

Package ‘sftpR’

April 9, 2026

Type Package

Title Robust SFTP Interface Using 'curl'

Version 0.2.0

Description Provides a high-level, object-oriented interface for Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) operations built upon the 'curl' package. The package implements an 'R6' class to manage persistent connections and provides 'tidyverse'-style functions for common file system tasks. Key features include recursive directory creation with idempotency support, ``smart" local path resolution that distinguishes between files and directories, and the ability to download remote resources directly into memory as raw vectors for seamless integration into data processing pipelines. It is designed to handle common SFTP edge cases gracefully, providing informative error messages and robust path sanitization to ensure compatibility across different server configurations.

License MIT + file LICENSE

URL <https://mikuo0628.github.io/sftpR/>,
<https://github.com/mikuo0628/sftpR>

BugReports <https://github.com/mikuo0628/sftpR/issues>

Encoding UTF-8

SystemRequirements libcurl: libcurl (with libssh2 support)

Depends R (>= 4.1.0)

Imports curl (>= 7.0.0), R6 (>= 2.6.1)

RoxygenNote 7.3.3

Suggests knitr, rmarkdown, testthat (>= 3.0.0), withr

Config/testthat/edition 3

VignetteBuilder knitr

Collate 'sftp_connect.R' 'sftp_delete.R' 'sftp_download.R'
'sftp_list.R' 'sftp_mkdir.R' 'sftp_rename.R' 'sftp_upload.R'
'utils.R' 'shared_docs.R'

NeedsCompilation no

Author Michael Kuo [aut, cre]

Maintainer Michael Kuo <michael.kuo@bccdc.ca>

Repository CRAN

Date/Publication 2026-04-09 15:40:02 UTC

Contents

sftp_connect	2
sftp_delete	3
sftp_download	5
sftp_list	6
sftp_mkdir	8
sftp_rename	9
sftp_upload	11

Index **13**

sftp_connect	<i>Create an SFTPConn R6 object that contains important connection information safely</i>
--------------	---

Description

An R6 class to safely store information needed for SFTP connection, with convenient methods to check connections and existence of files or directories, and create specific handles for sftp_* function family of CRUD operations.

Usage

```
sftp_connect(
  protocol = "sftp",
  hostname = "localhost",
  path = NULL,
  port = "22",
  user = NA_character_,
  password = NA_character_,
  timeout = 30L,
  ...,
  .verbose = TRUE
)
```

Arguments

protocol	Character. Protocol string. Defaults to "sftp".
hostname	Character. Server URL or IP. Defaults to "localhost".
path	Character. Sub-path on server.
port	Character. Port number. Defaults to "22".
user	Character. SFTP account name.
password	Character. SFTP password.
timeout	Integer. Connection timeout.
...	Additional arguments passed to <code>curl::handle_setopt()</code> .
.verbose	Logical. Defaults to TRUE. Prints helpful messages.

Details

One important goal of this design choice is to keep user credentials safe, as private fields. Credentials are used to create specific handles for `sftp_*` family, and are reused where appropriate. SFTPConn This class checks if credential is valid, and has a internal convenience methods such as safe printing for basic information, checking destination existence, and ensuring URL is correctly formatted.

Value

SFTPConn R6 class object, used in `sftp_*` family.

Examples

```
if (interactive() || Sys.getenv("R_SFTP_TEST_SERVER") == "true") {
  # Create a new SFTP connection
  sftp_conn <- sftp_connect(
    hostname = "127.0.0.1",
    port     = 2222,
    user     = "tester",
    password = "password123"
  )
}
```

sftp_delete

Delete Files or Directories from SFTP Server

Description

Deletes a specific file or directory from the remote server. If the target is a directory, it must be empty unless `.recursive = TRUE` is specified.

