

EVC Download Tracker

User Manual

Every download on your site should be counted, and the file it serves should never be visible in the page source. EVC Download Tracker gives you a link of its own for each file, counts every click on it, and shows the numbers on a dashboard in your admin area.

Point your download buttons at the tracker's links and you get per-product totals, a 14-day chart and the 50 most recent downloads, refreshed every 10 seconds. It is free, it has no license key, and it never phones home.

Version 1.2.0

What it does

EVC Download Tracker counts how many times your files get downloaded and shows you a live dashboard right inside your WordPress admin: per-product totals, a 14-day chart, and the 50 most recent downloads. It refreshes itself every 10 seconds — you just leave it open and watch the numbers go up.

Point your download buttons at the links it gives you, and every click gets counted. Any file works: ebooks, plugin zips, PDFs, music, artwork, anything that lives on your server.

It is completely free. No license key, no account, nothing phones home.

Requirements

- WordPress 5.8 or newer
- PHP 7.4 or newer
- The file(s) you want to track must live on the same server as your WordPress site

That's the whole list.

Installation

1. In your WordPress admin, go to Plugins → Add New → Upload Plugin.
2. Choose evc-download-tracker.zip and click Install Now.
3. Click Activate.

A new item appears in your admin menu: EVC Tracker.

Quick start (two minutes)

1. Click EVC Tracker in your admin menu.
2. Scroll to Add a file to track and fill in three boxes:

- Display name — how the file appears on the dashboard (for example, "My Ebook"). - Link word — optional. Leave it empty and it is made from the display name (EVC Helpdesk Manual becomes evc-helpdesk-manual). Type one if you want a shorter address. - File location — where the file actually sits on your server, uploaded by FTP. Products live in downloads/, manuals live in manuals/, and the names are case-sensitive: downloads/evc-checkout.zip and manuals/EVC-Checkout-Manual.pdf. Paste that path (from your WordPress root down) or the full server path. This is the file the tracker serves. Customers never see it. - Public address — you do not type it. The tracker answers at https://yoursite.com/evc-download/<slug>/, and that is the link you hand out: buy buttons, emails, licence letters, documentation. Every product and its manual has its own slug — metatag, metatag-manual, builder, builder-manual, checkout, checkout-manual, snippets, snippets-manual, tracker, tracker-manual — so all ten are counted, and the real file name and folder never appear in a page's source.

The ten EVC files, as they sit on evcapps.ca:

- Metatag — downloads/evc-metatag.zip, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/metatag/
- Metatag manual — manuals/EVC-Metatag-Manual.pdf, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/metatag-manual/
- AI Builder — downloads/evc-ai-builder.zip, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/builder/
- AI Builder manual — manuals/EVC-AI-Builder-Manual.pdf, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/builder-manual/
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- Snippets — downloads/evc-snippets.zip, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/snippets/
- Snippets manual — manuals/EVC-Snippets-Manual.pdf, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/snippets-manual/
- Tracker — downloads/evc-download-tracker.zip, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/tracker/
- Tracker manual — manuals/EVC-Download-Tracker-Manual.pdf, handed out as evcapps.ca/evc-download/tracker-manual/

Zips are lower case, manuals are not, and file names are case-sensitive: a path typed with the wrong case is a file the tracker cannot find.

3. Click Add file. The plugin checks that the file really exists before accepting it.
4. The Tracked files table now shows your download link, ready to copy:

https://yoursite.com/evc-download/ebook/

5. Put that link on your download button (in place of the old direct file link).

Done. From now on, every download of that file is counted on the dashboard.

The EVC Tracker tabs

The plugin's admin is three tabs, plus the family shelf. One job per screen, so nothing is a long scroll:

- Dashboard — the live counters and the 14-day chart. This is where you look.
- Downloads — the 50 most recent downloads, and the button that clears the log.
- Files — the files being tracked, and the form that adds another one.

Each tab has its own address, so you can bookmark the one you use. Actions take you back to the tab they belong to, and the message confirming what happened appears on that tab.

Dashboard

Live dashboard — the cards at the top. One card per tracked file showing all-time downloads, plus today and the last 7 days. The last card totals everything together. The LIVE badge means the page updates itself every 10 seconds; the "last update" time confirms it's ticking.

Daily downloads — last 14 days — a bar chart of how many downloads happened each day. Quiet days show a short bar; launch days show a tall one.

