

# Vuo Manual

Vuo 1.0.1

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# 1 Introduction

Vuo is a realtime visual programming environment designed to be both incredibly fast and easy to use. With Vuo, artists and creative people can create audio, visual, and mixed multimedia effects with ease.

This manual will guide you through the process of installing Vuo and creating your first composition. Then it will show you the details of all the pieces of a composition and how to put them together. It will explain how to create and run compositions with the Vuo Editor and, as an alternative, the command-line tools. It will show you how to make Vuo do even more by adding nodes to your Node Library.

Many of the compositions in this manual are available from within the Vuo Editor's   menu. It may help to open these example compositions in the Vuo Editor and run them as you work through the manual.

For more resources to help you learn Vuo, see our [support page](#) on vuo.org.





For more information on what you can do with Vuo, see our [features page](#) and [roadmap](#) on vuo.org.

If you have any feedback about this manual, please [let us know](#). We want to make sure you find the manual helpful.

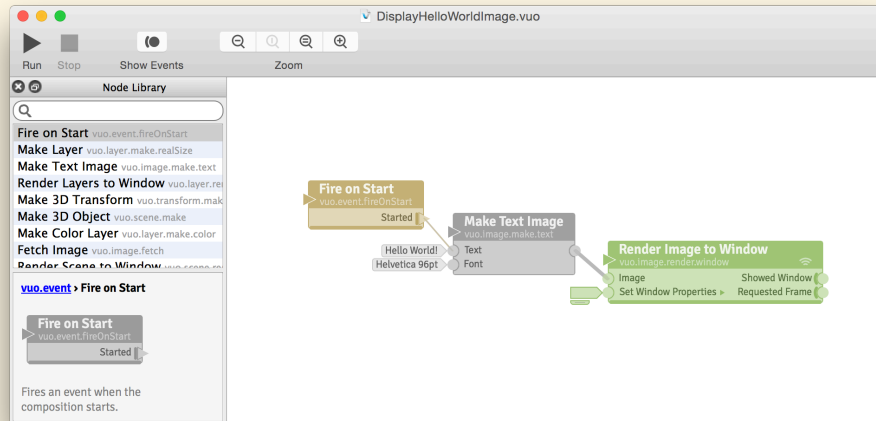
Welcome to Vuo. Get ready to create!

## 2 Quick Start

### 2.1 Install Vuo

- Go to <https://vuo.org/user> and log in to your account
- Click the  tab
- Under the  section, download the Vuo Editor
- Uncompress the ZIP file (double-click on it in Finder)
- Move the Vuo Editor application to your  Applications folder
- Open the Vuo Editor application from the  Applications folder and the Vuo Editor will appear. The first time you open it, you'll see a dialog box prompting you to activate your software.
- Click the "Activate Vuo" button to launch a web browser and complete the activation process. Depending on your browser, the activation might happen automatically, or you might need to follow the instructions on the web page.

## 2.2 Create a composition



Let's make a simple composition. It will just pop up a window with the text "Hello World!"

1. By default, the Vuo Editor displays a "Welcome to Vuo" window when it is first opened. Either click the "Create a new composition" button in that window or go to **File** > **New Composition**.
2. A composition window will appear. The Node Library will be on the left, and a canvas with a **Fire on Start** node will be on the right. The **Fire on Start** node is already on the canvas. Many compositions use a **Fire on Start** node, and it helps to remind you that Vuo uses events (such as the event that is fired out of the **Started** port) to make things happen in a Vuo composition.
3. In the Node Library, find the **Make Text Image** node. You can do this by typing part of the node title (such as "text") into the search bar at the top of the Node Library. Drag the node onto the canvas. You can see that "Hello World!" is written in next to the **Text** input port. The font and size are written next to the **Font** input port.
4. Double-click on the port (circle) next to the **Font** input port. This pops up an input editor. Change the font size to 96 by either typing it in, or using the font size slider. Click on "OK" when you're done.
5. In the Node Library, now find the **Render Image to Window** node. As before, you can do this by typing part of the node title (such as "render image") into the search bar at the top of the Node Library. Drag the node onto the canvas.
6. Draw a cable from the **Started** port of the **Fire on Start** node to the **Text** port of the **Make Text Image** node. You can do this by pressing the mouse button while over the **Started** port, dragging the cable that appears, and releasing the mouse button while over the **Text** port.
7. Now draw a cable from the output port on the right side of the **Make Text Image** to the **Image** port of the **Render Image to Window**.

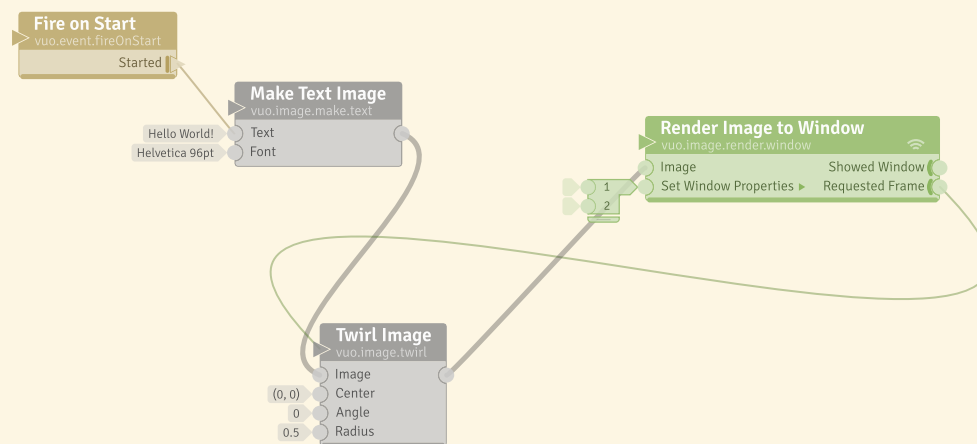
## 2.3 Run the composition


Now let's run your composition.

1. Click the Run button (or go to **Run** **Run**).

## 2.4 Modify the composition

You can modify your composition while it is running. This is called **live coding**. You can change data, rearrange cables, and even add nodes while a composition is running.



1. In the Node Library, search for the **Twirl Image** node, and drag it onto the canvas.
2. Put your mouse cursor on top of the cable that is going from **Make Text Image** to **Render Image to Window**, and click on it. It will change color to show you have selected it. Press the , or use the Editor's menu **Edit** **Cut** or **Edit** **Delete** to delete the cable.
3. Draw a cable to connect up the output port of the **Make Text Image** node to the **Image** port on the **Twirl Image** node.
4. Draw a cable from the output port of the **Twirl Image** node to the **Image** port on the **Render Image to Window** node.
5. Notice that nothing has happened yet in your composition. This is because Vuo uses events to drive changes in the composition. Draw a cable from the **Requested Frame** output port on the **Render Image to Window** node to the refresh port (the triangle on the top left of the **Twirl Image** node).



6. Since Vuo is event-driven, you'll need an event to push the image into the new **Twirl Image** node. Right click **Fire on Start's Started** trigger port. You'll see a menu that includes the option, **Fire Event**. (Don't see the **Fire Event** option? Make sure your composition is still running.) Click on this option to fire an event to carry the image through the cable to the **Twirl Image** node.
7. Now you can see that your text is distorted.
8. Double-click on the **Angle** input port of **Twirl Image**. By moving the slider you can see the twirl distortion increase or decrease. This is because the **Requested Frame** node's output port is sending a stream of events to the **Twirl Image** node and these events carry the changes to the **Render Image to Window** node.
9. Click on the Show Events button in the Vuo Editor toolbar and you'll see a representation of the events flowing out of the **Render Image to Window** to the **Twirl Image** node.

## 2.5 Close your composition

1. When you're finished admiring the "Hello world!" text, click the Stop button (or go to **Run** **Stop**).

## 2.6 How to learn more

There are different ways to learn about Vuo, depending on how you learn best. You can read more of the manual, watch [tutorials](#), or open example compositions in the Vuo Editor **File** **Open Example**.

### 2.6.1 Example compositions

Examples are arranged by the node set they help explain, such as `vuو.image` or `vuو.math`. From **File** **Open Example** in the Vuo Editor, you can hover over a node set to see relevant examples. Hovering over `vuو.color`, for example, will display the example composition, `Explore Color Schemes`. Clicking on an example composition will open it in the Vuo Editor. Alternately, if you know the title of an example composition, you can use the **Help** **Search** box to search for words within the composition title.

To learn more about an example composition, look at the Editor's Node Documentation Panel. This displays the composition's description, which includes instructions on how you can interact with it.

To see a list of descriptions for all example compositions for a node set, look in the node set documentation. In the Editor's Node Library (**Window** **Show Node Library**), find a node that belongs to that node set. For example, to learn more about the `vuو.math` example compositions, use the keyword

“math” in the Node Library search window to find the nodes in that node set, or click on a node in the library that contains “math” in its class name. You can see class names by using [View](#) [Node Library](#) [Display by class](#). Clicking on any node in the node set will show that node’s description in the Node Documentation Panel. The description will contain a link to the node set documentation. Using that link will display some general information about that node set, as well as descriptions of the associated example compositions.

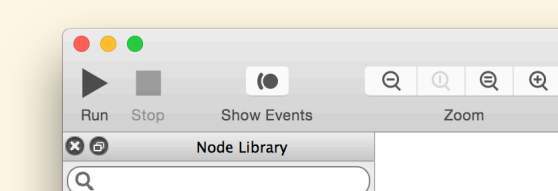
More examples are available in the Vuo [composition gallery](#). You can filter compositions in the gallery by using the tabs. The “Helpful” tab contains compositions other users have voted helpful.

## 3 The Basics

### 3.1 Events are what make things happen

Vuo compositions are driven by **events**. You can think of events as signals that cause nodes in your composition to **execute**. Without events, your composition won’t do anything! Events are like the wind — you can’t see them directly, but you can see their effects.

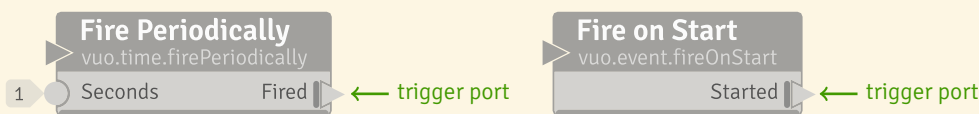
If you want to get a better idea of how events flow through your composition, you can use the Vuo Editor’s [Run](#) [Show Events](#), or you can use the Show Events button in the Vuo Editor toolbar.



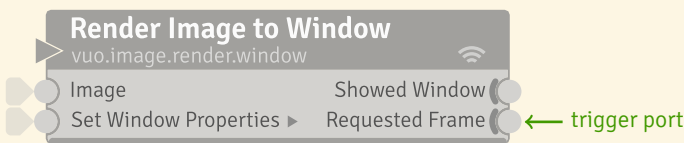
### 3.2 Trigger ports fire events

Events come from **trigger ports**. Trigger ports **Fire** events at certain times, which are different for each trigger port.

For example, the **Started** port of the **Fire on Start** node fires an event when a composition starts. A **Fire Periodically** node’s **Fired** port fires each time the time period in the **Seconds** port has elapsed (and doesn’t fire if the time period in the **Seconds** port is a negative number). The nodes that have a **Requested Frame** port, such as the **Render Image to Window** node, fire when the Vuo composition window is ready for its next frame. This is typically about 60 times a second.



Nodes with event trigger ports

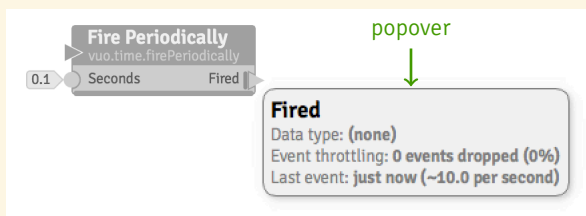


Node with a data-and-event trigger port

You can identify a trigger port by how it is displayed. All trigger ports are **output ports**, positioned on the right side of a node, since they generate events that flow out of a node. All trigger ports have a thick line on the left side of the port. The thick line indicates that trigger ports can *create* events; they never *transmit* events. More information on [trigger-ports](#) is provided later in the manual.

To place a trigger port into a composition, search for the words “fire” or “trigger” in the Node Library. Once you have found the node you want, drag it onto the canvas.

To see a trigger port in action, use the Show Events mode or a port popover.



More information about [the Show Events mode and port popovers](#) is provided later in the manual.

Based on how you connect these trigger ports to other nodes, you have complete control over the timing of events in your composition.

You can refer to the chapter on [Events](#) for more detail on event flow.

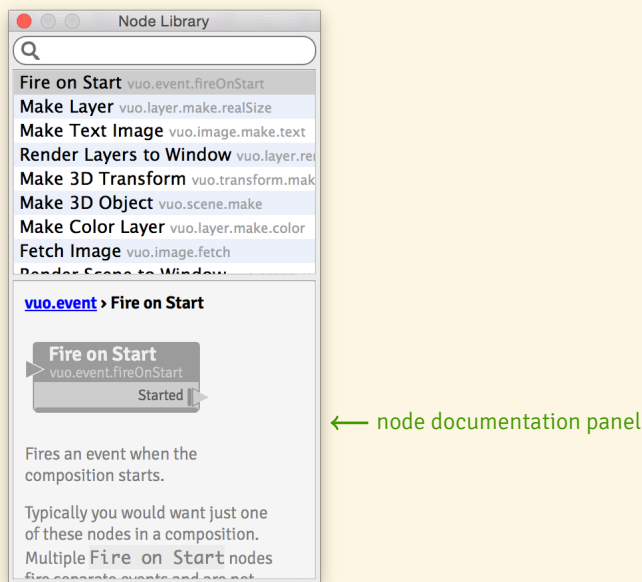
### 3.3 Nodes execute in response to events

The rectangular boxes in your composition are **nodes**. Each **node** performs a task when it receives an event, like counting numbers or displaying a window or periodically firing events. Nodes are your tools for creating — they’re the building blocks of compositions.

Nodes do many different things. They can create or manipulate an image or 3D object, display an image or 3D scene, receive information from outside your composition (from your mouse, for example), send data outside your composition, perform math or logic functions, or execute a wide variety of other actions.

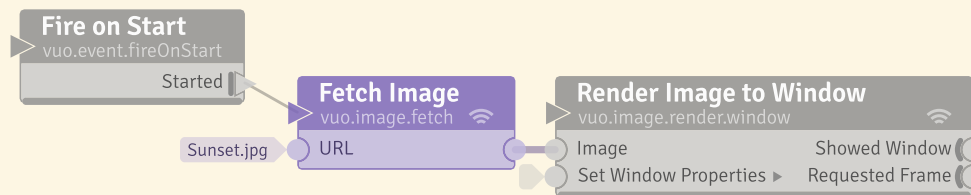
To find a node you want to put in your composition, search the Node Library for what you want to do. The Node Library will display both exact matches and related terms. For example, if you enter “sum,” into the search bar, you’ll see several nodes, including **Count**, **Add**, **Count within Range**, and **Calculate**.

When you look at a node, the title (large text along the top) tells you the task that the node performs. You can get more details by selecting the node in the Node Library or on the canvas. This will bring up the node’s documentation in the Node Documentation Panel, which will show an in-depth description of the node.