Usage

```
sftp_delete(
  sftp_conn,
  remote_url = NULL,
  .recursive = FALSE,
  .verbose = TRUE,
  .validate = TRUE
)
```

Arguments

sftp_conn	An SFTPConn object containing connection details and authentication. Created by <code>sftp_connect</code> .
remote_url	Character. The full URL or path of the file or directory to be operated on.
.recursive	Logical. Defaults to FALSE. If TRUE, will recursively perform the SFTP operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>sftp_delete()</code>: deletes the directory and everything within. • <code>sftp_list()</code>: lists all the directories and files. • <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>: creates all the missing parent directories. • <code>sftp_rename()</code>: see <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>.
.verbose	Logical. Defaults to TRUE. Prints helpful messages.
.validate	Logical. Whether to validate the <code>remote_url</code> against the connection object. Defaults to TRUE, which will parse <code>remote_url</code> , compare to that of SFTPConn, and replaces parts incongruent with SFTPConn. Internally set to FALSE when <code>.recursive = TRUE</code> because the URLs produced by the listing operation aren't subjected to human errors, thus do not need further validation. This provides a minor performance boost.

Value

TRUE (invisibly) if the operation was successful.

Safety Warnings

- **Irreversibility:** Deletion on SFTP is permanent. There is no "Trash" or "Recycle Bin" on most SFTP server configurations.
- **Recursive Caution:** Setting `.recursive = TRUE` on a high-level directory can result in significant data loss. Always verify the `remote_url` before executing.

Examples

```
if (interactive() || Sys.getenv("R_SFTP_TEST_SERVER") == "true") {
  # Create new SFTP connection
  sftp_conn <- sftp_connect(
    hostname = "127.0.0.1",
    port     = "2222",
    user     = "tester",
  )
}
```

```

    password = "password123"
  )

  # Delete a single file
  sftp_delete(sftp_conn, "project/old_report.csv")

  # Delete an entire directory and its contents
  sftp_delete(sftp_conn, "project/temp_outputs/", .recursive = TRUE)
}

```

sftp_download

Download Files from SFTP Server

Description

Downloads a file from a remote SFTP server to a local disk location or directly into R's memory as a raw vector.

Usage

```

sftp_download(
  sftp_conn,
  remote_file,
  local_file = NA_character_,
  .create_dir = FALSE,
  .overwrite = FALSE,
  .verbose = TRUE,
  ...
)

```

Arguments

sftp_conn	An SFTPConn object containing connection details and authentication. Created by sftp_connect .
remote_file	Character. The path or URL of the file on the SFTP server.
local_file	Character or NULL. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If NA (default) or an "": The file is saved to the current working directory while using remote_file filename. If character: The local path where the file should be saved. If NULL: The file is downloaded to memory and returned as a raw vector.
.create_dir	Logical. Defaults to FALSE. If TRUE, creates the necessary parent directories if needed.
.overwrite	Logical. Defaults to FALSE. If TRUE, will overwrite destination file.
.verbose	Logical. Defaults to TRUE. Prints helpful messages.
...	Additional arguments passed to <code>curl::curl_download</code> .

Value

If `local_file` is `NULL`, a raw vector of the file contents. Otherwise, the resolved local path to the saved file (invisibly).

Local Path Resolution Caveats

To provide a "smart" user experience, the function guesses if `local_file` is intended to be a directory or a specific filename:

- **Directory Detection:** If the path exists as a directory, ends in a trailing slash, or has no file extension, it is treated as a folder. The `remote_file` filename will be appended to this path.
- **File Detection:** If the path does not exist and contains a file extension (e.g., ".csv"), it is treated as the final destination filename.
- **Ambiguity:** In ambiguous cases (e.g., a non-existent path without a slash or extension), the function defaults to treating the path as a directory.

Examples

```
if (interactive() || Sys.getenv("R_SFTP_TEST_SERVER") == "true") {
  # Create new SFTP connection
  sftp_conn <- sftp_connect(
    hostname = "127.0.0.1",
    port     = "2222",
    user     = "tester",
    password = "password123"
  )

  # Download and use the remote filename
  sftp_download(sftp_conn, "data/raw_logs.zip")

  # Download to a specific local name
  sftp_download(sftp_conn, "remote_file.csv", "local_name.csv")

  # Download to memory for immediate processing
  raw_bytes <- sftp_download(sftp_conn, "data.json", local_file = NULL)
  # Parse with appropriate packages
  # data <- jsonlite::fromJSON(rawToChar(raw_bytes))
}
```

sftp_list

List and Crawl SFTP Directory Contents

Description

Retrieves a directory listing from an SFTP server. If `.recursive = TRUE`, it will perform a depth-first crawl of all subdirectories found, implementing a path-tracking algorithm to detect and skip circular symbolic links, preventing infinite recursion and stack overflow errors.

