CineCinch Documentation v1.0.5

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

CineCinch is a Windows-based video analysis and compression utility that helps you find storage-heavy video files and reduce their size using H.265 (HEVC) encoding. Compressed files are written as MP4 for broad compatibility. The app is designed for predictable, repeatable bulk workflows: scan a folder, review efficiency ratings, build a queue, and compress files with clear progress and interruption controls.

Workflows run in background workers to avoid UI conflicts and race conditions. CineCinch is distributed through the Microsoft Store and includes a 24-hour free trial that lets you evaluate the workflow. The trial allows scanning and compressing the first 10 files in a folder and disables CSV export; the full version removes those limits.

2. Recommended Settings (Quick Start)

For most users, we recommend the following settings:

- **Quality Rating Threshold: Medium (adjust per goals)**
- **File types: All selected**
- **Output folder: Same folder as source**
- **Delete originals: Unchecked**
- **Keep all audio tracks: Unchecked**
- **Keep all subtitle tracks: Unchecked**
- **Output Mode: Standard**

These settings keep outputs next to sources for easy verification, avoid accidental deletion, and use a balanced encoding preset suitable for general use. Change Output Mode only when you have a specific need (see section 7.7).

3. System Requirements

- **Operating system:** Windows 10 or later (64-bit)
- **Dependencies:** FFmpeg and FFprobe (bundled in packaged builds; otherwise discovered via PATH)
- **Hardware:** Multi-core CPU recommended for faster H.265 encoding
- **Storage:** Sufficient free disk space for temporary files and outputs

4. Key Features Overview

- Fast folder scanning with real-time duration probing
- Automatic video efficiency rating (Efficient, Average, Bloated, Error)
- Customizable file type filters
- Search and category filtering
- Batch compression using H.265 with four preset modes
- Reorderable compression queue
- Real-time progress tracking
- Pause, Cancel, and Stop After Current controls
- Output to source folder or custom folder
- Optional deletion of originals
- CSV export of scan results (full version)
- Persistent settings between sessions

5. User Interface Overview

CineCinch provides a clean, responsive interface with the following sections:

5.1 Title Bar

- Custom frameless window with minimize, maximize, and close buttons
- Window can be dragged and resized

5.2 Scan Settings

- **Folder to Scan:** read only field with a folder picker (📂).
- **Scan Videos:** starts scanning; disabled until a folder is selected.
- **Stop Scan:** safely interrupts the scan worker.
- **Export CSV:** Creates a printout of the sorted table in .csv format (available in the full version only).
- **Quality Rating Threshold:** Low / Medium / High (affects MB/sec categorization).

5.3 File Type Filters

- **Folder to Scan:** readonly field with a folder picker (🗀).
- **Scan Videos:** starts scanning; disabled until a folder is selected.
- **Stop Scan:** safely interrupts the scan worker.
- **Export CSV:** available in the full version only.
- **Quality Rating Threshold:** Low / Medium / High (affects MB/sec categorization).

5.4 Compression Settings

- **Output folder:** Same folder as source (default) or custom folder.
- **Delete originals:** optional; use with caution.
- **Output Mode:** four presets (see section 7.7).
- **Keep all audio tracks / Keep all subtitle tracks:** (see section 7.8).

5.5 Compression controls

- Start Compression **begins processing the queue.**
- Cancel **immediately terminates the current FFmpeg process.**
- Stop After Current **lets the current file finish and stops before the next.**
- Reset Progress **clears progress statuses so files can be reprocessed.**

5.6 Table and double-click behaviors

- Columns: **Compress**, **File**, **Size (MB)**, **Duration (sec)**, **MB/sec**, **Rating**, **Progress**.
- Double-click **File** opens the file location in Explorer.
- Double-click **Progress** opens the output file location if the output exists.

6. Scanning Workflow

6.1 Starting a scan

- Select a folder and ensure at least one file type is enabled.
- Click **Scan Videos**. The UI enters scan mode and disables conflicting controls.

6.2 What happens internally

- A background **ScanWorker** thread recursively walks the folder.
- Each file is probed with **FFprobe** to determine duration and stream info.
- Rows are emitted to the UI queue as results arrive.
- Default sorting is by **MB/sec** so the largest potential savings are visible first.

6.3 Scan completion

- On completion the UI restores and shows total files and elapsed time.
- Export and compression controls become available.