### 3.4 Events and data travel through cables and ports

Nodes talk to each other by sending data and events through **cables** plugged into **ports**. Data and events flow from the **output port** of one node, through a cable, to the **input port** of another node.



An example composition, Display Image (under vuo.image), with three **nodes** and two **cables**

Note for  
Quartz Composer users

A **node** in Vuo is analogous to a **patch** in Quartz Composer. Unlike Quartz Composer, which typically executes each patch once per video frame, nodes in Vuo can be executed whenever they receive an event — whether it’s 60 per second, 44,100 per second, or 1 per year.

Note for  
text programmers

A **node** in Vuo is analogous to a **class instance method** that takes a list of inputs and returns a list of outputs.

In the composition above, an event from the **Fire on Start** node travels to the **Fetch Image** node, which fetches the image. The image data and event then travel to the input port **Image** of the **Render Image to Window** node. This node will display the image in a window.

### 3.4.1 Sending events and data through cables

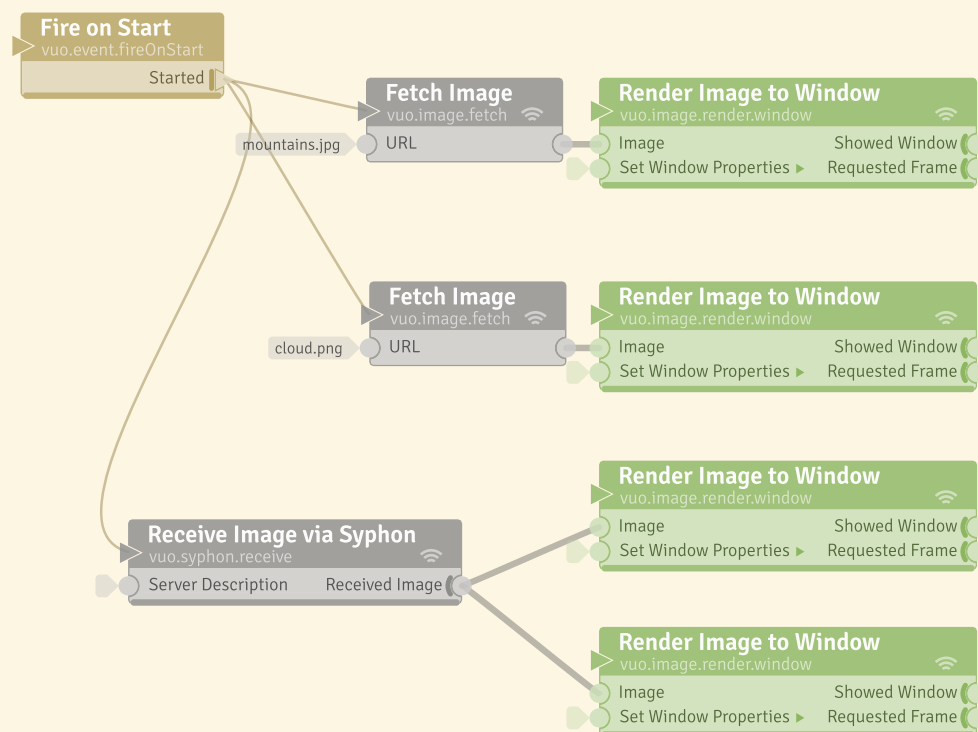
All cables carry events. In the composition above, an example of an **event-only** cable is the cable into the **Fetch Image** node, while an example of a **data-and-event** cable is the cable from **Fetch Image** to **Render Image to Window**.

**Event-only cables** are thin. **Data-and-event cables** are thicker than event-only cables.


### 3.4.2 Connecting cables to ports

Ports are where cables are connected. You've already seen one type of port, a trigger port. Multiple data-and-event and event-only cables can be connected to an output port, since the output created by one node may be needed by more than one node downstream. In contrast, multiple event-only cables, but only one data-and-event cable, can be connected to an input port.

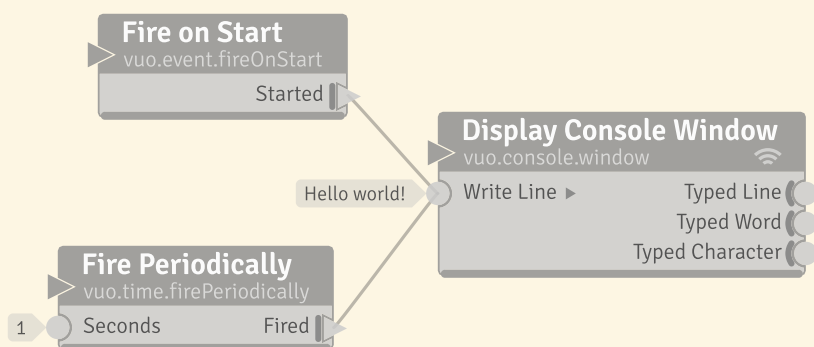
You can connect an event-only output port to any type of data-and-event input port. You can connect a data-and-event output port to a data-and-event input port if they are expecting the same, or similar data. For example, if an input port is expecting an image, you can't connect it up to an output port for integer numbers.



The composition above shows nodes with multiple output port cables.

 Note for  
Quartz Composer users

Unlike Quartz Composer, you may create as many or few windows as you like. This composition will create 4 separate windows.



The composition above shows multiple (two) event-only cables connected to a node's input port.

To draw a cable in a composition, pick the port where you want the cable to start or end, and drag from that port. You'll see ports that can be connected highlighted; pick the one you want to connect to. If you want to draw an event-only cable, hold down the option key while dragging (option + drag).

Some input ports let data and events flow into the node all the time, while some input ports control the flow of data and events into a node. The manual covers differences in input ports in detail in the section on [How events travel through a node](#).

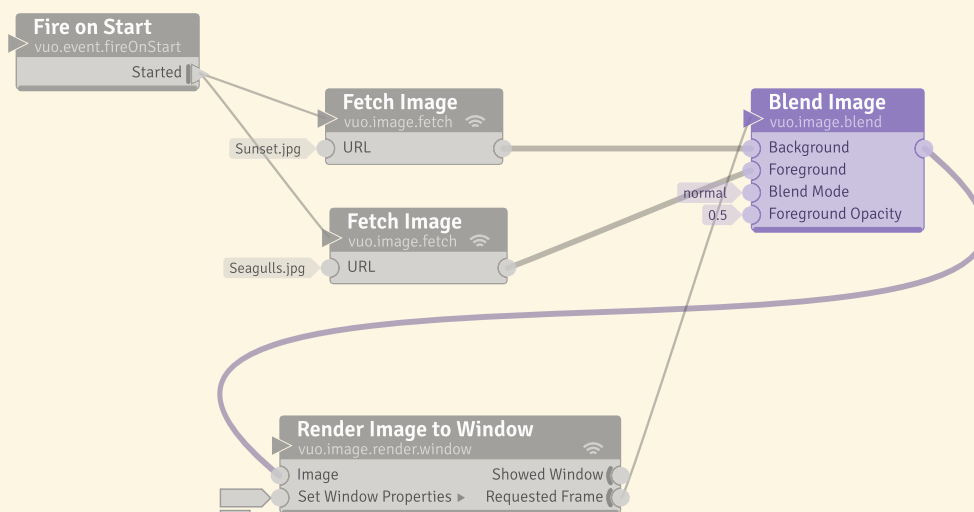
## 3.5 Putting it together in a composition

### 3.5.1 Starting new

When you create a composition, there is usually a problem you want to solve. Let's use an example to demonstrate this approach. How would I create a composite image made up of two images blended together?

1. First, you know you'll need the two images, so drag the two files onto the canvas. Vuo will create two **Fetch Image** nodes, with the image locations filled in.
2. Search the Node Library for "composite image," and drag **Blend Images** onto canvas. Alternatively, you could search the Node Library for "image" and see a list of all the nodes that manipulate images, and pick from that list.
3. Look at the Node Description Panel for the **Blend Images** node, and see that it expects the two images, one for foreground and one for background.
4. Drag a cable from one **Fetch Image** node's output to the **Foreground** input port and the other to the **Background** input port.
5. Confirm by looking at the port popover for **Blend Images**'s output port (by left-clicking on the output port) to see that its type is Image.

6. Search the Node Library for “display image,” or, if you remember the quick start example, search for “window” or “render.” Drag the **Render Image to Window** onto the canvas.
7. Start dragging a cable from **Blend Images**’s output port and drop the cable onto the **Image** port of the **Render Image to Window** node.
8. Run the composition — nothing shows up on screen. Why?
9. At this point you could check the port popover for the **Blend Images**’s output port. It says “Last event: (none observed).” That is the same message when tracing back to the **Fetch Image** input ports.
10. Think about what trigger ports you can use to fire an event. **Fire on Start** fires once when the composition starts, which should be good for loading images. Connect up the **Fire on Start** node’s **Started** port to the refresh port (top left triangle) on the **Fetch Image** nodes.
11. Stop the composition and run it again. Now the images show up, blended.
12. Yet, if you change **Foreground Opacity**, the change doesn’t affect the composition. You can either check the port popovers again to see that the most recent event was before you changed the port value, or you could remember that Vuo needs events to carry changes downstream.
13. Look again at trigger ports available in composition and the corresponding node descriptions. The **Requested Frame** output port of **Render Image to Window** fires around 60 times per second (or whatever your display refresh rate is set to), so it will update the blended image in real time as you experiment with opacities and blending modes.
14. Drag a cable from the **Requested Frame** output port to **Blend Images**’s (highlighted) refresh port, as when modifying the quick start example.
15. Use the input editors on **Foreground Opacity** and **Blend Mode** to control the blending.
16. Now you have a blended image.
17. Open the Editor’s example compositions, and see that your composition looks like the example, Blend Images, under vuo.image.

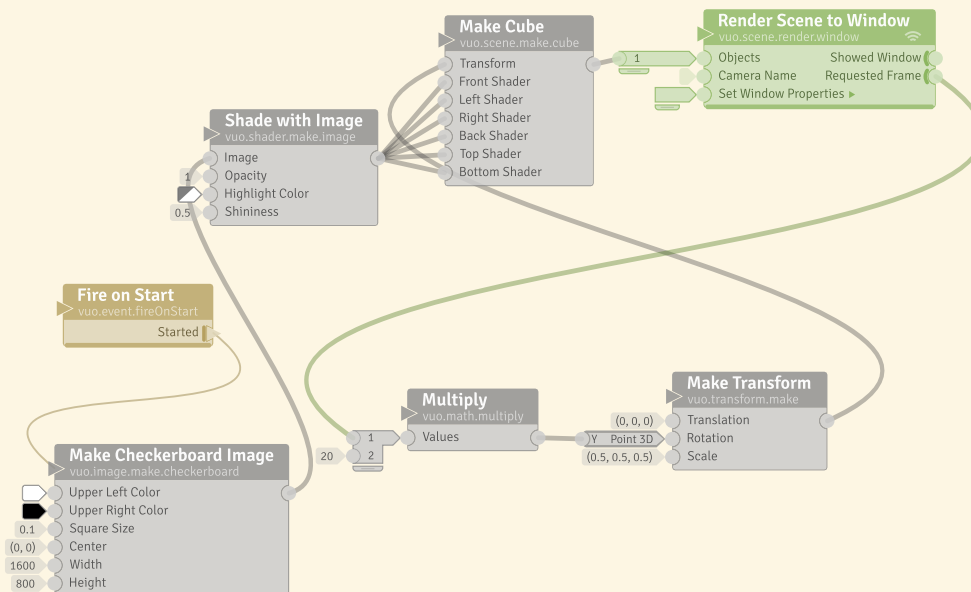




### 3.5.2 Modifying an existing composition

Again, let's start with a problem you want to solve, say to display a rotating cube.

1. You have read from the [example composition section](#) that each node set has several example compositions. You know from experience that `vuio.scene` likely covers 3D objects and scenes.
2. The example composition, Spin Sphere, sounds pretty close to what you want to do, so open that.
3. Run the example and see that it spins a sphere.
4. Search for “cube” in the node library and find **Make Cube**. Add it to the scene.
5. Now as you inspect the example composition you see that it has a **Make 3D Object**. This might be where to insert the **Make Cube** node. But, **Make 3D object** has three cables going into it. You don't think you'll need **Make Sphere Mesh**, but what about the **Shade with Image**?
6. Start by replacing the **Make 3D Object** node with the **Make Cube** node and connect it up to the **Render Scene to Window** node. Leave the **Shade with Image** node not connected. You see that there is a **Transform** input port on the **Make Cube**, like there was on the **Make 3D Object**. Connect up the output port of the **Make Transform** node to the **Transform** port.
7. Run the composition.
8. Now you see a large rotating cube, but it doesn't have any color on its sides, just a ghostly checkerboard. Let's connect up the **Shade with Image** to all sides of the cube, and run the composition again.
9. Now the cube has a black and white checkerboard on all sides, but you'd like it to be smaller. Adjust the **Scale** on the **Make Transform** node to 0.5, 0.5, 0.5.
10. ... and now you have a rotating cube.



## 4 Events

Events are what make things happen in a composition. As you get to know Vuo, you'll be able to look at a composition and imagine how an event comes out of a trigger port, flows through a cable into a node's input port, and either gets blocked or flows through the node's output ports and into the next cables. The previous section gave an overview of how that works. This section describes the process in detail.

### 4.1 Where events come from

Each event is fired from a **trigger port**, a special kind of output port on a node.



Some trigger ports fire events in response to things happening in the world outside your composition. For example, the **Receive Mouse Moves** node's trigger port fires an event each time the mouse is moved. The **Play Movie** node's trigger port fires a rapid series of events (for example, 30 per second), so that you can display images in rapid sequence as a movie. Similarly, the **Render Scene to Window** node's **Requested Frame** trigger port fires a rapid series of events, so that you can use these events to display scenes in rapid sequence as an animation.

Other trigger ports fire events in response to things happening within the composition. For example, the **Fire on Start** node's trigger port fires an event when the composition starts. The **Fire Periodically** node's trigger port fires events at a steady rate while the composition is running. A node's trigger port can even fire in response to an event received by the node, as happens with the **Spin Off Event** node. (However, this is a *different* event than the one that was received by the node. For more information, see the section on [Executing slow nodes in the background](#).)

Some nodes block events until a certain condition is met. The node **Became True**, for example, only lets an event through when the condition changes from false to true. These nodes are not trigger nodes, since they don't create events, but they control when events are output.

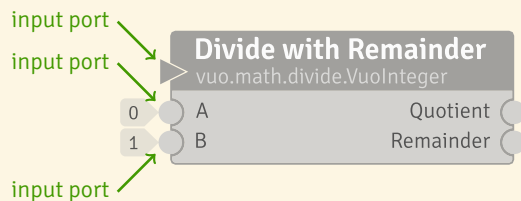
### 4.2 How events travel through a node

An event can come into a node through cables connected to one or more of its input ports. When an event reaches the node's input ports, the node executes, and it may or may not send the event through its output ports.

