

# iMessage Archiver - One-Page Summary

## What it is

A macOS tool that archives iMessage history with a choice of a CLI or a Streamlit web dashboard. It exports messages, reactions, and attachments from the local Messages database to files on disk.

## Who it's for

Primary users: macOS users who need a local, file-based archive of their iMessage conversations for backup, review, or analysis.

## What it does

- Runs as a CLI or a Streamlit dashboard, with automatic fallback to CLI when needed.
- Exports full message history including reactions and attachments.
- Supports incremental syncs to avoid re-exporting unchanged history.
- Outputs CSV, JSON, or Markdown (narrative) formats.
- Processes media into organized folders; optional OCR for images and transcription for audio via helper binaries.
- Resolves contact names from the local AddressBook database.

## How it works

- archiver.sh sets environment variables, checks Full Disk Access, and creates a temporary backup of Messages chat.db.
- If Streamlit is available, it launches dashboard.py; otherwise it runs cli\_main.py for a native macOS dialog flow.
- cli\_main.py calls backend modules to list chats, choose format and mode, and trigger exports.
- backend/db.py connects to the Messages database and contacts data; backend/engine.py builds message rows, processes attachments, and writes export files to OUT\_DIR.
- Optional helpers in bin/ (ocr\_helper, transcribe\_helper) are invoked for OCR and audio transcription when present and verified.

## How to run

- Grant Full Disk Access to your terminal so it can read Messages chat.db.
- Run ./setup.sh to install Python dependencies (Streamlit optional for the dashboard).
- Run ./archiver.sh and follow the prompts (or use --batch / --preset options).