6.4 Stopping a scan

- **Stop Scan** interrupts the worker safely; partial results remain visible.

7. Compression Workflow

CineCinch processes files sequentially to keep resource usage predictable and progress reporting simple.

7.1 Building the queue

A file is included in the compression queue only if:

- The row is visible (not filtered out).
- The **Compress** checkbox is checked.
- The **Progress** column is empty or marked **Cancelled**.
- File path and duration are valid. Rows with existing progress (Complete, Failed, Skipped) are skipped unless Reset Progress is used.

7.2 Starting compression

- Sorting and scan controls are disabled.
- Output controls and category filters are disabled.
- A worker thread begins processing the queue sequentially.
- A timer tracks elapsed compression time.

7.3 Real-time progress

The worker emits signals to the UI:

- progress_signal(row, status, percent)
- status_signal(message)
- completed_signal(count)

Status examples: **Queued**, **Compressing (xx%)**, **Complete (output size)**, **Failed**, **Cancelled**.

7.4 Cancel behavior

- **Cancel** immediately terminates the FFmpeg process.
- The current file is marked **Cancelled** and the remaining queue is abandoned.
- UI is restored to idle state.

7.5 Stop After Current

- Allows the current file to finish and stops before the next.
- UI indicates “Will stop after current file…”.

7.6 Completion

- Timer stops and UI restores.
- Status shows total processed files and elapsed time.

- Reset Progress becomes available to clear statuses for reprocessing.

7.7 Output Mode (presets and use cases)

- **Standard** — Balanced quality and size. Recommended for most users who want good visual quality with reasonable file sizes.
- **High Compression** — Prioritizes smaller files; expect more visible artifacts. Use when storage is the priority.
- **High Quality** — Prioritizes preserving detail over file size; use when source is poorly compressed or you need maximum fidelity.
- **Max Compression** — Fastest and smallest output with noticeable quality loss; useful for low-bandwidth devices or quick transfers.

Choose **Standard** for general use; pick another preset only when you have a clear priority (quality vs size vs speed).

7.8 Keep all audio tracks and Keep all subtitle tracks

- These options control whether CineCinch preserves all audio and subtitle streams in the output MP4.
- **Keep all audio tracks**
  - When enabled, CineCinch includes all audio streams from the source in the output container. MP4 supports multiple audio tracks, so language tracks and commentary tracks can be preserved.
  - Use this when you need to retain alternate audio streams; leave unchecked if you want smaller outputs and only the primary audio.
- **Keep all subtitle tracks**
  - CineCinch will attempt to preserve subtitle streams, but MP4 supports only certain subtitle types. Behavior is:
    - **Text-based subtitles (SRT, ASS/SSA):** Converted to MP4-friendly mov_text or webvtt. ASS/SSA styling may be lost or simplified.
    - **MP4-native subtitles (mov_text, webvtt):** Copied directly when present.
    - **Image-based subtitles (PGS, VobSub):** Cannot be preserved in MP4 and will be omitted unless the user burns subtitles into the video (burning subtitles is not supported by default).
  - Because conversion can change styling and increase file size, the Quick Start defaults leave this unchecked. Enable only when you must preserve all subtitle streams.

8. Output File Rules

8.1 Same folder as source (default)

- Output path: <source_basename>_compressed.mp4 (written next to the source file).

8.2 Custom output folder

- Output path: <output_folder>/<source_basename>.mp4.

8.3 Output path discovery

- Double-clicking the Progress cell opens the output file location if the output exists; otherwise it opens the source file location.

9. Efficiency Rating Logic

CineCinch rates files by **MB/sec** (size divided by duration) to indicate how "dense" a video is.

- Efficient: ≤ efficient_threshold
- Average: > efficient_threshold and ≤ average_threshold
- Bloated: > average_threshold
- Error: duration or MB/sec unavailable

Thresholds (per Quality Rating Threshold):

Tolerance	Efficient Threshold	Average Threshold
Low	0.16 MB/s	0.75 MB/s
Medium	0.32 MB/s	1.5 MB/s
High	0.75 MB/s	3.52 MB/s

Colors: Efficient = green; Average = orange; Bloated = red; Error = gray.

10. Settings Persistence

CineCinch stores and restores these settings between sessions:

- Last scanned folder
- File type selections
- Tolerance (Quality Rating Threshold)
- Output folder
- Output mode
- Same-as-source toggle
- Category filter states
- Last export directory

Settings load automatically at startup.