#### Note for Quartz Composer users

In Vuo, events are generated from trigger ports and flow to other nodes to cause them to execute. You can think of events "pushing" output data to downstream nodes. Quartz Composer works differently. In Quartz Composer, if you connect a Wave Generator (LFO) patch to a Cube patch, the cube will respond. It is "pulling" data at a rate of 60 fps. This "pull" is inherent in Quartz Composer. If you set up a similar situation in Vuo, nothing would happen. To make an object respond to a **Wave** node, you have to explicitly provide a stream of events to "push" the changes caused by the **Wave** node to the object. In Vuo you get to choose the source of those events. It might be the trigger port of a **Fire Periodically** node, the trigger port of a **Render Layers to Window** node, or something else.

### 4.2.1 Input ports



An **input port** is the location on the left side of the node where you can enter data directly, connect a data-and-event cable, or connect an event-only cable. When an event arrives at an input port, it causes the node to execute and perform its function based on the data present at the node's input ports.

**4.2.1.1 Event walls and doors** Some nodes, like the ones shown below, have input ports that block an event. This means the node will execute, but the event associated with that data won't travel through any output ports. Event blocking is useful when you want part of your composition to execute in response to events from one trigger port but not events from another trigger port, or when you're creating a feedback loop.



Ports that always block events have a solid semi-circle (like the **URL** port above) or a solid chevron (like the **Start** port above). This is called an **event wall**. The node must receive an event from another port without an event wall for the results of the node's execution to be available to other nodes.

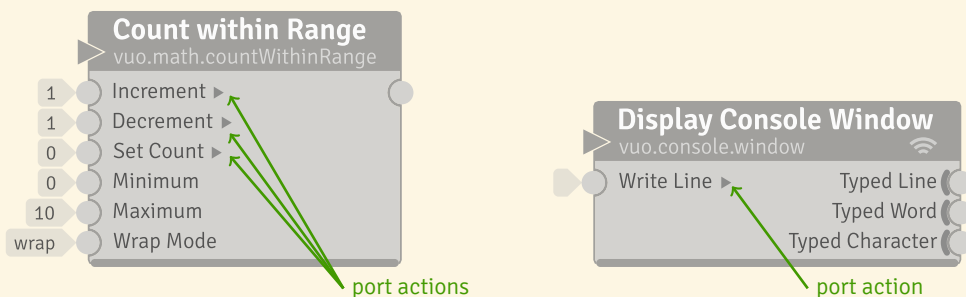
Ports that sometimes block events have a broken semi-circle (like the **Which** port above) or a broken chevron (like the **Time** port above). This is called an **event door**. Event doors are useful when you want to take events from a trigger port and filter some of them out or route them to different parts of the composition. For example, in the **Select Output** node, the value at the **Which** port will determine whether the data-and-event coming into the **In** port will be transmitted to the **Option 1** port or the **Option 2** port.

The manual section [How events travel through a composition](#) has more information on how events move through a composition.

#### + Tip

The event wall is visually placed inside the node to indicate that the event gets blocked inside the node (as it executes) — rather than getting blocked before it reaches the node.

**4.2.1.2 Port actions** Some input ports cause the node to do something special when they receive an event. In the **Count within Range** node shown below, the **Increment**, **Decrement**, and **Set Count** ports each uniquely affect the count stored by the node — upon receiving an event, they increment the count, decrement the count, or change the count to a specific number. Likewise, in the **Display Console Window** node, the **Write Line** input port does something special when it receives an event — it writes a line of text to the console window. Each of these ports has a *port action*.



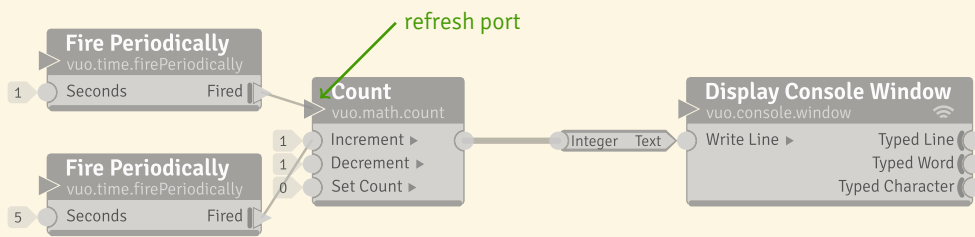
If an input port has a **port action**, then the node does something different when that input port receives an event than it does when any other input port receives an event. What counts as “something different”? Either the node outputs different data (immediately or later) or the node affects the world outside the composition differently.

Looking again at the **Count within Range** node, you can see that the node has some input ports with port actions and some without. For the ports without port actions — **Minimum**, **Maximum**, and **Wrap Mode** — the node will output the same number regardless of whether the event causing the node to execute has hit one of these ports. The node uses the data from these ports and doesn’t care if they received an event. For each of the ports with port actions, however, it makes a difference whether the event has hit the port. The **Increment** port, for example, only affects the count if the event came in through that input port.

Rather than affecting the node’s output data, as in the **Count within Range** node, the **Display Console Window** node’s port action affects the world outside the composition. When the **Write Line** input port receives an event, it doesn’t affect the data coming out of the node’s output ports. Rather, it affects what you see in the console window.

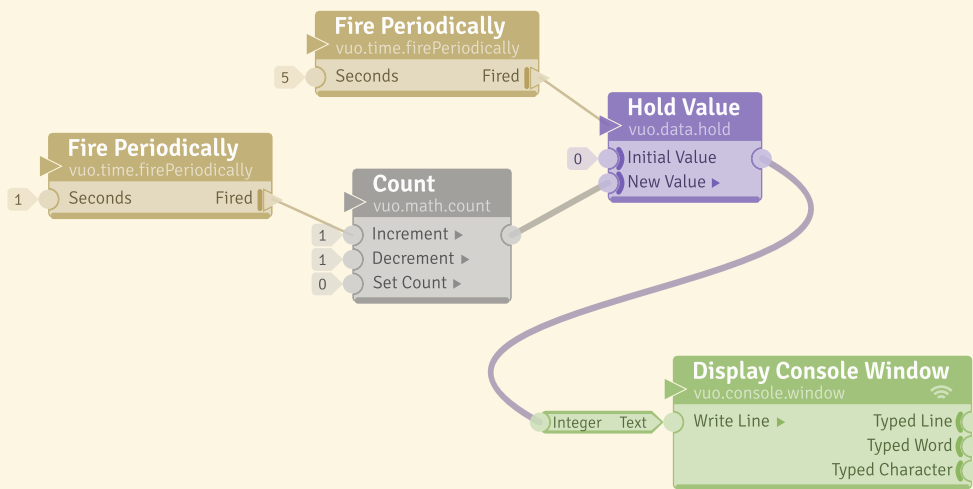
You can recognize an input port with a port action by the little triangle to the right of the port name. In Vuo, the triangle shape symbolizes events. The little triangle for the port action reminds you that this port does something unique when it receives an event.

**4.2.1.3 Refresh ports** Every node has a built-in event-only input port called the **refresh port**. The purpose of this port is to execute the node without performing any port actions.



A composition, CountSometimes.vuo, using a **refresh port**

For example, this composition above shows how you can use the refresh port to get the **Count** node's current count without incrementing or decrementing it. When the lower **Fire Periodically** node fires an event, **Display Console Window** writes the incremented count. When the upper **Fire Periodically** node — which is connected to the **Count** node's refresh port — fires an event, the count stays the same. **Display Console Window** writes the same count as before.



A composition using a **Hold Value** node

On other nodes, like **Hold Value**, the refresh port is the only input port that transmits events to any output ports. The **Hold Value** node lets you store a value during one event and use it during later events. This composition shows how you can use a **Hold Value** node to update a value every 1 second and write it every 5 seconds.

When the left **Fire Periodically** node executes, the count, as a data-and-event, is transmitted to the **Hold Value** node. The **Display Console Window** node doesn't execute because, when the event arrives at the **Hold Value** node, it is blocked.

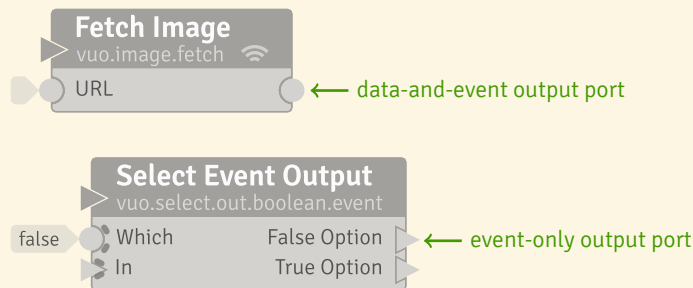
When the upper **Fire Periodically** node executes, the count stored in the **Hold Value** node travels to the **Display Console Window** node and gets written.

#### + Tip

Refresh ports are useful for allowing event flow out of nodes that have event walls. The event entering the **Refresh port** can travel to downstream nodes, while an event encountering an event wall cannot.

### 4.2.2 Output ports

When an event executes a node, the event can travel to downstream nodes using the **output ports**. Like input ports, output ports can be data-and-event or event-only.



**4.2.2.1 Trigger ports** Although trigger ports can *create* events, they never *transmit* events that came into the node through an input port (hence the thick line to the left of each trigger port — an event wall), nor do they cause any other output ports to emit events.

## 4.3 How events travel through a composition

Now that you’ve seen how events travel through individual nodes, let’s look at the bigger picture: how they travel through a composition.

### 4.3.1 The rules of events

Each event travels through a composition following a simple set of rules:

1. **An event travels forward through cables and nodes.** Along each cable, it travels from the output port to the input port. Within each node, it travels from the input ports to the output ports (unless it’s blocked). An event never travels backward or skips around.
2. **One event can’t overtake another.** If multiple events are traveling through the same cables and nodes, they stay in order.
3. **An event can split.** If there are multiple cables coming out of a trigger port or other output ports, then the event travels through each cable simultaneously.
4. **An event can rejoin.** If the event has previously split and gone down multiple paths of nodes and cables, and those paths meet with multiple cables going into one node, then the split event rejoins at that node. The node waits for all pieces of the split event to arrive before it executes.



Note for  
Quartz Composer users

Quartz Composer provides less control than Vuo does over when patches execute. Patches typically execute in sync with a framerate, not in response to events. Patches typically execute one at a time, unless a patch has been specially programmed to do extra work in the background.



Note for  
text programmers

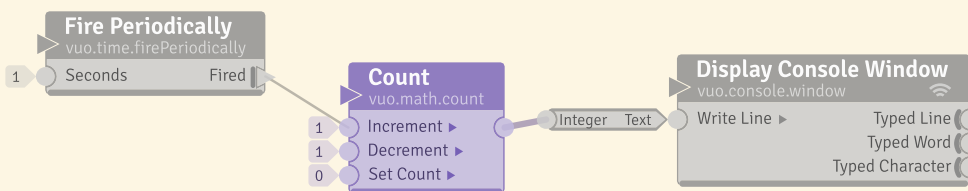
This section is about Vuo’s mechanisms for control flow and concurrency.

5. **An event can be blocked.** If the event hits an event wall or door on an input port, then although it will cause the node to execute, it may not transmit through the node.
6. **An event can travel through each cable at most once.** If a composition could allow an event to travel through the same cable more than once, then the composition is not allowed to run. It has an infinite feedback loop error.

Let's look at how those rules apply to some actual compositions.

### 4.3.2 Straight lines

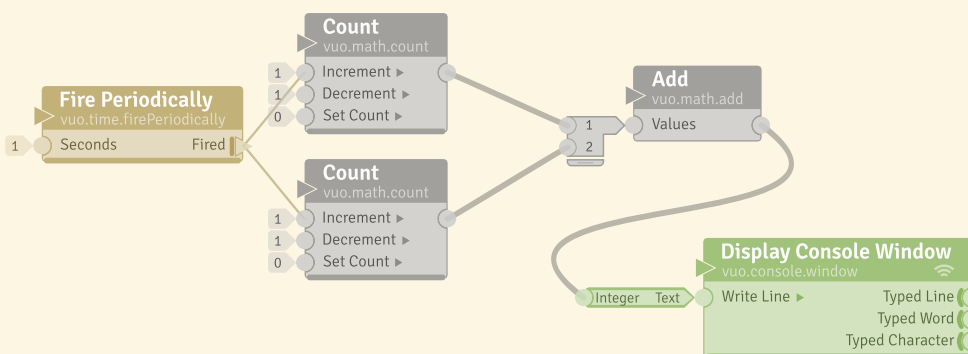
The simplest event flow in a composition is through a straight line of nodes, like the composition below.



In this composition, the **Fired** trigger port fires an event every 1 second. Each event travels along cables and through the **Count** node, then the integer-to-text type converter node, then **Display Console Window** node. The event is never split or blocked.

### 4.3.3 Splits and joins

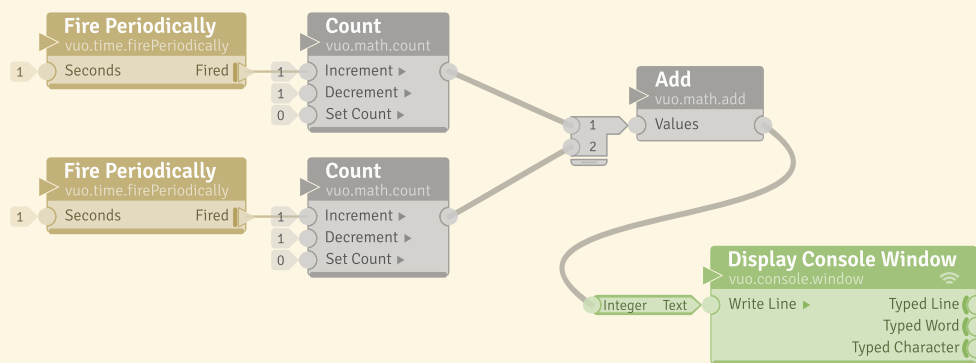
When you run a composition in Vuo, multiple nodes can execute at the same time. This takes advantage of your multicore processor to make your composition run faster.



In this composition, the two **Count** nodes are independent of each other, so it's OK for them to execute at the same time. When the **Fire Periodically** node fires an event, the upper **Count** node might execute before the lower one, or the lower one might execute before the upper one, or they might execute at the same time. It doesn't matter! What matters is that the **Add** node waits for input from both of the **Count** nodes before it executes.

The **Add** node executes just once each time **Fire Periodically** fires an event. The event branches off to the **Count** nodes and joins up again at **Add**.

#### 4.3.4 Multiple triggers



In this composition, the **Add** node executes each time either **Fire Periodically** node fires an event. If one of the **Add** node's inputs receives an event, it doesn't wait for the other input. It goes ahead and executes.

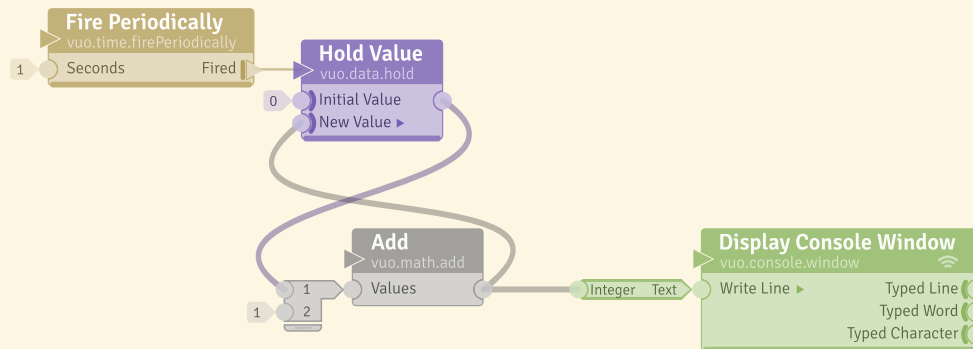
If the two **Fire Periodically** nodes fire an event at nearly the same time, then the **Count** nodes can execute in either order or at the same time. But once the first event reaches the **Add** node, the second event is not allowed to overtake it. (Otherwise, the second event could overwrite the data on the cable from **Add** to **Display Console Window** before the first event has a chance to reach **Display Console Window**.) The second event can't execute **Add** or **Display Console Window** until the first event is finished.

