section 18 for more information about this master log file.



On fatal errors, indicated by the word [FAILED], an additional error message and the note STOPPED at the bottom of the status window, ***pgn2scid*** stops working completely. This can only happen if pgn2scid loses the read / write permissions on a directory or a file is suddenly inaccessible during runtime.

When ***pgn2scid*** stops working due to a fatal error it doesn't clean up the working directory automatically. After fixing the underlying error you have to take care about what to do with the remaining files.

12 Set working path

Here you have to enter or to choose a working path. You have to put all files you'd like to get processed into this folder. When you use the TWIC auto downloader (see the section below), all downloaded files are also saved into this folder. ***pgn2scid*** needs full read / write access to this folder in order to work properly. If this is not the case, the program will display an error message.

13 Enable the TWIC auto downloader

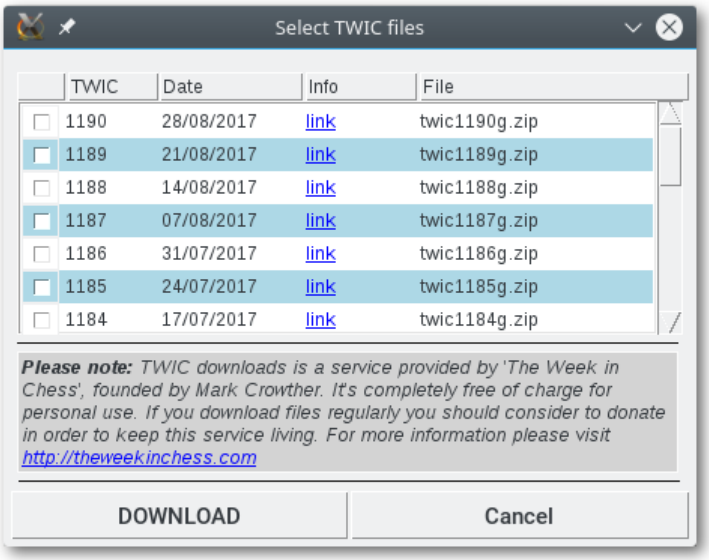
When you select this option, ***pgn2scid*** can update your Scid database automatically by downloading the latest tournament games found on www.theweekinchess.com (TWIC). You need a working internet connection to use this option. A proxy server is

detected automatically. Actually the TWIC auto downloader is more a semi-automatic downloader because ***pgn2scid*** always asks for permission before downloading any files.

13.1 The 'Select TWIC files' window

After loading and parsing the TWIC website, ***pgn2scid*** displays the 'Select TWIC files' window. All important information gathered from the TWIC website is displayed in this window, clearly arranged in a table. Just select the files you would like to download and click the <DOWNLOAD> button. Selecting <CANCEL> cancels the download. If you need more information about a certain TWIC game collection before downloading it, you can click on the related 'link' entry in the 'Info' column. ***pgn2scid*** then opens your systems default web browser and loads the appropriate website.

pgn2scid keeps track of your downloads. When there are no new TWIC files available after the last download, pgn2scid doesn't display the 'Select TWIC files' window. Instead the download step is skipped altogether and an appropriate message is displayed in the status window.

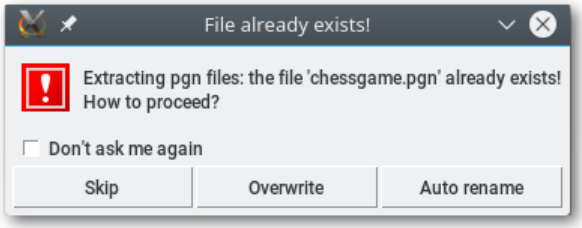


Be careful which files you choose to download because ***pgn2scid*** remembers the highest already downloaded TWIC issue number. Every file below is not available anymore next time you use the TWIC auto downloader. For this reason it's also advisable to avoid gaps between selected TWIC files, except you are really not interested in certain issues. On the other hand you shouldn't download everything you can get to minimize server load and bandwidth and to avoid having doubled or unwanted games in your database. Please keep in mind that this service is for free for personal use so again: **avoid unnecessary server load!**

14 Extract PGN files from ZIP archives

When this option is selected, ***pgn2scid*** extracts ZIP compressed PGN files automatically. When there are no ZIP files in the working directory, ***pgn2scid*** skips this step, displays an appropriate message within the status window and goes on to the next selected option.