Starting a count again — bottom right of every panel is a small Reset, whichever tab that panel sits on. A count that only goes up stops meaning anything the moment a crawler, a link checker, or your own click lands in the log, so each panel can start again from now: a single file's card, the overall total, the chart, the recent list. Resetting one affects only that panel. Nothing is deleted; the log rows stay, and the panel just says "counting since" the moment you pressed it.

Downloads

50 most recent downloads — the newest first: when it happened, which product, and the visitor's IP address. This list refreshes itself too, so you can leave it open while you announce something.

Clear the tracking data — at the bottom of the Downloads tab. This is the one that really removes something: every logged download is deleted and all counts start from zero. Your tracked files, their link words and the addresses on your buttons are not touched, so every download link keeps working. Worth doing once if a crawler has filled the log with noise. It cannot be undone.

Files

Tracked files — your list of files. Each row shows the display name, the link word, the file on the server, the download link to put on your buttons, and a Remove button. Removing a file only stops tracking it — your file on the server is never touched or deleted.

File on the server is the path you pointed at when you added the file, and it is the thing that actually gets sent. A path inside your WordPress install is shortened to read from the site root down (/downloads/guide.zip); hover it to see the full server path. Beside it is the file's size, which is the quickest proof that the plugin is looking at a real file.

Download link is the address you put on your buttons. It never shows the file's real location — that is the whole point of routing downloads through a link of the plugin's own, and it is why the two columns look so different.

If a tracked file has since been moved or deleted, its row says so in red: *File is not there any more — add it again with the right path.* That link was returning a 404, and until version 1.0.2 nothing on the page said so.

Adding a file

Under the table is Add a file to track: a display name, a link word, and the file's location. The name and the file are needed; the link word is optional, and left empty it is made from the name.

The link word becomes the last part of the download link, so helpdesk-manual gives you https://yoursite.com/evc-download/helpdesk-manual/. Type it however you like — capitals, spaces and underscores are tidied into dashes for you.

The file location accepts any of these three, so nobody has to guess which one this plugin wants:

- a path from your site root: /manuals/EVC-Helpdesk-Manual.pdf
- a path inside your WordPress folder: manuals/EVC-Helpdesk-Manual.pdf
- the file's own address: https://yoursite.com/manuals/EVC-Helpdesk-Manual.pdf

What it will not accept is the address of a page, because a page is not a file the server can send. That was the quiet fault fixed in 1.0.9: a link that opens a page in your browser looked close enough to the

real thing, and the only reply was "could not find that file" — printed at the top of the page, above everything, while you were looking at the button.

Now, if a file will not add, the reason appears twice: at the top of the screen and again directly above the button you pressed. It says which path it looked for, and the three boxes keep what you typed, so the second attempt is a correction rather than a retype. A file that has just been uploaded to the server is found straight away — there is nothing to clear or refresh.

When it works, the message names the file and prints the download link it created, so you are not left guessing whether it took.

Keeping old links working

If people have already bookmarked your old direct file links, you can keep those links alive AND counted by adding redirect rules on your server. The rule says "if someone asks for the old file, send them through the tracker instead." Example for an Apache .htaccess file in the folder that holds your files:

```
RewriteEngine On
RewriteRule ^ebook\.zip$ /evc-download/ebook/ [L]
```

Repeat one line per file, matching each old file name to its link word. Not sure whether you need this? Skip it — new buttons alone will be counted just fine.

A word from the workshop. That .htaccess file is unforgiving: one typo and the site is down until somebody fixes it over FTP. If you opened it only because you want your redirects to agree with the rest of the site, EVC Metatag writes the two things most people came here for — robots.txt and the sitemap — from a form, and shows you what it is about to write before it writes it. It never touches .htaccess, so everything above still applies.

The full version, and the file limit

The tracker does one job and does it whole in the free copy: three tracked files, every download counted, the dashboard live, the chart drawn, your own addresses instead of the real paths. The full version removes the limit on how many files you can track. It adds nothing else, and it expires never.

Where the key goes. EVC Tracker, then the Full version tab. Paste it, press Save key. A refused key stays in the box exactly as you typed it, so a mistyped block is a correction and not a retype. Removing the key takes none of your files or counts with it.

What a key looks like. EVC-T-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX. The letters and numbers are checked on your own server, so the plugin never asks anybody whether your key is real and sends nothing about your site anywhere. One letter marks the product: a key from another EVC plugin is refused here, and a tracker key is refused there.

Nothing to switch on. Both editions are plain readable PHP. There is no encoder, no bytecode and no extension to ask your host for, so the plugin runs the moment it is activated. If a screen ever says the plugin is short of a file, that is a zip that did not finish arriving: install it again over the top.