Compare this composition to the one above it. Since in this composition the **Fire Periodically** nodes can execute in either order, or at the same time, the results are unpredictable. When you want to ensure events are executed by separate nodes at the same time, use the *same* event.



### 4.3.5 Feedback loops

You can use a **feedback loop** to do something repeatedly or iteratively. An iteration happens each time a new event travels around the feedback loop.



A composition, CountWithFeedback.vuo, showing a **feedback loop**.

The above composition prints a count upon a console window: 1, 2, 3, 4, . . .

The first time the **Fire Periodically** node fires an event, the inputs of **Add** are 0 and 1, and the output is 1. The sum, as a data-and-event, travels along the cable to the **Hold Value** node. The new value is held at the **New Value** port, and the event is blocked, as you can see from its event wall; **Hold Value** doesn't transmit events from its **New Value** port to any output ports.

The second time the **Fire Periodically** node fires an event, the inputs of **Add** are 1 (from the **Hold Value** node) and 1. The third time, the inputs are 2 and 1. And so on.

**4.3.5.1 Infinite Feedback Loops** Each event is only allowed to travel once through a feedback loop. When it comes back to the first node of the feedback loop, it needs to be blocked by a walled input port. If your composition isn't set up like this, then Vuo will tell you there's an **infinite feedback loop** and won't allow your composition to run.

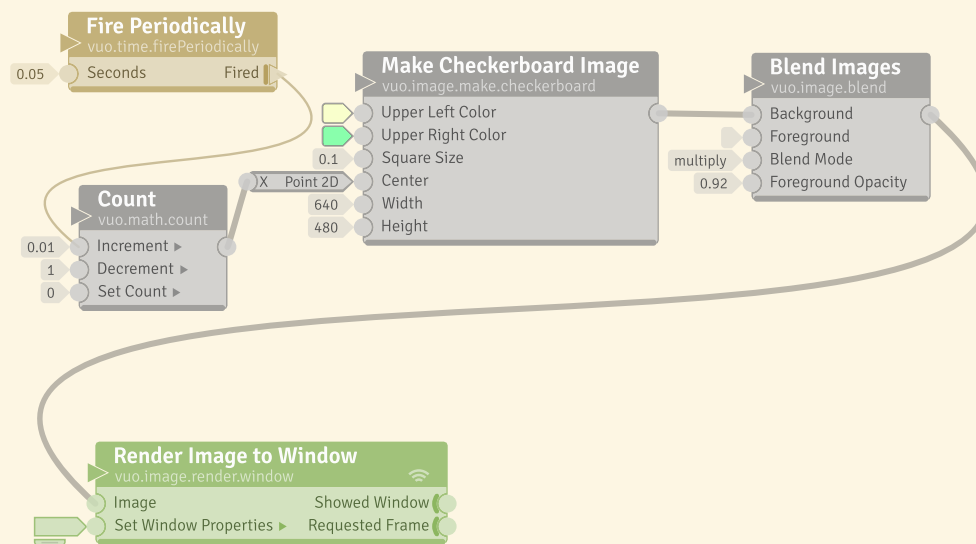


The above composition is an example of an infinite feedback loop. Any event from the **Fire Periodically** node would get stuck forever traveling in the feedback loop from the **Add** node's **Sum** port back to the

**Item 1** port. Because there's no event wall in the feedback loop, there's nothing to stop the event. Every feedback loop needs a node like **Hold Value** to block events from looping infinitely.

If your composition has an infinite feedback loop, there are several ways you can fix it. Let's walk through a composition where you encounter a feedback loop, and look at ways to solve it.

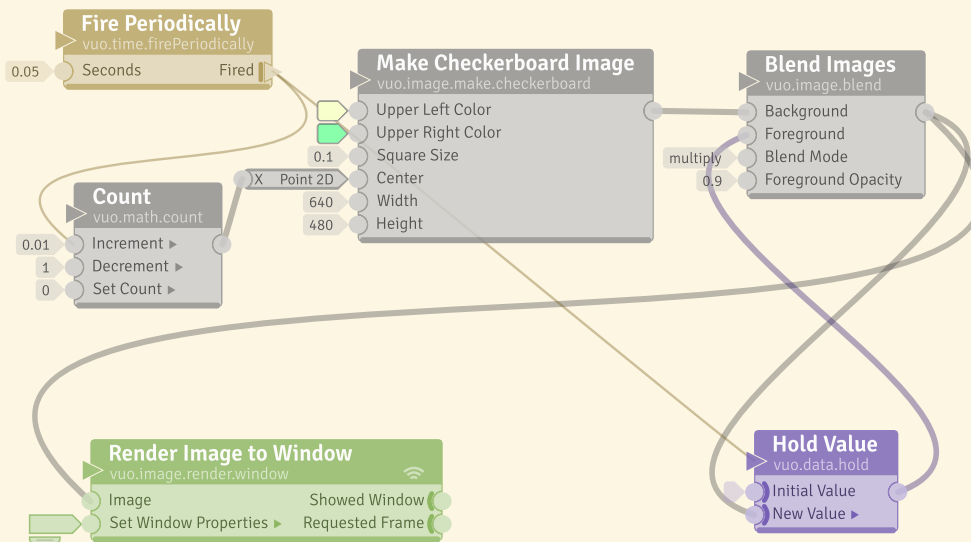
You can use Vuo's **Blend Images** node to blend two images together. This first composition creates one checkerboard image, and the image moves across the window because events from the **Fired** trigger port are incrementing the count that becomes the X value of the 2D point that is the center of the checkerboard.



But you want to see the effect of taking the produced image from the **Blend Images** node and feeding it back into the **Foreground** input port of the node. If you try that, you see that you create an infinite feedback loop, because there is no event wall on the **Foreground** input port to stop an event from entering the node a second time.

So, let's introduce a **Hold Value** and connect the output from the **Blend Images** to the **New Value** input port of the **Hold Value** node and the output from the **Hold Value** node to the **Foreground** input port of the **Blend Images** node. Now, what event source can we use? The composition has two nodes with trigger ports, the **Fire Periodically** and the **Render Image to Window**.

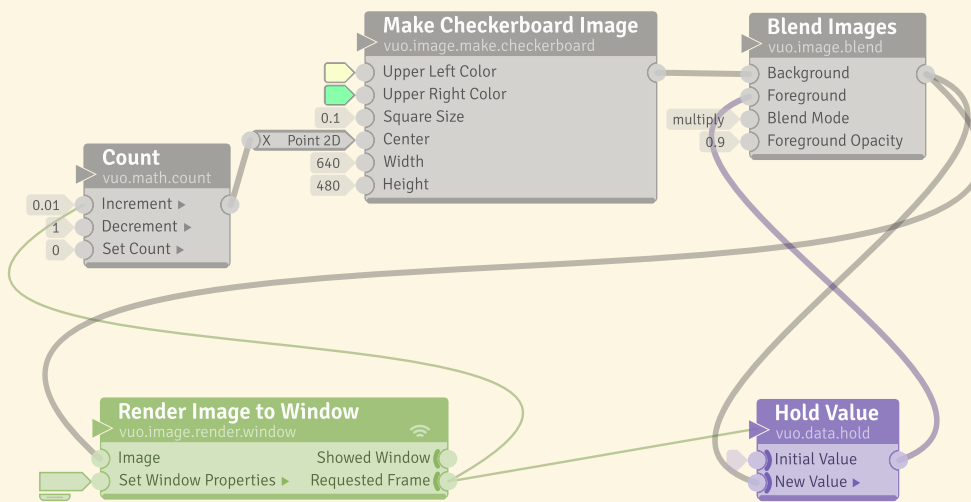
One strategy is to see if you can use the same trigger port that is already providing events to the node that will be part of the feedback loop. So, you can connect up the **Fired** trigger port to the refresh port of the **Hold Value** node.



This works. An event from the **Fire Periodically** node travels through the **Count** node to the **Make Checkerboard Image** node, to the **Blend Images** node. The same event travels through a separate cable to the **Hold Value** node, and then to the **Blend Images** node. There the two events are joined.

Notice that the first event through the **Hold Value** node will output the value present at the **Initial Value** port (which has no image present), and the second event will output the value present at the **New Value** port. It's not until the second event with its data reaches the **Blended Images** node that two images are blended. This is not important in this composition because the time between the first and second events reaching the node is small, but properly initializing your **Hold Value** nodes and understanding when the **New Value** port's data will arrive may be important in other compositions you create.

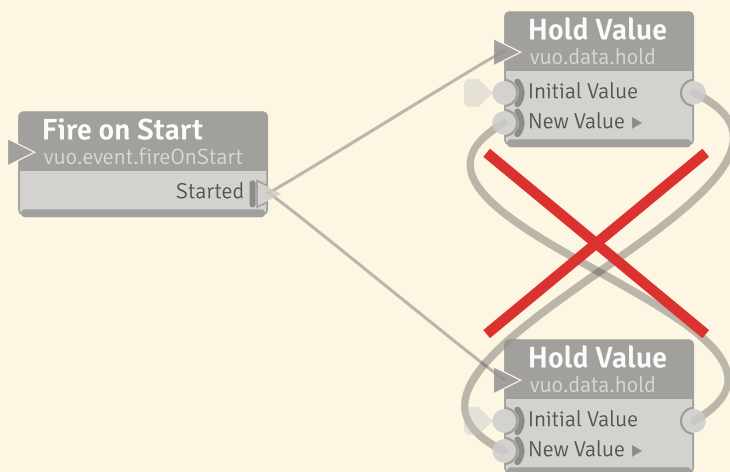
What about using the trigger port from the **Render Image to Window** node? When you look at your composition, using an event from a different trigger port may work better. So, a second strategy is to see if you can use the trigger port of another node in your composition to provide events to your **Hold Value** node's refresh port. This composition uses the events that are generated by the **Render Image to Window** node's **Requested Frame** trigger port.



In this case, you can use the same stream of events into the **Count**'s **Increment** port, simplifying your composition. Using events from a **Rendered Frame** trigger port is usually the best way to provide events for any type of animation in your composition.

A third approach is to insert a **Spin Off Event** node into your composition to generate a separate event. This is covered in the section [Generating an event that fires under certain circumstances](#).

**4.3.5.2 Deadlocked feedback loops** In most cases, an event needs to travel through all of the cables leading up to a node before it can reach the node itself. (The one exception is the node that starts and ends a feedback loop, since it has some cables leading into the feedback loop and some coming back around the loop.) A problem can arise if the nodes and cables in a composition are connected in a way that makes it impossible for an event to travel through all the cables leading up to a node before reaching the node itself. This problem is called a **deadlocked feedback loop**. If your composition has one, Vuo will tell you so and won't allow your composition to run.



This composition is an example of a deadlocked feedback loop. Because the top **Hold Value** node could receive an event from the **Fire on Start** node through the cable from the bottom **Hold Value** node, the top **Hold Value** node needs to execute after the bottom one. But because the bottom **Hold Value** node could receive an event from the **Fire on Start** node through the cable from the top **Hold Value** node, the bottom **Hold Value** node needs to execute after the top one. Since each **Hold Value** node needs to execute after the other one, it's impossible for an event to travel through the composition. To fix a deadlocked feedback loop, you need to remove some of the nodes or cables involved.

### 4.3.6 Summary

You can control how your composition executes by controlling the flow of events. The way that you connect nodes with cables — whether in a straight line, a feedback loop, or branching off in different directions — controls the order in which nodes execute. The way that you fire and block events — with trigger ports and with event walls and doors — controls when different parts of your composition will execute.

Each event that's fired from a trigger port has its own unique identity. The event can branch off along different paths, and those paths can join up again at a node downstream. When the *same* event joins up, the joining node will wait for the event to travel along all incoming paths and then execute just once. But if two *different* events come into a node, the node will execute twice. So if you want to make sure that different parts of your composition are exactly in sync, make sure they're using the same event.

## 4.4 Controlling the buildup of events

What if a trigger port is firing events faster than the downstream nodes can process them? Will the events get queued up and wait until the downstream nodes are ready (causing the composition to lag), or will the composition skip some events so that it can keep up? That depends on the trigger port's **event throttling** setting.

Each trigger port has two options for event throttling: **enqueue events** or **drop events**. If enqueueing events, the trigger port will keep firing events regardless of whether the downstream nodes can keep up. If dropping events, the trigger port won't fire an event if the event would have to wait for the downstream nodes to finish processing a previous event (from this or another trigger port).

Each of these options is useful in different situations. For example, suppose you have a composition in which a **Play Movie** node fires events with image data and then applies a series of image filters. If you want the composition to display the resulting images in real-time, then you'd probably want the **Play Movie** node's trigger port to drop events to ensure that the movie plays at its original speed. On

the other hand, if you're using the composition to apply a video post-processing effect and save the resulting images to file, then you'd probably want the trigger port to enqueue events.

When you add a node to a composition, each of its trigger ports may default to either enqueueing or dropping events. For example, the `Play Movie` node's trigger port defaults to dropping events, while each of the `Receive Mouse Clicks` node's trigger ports defaults to enqueueing events.

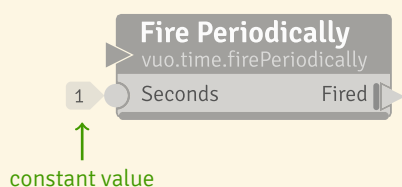
In the Vuo Editor, you can right-click on a trigger port and go to the `Set Event Throttling` menu to view or change whether the port enqueues or drops events.

## 5 Data

### 5.1 Where data comes from

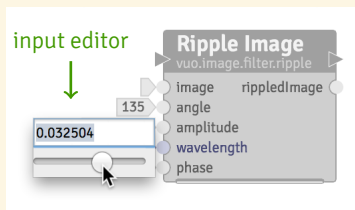
Over time, data in your composition can remain the same (be constant), or change as data flows through **data-and-event** cables. In some cases, data can come from outside your composition using **interface** nodes.

#### 5.1.1 Constant input port values



Instead of passing data through a cable, you can give a data-and-event input port a **constant value**. A constant value is “constant” because, unlike data coming in from a cable, which can change from time to time, a constant value remains the same unless you edit it.

For many types of data (such as integers and text), you can edit a constant value by double-clicking on the constant value attached to an input port. This will pop up an **input editor** that lets you change the constant value. (If nothing happens when you double-click on the constant value, then the Vuo Editor doesn't have an input editor for that data type. To change the data for that input port, you have to connect a cable.)



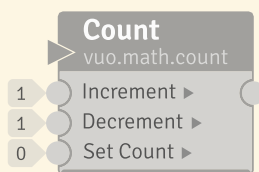
When using an input editor to edit text, you can enter text that contains multiple lines (line breaks) by composing your text in a basic text editor (such as TextEdit), then copying and pasting it into the input editor.