When ***pgn2scid*** detects a filename during ZIP decompression which already exists in your working directory, a warning message pops up asking you how to proceed. You have to choose between <SKIP> which skips the file in question, <OVERWRITE> which just overwrites the existing file or <AUTO RENAME>. When you click on <AUTO RENAME>, ***pgn2scid*** appends an ascending number in brackets to the filename, e.g. 'my_game.pgn' becomes 'my_game(1).pgn' and so on.



When you set a check mark on 'Don't ask me again', ***pgn2scid*** executes your last selected option automatically as soon as it detects an already existent file name again, without displaying a warning message. This only applies to the current session.

pgn2scid only extracts files with the suffix *.pgn. When there are other type of files within a ZIP compressed file, pgn2scid skips them and displays an appropriate message in the status window.

14.1 Delete ZIP files after decompressing

Only available when 'Extract PGN files from ZIP archives' is selected. Use this option to delete unnecessary ZIP files after decompressing. When you don't select this option because you want to keep these ZIP files, ***pgn2scid*** creates a new directory called 'zip_files' beneath the applications root directory. It then moves all ZIP files to this folder to keep the working directory clean. This is important to avoid processing ZIP files multiple times.

15 Merge all PGN files to one monolithic file

pgn2scid can merge almost any number of PGN files to one, single file. This filename is given automatically and consists of the prefix p2s, followed be a timestamp and the suffix pgn, e.g. p2s_17-06-04_19-10-48.pgn, generally: p2s_YY-MM-DD_HH-MM-SS.pgn. The timestamp format is used to make any merged PGN file unique. Whenever you want to process more than just a few PGN files and you'd like to convert those files to the native Scid format it's recommended to select this option, because the conversion process creates three files for every single PGN file (for details see section 16).

PGN file merging is even more important when you also want to integrate your converted files into an existing Scid database (see section 11 for more information). Merging is quite fast. On an Intel Core i5 with 2.5 GHz and a Samsung 850 EVO SSD merging more than 315.500 lines, distributed over 5 PGN files, only took about 2-3 seconds. With a standard HDD it takes a bit longer, of course.

pgn2scid is able to recognise older merged PGN files kept in the working directory. In this case a message box pops up asking whether or not to move this file. If in doubt select <YES> here to avoid having unwanted games in your database. ***pgn2scid*** then moves this file to the folder 'pgn_files', located in the applications root folder. <NO> means that this file is going to be processed according to the subsequently set options.

> When there is only one PGN file inside your working directory so that there is actually nothing to merge with you don't have to unselect this option. The merge process will then act just like a file rename function using the timestamp format described above.

15.1 Delete single PGN files after merging

Only available when 'Merge all PGN files to one monolithic file' is selected. After PGN file merging, ***pgn2scid*** can delete all single PGN files as they are no longer needed. When you don't select this option, ***pgn2scid*** creates a folder called 'pgn_files' in your

applications root directory and moves all PGN files to this location. As mentioned earlier this is to keep the working directory clean.

16 Invoke ‘pgnscid’ to convert PGN files to native Scid format

By selecting this option ***pgn2scid*** converts all PGN files in the given working directory to the native Scid database format. This is achieved by invoking the 3rd party command line tool *pgnscid*, which is automatically executed in the background so you don’t have to use a command line interface (CLI).

During the conversion process *pgnscid* creates three database files per PGN file: the index file (.si4), the name file (.sn4) and the game file (.sg4). This is the reason why it is recommended to merge a larger number of PGN files before converting them. Otherwise, for example twenty single PGN files would end up in sixty(!) Scid database files.

16.1 Delete remaining PGN files after data conversion

When this option is selected, ***pgn2scid*** deletes all PGN files left in the working directory, including the optionally merged PGN file created before. These files are no longer needed for further processing so you can safely delete them.