Usage

```
sftp_list(  
  sftp_conn = NULL,  
  sftp_url = NULL,  
  .verbose = TRUE,  
  .recursive = FALSE  
)
```

Arguments

sftp_conn	An SFTPConn object containing connection details and authentication. Created by <code>sftp_connect</code> .
sftp_url	A SFTP URL of which the contents will be listed. If NULL, the base URL in SFTPConn will be used: contents of the SFTP home folder will be listed.
.verbose	Logical. Defaults to TRUE. Prints helpful messages.
.recursive	Logical. Defaults to FALSE. If TRUE, will recursively perform the SFTP operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <code>sftp_delete()</code>: deletes the directory and everything within.• <code>sftp_list()</code>: lists all the directories and files.• <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>: creates all the missing parent directories.• <code>sftp_rename()</code>: see <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>.

Value

A data.frame containing remote file/directory metadata:

- permission: Unix-style permission string (e.g., "drwxr-xr-x").
- nlink: Number of hard links.
- user: Owner username.
- group: Owner group.
- size: File size in bytes.
- month, day, time_year: Timestamp components.
- name: File or directory name.
- type: Categorization as "dir" or "file".
- url: The source URL for that specific object.

Examples

```
if (interactive() || Sys.getenv("R_SFTP_TEST_SERVER") == "true") {  
  # Create a new SFTP connection  
  sftp_conn <- sftp_connect(  
    hostname = "127.0.0.1",  
    port     = "2222",  
    user     = "tester",  
    password = "password123"  
  )  
}
```

```

)

# List recursively
sftp_list(sftp_conn, .recursive = TRUE)
}

```

sftp_mkdir

Create Remote Directories in SFTP

Description

This function creates directories on a remote server using the SFTP protocol. It supports recursive directory creation, effectively behaving like `mkdir -p` on a Unix-like system.

Usage

```

sftp_mkdir(
  sftp_conn,
  remote_url = NULL,
  .recursive = TRUE,
  .verbose = TRUE,
  .ignore_error = .recursive
)

```

Arguments

<code>sftp_conn</code>	An SFTPConn object containing connection details and authentication. Created by <code>sftp_connect</code> .
<code>remote_url</code>	Character. The full URL or path of the file or directory to be operated on.
<code>.recursive</code>	Logical. Defaults to FALSE. If TRUE, will recursively perform the SFTP operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>sftp_delete()</code>: deletes the directory and everything within. • <code>sftp_list()</code>: lists all the directories and files. • <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>: creates all the missing parent directories. • <code>sftp_rename()</code>: see <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>.
<code>.verbose</code>	Logical. Defaults to TRUE. Prints helpful messages.
<code>.ignore_error</code>	Logical. If TRUE, the function uses the <code>*</code> prefix in the curl quote command to ignore errors (e.g., if the directory already exists). This is useful in <code>.recursive = TRUE</code> because attempting to create a directory that already exists will return error. While this can be avoided by checking for directory existence, doing so adds extra step that impacts performance.

Details

When `.recursive = TRUE`, the function splits the path into segments and attempts to create each one sequentially. It uses the `*` prefix for internal calls to ensure that existing directories do not trigger errors.

Value

`invisible(TRUE)` on success.

Examples

```
## Not run:
if (interactive() || Sys.getenv("R_SFTP_TEST_SERVER") == "true") {
  # Create new SFTP connection
  sftp_conn <- sftp_connect(
    hostname = "127.0.0.1",
    port     = "2222",
    user     = "tester",
    password = "password123"
  )

  # Create a nested directory structure
  sftp_mkdir(sftp_conn, "project/data/results/2026", .recursive = TRUE)

  # Create a single directory and fail if parents are missing
  sftp_mkdir(sftp_conn, "simple_dir", .recursive = FALSE)
}

## End(Not run)
```

sftp_rename

Rename or Move Remote SFTP Resources

Description

Renames a file or directory on the SFTP server. This can also be used to move files between directories.