If you edit a constant value for a node's input port, the node will use the new port value the next time it executes. Setting a constant value won't cause the node to execute.

### 5.1.2 Default input port values

When you add a node to a composition, each input port has a preset constant value called its **default value**. The default value for an input port is the same for all nodes of a given type. For example, the **Increment** port of all **Count** nodes defaults to 1. The port stays at its default value until it receives an event.

If you disconnect a data-and-event cable to a port that previously had a constant value, then the port retains the last value it received from the cable. If you did not set a constant value, it goes back to its default value.

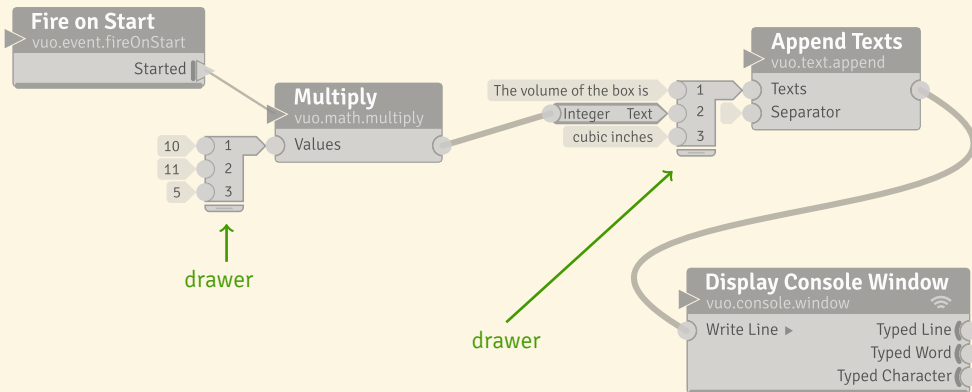


### 5.1.3 Drawers

Some input ports accept a list of values rather than a single value. If no cable is connected, a list input port has a special attachment called a **drawer** that lets you input each item of the list separately. For each input port within the drawer, you can either connect a cable to it or set its constant value.

In most cases, you can change the number of items in the drawer. (The one exception is the drawer on the **Calculate** node's **Values** input port, which changes automatically when you edit the **Expression** input port's constant value.) To change the number of items in a drawer, you can either drag on its handle (the bar along the bottom of the drawer) or right-click on the drawer and select **Add Input Port** or **Remove Input Port**.

In the following composition, the **Multiply** node and the **Append Texts** node have drawers.



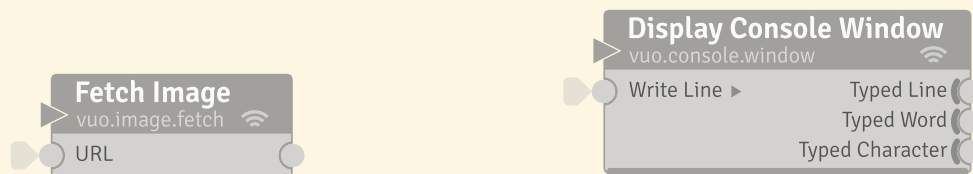
A composition that takes the height, length, and width of a box and calculates its volume

When you edit a drawer's constant values or change the number of drawer items, this affects the attached list input port in the same way as if you had edited a constant value on the list input port itself. For example, in the composition above, the **Multiply** node's **Values** input port contains the list 10, 11, 5. When the **Multiply** node receives an event from **Fire on Start**, it calculates the product of those numbers, 550, and sends that through its output cable.

#### 5.1.4 Interface nodes

Some nodes interact with the world outside the composition — such as windows, files, networks, and devices.

Nodes that bring information into the composition from the outside world and/or affect the outside world are called **interface** nodes. An example of an interface node is the **Fetch Image** node, which can download an image from the Internet. Another example is the **Display Console Window** node, which reads text typed in a console window and writes text to that window.



Interface nodes have three radio arcs in the top-right corner, symbolizing that they send or receive data with the world outside your composition.

#### Note for Quartz Composer users

Instead of Vuo's interface and non-interface nodes, Quartz Composer has an execution mode for each patch: provider, consumer, or processor. A patch's execution mode not only indicates how it interacts with the outside world, but also controls when it executes and whether it can be embedded in macro patches.



### 5.1.5 Dragging files onto the canvas to create an interface node

In Vuo, dragging an audio, video, image, scene, or projection mesh file onto the canvas will create the appropriate interface node with that file as input. For example, when you drag an image onto the canvas, the Editor will create a **Fetch Image** node with the file path entered in the **URL** input port. The default will be the file's relative path. To enter an absolute path, hold down the option key when dragging the file on the canvas.

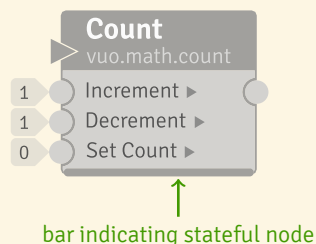
## 5.2 How data travels through a composition

Data can't travel to another node by itself. Data travels along with events through **data-and-event** cables. If multiple data-and-event cables are connected to an output port, the data and events travel along all the attached cables.

## 5.3 How data is stored within a node

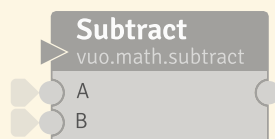
Data stays in a node input port until it is replaced by other data. If you detach a cable while the composition is running, the input port will keep the latest data that came through that cable.

Some nodes have **state**. A **stateful node** retains information from the last time it executed. An example of a stateful node is **Count**. If a **Count** node is told to increment, its state (the retained count) changes.



Stateful nodes have a thick bar along the bottom that resembles a **data-and-event cable**. This symbolizes that the node's state data is kept after the node executes, and used next time it executes.

A **stateless** node doesn't retain any information about previous times it executed. If you give it the same inputs, it'll always give you the same outputs.



## 5.4 Port data types

Nodes are sensitive to **data type**. Vuo works with various types of data, such as integer (whole) numbers, real (decimal) numbers, Boolean (logical) values, text, 3D points, images, and more.

For example, the **Count Characters** node's **Text** input port has data type text, and its **Character Count** output port has data type integer. If you see a **Count Characters** node that has a cable connected to its **Character Count** port, then you can know that the port at the other end of the cable must also have type integer.

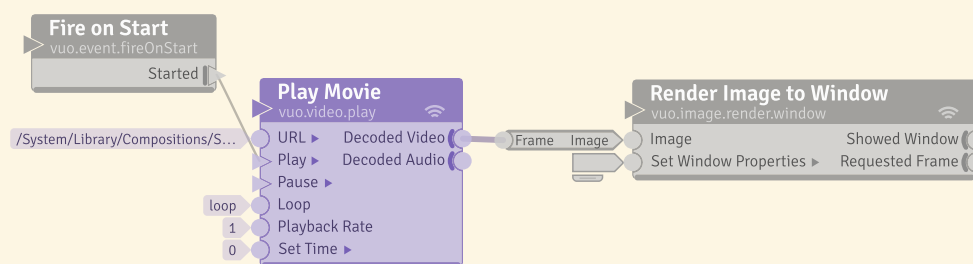
### 5.4.1 Type-converter nodes

What if you want to connect the **Count Character** node's integer output port to a text input port? If you start to drag a cable from the **Character Count** port, any ports in the composition that the cable can connect to are highlighted. This includes not just ports of type integer, but also ports of type text. If you drag the cable to a text input port and release the mouse, then a type converter node will be automatically added to convert the integer data to text data.


A **type converter node** is just a node that happens to have a single input port of one data type and a single output port of another data type. Whenever you want to connect a port of one data type to a port of another data type, you can try drawing the cable to find out if any type converters can be inserted automatically. Or you can search the Node Library using the term “convert” for a node that has an input port of the type that you want to convert from to an output port of the type that you want to convert to. When you drag a convert node onto the canvas and connect it up, it will collapse to only show the original data type name and the data type the data is converted to.

For some types, there's more than one way to do the conversion. For example, if you want to convert from a real number to an integer, you can round the real number to the nearest integer, round it down to the integer below, or round it up to the integer above. If you try to connect a cable from a real-number output port to an integer input port, a menu will pop up allowing you to pick the conversion you want to use.

You can see type converters used in previous compositions in this manual, such as in the section [Creating a composition with the Count composition](#).



An example composition, Play Movie (under vuo.video), showing a type converter from a movie frame to an image.

 Note for  
Quartz Composer users

The Quartz Composer equivalent to a **type-converter** is represented as a darker red line in QC. The benefit of exposing these conversions is greater control over how your data is interpreted.

### 5.4.2 Generic port types

Some nodes can work with many different types of data. For example, a **Hold Value** node could hold an integer, an image, a 3D point... or really, any type of data. Rather than cluttering up the Node Library with a separate **Hold Value** node for each data type, Vuo lists a single **Hold Value** node that can be made to work with any type.

When you drag a **Hold Value** node from the Node Library onto the canvas, each of the node's ports has a **generic data type**. This means that the data type for these ports hasn't been decided yet. Right now, each of the **Hold Value** node's ports has the potential to connect to any type of port in the composition. You can see that a port is generic by hovering over it with the mouse and reading the port popover that pops up.

When you connect one of the **Hold Value** node's ports to a non-generic port, then all of the **Hold Value** node's generic ports change to non-generic ports with the same type as the connected port. For example, if you connect the **Hold Value** node's **Held Value** port to a **Count Character** node's **Text** port, then all of the **Hold Value** node's generic ports change to text ports, matching the **Text** port.

Another way to change a generic port to a non-generic port is to right-click on the port, go to the **Set Data Type** menu that pops up, and choose a data type.

If you want to change the port back to generic, you can right-click on the port and select the **Revert to Generic Data Type** menu item. (This will delete any cables between non-generic ports and ports changed back to generic.)

Some generic nodes can work with several different types of data, but not all types. For example, the **Add** node can work with with integers, real numbers, 2D points, 3D points, and 4D points, but not text or images. Some generic nodes are automatically turned into non-generic nodes when first created. For example, when you drag an **Add** node from the Node Library onto the canvas, its ports are automatically changed from generic to real numbers, because real numbers are usually a suitable choice for the **Add** node. But if you want to work with integers instead, you can use the **Revert to Generic Data Type** command and then the **Set Data Type** menu to change the ports to integers.

When you drag an **Measure Distance between Points** node from the Node Library onto the canvas, its **A** port is generic, but it can only connect to a port of type 2D point, 3D point, or 4D point. You can see the list of compatible types for a generic port by looking at the port popover.

You can connect a generic port to another generic port, as long as they work with compatible types of data. For example, you can connect a **Hold Value** node to an **Add** node, since the **Hold Value** node is compatible with any type. However, you can't connect the output of a **Find Maximum** node to a **Measure Distance between Points** node, since the **Find Maximum** node is only compatible with integers


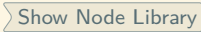
and reals while the **Measure Distance between Points** node is only compatible with 2D, 3D, and 4D points.

A generic node can have ports that each work with a different generic type. For example, the **Get Message Values** node in the **vuio.osc** node set has several output ports with independent generic types. You can change one output port's generic type to integer and another output port's generic type to text, for example. You can see if a node's generic ports use the same generic type or different generic types by looking at the port popover. The port popover displays a name for the port's generic type, such as "generic #1" or "generic #2". If two generic ports have the same name for their type (including if they're on separate nodes connected by cables), then changing the generic type of one port will also change the other port. If two generic ports have different names for their type, then changing one will not affect the other.

## 6 Nodes

Nodes are the building blocks of Vuo, which you can assemble in any way your creative mind can think of to create compositions. When you download Vuo, it comes with a large set of nodes that support 2D and 3D graphics, video, audio, networking, user interaction, and more. If you've purchased Vuo Pro, then you have some bonus "pro nodes" available to you. Whether you're using Vuo or Vuo Pro, you can also download nodes by third-party developers to add to your collection.

### 6.1 Finding out what nodes are available

The Vuo Editor has a list of all nodes called the Node Library. (If you don't see it, go to  .) You can skim through the Node Library to see what's available, or you can search by node title, port name, or keyword. For example, if you're wondering if Vuo has nodes for working with hues, search for "hue" and you'll find several nodes related to color.

For a complete list of built-in nodes, you can go to the [online node documentation](#).

If you're interested in third-party nodes, developers share them among the [Vuo community](#).

### 6.2 Learning how to use a node

Each Vuo node has documentation, or in other words, a description of how it works. You can view this description in the Node Documentation Panel (lower panel of the Node Library) after clicking on the node in the Node Library or on the composition canvas.

Besides the documentation for individual nodes, there's also documentation for node sets. At the top of the Node Documentation Panel, most nodes have a link to their node set's documentation. For example, the **Make 3D Object** (`vuو.scene.make`) node has a link for `vuو.scene`, which provides documentation that applies to nodes throughout the `vuو.scene` node set.

Documentation both for nodes and for node sets is available in the [online node documentation](#).

Besides documentation, many nodes also come with example compositions, which demonstrate use of the node within a composition. For nodes that have them, the example compositions are listed near the bottom of the Node Documentation Panel.

## 6.3 Pro vs. non-pro nodes

**Pro nodes** are only available in Vuo Pro, not in the regular Vuo or the free trial. If a node is pro, then the Node Documentation Panel says so at the bottom. If you try to open a composition containing pro nodes using non-Pro Vuo, then you'll be warned that you won't be able to run the composition.

If you plan to share a composition that contains pro nodes, keep in mind that Vuo users without Vuo Pro can't run the composition. If you want others to be able to use your composition even if they don't have Vuo Pro, consider [exporting it to an app](#).

Currently, pro nodes aren't available when [using compositions in other applications](#).

## 6.4 The built-in nodes

This section gives an overview of some of Vuo's built-in nodes. The purpose is to give you a sense of what you can accomplish with the built-in nodes and where to start. For more details, see the node and node set documentation.

### 6.4.1 Graphics/video

Vuo comes with many different nodes for working with graphics. These can be roughly divided into 2D and 3D graphics (along with some nodes to convert between them).

For 2D designs and animations, the `vuو.image` and `vuو.layer` node sets are your starting point. These let you arrange and manipulate shapes and images, and render them in a window or composite image.

