



NUVAR

Indie filmmaking toolkit · storyboard, pre-viz, AI studio.

VERSION 1.7.4 · USER GUIDE

Welcome

NUVAR turns a screenplay into a storyboard, a storyboard into an animatic, and an animatic into a shoot plan — all in one app. Everything stays on your machine. No subscription. No cloud lock-in.

NEW IN V1.7

Character Sheet Generator — from a concept (or an anchor image) NUVAR writes a locked character look and generates a consistent set of views, saved as a reusable character. **Real camera coverage** — an Angle-coverage control produces shot/reverse-shot and several angles per beat, plus right-click → “Add coverage angles...” on existing shots. **Color grading** — a non-destructive per-shot and project-wide look with LUTs, Auto-correct, Match-to-reference, grain/vignette/VHS, live preview and baked into exports. Plus cross-platform reliability hardening (macOS asset paths, friendlier API-key handling, a whole crash-class closed), and in **1.7.4**: safer batch image generation (your edits during a batch are never lost), smoother timeline performance, safer project locking, and trial enforcement on AI generation & PDF/XML export. This is the **STANDARD** edition; the internal **STUDIO** edition adds AI video generation + a full timeline editor.

What's in the box



Storyboard manager



AI script analyzer

Paste a screenplay (txt / Fountain / PDF / DOCX)
— Claude breaks it into shots.

Acts, layers, shots — drag-reorderable (cards across layers, whole layers & acts too), with per-shot type, duration, audio, notes.



Image generation

61+ image models via Atlas Cloud. Character consistency via reference images.



3D scene preview

Drop GLB models, position camera and characters, snapshot to PNG.



Mood Board

Pinterest-style reference grid per project. Drag from Explorer.



Animatic → WebM / MP4 / ProRes

Render shots as a video with mixed audio. Plays in Premiere & Resolve.



XML export

Direct import into Premiere Pro and After Effects timelines.



Production schedule

Day · location · cast · setup tracking, CSV export for line producers.

Install & First Run

First launch creates your local admin account and starts a 14-day trial. Everything you need is built in — no extra installs required.

System requirements

OS	MIN. VERSION	NOTES
Windows	10 (64-bit)	SmartScreen warning on first launch — click "More info" → "Run anyway"
macOS	11 Big Sur	Apple Silicon (arm64) and Intel (x64). Right-click → Open on first launch.
RAM	4 GB	8 GB+ recommended for large projects (500+ shots)
Disk	500 MB	Plus space for your project images

First-run wizard



- 1 **Splash screen** — click anywhere or wait 2.4 seconds to continue.
- 2 **Create admin account** — choose a username (≥ 3 chars), password (≥ 8 chars), and optional recovery email. These are stored encrypted on your machine only.
- 3 **Accept the EULA** — required by law. Click the link to read the full text.
- 4 **Trial starts automatically** — 14 days of all features unlocked. After trial expires, the app keeps working but exports get a watermark until you enter a license key.
- 5 **Pick a project** — install the sample project (recommended for the first time), create a blank project, or link an existing folder.

TIP — TRY THE SAMPLE PROJECT FIRST

Click "TRY SAMPLE PROJECT" on the projects page. You'll get an 8-shot 3-act demo that exercises every major feature, with notes on each card pointing to what to try next.

5-minute Quickstart

Go from script to storyboard with three AI-generated images in five minutes. Requires an Anthropic API key + an Atlas Cloud key (see Settings → API Keys).

- 1 **New project** — Projects page → "+ NEW PROJECT" → name it, pick a color.
- 2 **Paste a screenplay** — top toolbar → "AI SCRIPT" → paste 1-2 pages → click "ANALYZE". Claude returns a storyboard preview.
- 3 **Apply** — "APPLY TO PROJECT" (replace or append). The full storyboard appears.
- 4 **Tag a character** — Header → "CHARACTERS" → "+ NEW" → describe (e.g. "Mid-30s, leather jacket, weathered"). Click a shot's chip-row to attach the character.
- 5 **Generate images** — Click  on any card → pick a model → "GENERATE". Image arrives in ~10-30 seconds.
- 6 **Switch to timeline** — top right →  button (or `Ctrl 4`). Press `Space` to play your animatic.

Projects

Every project is a folder on your disk. You decide where it lives — usually

`Documents/NUVAR/` on Windows or `~/Documents/NUVAR/` on Mac.