11. CSV Export

- CSV export is available in the full version.
- Exports all rows, including hidden ones, and excludes the **Compress** column.
- Saves to a user-selected location and remembers the last export directory.

12. Error Handling and Warnings

CineCinch marks rows and shows status messages for common issues. The UI prevents actions that could cause inconsistent state.

12.1 Scan errors

- Missing files, FFprobe failures, and permission issues are marked **ERROR** in the row.
- If FFprobe cannot read a file, the duration may be unavailable; see Troubleshooting.

12.2 Compression errors

- FFmpeg failures, invalid output folder, missing source file, and permission issues are marked **Failed**.
- Failed rows can be retried after correcting the underlying issue.

12.3 UI safety guards

- Sorting is disabled during compression.
- Move Up/Down and output folder selection are disabled while operations are active.
- These guards prevent race conditions and inconsistent row ordering.

13. Performance Tips

- Use **High Compression** or **Max Compression** for greatest reduction in file size.
- Use **Standard** for balanced quality, speed, and compression efficiency.
- Use **High Quality** when you need to preserve detail in poorly compressed sources.
- Avoid scanning network drives for best performance; prefer a fast local disk for output.
- Disable unnecessary file types to speed up scanning.
- Ensure sufficient free disk space for temporary files and outputs.

14. Troubleshooting Guide

Scan shows 0 files

- Ensure file types are enabled and the folder contains supported formats.

Duration shows ERROR

- FFprobe could not read the file. The file may be corrupted or use an uncommon container/codec. In many cases the file can still be compressed by re-encoding or by running FFmpeg directly to normalize the container; try re-running the scan after re-encoding.

Compression is slow

- H.265 is CPU-intensive. Try a faster preset (High Compression or Max Compression) or use a machine with more CPU cores.

Output file not found

- Check the custom output folder and write permissions. If using Same folder as source, ensure the output filename is not blocked by antivirus or other processes.

Rows disappear

- Category filters may be hiding them. Check the Show: Errors / Bloated / Average / Efficient filters.

15. Frequently Asked Questions

Why does MB/sec matter?

MB/sec indicates how "dense" a video is in terms of storage per second of playback. Higher MB/sec often means inefficient encoding or unnecessarily high bitrates. CineCinch uses MB/sec to categorize files so you can focus compression where it will have the most impact.

Is there a free trial?

Yes. CineCinch includes a 24-hour free trial through the Microsoft Store.

What's the difference between the trial and full version?

The trial lets you experience the full workflow—scanning folders, reviewing efficiency ratings, and using all four compression modes—on a limited set of files and without CSV export. The trial is limited to analyzing and compressing the first 10 files in a folder. The full version removes the 10-file limit, enables CSV export, and supports ongoing, large-scale compression and analysis.

Does CineCinch modify my original files?

Only if **Delete originals** is enabled after successful compression. By default, CineCinch writes compressed files alongside the originals (or to a custom output folder) and leaves the source files untouched.

Can I reorder files in the compression queue?

Yes. Use the ▲ and ▼ buttons when no scan or compression is active to prioritize files.

Can I resume compression without rescanning?

Yes. You can reuse existing scan results and start compression again. Use **Reset Progress** to clear statuses like Complete or Failed if you want to reprocess files.

Does CineCinch use GPU acceleration?

No. CineCinch currently uses CPU-based H.265 encoding only.

Can I use custom FFmpeg flags?

Not in this version. CineCinch uses carefully chosen presets for consistency and safety and does not expose arbitrary FFmpeg command-line options.

Can CineCinch compress multiple files at once?

No. CineCinch processes one file at a time to avoid overloading the system and to keep progress reporting simple and predictable.

Does CineCinch include a video player or preview?
No. CineCinch focuses on analysis and compression. You can open files in your preferred player or in Explorer directly from the table.

What happens to subtitles during compression?
Subtitle behavior depends on the subtitle type: text-based subtitles (SRT, ASS/SSA) are converted to MP4-friendly mov_text or webvtt (ASS styling may be lost); MP4-native subtitles (mov_text, webvtt) are copied; image-based subtitles (PGS, VobSub) cannot be preserved in MP4 and will be omitted unless burned into the video (not supported by default).

16. Legal Notes

CineCinch uses FFmpeg under LGPL/GPL licensing. Users are responsible for ensuring compliance with local laws and codec licensing requirements.