Usage

```
sftp_rename(
  sftp_conn,
  remote_url_from = NULL,
  remote_url_to   = NULL,
  .recursive      = FALSE,
  .verbose        = TRUE
)
```

Arguments

sftp_conn	An SFTPConn object containing connection details and authentication. Created by <code>sftp_connect</code> .
remote_url_from	Character. The current path of the file or directory.
remote_url_to	Character. The new path for the file or directory.
.recursive	Logical. Defaults to FALSE. If TRUE, will recursively perform the SFTP operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <code>sftp_delete()</code>: deletes the directory and everything within. • <code>sftp_list()</code>: lists all the directories and files. • <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>: creates all the missing parent directories. • <code>sftp_rename()</code>: see <code>sftp_mkdir()</code>.
.verbose	Logical. Defaults to TRUE. Prints helpful messages.

Details

The SFTP protocol's rename command is typically non-overwriting. If `remote_url_to` already exists, the operation will fail.

When `.recursive = TRUE`, parent directories of `remote_url_to` are identified, and existence ensured before attempting the renaming.

Value

`invisible(TRUE)` on success.

Examples

```
if (interactive() || Sys.getenv("R_SFTP_TEST_SERVER") == "true") {
  # Create new SFTP connection
  sftp_conn <- sftp_connect(
    hostname = "127.0.0.1",
    port     = "2222",
    user     = "tester",
    password = "password123"
  )

  # Simple rename in the same folder
  sftp_rename(sftp_conn, "old_name.csv", "new_name.csv")

  # Move a file to a new, potentially non-existent directory
  sftp_rename(
    sftp_conn,
    "data/raw.csv",
    "archive/2026/processed.csv",
    .recursive = TRUE
  )
}
```

sftp_upload	<i>Upload a file to an SFTP server</i>
-------------	--

Description

A robust wrapper to upload local files or data frames to a remote SFTP server. It manages the libcurl handle lifecycle, ensures connections are closed, and validates URLs against the connection's "Source of Truth".

Usage

```
sftp_upload(  
  sftp_conn,  
  local_file,  
  remote_file = NULL,  
  .create_dir = FALSE,  
  .verbose = TRUE  
)
```

Arguments

sftp_conn	An SFTPConn object containing connection details and authentication. Created by sftp_connect .
local_file	Character string (path to a file) or a data.frame. Data frames are automatically written to a temp file before upload. The temp file will automatically be cleaned up at the end of function.
remote_file	Character string. The destination path on the server. If NULL, attempts to use the basename of the local_file.
.create_dir	Logical. Defaults to FALSE. If TRUE, creates the necessary parent directories if needed.
.verbose	Logical. Defaults to TRUE. Prints helpful messages.

Details

The function uses a secure lifecycle:

1. Validates the remote URL to prevent credential leakage.
2. Opens a file connection to the local source.
3. Uses `on.exit` to ensure file handles are released and temporary files are unlinked even if the transfer is interrupted.

Value

Returns TRUE (invisibly) on success. Throws an error on failure.

Examples

```
if (interactive() || Sys.getenv("R_SFTP_TEST_SERVER") == "true") {  
  # Create new SFTP connection  
  sftp_conn <- sftp_connect(  
    hostname = "127.0.0.1",  
    port     = "2222",  
    user     = "tester",  
    password = "password123"  
  )  
  
  # Upload `my_df` as csv  
  sftp_upload(conn, my_df, "uploads/data.csv")  
}
```

Index

sftp_connect, [2](#), [4](#), [5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [10](#), [11](#)
sftp_delete, [3](#)
sftp_download, [5](#)
sftp_list, [6](#)
sftp_mkdir, [8](#)
sftp_rename, [9](#)
sftp_upload, [11](#)