1. Create a recipient copy

Create a copy for one recipient, save your registry backup, and inspect a suspected copy later.

Your manuscript or paper stays on your device. InkTrace reads and processes selected documents locally in your browser. Its create, export, and scan functions do not send manuscript contents to the author, InkTrace servers, or an AI service. Selecting a file does not publish it or email it to anyone.

The website still needs to load normally over the internet. Files you choose to email, share, or save in a cloud-synced folder are handled by those services separately.

Before you begin

Use an original, unmarked **.docx** file, up to 50 MB. Keep your original safe. PDF, EPUB, TXT, pasted text, encrypted documents, and digitally signed documents are not supported. Avoid private/incognito mode if you want the registry to remain available.

Open InkTrace

Visit the InkTrace for Authors page and select **Launch InkTrace**, or open the app directly. Choose **Create copy**.

Choose the document and recipient

Under **1. Original DOCX**, choose your file. Check the read-only text preview. Enter the recipient's **Name** and, if useful, an **Email or reference**. An email here is a label only; InkTrace does not send email.

Export and send the right copy

Select **Export metadata-only DOCX**. Save the downloaded file, whose name includes a unique copy ID. Send that file to the intended recipient using your usual method. Repeat for each recipient; each export creates a new ID and registry entry.

What changes? InkTrace adds a random ID to DOCX metadata, not to the manuscript text. Original text and formatting parts are preserved. Names and email references stay in the browser registry. The text preview does not reproduce page layout; export uses the original document package.

Next: back up your registry before you finish.

2. Save your registry backup

The registry connects each copy ID to a recipient. A document ID alone cannot tell a new browser who received the copy.

Download the full registry

After creating a copy, use **Back up registry now** in the reminder. You can also use **Download current backup** in the status panel or **Download registry backup** under **Registry & backups**. All three download the full registry, even if you have searched or sorted the pending list.

Keep the JSON file somewhere safe

Check that the **inktrace-registry-YYYY-MM-DD.json** download completed. Save it outside browser storage, such as in a private backup folder. Keep a fresh backup after adding recipients. Do not send this registry file to recipients or publish it.

> **The backup contains recipient names, email/reference details, manuscript filenames, and copy IDs. It does not contain manuscript text or the DOCX file.** The JSON backup is not encrypted. Protect it as you would other private contact records.

Confirm only after saving

Select **I saved the backup** in the reminder, or **Confirm backup saved** in the status panel. InkTrace records your confirmation time. Downloading alone does not clear the reminder: the app cannot verify that you kept the file.

Check your status at a glance

The status panel shows the **last confirmed backup** in your local time zone and the number of **new recipient copies** needing backup. Click that count to see names, manuscript filenames, and copy IDs. Search by recipient or manuscript, then sort either column A-Z or Z-A. Search and sorting are remembered in that browser.

The reminder survives refreshes and reopening the app until you confirm a saved backup. Older confirmations may show **date unavailable** because earlier versions did not record a time. Creating another copy makes it pending again.

Restore after changing browsers or clearing data

Open **Registry & backups**, select **Restore registry backup**, and choose your saved JSON file. Existing records are retained; identical duplicates are skipped. Invalid files or conflicting IDs are rejected without replacing the registry. Restore accepts up to 10 MB and 10,000 records.

Remember: the registry and backup status are local to that browser, not automatically synced. Clearing browser data removes them. Restore your latest backup before scanning; create and confirm a fresh backup if the restored or merged registry needs one.

3. Scan a suspected document

Scanning looks for the metadata ID and compares it with your local recipient registry. It does not search the internet for leaks.

Keep the suspected original

Save the document as received and keep a separate untouched copy. Record where and when you obtained it. Do not convert or re-save it before scanning, because another application may remove metadata.

Open the scanner

Select **Scan suspected document** in the top navigation. Under **Suspected document**, choose the DOCX file. Scanning starts automatically; the document is read locally in your browser and its manuscript contents are not sent anywhere by InkTrace.

Read the result

If the ID matches your registry, InkTrace shows the **assigned recipient**, **email or reference**, **manuscript filename**, and **copy ID**. Compare these details with your own distribution records.

> **A match identifies the assigned copy, not the person who leaked it.** Metadata can be removed, changed, forged, or transferred to another document. Treat a match as a lead to check, not proof of responsibility.

If there is an ID but no recipient match

Restore a registry backup containing that ID. A registry from a different browser may be missing until restored. The displayed match updates when the relevant records are restored. If you never saved the recipient mapping, InkTrace cannot reconstruct it from the random ID.

If no ID is found

The result is inconclusive. The document may never have been identified, or its metadata may have been stripped. Copy/paste, retyping, screenshots, and conversion generally do not retain this ID. The metadata-only scanner does not recover older text-based fingerprints.

If the file cannot be read

Check that it is a supported, unencrypted .docx file within the 50 MB limit. The app does not scan PDFs, images, pasted text, or signed/encrypted documents. Keep the source file rather than converting it just to obtain a result.

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4. Delete a registry record

Remove an unwanted copy-to-recipient mapping without changing any manuscript files.

Save a backup before deleting

If you may need the recipient mapping later, download and safely save a registry backup first. Deleting a record removes it from this browser only. Other browsers and previously downloaded backups are not changed.

Choose the exact record

Open **Registry & backups**. In the recipient table, select **Delete record** beside the entry you want to remove. Check the recipient name, manuscript filename, and full copy ID; names alone may not be unique.

Review the confirmation

The confirmation repeats the recipient, manuscript, and copy ID. Select **Cancel - keep record** to leave the registry unchanged. Select **Confirm delete record** only when all three details match the entry you intend to remove. If the record changed or was already removed, refresh and review it again.

> **Deletion does not delete a DOCX, change its contents, remove its metadata ID, recall a sent copy, or erase a downloaded backup.** It removes the local mapping used to identify the assigned recipient. Scanning that copy will still find its ID, but cannot show the recipient unless the mapping is restored.

Undo immediately if needed

Select **Undo last deletion** to restore the most recently deleted record. Undo is available only while you remain on the current page, before a refresh or navigation away. It is not a permanent recycle bin; after another deletion, Undo refers only to that latest deletion.

Recover later from a saved backup

If Undo is no longer available, use **Restore registry backup** with a backup containing the deleted record. Restore merges records, so an older backup may bring back entries you deliberately deleted. Check the registry after restoring.

Save the registry you want to keep

After deleting or undoing, download a fresh registry backup and confirm it is saved. Do this even if the new-copy count is zero: that count tracks new copies, not deleted records. Keep older backups clearly dated and private so you know which records each can restore.

Quick finish check: send the correct recipient copy, keep your original DOCX, save the current registry backup, and keep the PDF guide for reference.

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