Project anatomy on disk

```
Documents/NUVAR/my-film/ |— cron-project.json ← the only mandatory file |— images/ ← AI-
generated & imported images | |— ESTABLISHING-001.jpg | |— ... |— audio/ ← per-shot audio
files |— scenes/ ← 3D scene JSON snapshots |— mood-board/ ← reference images |— drawings/
← hand-drawn frames |— .nuvar-backups/ ← last 5 auto-backups
```

Project actions

- **New project** — picks a fresh folder, optionally pre-fills from a template.
- **Link existing folder** — bring back a project after machine change or restore.
- **Scan drives** — searches all your drives for `cron-project.json` files. Useful when you've forgotten where you put something.
- **Edit meta** — right-click a card to rename, recolor, or add a subtitle without opening it.
- **Unlink** — removes the project from your list but never touches the disk folder.

The Storyboard

Four views, one model. Switch views with the buttons in the header or `Ctrl 1-4`. Every view edits the same project — moving between them never loses work.

The four views

KEY	VIEW	BEST FOR
Ctrl 1	Grid	The default. See all shots in their acts & layers.
Ctrl 2	Center	Focus on one shot at a time, like a Lightbox.
Ctrl 3	Tree	Outline view — quick re-ordering at the act/layer level.
Ctrl 4	Timeline	Animatic — proportional widths reflect shot duration.

Aspect ratios

Eight presets in the top-right corner: 16:9 · 9:16 · 2.35:1 · 2.39:1 · 4:3 · 1:1 · 3:4 · 6:5. Changes all card thumbnails instantly without re-rendering. Useful for switching between landscape feature and portrait social.

Shots, Layers, Acts









Three-level structure mirrors real productions. Most projects use one layer per act — but you can have parallel layers (alt cuts, reference videos, narration) when needed.

Shot anatomy

Code Your shot label — "ESTABLISHING", "INT_CAFE_03". Free text.	Type main / flash / insert. Visual distinction in the timeline.
Camera ECU · CU · MS · WS · OTS · POV · AERIAL... + custom types	Duration Seconds — feeds the animatic and PDF.
Description Free text. Feeds AI image generation.	Characters Tag chips. Their references are sent with image gen.
Audio	Production

Per-shot actions

Each card has a row of icons in the center-bottom:

-  — Edit shot (modal with all fields)
-  — Generate AI image for this shot
-  — Pick image from disk
-  — Draw the shot (Wacom-friendly canvas)
-  — Open 3D scene editor
-  — Pick audio file
-  — Export this single shot as PNG
-  — Delete shot (undoable)

Multi-select & bulk operations

shift-click a card to extend a range; **ctrl**-click to toggle one. The bottom action bar appears once anything is selected:

- Bulk delete · Bulk status (wip / done / missing) · Bulk move to layer · Bulk copy to layer · Bulk generate


Characters

Characters are the secret to consistent AI-generated images. Define them once, tag them on shots, and reference images get sent with every generation.

How character consistency works

- 1 Header → "CHARACTERS" → "+ NEW CHARACTER"
- 2 Give them a name, color (for chip), and a written description (gets prepended to prompts)
- 3 Upload 1-5 reference images — front, profile, full body if possible
- 4 On any shot, click the character-chip row to tag them

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Next time you  generate, those references are uploaded to the image model (max 5 per gen)

⚠ REFERENCE IMAGE RULES

Atlas Cloud auto-resizes references to 1024px JPEG. Only the first 5 references are sent. Pick the strongest, clearest shots — squinting, profile, motion blur all hurt consistency.

AI Script Analysis

Paste a screenplay or upload a file — Claude breaks it into shots structured as acts and layers. Edit before applying.

Supported formats

- Plain text — copy/paste anything
- Fountain (`.fountain`) — the screenwriter-friendly markup
- PDF — text-only PDFs from Final Draft / Highland / WriterDuet
- Word (`.docx`) — works for un-formatted scripts too

Director presets

Pick a director preset to bias Claude toward a particular sensibility. Built-in: *Classic Drama*, *Music Video*, *Commercial*, *Documentary*, *Action*. You can edit or create your own in **Settings** → **Director Prompts**.

Apply modes

- **Replace** — wipes the current project, starts fresh. Use for first analysis.
- **Append** — adds the AI's output as new acts after your existing ones. Use for revisions.
- **Save as new project** — generates a new folder, leaves your current project untouched.