Never a price in this manual. What the full version costs is on the checkout page, not printed in a file: that way the figure is today's figure and not the one that was true when this PDF was built.

More from EVC

There is a tab with that name next to the dashboard. One product is marked "Goes with this one" — usually EVC Metatag, because the pages that link your files need titles and descriptions too — and the rest of the workshop sits under it. This plugin is free, so there is nothing of its own to sell.

The tab also appears on the Plugins screen, next to a Manual link, so this document is one click away from where you installed the plugin. Do not want the tab? One line: add_filter('evc_tracker_family_visible', '__return_false');

Troubleshooting

The download link opens a "Page not found" screen. Visit Settings → Permalinks once, without changing anything. That refreshes your site's link rules and fixes this almost always.

"Could not find that file on the server" when adding a file. The tracker tried to open the file and couldn't (you'll see the exact path it checked in the error message). Check it for typos — the path is case-sensitive: Ebook.zip and ebook.zip are different files. When in doubt, use the full server path (on cPanel it looks like /home/username/public_html/...).

The dashboard says "loading..." forever. Reload the page and make sure you're logged in as an administrator — the dashboard is only visible to admins.

Numbers seem low. Only clicks on the tracked link are counted. If some page still links straight to the file, those downloads aren't in your counts — see "Keeping old links working" above.

I removed a file by mistake. Just add it again with the same link word. Its history is kept — past downloads still count toward the total.

Privacy

The log stores only what a download counter needs: the time, which file, and the visitor's IP address (to spot one person hammering the button). No names, no emails, no cookies on your visitors. It's your data, on your server, forever.

Changelog

1.1.0: the code is locked (the working half ships as ionCube bytecode, the header stays readable), a key lifts the limit on tracked files, and a package short of its engine file says so instead of stopping on a blank screen.

1.0.10

- The Link word box is optional. Leave it empty and it is made from the

display name, so adding a file is a name and a path and nothing else.

- An invented link word never takes an address another file already answers on (-2, -3 and so on), and re-adding the same file still replaces it.
- Adding the Helpdesk manual to evcapps.ca took three attempts on 1.0.8: that version refused a capital in this box in the browser, so the form never sent and nothing appeared. 1.0.9 tidied the typing; 1.0.10 removed the box as a way to fail.

1.0.9

- If a file will not add, the reason is printed right above the Add button, not only at the top of the page. The form keeps what you typed, so a second try is a fix rather than a retype.
- The Link word box no longer refuses a capital or a space in the browser. Anything you type is tidied into a link word for you.
- A link that opens a page, or a folder, is now named as that — "that address is a page, not a file" — instead of "could not find that file".
- A successful add names the file and shows the download link it created.

1.0.8

- The admin is three tabs instead of one long page: Dashboard (counters and the 14-day chart), Downloads (the 50 most recent, and clearing the log), Files (the tracked files table and the add form).
- Nothing removed, no count changed. Every action returns to the tab it came from, and the confirmation message appears there.
- Each tab has its own address, so a bookmark opens the one you want.

1.0.7

- The author line reads Elite Venture Capitol, spelled the same as the rest of the family.

1.0.6

- A Reset at the bottom right of every panel, one panel at a time. Counts start again from the moment you press it; no log row is deleted, so the evidence stays and the panel shows a "counting since" line.
- Clear the tracking data: empties the log and every count, and leaves the tracked files and download links alone.
- The overall card now shows today and the last 7 days beside the all-time number, matching the per-file cards.

1.0.5

- "Goes with this one" on the family tab: one product is named as the natural partner instead of leaving a row of five equal cards.

- Manual link on the Plugins screen, next to the tab.

1.0.4

- A "More from EVC" tab, next to the dashboard, holding the rest of the workshop in one place. It is a tab, not a banner, and a site owner can switch it off with one line of code.

1.0.3

- A note in this manual for anyone editing .htaccess: EVC Metatag writes robots.txt and the sitemap from a form, and leaves .htaccess alone.

1.0.0

- First release: live dashboard, per-file counters, 14-day chart, recent activity feed, tracked-file manager.

EVC Download Tracker is free from Elites Venture Capitol — evcapps.ca. This manual ships with the plugin zip and is also available on the website.

1.2.0: one source, two folders. The repository now builds free/evc-download-tracker and paid/evc-download-tracker with a single command, and the free folder simply does not contain the uncapped path, so nothing there can lift the limit. At the third file the free copy draws the Files screen faded behind one card. Nothing is encoded any more: no ionCube, no bytecode, no expiry and nothing to ask your host for.