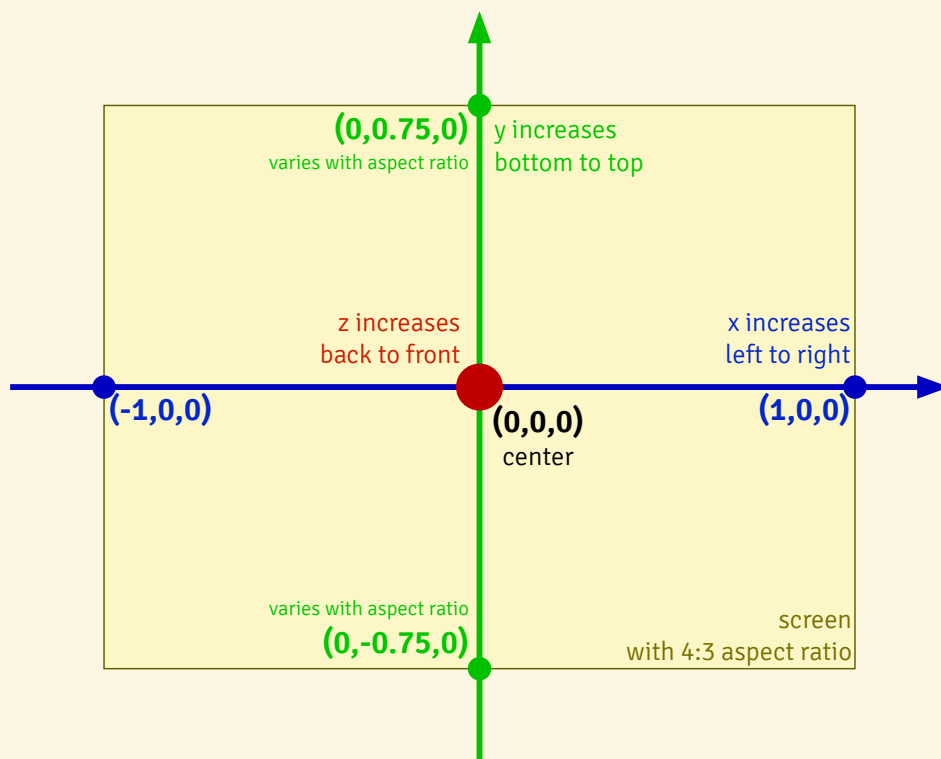
For 3D models and meshes, the `vuoscene` node set is your starting point. It lets you load or build 3D objects, warp them, and arrange them within a scene, which you can render in a window or image. When building 3D objects, two additional node sets are helpful: `vuotransform` for positioning, rotating, and scaling an object, and `vuoshader` for painting a pattern or material on an object.

When working with 2D or 3D animations, the `vuomotion` node set lets you control the path and speed of a moving object.

For video, the `vuovideo` node set handles playing movies and receiving video from cameras. When working specifically with the cameras on a Kinect, you can use the `vuokinect` node set. If you want to send and receive video between Vuo compositions and other applications, there's the `vuosyphon` node set.

**6.4.1.1 Vuo Coordinates** When drawing graphics to a window or image, you need to understand the **coordinate system** of the area you're drawing to. For example, when you use the `Render Scene to Window` node to display a 3D scene in a window, typically the point in your 3D scene with coordinates (0,0,0) will be drawn at the center of the window. (If you're not familiar with the concept of 2D and 3D coordinates, see [http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartesian\\_coordinate\\_system](http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartesian_coordinate_system) and other references to learn more.)

All of the built-in nodes that work with graphics use **Vuo Coordinates**:



Typically, as illustrated above, the position (0,0) for 2D graphics or (0,0,0) for 3D graphics is at the center of the rendering area. The X-coordinate -1 is along the left edge of the rendering area, and the X-coordinate 1 is along the right edge. The rendering area's height depends on the aspect ratio of the graphics being rendered, with the Y-coordinate increasing from bottom to top. In 3D graphics, the Z-coordinate increases from back to front.

When working with 3D graphics, you can change the center and bounds of the rendering area by using a `Make Perspective Camera` or `Make Orthogonal Camera` node. For example, you can use a camera to zoom out, so that the rendering area shows a larger range of X- and Y-coordinates.

### 6.4.2 Sound/audio

The `vu.audio` node set lets you work with audio input and output. You can use audio input to create music visualizations or control a composition with sound. You can use audio output to synthesize sounds. Together, audio input and output can be used to receive a live audio feed, process the audio, and play it aloud.

To interface with MIDI keyboards, synthesizers, and sequencers, you can use the `vu.midi` node set.

### 6.4.3 User interaction

There are many built-in nodes you can use to make your compositions interactive, including:

- `vu.mouse` for getting input from a mouse or trackpad
- `vu.keyboard` for getting input from keys typed or pressed
- `vu.leap` for receiving hand and finger movements from a Leap Motion device
- any of the built-in nodes for networking listed below, which can be used to remotely control a composition from a phone or other device

### 6.4.4 Network

Several node sets let you connect with other devices such as iPhones and iPads, Android phones and tablets, musical synthesizers and sequencers, and stage lighting.

- `vu.osc` for receiving OSC messages, for example from a TouchOSC interface on a mobile device
- `vu.midi` for sending and receiving MIDI events, often used with music equipment
- `vu.artnet (pro)` for sending and receiving Art-Net messages, often used with stage lighting

If you want to download feeds from the internet, you can use the `vu.rss` node set.

### 6.4.5 Displays

Two node sets let you fine-tune how a composition's windows are displayed on the available screens. The `vuoscreen` node set provides information about the available screens. The `vuowindow` node set controls how each window is displayed, including its aspect ratio and whether it's fullscreen.

## 6.5 Adding nodes to your Node Library

You can expand the things that Vuo can do, or save yourself the work of creating the same composition pieces over and over, by adding nodes to your Node Library.

### 6.5.1 Installing a node

Third-party developers have created nodes that you can download and install. Once you've downloaded a node (`.vuonode` file), you can install it with the following steps.

First, place the node in one of Vuo's Modules folders. The easiest way to find these folders is, in Vuo Editor, to go to the **Tools** menu and choose the option you want:

- **Open User Modules Folder**
  - Or, if you'd rather find the folder yourself: In your home folder, go to **Library ▶ Application Support ▶ Vuo ▶ Modules**. (On Mac OS X 10.7 and above, the **Library** folder is hidden by default. To find it, go to Finder, then hold down the Option key and select the **Go ▶ Library** menu option.)
- **Open System Modules Folder**
  - Or, if you'd rather find the folder yourself: In the top-level folder on your hard drive, go to **Library ▶ Application Support ▶ Vuo ▶ Modules**.

You'll typically want the User Modules folder, since yours will be the only user account on your computer that needs access to the node. Use the second option only if you have administrative access and you want all users on the computer to have access to the node.

Second, restart the Vuo Editor. The node should now show up in your Node Library.

### 6.5.2 Creating your own node

Programmers can use Vuo's API to create new nodes for Vuo. See [Developing Node Classes and Types for Vuo](#).



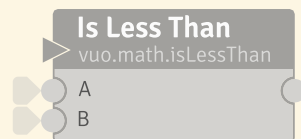
## 7 Common Patterns - How do I...

This section describes a few approaches to controlling data and event flow that you're likely to use in many different compositions. As you begin with an idea of what you want your composition to do, you might come up with questions on how to use Vuo's nodes and cables to create a certain result in your composition. This section of the user manual can help answer those questions.

### 7.1 Checking if a condition is met

Vuo has nodes that can evaluate whether a statement is **True** or **False**. True and false are called **Boolean values**.

The following is an example of a node that outputs a Boolean value, by determining if "A" is less than "B."



You can execute downstream nodes based on whether an output is true or false. Logic nodes are often used with nodes that route data, where the logic node acts as an "if" and the node that routes data (normally one of Vuo's **Select** nodes) as a "then do this, or if not, do that."

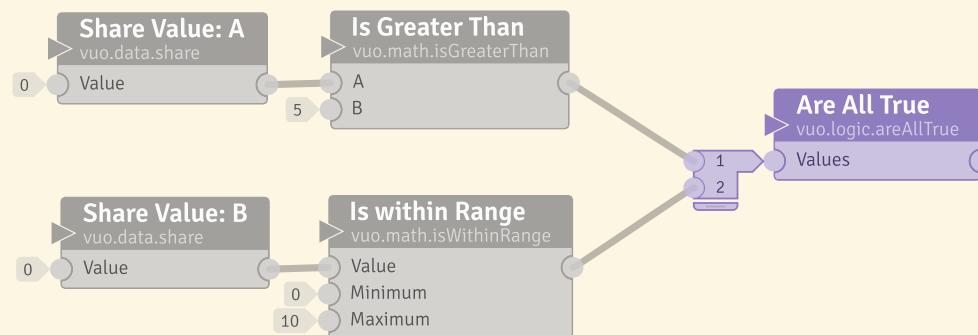
Vuo also has nodes for evaluating if points are within certain parameters, such as the **Is within Circle**, or **Is Point within Layer** nodes.

#### + Tip

In Vuo, you can change certain data from one type to another through **type converters**. Vuo converts some types automatically by letting you connect a cable of a compatible type to that of another type, using a collapsed type converter. Using this feature, True can be converted to "1" and False can be converted to "0".

### 7.2 Checking more than one condition

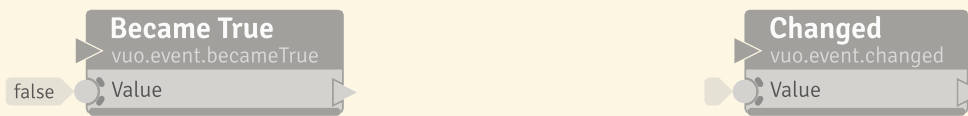
The nodes **Are All True**, **Are Any True**, and **Is One True** can be used to check if a certain combination of conditions have been met. If the conditions produce events, you can use the node **Are All Hit**. In the following composition a data + event cable can feed into the **Share Value: A**, and a different cable in to **Share Value: B**. The node **Are All True** will check if both the conditions are true.



## 7.3 Checking when a condition changes

You might want to know when there is a change in the data in your composition. Vuo's logic node set and math node sets include nodes to test for data changes, such as **Is Greater Than** and **Is Within Range**, which output the Boolean values True and False.

You might also want to control your composition based on when something changes, such as when the output of a **Is Less Than** node first becomes true. The Vuo node **Became True** outputs an event when the input changes from false to true, as do similar nodes.

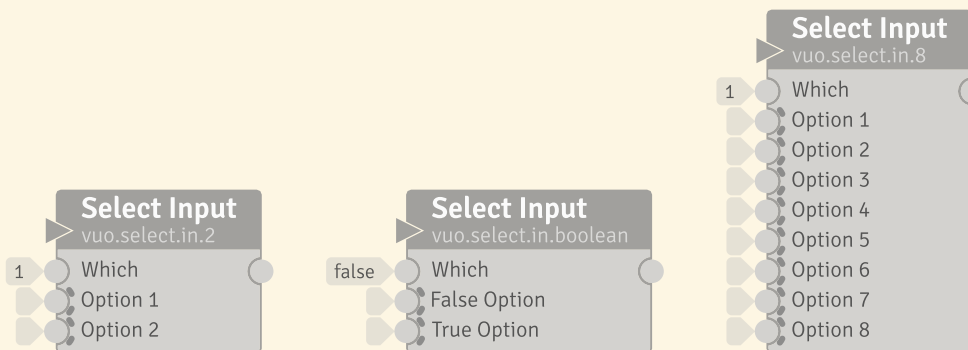


### + Tip

**Became True** and **Became False** are not trigger nodes. They don't generate new events; they only let an event received at the **Value** port through.

## 7.4 Choosing which data and events to send through the composition

A **Select Input** node lets you select a value from different input ports and route it to the output. There are two different classes of Select nodes. The first uses integers to control how the node functions, while the second uses Boolean true or false values. The first set of **Select Input** will show up in the Node Library when using Display by Name (**View** > **Node Library** > **Display by name**) as **Select Input (2)**, or **Select Input (8)**, or **Select Input (Boolean)**. With these different options, you can control your composition based on what makes sense with respect to the rest of your composition.



### Note for Quartz Composer users

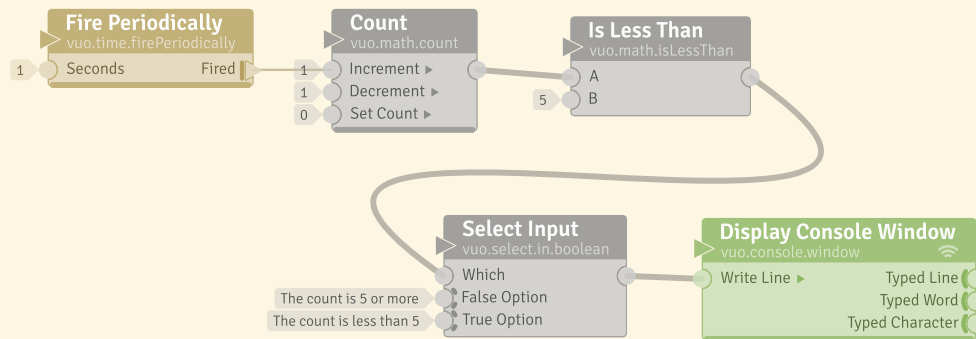
Vuo's **Select Input** node is similar to Quartz Composer's Multiplexer patch. Vuo's **Select Output** node is similar to Quartz Composer's Demultiplexer patch.

### Note for text programmers

Vuo's **Select Input** and **Select Output** are similar to if/else or switch/case statements.

When the **Select Input** node executes, it looks at what is present at the **Which** port and outputs the value found at the corresponding port below it. For example, if the value "1" is present at the **Which** port, whatever value is present at the **Option 1** port will be output. If the value "false" is present at the **Which** port, whatever value is present at the **False Option** will be output.

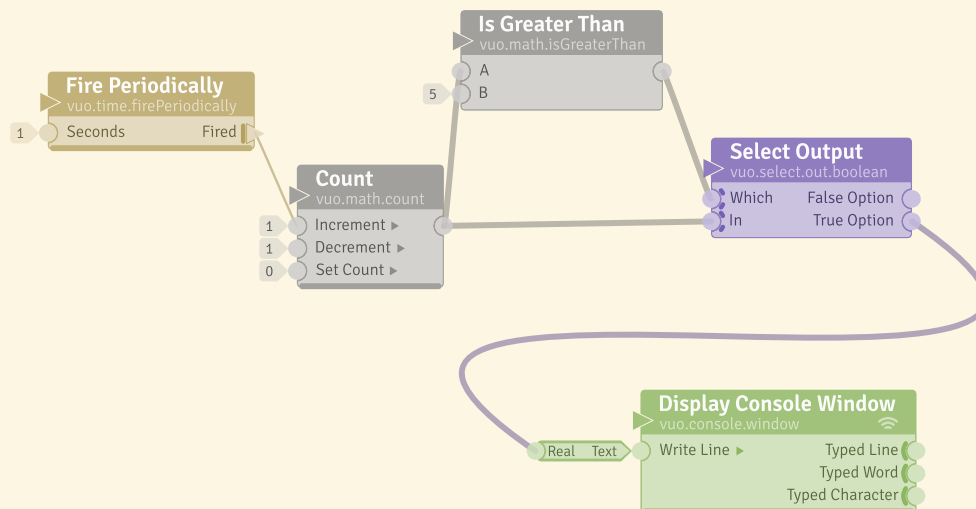
Here's a composition using both a logic node and a **Select Input** node. The composition will write "The count is less than five" four times, before "The count is 5 or more" begins to be written.