Image Generation

61+ image models via Atlas Cloud — pick the right model for the shot, batch-generate the whole project, or refine one shot at a time.

Choosing a model

The model dropdown groups options by family. Common picks:

- **Seedream-v5-lite** — fast, good for text2img establishing shots
- **Seedream-v5-pro** — higher fidelity, slower
- **FLUX** — strong on character consistency with references
- **Edit models** (e.g. *seededit*) — require at least one reference image; batch fallback to text2img otherwise

Batch generation

Header → "BATCH" generates images for every shot with status "missing". A progress modal shows current shot + cancel button. Generated shots are tallied in the Generation Report.

TIP — TEST FIRST

Generation runs on your own provider account (you bring your own API key). NUVAR no longer shows price estimates — provider prices change and can be wrong — so always start with a small test batch and check the real charges in your provider's own dashboard.

Shot Refinement (✨)

The ✨ button next to shot description rewrites it via Claude. Optionally give a direction like "more dramatic" or "tighter".



- Vague descriptions like "Bob enters" become evocative: "Mid-shot — Bob steps through the doorway, autumn light catching the dust"
- The direction field accepts anything — "more dramatic", "shorter", "in style of Kubrick", "show character motivation"

- The original description is replaced; use `ctrl z` to undo

3D Scene Preview

Lay out a shot in 3D space. Use the built-in GLB starter pack or drop your own models from Sketchfab / Mixamo / RenderHub.

Workflow

- 1 Click  on a shot card to open the scene editor
- 2 Drag a GLB from the library panel into the viewport
- 3 Click to select, use the gizmo to move/rotate/scale
- 4 Adjust camera (pan/orbit/zoom with mouse)
- 5 Click " SNAPSHOT" — writes a PNG to the shot's image slot
- 6 The 3D scene JSON saves separately — you can come back and refine

Mood Board

A Pinterest-style reference grid per project. Open with `ctrl M` or from the project dropdown.

- **Drag from Explorer / Finder** — drop straight onto the grid
- **Per-item tags** — "lighting reference", "wardrobe", "color palette"
- **Per-item notes** — "use as primary mood for act 1"
- **Search** — filters by tag or note text
- Items stay project-local — never shared between projects

Animatic Playback

The timeline view (**Ctrl 4**) plays your shots in sequence, respecting each shot's duration. Audio plays in sync if attached.

- **Space** — play / pause
- **→** — skip to next shot
- **0** — reset to start
- Click any shot on the timeline to jump to it
- Centered preview shows the current shot at full size during playback

Export Animatic Video (WebM / MP4 / ProRes)

Renders your animatic to a real video file with per-shot audio mixed in. Frames are assembled directly by the built-in encoder — much faster than real time, and you always choose where to save.

Formats

FORMAT	CODEC	USE FOR
WebM	VP9 + Opus	Smallest file · browsers, VLC, quick sharing
MP4	H.264 + AAC	Universal — every player, YouTube, NLEs
MOV	ProRes 422 HQ + PCM	Editing master — Premiere, Resolve, Final Cut

The **Quality** selector applies to MP4 & WebM; ProRes is always full quality.

Layers to include

A per-act checklist lets you render exactly the layers you want — with **All / Main only / None** shortcuts and a live shot + runtime counter. Default: the main (first) layer of every act. If you include an act's main layer plus other layers, anchored inserts/cutaways are woven into the main line just like in playback.

Resolution presets

PRESET	LONG EDGE	USE FOR
720p	1280	Quick previews · sharing
1080p	1920	Client review · social
1440p	2560	Conform pre-edit · presentations

The aspect ratio is read from the current storyboard view — change it via the top-right buttons before exporting. The preset is the *long* edge, so a 9:16 board at 1080p exports as 1080×1920.

Export PDF

Export menu → "Export as PDF". Creates a printable storyboard with images, shot codes, descriptions, and a header. The page layout follows the board's aspect ratio — 9:16, 1:1, 2.39:1 and the rest each get matching thumbnails.

Options: portrait / landscape · A4 / Letter · "include descriptions" toggle. Trial / trial-expired users get a "TRIAL" watermark; licensed users get a clean export.

Export to Premiere / After Effects

Generates a Final Cut Pro 7 XML — accepted as import by Premiere Pro and After Effects. Shots come in as a sequence at the right durations.

