



# AstroJournal

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## *User Manual*

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25th May 2016

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# 1 Introduction

This software utility aims to generate structured documents from astronomy observation reports created as basic tables. These tables are saved as .tsv or .csv format files and imported by AstroJournal. Once imported, the program will export this information by category (reports by date, by target, by constellation) in PDF format using LaTeX.

## 1.1 Main Features

The following list shows the main features for the software AstroJournal:

- Support for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X, and Windows users.
- Runnable via Graphical User Interface (GUI) or command line.
- Generation of a PDF document containing all user observation reports collected by increasing target catalogue number. This is useful for comparing targets observed over time.
- Generation of a PDF document containing all user observation reports collected by decreasing date. This is useful for visualising one's observations by session.
- Generation of a PDF document containing the targets observed by constellation. This is useful for checking observed and unobserved targets by constellation.
- Generation of a txt document containing all user observation reports collected by decreasing date. This can be useful for copying and pasting reports with any text editor.
- Complete lists of Messier objects and Caldwell selection of NGC targets are included at the end of the generated PDF documents.
- Although the program requires some form of structured input file, this is intentionally minimal in order to not distract the user who wants to insert his / her data rather than thinking of how to format this data. All input data is treated as a string and therefore is not parsed for controls. This leaves the freedom to the user to introduce the data content as s/he wish. For instance, although in each document header I use the Antoniadi Scale for Seeing, this can be trivially overridden with a customised one. The inserted value for the seeing is not controlled according to a specific scale.
- Possibility to edit the document header and the footer according to one's need. This must be done in LaTeX for preserving the format controls in the final output file.

## 1.2 Requirements

To use AstroJournal you need to install:

- Java 1.7+ <https://java.com/en/download/>;

- TeX Live <http://www.tug.org/texlive/> (GNU/Linux users only);
- MikTeX <http://miktex.org/download> (Windows users only);
- MacTeX <https://tug.org/mactex/> (Mac OS X users only).

### 1.2.1 Notes:

- On GNU/Linux Debian/Ubuntu/Mint, a deb package is provided and is located in the folder *target/*.
- On Windows, users should install MikTeX and then the LaTeX packages *url* and *mptopdf* using MikTeX Manager.
- On Mac OS X, users should install MacTeX. If the command *pdflatex* is not available, I think it should be possible to create a link called *pdflatex* to the corresponding program used by MacTeX to compile LaTeX code. In addition, to run AstroJournal on a MAC OS X platform, some steps are required since Mac OS X still uses Java 1.6 while AstroJournal requires Java 1.7+:
  - Download the latest Java from [https://java.com/en/download/mac\\_download.jsp](https://java.com/en/download/mac_download.jsp).
  - Follow the procedure for installing the package.

Unfortunately, Mac OS X installs this version of Java as Plugin, and this is not in the `$PATH` environment variable. To correct this, 1) open the application Terminal; 2) type `nano ~/.bash_profile`; 3) write at the beginning of the file the following instruction: `export PATH=/Library/Internet\ Plug-Ins/JavaAppletPlugin.plugin/Contents/Home/bin/:$PATH` (there is a SPACE after *Internet*); 4) hold the button *Control* while pressing the button *x* ; 5) press the button *y* (Yes) ; Press the button *Enter* / *Return* ; 5) close Terminal. To test: start Terminal and type `java -version`. It should report a version above 1.6. As of the time this README was written, this command returned `java version "1.8.0_66"`. This procedure is required for the first time only.

- Download AstroJournal, unzip the file, and enter the application folder.
- Enter the folder *target*.
- Click *astrojournal-x.x.x-jar-with-dependencies.jar*
- Mac OS X will ask for permissions to execute the file. Answer *Yes*. This may require the user to disable special controls in Mac OS X in *System Preferences* → *Security & Privacy*. In particular at least the radio box *Mac App Store and identified developers* should be selected.
- AstroJournal should start correctly now.

### 1.3 Download

The user manual for the software astroJournal can be downloaded:

[https://github.com/pdp10/AstroJournal/blob/develop/doc/user\\_manual.pdf?format=raw](https://github.com/pdp10/AstroJournal/blob/develop/doc/user_manual.pdf?format=raw).

The latest stable version of this software application can be downloaded here:

<https://github.com/pdp10/AstroJournal/zipball/master>.