## 7.5 Choosing which parts of the composition to execute

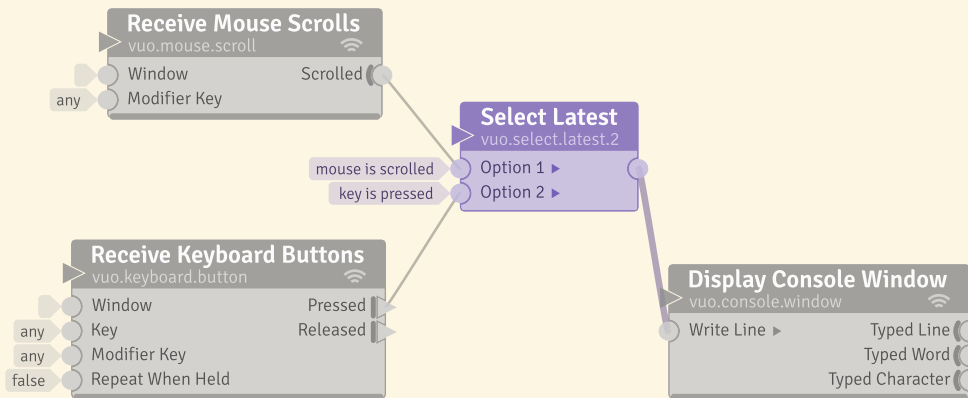
A **Select Output** node lets you route an input value to one of several outputs. Similar to the **Select Input**, you pick an output port using the **Which** input port. Similar to the **Select Input** nodes, Vuo has three different **Select Output** nodes, one for Boolean values and two for inputs controlled by a numeric **Which** port, one with two outputs and one with eight.

A **Select Output** is useful for routing data to different parts of your composition, or only letting data through that meets certain conditions. In the following composition, although the **Count** node is counting up, only when the count is greater than 5 will it be written.



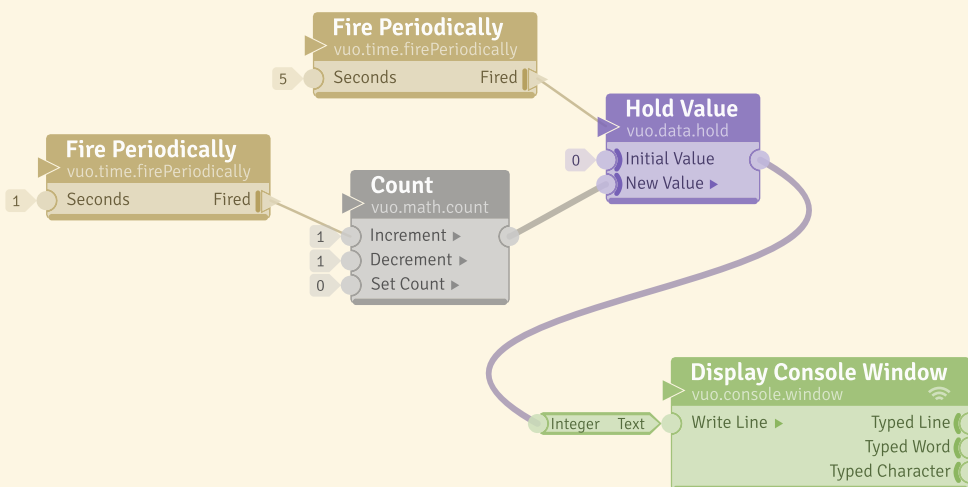
## 7.6 Merging events from multiple triggers

A **Select Latest** node lets you select the latest data and event to arrive at the node. In the following composition, Each time the mouse is scrolled or a keyboard button is pressed, the event that is generated causes the text associated with that option to be output.



If an event comes into both **Option 1** and **Option 2** at the same time, then **Option 1** is used.

## 7.7 Setting data with one trigger and using it with another



A composition showing nodes executing at different rates

This composition writes a count upon the console window every 5 seconds. The count updates every 1 second.

The **Hold Value** node prevents the count from being written each time it's updated by the 1-second **Fire Periodically** node.

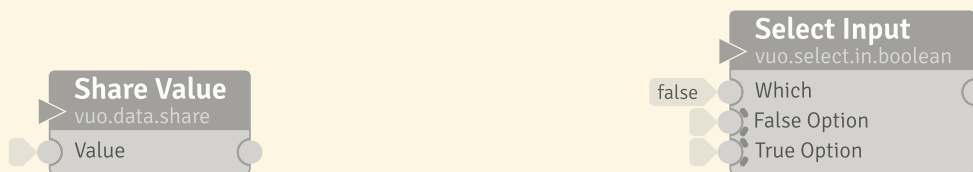
### + Tip

Every 5 seconds, when the two **Fire Periodically** nodes fire at nearly the same time, it's unpredictable whether the count will be written before or after it's incremented.

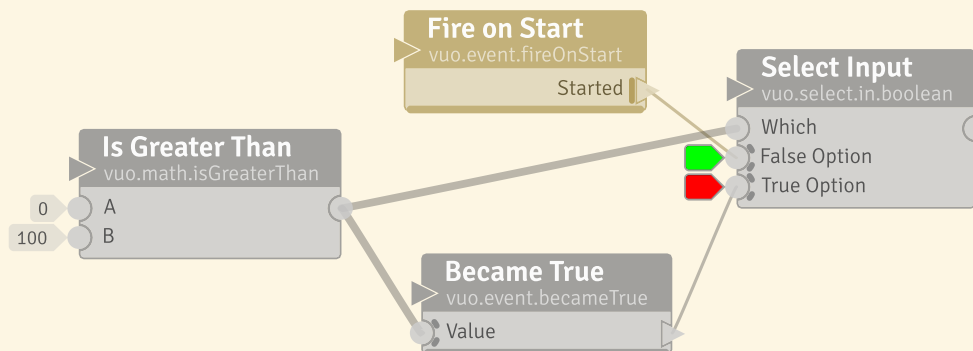
## 7.8 Stripping data from an event, or adding an event to data

To separate out an event, you can use the option + drag from an output port to begin an event-only cable from that port.

Sometimes you may want to add data to an event. For example, you might want to add a Boolean value to an event. You can do this by connecting an event-only cable into a data port that has data. Two nodes that are helpful in adding data to an event are the **Share Value** node and the **Select Input** node with the appropriate **Which** port set.



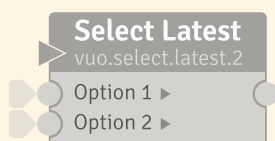
Here is part of a composition that creates a color to be used by a downstream node. The color is initialized to green. If a data + event cable were connected to the **A** input port of the **Is Greater Than** node and data was received that was over a limit (in this case 100), the event from the **Became True** node would change the color to red.



Another way get data and an event is to use the **refresh** port of a node that will output the data-and-event you want, such as the **Count** node.

## 7.9 Starting with a certain data value

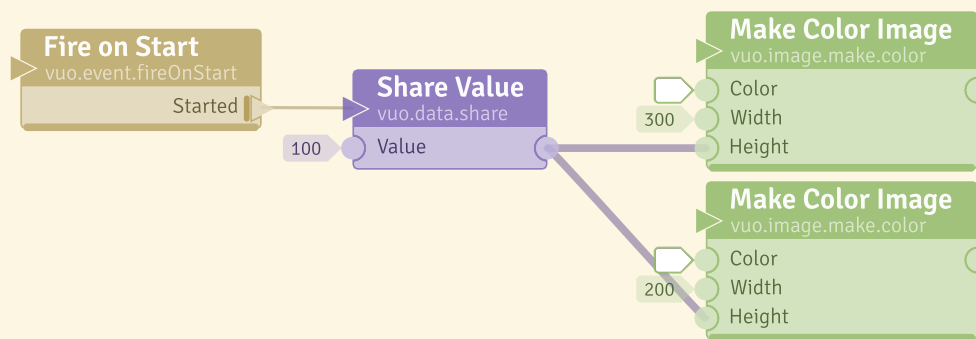
It is often good practice to initialize node data values. You can do this by using a **Select Latest** with one incoming cable from a **Fire on Start** to initialize the node's values and another data-and-event cable from elsewhere in the composition to receive the changed data as your composition executes.



## 7.10 Simplifying your composition by sending the same data to multiple ports

What if you want to set the same value on multiple input ports? For example, suppose you want to draw several images, all having the same height. One way to accomplish this would be to go one by one to each node's height input port, open the input editor, and set it to the height you want. But what if you later decide to change the height? It would be better to set the height in one place and have it affect all nodes.

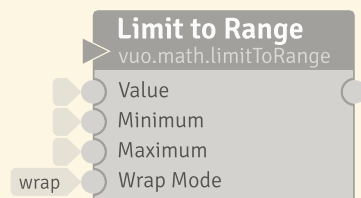
You can do this with the **Share Value** node, as illustrated here. When the **Share Value** node receives an event, it sends the value in its input port (100) through its output port to all connected nodes.



**Share Value** nodes can help reduce the number of cables that cross your composition by using one cable to a **Share Value** node, and then creating multiple output cables from that **Share Value** node.

## 7.11 Keeping numbers within a certain range

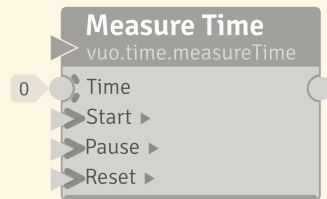
Vuo has nodes that limit the range of data (**Limit to Range**, **Fit in Range**, and **Count within Range**), and a **Scale** node that scales data.



## 7.12 Doing something after a certain amount of time has elapsed

One way to do this is to use a **Count** node that receives an event from a **Fire Periodically** node. If you set up the **Fire Periodically** node to fire every second, the output is the number of times (thus seconds) since the node started.

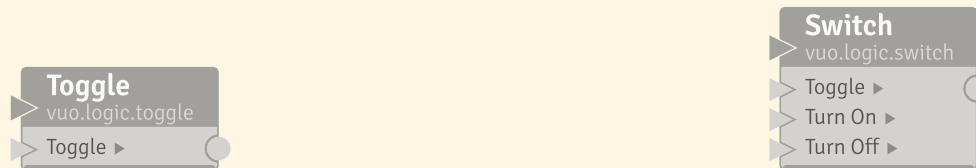
If you already have a source for time in your composition (such as a **Render Scene to Window**, with its **Requested Frame** output port) you could use the **Measure Time** node.



In both cases, you can test the elapsed time with a logic node, such as an **Is Greater Than** node, and use the result to initiate your action.

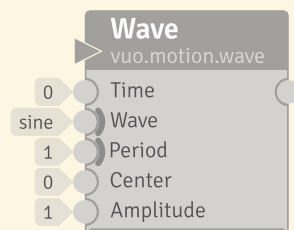
## 7.13 Alternating what happens in your composition

Vuo has two logic nodes, **Toggle** and **Switch**, which can be used to in conjunction with a **Select Input** node to alternate between two values or two actions.



## 7.14 Changing a data value gradually between limits

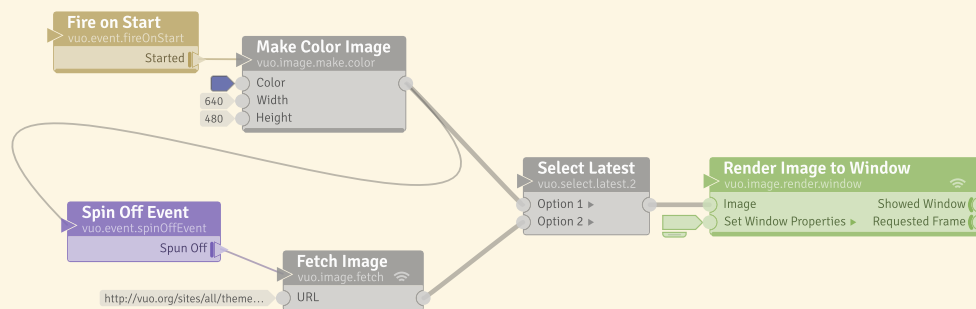
Vuo has two nodes, **Wave** and **Curve**, that can be used to gradually change between two different data values. The **Wave** output defaults to values between -1 and 1. By changing the input values, or using this node with a **Scale** node, you can change gradually from a first to a second value, and back to the first value again.



## 7.15 Keeping track of the number of times that something happens

First, you will need to generate an event when the condition happens. You can then input this event into a **Count** node to increment its count.

## 7.16 Executing slow nodes in the background



An example composition, `LoadImagesAsynchronously.vuo` (under `vuo.event`), has nodes execute in the background

This example shows how a composition can do some work in the background (asynchronously). It displays a colored background while downloading an image from the internet, then displays the image.

The **Spin Off Event** node is what allows the image to download in the background. When an event reaches the **Spin Off Event** node, the **Spin Off Event** node fires a new event. Because it's a new event instead of the same old event, other parts of the composition can go on executing without having to wait on the event.

Let's take a more detailed look. When the **Fire on Start** node fires an event, the event travels to the **Spin Off Event** node (where it stops) and through the upper **Make Color Image** node, **Select Latest**, **Render Image to Window**. All of these nodes execute without waiting for the lower **Fetch Image** node. Meanwhile, the **Spin Off Event** node fires a new event, the **Fetch Image** node downloads the image, and eventually the new event travels onward through **Select Latest** and **Render Image to Window**.

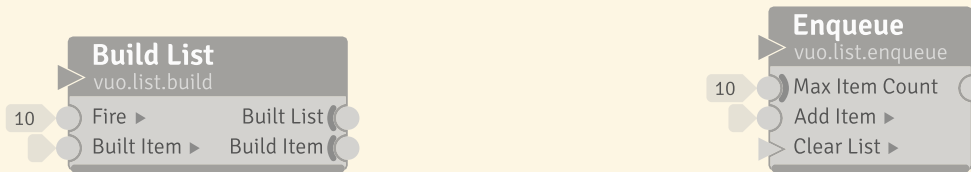
## 7.17 Doing something more than once (iteration)

Creating a list, and then completing actions on each item in that list is one way to perform a sequence of actions in your composition.

One way to build a list is to use the **Build List** node. This node fires events that can be sent to a sequence of nodes to create each item for the list. The **Fire** input port is used for how many events, and thus items, to generate.

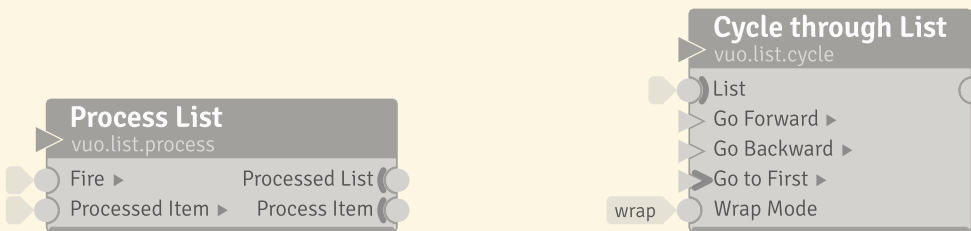


The **Enqueue** node can be used to create a list of a set size where newer items are put in the list and older items over the set size are discarded.