When you don’t select this option, ***pgn2scid*** moves these PGN files to the folder ‘pgn_files’, located in the applications root directory. If this folder doesn’t exist, ***pgn2scid*** creates it.

17 The ‘pgnscid error log’ window

When *pgnscid* runs into errors during data conversion caused by a faulty PGN file, it writes an error log file into the working directory. ***pgn2scid*** detects this error log file, adds a timestamp on top of the log files content and displays the ‘pgnscid error log’ window. Please read these error messages carefully because you have to choose whether you’d like to ignore these errors or you’d like to suspend the faulty PGN file.

Depending on the kind and number of errors displayed in the error log window, choosing <IGNORE ERRORS> might end up in a corrupt database when you merge the resulting Scid file with an existing Scid database. One of the most common error is a missing game result. In this case you can ignore this error without the risk of corrupting your database. You might add the game result in your Scid database afterwards. You should also bear in mind that not every irregular move should be corrected. The reason is that an irregular move not recognised by both players neither neccesseraly leads to a penalty nor is the game per se nulled after finishing it. This depends on the chess federation under which the tournament is played.

Ignore errors: ***pgn2scid*** ignores all errors displayed in the 'pgnscid error log' window and appends the log files content to a master log file called 'pgn2scid_error.log'. This master log file, which collects all cumulated pgnscid warnings or errors across all sessions so far, resides in the applications root directory. If there's no such file, ***pgn2scid*** creates it. Afterwards the initial error log file (NOT the master log file) is deleted. Finally ***pgn2scid*** goes on to the next PGN file or to the next selected option.

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Suspend file: ***pgn2scid*** deletes all formerly created Scid files based on the faulty PGN file. It then moves the faulty PGN file to the folder 'suspended_pgn_files', located in the applications root folder. If this folder doesn't exist, ***pgn2scid*** creates it. Afterwards it adds the log files content to the master log file. Finally the initial log file is deleted and ***pgn2scid*** goes on to the next PGN file or to the next selected option.

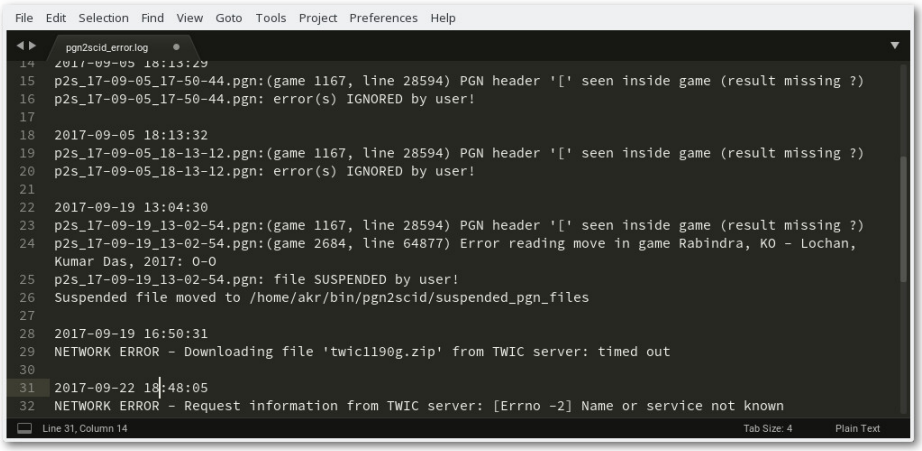
When you have suspended a faulty PGN file, you can always read the master log file which gives you hints about where in this PGN file you have to look for the mentioned

errors. You can then open the PGN file with a text editor (it's just an ASCII file), correct any errors and move the file back to the applications working directory to see if it now passes the conversion process without errors.

> To correct errors in a PGN file you need to have a good understanding of the PGN file format and the algebraic chess notation, otherwise you could make things even worse!