After downloading and uncompressing the file, once in the folder, run AstroJournal as follows:

- On GNU/Linux or Mac OS X, type or click: “./astrojournal.sh” .
- On Windows, click: “astrojournal.exe” .

This will start a basic graphical user interface to generate the journals.

To run AstroJournal via command line, type “./astrojournal.sh -c”. Please use the option -h (-help) to see the available options.

## 2 Use Case

Here is a simple use case for using AstroJournal:

1. After the first execution of AstroJournal, a default folder called AstroJournal.files will be created in your user home folder. Inside this folder, examples of raw reports, and the default LaTeX headers / footers for each exported journals are provided.
2. Report your observations (with the same structure of my tsv or csv files provided in the folder raw\_reports) using a spreadsheet program, such as MS Excel, Libreoffice Spreadsheet, or Google Spreadsheet. Alternatively you can use a common text editor (e.g. Wordpad, GNU Emacs, Kate, etc.) as long as the fields are the same as in the samples provided in the raw\_report and that each field is separated using a TAB character.
3. Export your file as tsv (if using Google Spreadsheet) or csv. In the latter case, when asked, select tab as field delimiter.
4. Put this file in the folder raw\_reports.
5. Start the AstroJournal application by clicking astrojournal.sh (GNU/Linux) or astrojournal.exe (Windows).
6. Press the button “Create Journals”.

### 2.1 Create an observation report

As currently implemented, the format of the observation tables is specific. The titles (Date, Time, Location, Altitude, Temperature, Seeing, Transparency, Telescopes, Eyepieces, Filters, Target, Cons, Type, Power, and Notes) cannot be changed as these are used by AstroJournal to retrieve the data. All fields are separated by a tab character (TAB) explicitly shown in this example with

a text when this must be included. Fields can have single or double quotes. You can find samples of these files in the folder raw\_reports, which is AstroJournal input folder.

These files can be edited with any spreadsheet (e.g. Google SpreadSheet, MS Excel, LibreOffice SpreadSheet) or a common text editor (e.g. MS Wordpad, Emacs, Kate, or GEdit).

To customise the document header and footer, please look into the folder latex\_header\_footer to find the LaTeX files for the header and footer. Also these files can be edited with any common text editor.

If desired, LaTeX code can be inserted in the report. For instance, a target note could be customised as:

```
{\color{red} Invisible} at 100x.
```

to print the text “**Invisible** at 100x”. Other common customisations could be:

```
{\bf Invisible} at 100x.  
{\it Invisible} at 100x.
```

to print “**Invisible** at 100x” and “*Invisible* at 100x”, respectively. A combination of two could be: Other common customisations could be:

```
{\color{red}\bf Invisible} at 100x.
```

to print “**Invisible** at 100x”.

Example of observation records contained in a file parsed by AstroJournal:

### 3 Preferences

AstroJournal allows users to customise a few parameters via graphical user interface (Edit → Preferences).

If you are acquainted with Latex, you can also change the generated document headers and footers by editing the files in the folder latex\_header\_footer. No customisation is required for a normal use of AstroJournal.

### 4 Reporting Bugs

If you find a issue with AstroJournal please try the following steps:

1. Check that you are running the latest version of AstroJournal. You can see the version you are running on the main window title and you can check the AstroJournal website (<http://pdp10.github.io/AstroJournal/>) to see what the latest version is.

Target	Cons	Type	Power	Notes
M42	Ori	CL+Neb	15x	Great Orion Nebula. M42 benefits from both UHC
NGC2244	Mon	Opn CL	15x	Satellite cluster. Six stars in two columns
NGC2237	Mon	Neb	15x	Rosette nebula. Detectable with OIII filter. Very s
M35	Gem	Opn CL	15x	Detectable but not much detailed.
M36	Aur	Opn CL	15x	Very poor detail, but detectable.
M37	Aur	Opn CL	15x	Very poor detail, but detectable.
M38	Aur	Opn CL	15x	The first of the group to find. Poor detail.
M44	Cnc	Opn CL	15x	Praesepe. Spectacular at 15x.
M67	Cnc	Opn CL	15x	King cobra. Not to easy to detect. Looks like a g
Jupiter	Cnc	Planet	129x	A bit of wind, but the image stays crisp at high n
NGC1662	Ori	Opn CL	15x, 51x	Found casually while scanning from Aldebaran 1
NGC1647	Tau	Opn CL	15x	Beautiful open cluster easily detectable from Alc
NGC1746	Tau	Opn CL	15x	Not sure I found it. It appeared smaller than NGC
Cr65	Tau	Opn CL	15x	Nice aggregation of stars, although none of ther
Cr70	Ori	Opn CL	15x	Gorgeous Orion's belt. The chain of stars surrou