- **Premiere** — File → Import → pick the .xml. Each shot becomes a clip with the right offset.
- **After Effects** — File → Import → pick the .xml. Creates a comp with layers.
- Images are referenced by absolute path — keep the project folder intact when sharing the XML.

Production Schedule

Tools menu → "Production Schedule" — table view of every shot with editable day · location · cast · setup columns. CSV export feeds your line producer.

- Sort by any column (day, location, etc.) to plan a day-out-of-days
- Summary at the top: total shots, scheduled, unscheduled, day count, location count
- Inline editing — every keystroke debounce-saves at 600 ms

Generation Report

Tools menu → "Generation Report" shows how much you've generated — the number of shots with an AI image, plus a per-model count. NUVAR does not show price/credit figures (provider prices are uncertain and change often).

- Total: how many shots have at least one generated image.
- By model: how many shots were generated with each model.
- Per-shot list: click any entry to open it in the lightbox.

Check your actual spend in your AI provider's own dashboard — you use your own API keys.

Settings

Settings live on a separate page accessible via the gear icon. The left sidebar lets you jump between sections; the search box (`Ctrl K`) filters across all sections.

Major sections

- **API Keys** — Anthropic (Claude) + Atlas Cloud. Stored encrypted via OS keychain.
- **License** — Activate / deactivate your key. Trial status.
- **Defaults** — Image size, aspect ratio, default model.
- **Director Prompts** — Edit built-in presets or create your own.
- **Storage** — Move projects / 3D library to a different drive.
- **Shot Types** — Add custom camera shot abbreviations.
- **Shortcuts** — All keyboard shortcuts in one place.

- **Maintenance** — Self-registration toggle, crash logs, danger zone (full reset).
- **About** — Version, bug report, EULA, Impressum, AGB.

License & Trial

NUVAR is commercial software. The 14-day trial gives you full access; after that exports get a watermark.

States

STATE	WHAT IT MEANS	EXPORTS
trial	First 14 days, full features	Clean
trial-expired	14+ days, no license activated	Watermark "TRIAL EXPIRED"
licensed	Valid key activated	Clean
expired	License had an expiry date that passed	Watermark


Activate a key

Settings → License → paste the key starting with `NUVAR-...` → click **ACTIVATE**. The signature is verified offline against a built-in public key — no internet round-trip.

PRIVACY NOTE

License activation is fully offline. We never see your key. Even our updater (when enabled) only checks for new versions; nothing about your usage is sent anywhere.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Press  anywhere in the app for the full cheatsheet overlay.

Universal

SHORTCUT	ACTION
Ctrl + S	Save immediately
Ctrl + Z / Y	Undo / Redo
Ctrl + K	Command palette
Ctrl + F	Find / Replace
Ctrl + M	Mood Board
Ctrl + +/-/0	Zoom UI
?	Cheatsheet

Storyboard

SHORTCUT	ACTION
Ctrl + 1-4	Switch view (grid / center / tree / timeline)
Space	Play / pause animatic
→	Next shot during playback
Shift+Click	Range select
Ctrl+Click	Toggle single shot
Del	Delete selected shot(s)
Alt + ↑↓	Move shot up/down within layer

Troubleshooting

First step for anything weird: Settings → About → "Report a Bug". Attaches the latest crash log automatically.

IMAGE GENERATION FAILS

- Check your Atlas Cloud key — Settings → API Keys → "TEST KEY"
- Check the credit balance on the Atlas Cloud dashboard
- Check the crash logs: Settings → Maintenance → Crash Logs

"PROJECT IS ALREADY OPEN IN ANOTHER WINDOW"

- You have a second NUVAR instance with the same project open — close it
- Or a crash left a stale lock — wait 90 seconds, or use "FORCE-OPEN" from the warning

LICENSE KEY WON'T ACTIVATE

- Make sure you copied the entire string including the `NUVAR-` prefix
- Check the key wasn't expired or revoked — contact support
- On Linux without libsecret, encrypted storage isn't available — NUVAR refuses to persist plaintext for security

APP WON'T START ON MAC ("DAMAGED")

- Right-click the app → Open → Open (one-time Gatekeeper approval)
- Or terminal: `xattr -cr /Applications/NUVAR.app`

LOST A PROJECT

- Projects page → "SCAN DRIVES" — searches all drives for `cron-project.json`
- The `.nuvar-backups/` folder inside each project has the last 5 autosaves