18 The 'png2scid_error.log' file

pgn2scid runs an error log file called 'pgn2scid_error.log', which is located in the applications root directory. It contains all cumulated conversion errors as well as occurred network errors in a chronological order with the latest entries at the end of this file. Each entry begins with a timestamp, followed by the actual error or warning message. In case of *pgnscid* conversion errors the users' reaction (ignore error / suspend file) is also logged. If the user suspends a faulty PGN file, the full path to this file is given. In the image below you can see an excerpt from this logfile, opened in a text editor.



19 Invoke 'scmerge' to merge Scid files with an existing database

You have to select this option if you want to merge two or more Scid databases, either created by ***pgn2scid*** (please refer to section 16 for more details) or from any other source. In most cases, the other database to merge, specified in 'Select database' (see section 19.3) is your 'main database', containing all the games you have collected so far. ***pgn2scid*** uses the external command line tool *scmerge* to perform this operation.

As with *pgnscid*, *scmerge* is executed in the background, so you don't have to deal with a command line interface. Actually, due to its internal function, *scmerge* can't merge Scid databases directly. Instead it always creates a third database, consisting of the two databases you want to merge. You don't have to worry about this because ***pgn2scid*** has a build in 'workaround' addressing this issue so at the end of the merge operation you will always and only have your existing database, containing your already collected games plus all the new games. There are some file operations involved here hence it's important to BACKUP your database regularly.

It's advisable to merge a larger number of PGN files (described in section 8 of this manual) before converting them to the native Scid format, particularly if you finally want to merge them with an existing Scid database because it minimises file operations.

19.1 Create a ZIP compressed copy of the existing database before merging

Before starting database merging ***pgn2scid*** can create a zipped copy of your existing database. This is NO REPLACEMENT of a real backup, of course. However, it can help to recover your database quickly if something goes wrong during the merging process or when you realised that, despite the warning message, you mistakenly merged a defective Scid file. When you select this option, pgn2scid ZIP compresses all database files, namely the .si4, the .sg4 and the .sn4 file into one ZIP file and writes it into the 'scid_db_copy' folder, located in the applications root directory. If this directory doesn't exist, ***pgn2scid*** creates it first.

Similar to the PGN merge operation described in section 8 a timestamp format is used to safe the zipped Scid database copy. Let's assume your existing Scid database is named 'my_chessgames', the ZIP file will be named as 'my_chessgames_YY-MM-DD_HH-MM-SS.zip'.

If there are no Scid files in your working directory to merge, the merging process is skipped, hence there's actually no need to create a ZIP compressed copy of your existing database. In this case ***pgn2scid*** asks you whether you would like to create such a copy anyway.

19.2 Delete remaining Scid files after merging

After merging database files successfully ***pgn2scid*** can delete the remaining Scid files because they are not necessary anymore.

When you don't select this option because you would like to keep these files, ***pgn2scid*** moves them to the folder 'scid_files', located in the applications root directory. If this folder doesn't exist, ***pgn2scid*** creates it.

19.3 Select database

Here you have to select an already existing database to which you want to add other Scid files to, either created by ***pgn2scid*** or from other sources. If 'Invoke scmerge to merge Scid files with an existing database' is selected and there's no database given here, a warning message pops up informing you that you have to select a Scid database first.

20 START

When ***pgn2scid*** is configured as desired (or the last successful configuration has been read out of the 'pgn2scid.ini' file) you can press the <START> button. ***pgn2scid*** then processes all selected options from top to bottom if possible. Within the status window (see section 11 for more information) you can follow the steps currently performed by ***pgn2scid***.

After completing all tasks successfully, ***pgn2scid*** writes the current set of options as well as the selected working and database path to a configuration file called 'pgn2scid.ini'. This file is located in the applications root directory.

When you start ***pgn2scid*** it reads the configuration file 'pgn2scid.ini'. If this file is corrupt, ***pgn2scid*** displays an appropriate warning message. Just click on <ok> then. There's no further action required on your part, because ***pgn2scid*** always creates a new and valid configuration file based on your last settings as soon as all selected options run without errors. The only consequence is that your last settings might be lost and you might have to reconfigure the program.

21 Exit

Exits ***pgn2scid***.