Figure 1: A report consists of two tables placed one after the other without any empty line. The first table contains the report meta data, whereas the second table lists the description for each target observed during a session. Multiple reports can be created inside the same file, but at least one empty line must be inserted between reports. When the file is exported to csv or tsv format, check that the fields are separated by a TAB delimiter.

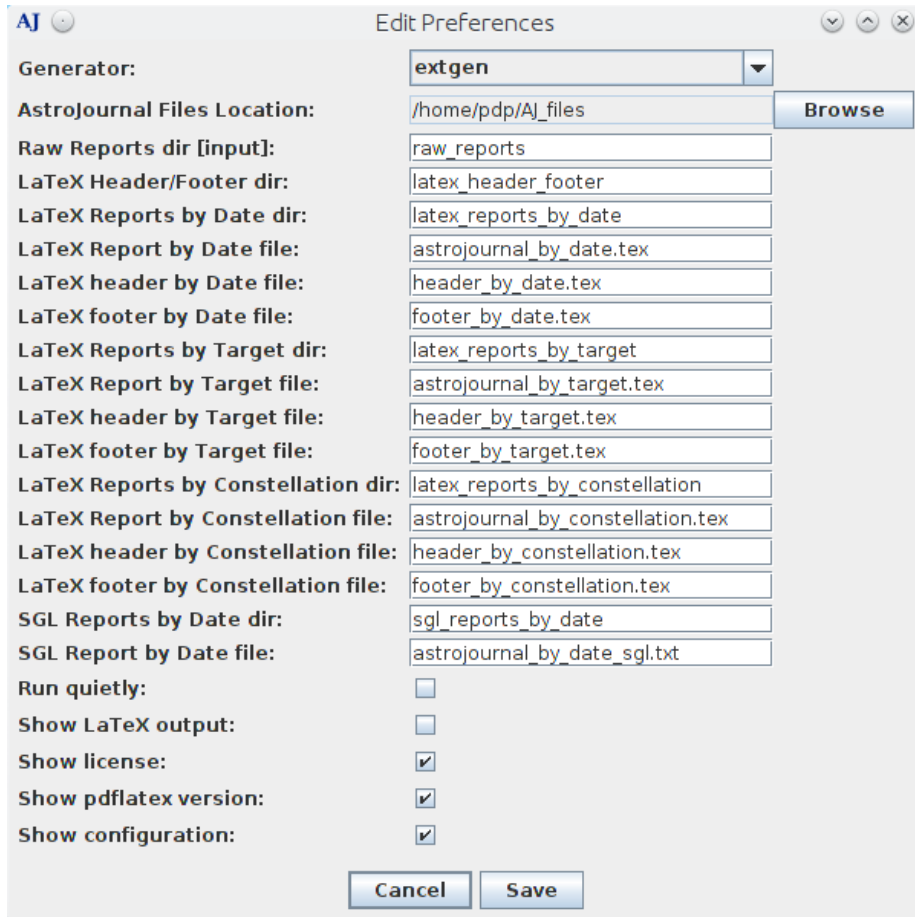


Figure 2: By default AstroJournal exports every fields provided in the csv or tsv files. However, it is also possible to export more compact reports by selecting a different generator. The “Location” field determines the folder where the raw reports (csv or tsv files) are stored. Users can also customised the name of output files and directories. If desired, the output on the main AstroJournal window can also be personalised. Two useful test features are “Show pdflatex version” and “Show LaTeX output”. When enabled, the former will show the output of the command `pdflatex -version`. This can be useful for testing the correct installation of `pdflatex`. The latter will show the complete output produced by `pdflatex` when exporting from LaTeX to PDF format.



2. Report a bug using AstroJournal online bug reporting and tracking system at <https://github.com/pdp10/AstroJournal/issues>.
3. Additionally, a mailing list is provided: astrojournal AT googlegroups.com .

You can also suggest new functionalities you would like to see in AstroJournal by filing them as a bug with a severity of “enhancement”.