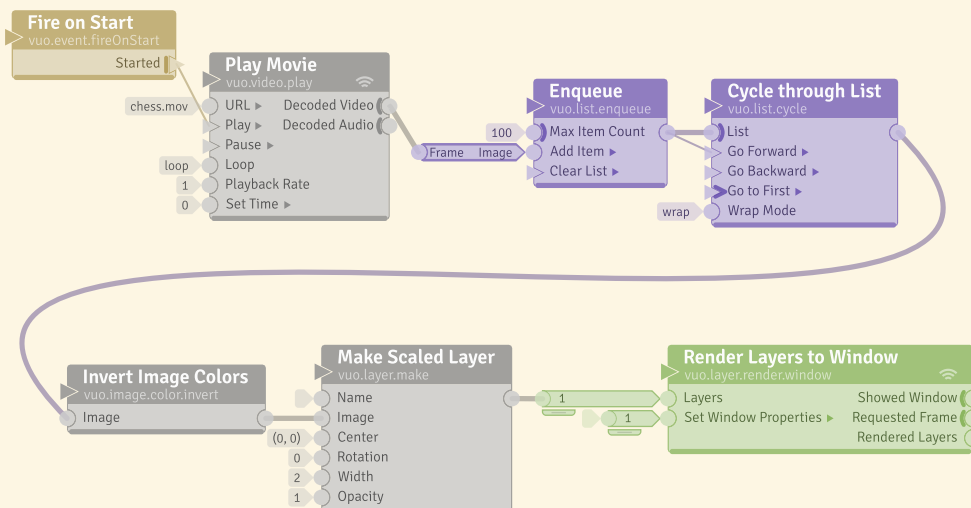


Once you have created your list, two nodes are useful in acting on each item in the list. The **Process List** node will fire an event for each item in the input list, output that item for processing by other nodes, and through its **Processed Item** input port, collect the results into a new list.

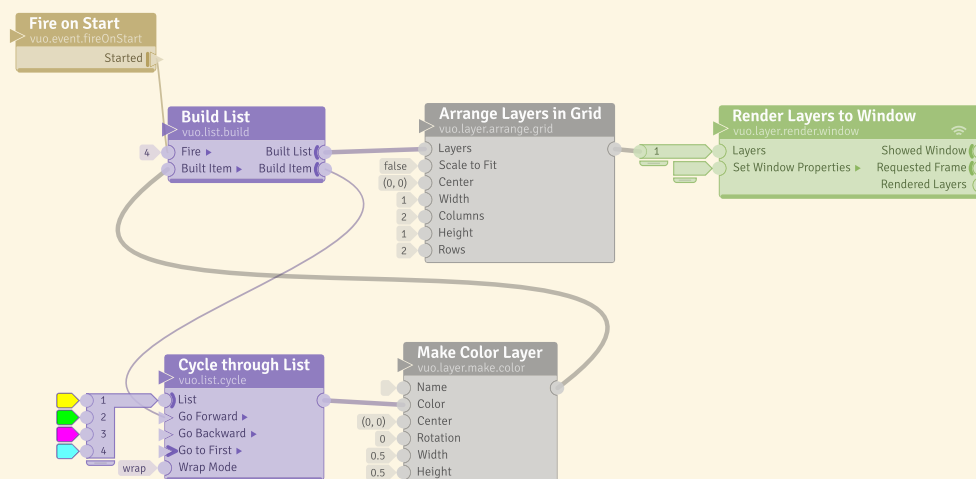
The **Cycle Through List** node will output the next item in a list when it receives an event at its **Go Forward** or **Go Backward** input port, allowing you set up a sequence of actions for each item output.



This is a composition that uses an **Enqueue** node and a **Cycle through List** node to recolor a movie.



This composition builds a list using a **Build List** node and a **Cycle through List** node and arranges the result to make a grid of four colored squares.



## 7.18 Creating a new event when needed


If you're building a composition, you might run into a situation where you need an event to cause something in the composition to happen, but events from the other trigger ports in your composition will cause an infinite feedback loop, or they produce events that are not timed to solve your problem. In this case, you might be able to use a **Spin Off Event** node.

# 8 Using Compositions in Other Applications

Some applications can load Vuo compositions as plugins — making it possible for you to customize or add to the application's behavior. For example, [CoGe](#), a VJ application that does media mixing and compositing, lets you mix in visual effects made with Vuo. In order for a Vuo composition to communicate with CoGe or another application, you need to create the composition in a special way using published ports and protocols.

## 8.1 Published ports

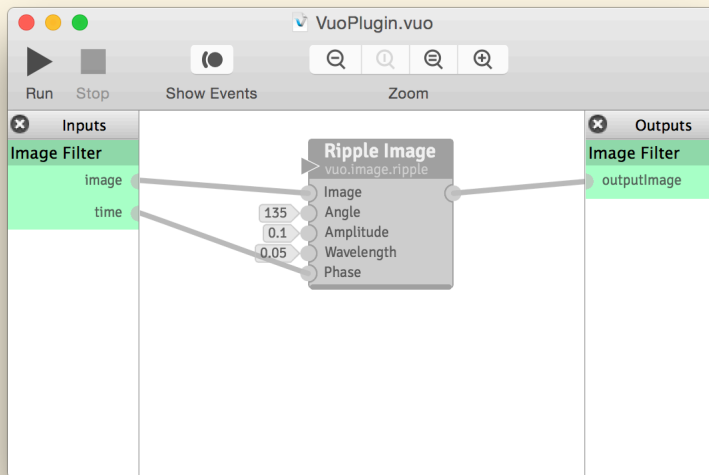
A **published port** is an input port or output port for the composition as a whole. A published input port receives events and possibly data from somewhere outside the composition and passes it along to input ports on nodes inside the composition. A published output port takes events and possibly data from output ports inside the composition and sends it to somewhere outside the composition.

 **Note for**  
Quartz Composer users

In Quartz Composer, there's a single, default rendering output. VJ apps typically capture that output and mix it into the VJ app's other feeds, so there is no need for a protocol for composition playback. In Vuo, an Image Filter or Image Generator protocol is necessary to produce output.

In the Vuo Editor, published ports appear in sidebars on the left and right of the composition canvas. (These sidebars are hidden by default if a composition has no published ports. To display them, go to **Window > Show Published Ports**.)

Here's a composition with published input ports called **image** and **time** and a published output port called **outputImage**:



This composition could be provided to an application to produce an effect. In that case, the application would feed the image into the published input port and grab the altered image from the published output port.

## 8.2 Protocols

If you're going to use a Vuo composition in an application, usually the application expects the composition to have certain published input and output ports. For example, an application that supports Vuo compositions for video effects would expect the composition to have a published input port that receives an image and a published output port that sends an altered image. To guarantee that your composition's published ports match what the application is expecting, you can use a protocol. The composition shown above adheres to a Vuo protocol.

A **protocol** is a predetermined set of published ports with certain names and data types. Vuo supports the following protocols:

- **Image Filter** — Alters an image.

- Published input ports:
  - \* **image** (Image) — The original image.
  - \* **time** (Real) — A number that changes over time, used to control animations or other changing effects. When previewing the composition in the Vuo Editor, this number is the time, in seconds, since the composition started running. In other applications, this number should be described in their instructions for creating Vuo compositions.
- Published output ports:
  - \* **outputImage** — The altered image.

The example above was created using the Vuo Editor's **File > New Composition with Protocol**, and the published ports in the composition follow the protocol.


- **Image Generator** — Creates an image.
  - Published input ports:
    - \* **width** (Integer) — The requested width of the image, in pixels.
    - \* **height** (Integer) — The requested height of the image, in pixels.
    - \* **time** (Real) — A number that changes over time, used to control animations or other changing effects. When previewing the composition in the Vuo Editor, this number is the time, in seconds, since the composition started running. In other applications, this number should be described in their instructions for creating Vuo compositions.
  - Published output ports:
    - \* **outputImage** — The created image. Its width and height should match the **width** and **height** published input ports.





When you run a protocol-compliant composition in the Vuo Editor, events and data are automatically fed into its input ports, and the resulting image is displayed in a window. This makes it easy to preview how your composition will look when run inside some other application. (But be aware that if you [export](#) a protocol-compliant composition as an application, the input events and data and the output window won't automatically be added, so the exported application may not do anything.)

## 9 The Vuo Editor

### 9.1 The Node Library

When you create a composition, your starting point is always the **Node Library** (**Window > Show Node Library**). The node library is a tool that will assist you in exploring and making use of the collection of Vuo building blocks (“nodes”) available to you as you create your artistic compositions.

 Note for  
Quartz Composer users

Many of the same shortcuts from Quartz Composer also work in Vuo. As an example,   opens the Node Library, and   begins playback of your composition.

Because you'll be working extensively with the node library throughout your composition process, we have put a great deal of effort into maximizing its utility, flexibility, and ease of use. It has been designed to jump-start your Vuo experience — so that you may sit down and immediately begin exploring and composing, without having to take time out to study reams of documentation.

When you open a new composition, the Node Library is on the left. The Node Library shows all the nodes that are available to you. In the Node Library, you can search for a node by name or keyword. You can see details about a node, including its documentation and version number.

### 9.1.1 Docking and visibility

By default, the node library is docked within each open composition window. The node library may be undocked by dragging or double-clicking its title bar. While undocked, only a single node library will be displayed no matter how many composition windows are open.

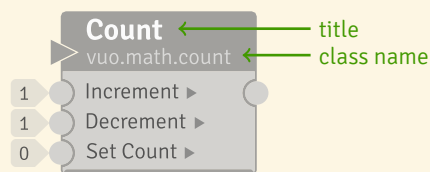
The node library may be re-docked by double-clicking its title bar.

The node library may be hidden by clicking the X button within its title bar. Once hidden, it may be re-displayed by selecting **Window** > **Show Node Library** or using **⌘⇧L**. The same command or shortcut, **⌘⇧L**, will put your cursor in the node library's search window.

Whether you have left your library docked or undocked, visible or hidden, your preference will be remembered the next time you launch the Vuo Editor.



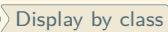

### 9.1.2 Node names and node display

Each node has two names: a title and a class name. The **title** is a quick description of a node's function; it's the most prominent name written on a node. The **class name** is a categorical name that reveals specific information about a node; it appears directly below the node's title.



Let's use the **Count** node as an example. "Count" is the node's title, which reveals that the node performs the function of counting. The class name is "vuo.math.count". The class name reveals the following: Team Vuo created it, "math" is the category, and "count" is the specific function (and title name).

Depending on your level of familiarity with Vuo's node sets and your personal preference, you might wish to browse nodes by their fully qualified family ("class") name (e.g., "vuo.math.add") or by their more natural human-readable names ("Add").

You may select whichever display mode you prefer, and switch between the modes at your convenience; the editor will remember your preference between sessions. You can toggle between node titles and node class names using the menu items    or .


The [Modifying and rearranging nodes and cables](#) section explains how to change node titles.

### 9.1.3 Node Documentation Panel

The node library makes the complete set of Vuo core nodes available for you to browse as you compose. By clicking on a node in the library, a description of the node will appear in the **Node Documentation Panel** below the node library. It describes the general purpose of the node as well as details that will help you make use of it. In addition to the Vuo core nodes, if you have access to pro nodes, you'll see those displayed.

If you're interested in exploring new opportunities, this is an ideal way to casually familiarize yourself with the building blocks available to you in Vuo.

### 9.1.4 Finding nodes

In the top of the Node Library there is a search bar. You can type in part of a node name or a keyword and matching nodes will show up in the Library. Pressing  while in the search bar will clear out your selection and show the entire library, as will deleting your search term.

Your search terms will match not only against the names of relevant nodes, but also against keywords that have been specifically assigned to each node to help facilitate the transition for any of you who might have previous experience with other multimedia environments or programming languages.


For example, users familiar with multiplexers might type "multiplex" into the Vuo Node Library search field to discover Vuo's "Select Input" family of nodes with the equivalent functionality; users with a background in textual programming might search for the term "string" and discover the Vuo "Text" node family. Users don't have to know the exact node title or port name. To find a node with a trigger port, for example, go to the Node library and type in the keywords "events," "trigger," or "fire."

If you do not see a node, particularly if you have received it from someone else, review the procedures under [Installing a node](#).

## 9.2 Working on the canvas

### 9.2.1 Putting a node on the canvas

The node library isn't just for reading about nodes, but for incorporating them into your compositions. Once you have found a node of interest, you may create your own copy by dragging it straight from the node library onto your canvas, or by double-clicking the node listing within the library.

Not a mouse person? Navigating the library by arrow key and pressing  to copy the node to your canvas works just as well.

You may copy nodes from the library individually, or select any number or combination of nodes from the library and add them all to your canvas simultaneously with a single keypress or mouse drag — whatever best suits your work style.

### 9.2.2 Drawing cables to create a composition





You can create a cable by dragging from a node's output port to a compatible input port or from a node's output port to a compatible input port.



Compatible ports are those that output and accept matching or convertible types of data. Compatible ports are highlighted as you drag your cable, so you know where it's possible to complete the connection.

If you complete your cable connection between two ports whose data types are not identical, but that are convertible using an available type converter (e.g., `vu.math.round` for rounding real numbers to integers), that type converter will be automatically inserted when you complete the connection.



Sometimes existing cables may also be re-routed by dragging (or “yanking”) them away from the input port to which they are currently connected. It is possible to yank the cable from anywhere within its **yank zone**. You can tell where a cable's yank zone begins by hovering your cursor near the cable. The yank zone is the section of the cable with the extra-bright highlighting. If no yank zone is highlighted, you'll need to delete and add back the cable.

### 9.2.3 Copying and pasting nodes and cables


You can select one or more nodes and copy or cut them using the   and/or   menu options, or their associated keyboard shortcuts. Any cables or type converters connecting the copied nodes will automatically be copied along with them.

You can paste your copied components into the same composition, a different composition, or a text editor, using the   menu option or its keyboard shortcut.

#### + Tip

Select one or more nodes and drag them while holding down  to duplicate and drag your selection within the same composition. Press  during the drag to cancel the duplication.

## 9.2.4 Deleting nodes and cables




Delete one or more nodes and/or cables from your canvas by selecting them and either pressing  or right-clicking one of your selections and selecting **Delete** from its context menu.

When you delete a node, any cables connected to that node are also deleted. A cable with a yank zone may also be deleted by yanking it from its connected input port and releasing it.

Any type converters that were helping to bridge non-identical port types are automatically deleted when their incoming cables are deleted.

## 9.2.5 Modifying and rearranging nodes and cables





You can move nodes within your canvas by selecting one or more of them and either dragging them or pressing the arrow keys on your keyboard.

You can change the constant value for an input port by double-clicking the port, then entering the new value into the input editor that pops up. (Or you can open the input editor by hovering the cursor over the port and pressing .) When the input editor is open, press  to accept the new value or  to cancel.

Input editors take on various forms depending on the data type of the specific input being edited — they may present as a text field, a menu, or a widget (such as color picker wheel), for example.

Some ports take lists as input. These ports have special attached “drawers” containing 0 or more input ports whose values will make up the contents of the list. Drawers contain two input ports by default, but may be resized to include more or fewer ports by dragging the “drag handle.”


You can change how a trigger port should behave when it’s firing events faster than downstream nodes can process them. Do this by right-clicking on the port, selecting **Set Event Throttling** from its context menu, and selecting either **“Enqueue Events”** or **“Drop Events”**.

You can change a node’s title (displayed at the top of the node) by double-clicking or hovering over the title and pressing , then entering the new title in the node title editor that pops up. You may save or dismiss your changes by pressing  or , respectively, just as you would using a port’s input editor. You can also select one or more nodes from your canvas and press  to edit the node titles for each of the selected nodes in sequence. If you delete the title and don’t enter a new title, the node will default to its original title.

You can change a node’s tint color by right-clicking on the node, selecting **Tint** from its context menu, and selecting your color of choice. Tint colors can be a useful tool in organizing your composition. For example, they can be used to visually associate nodes working together to perform a particular task.



Tip

Hold down  while pressing an arrow key to move the nodes even faster.



### 9.2.6 Viewing a composition

If your composition is too large to be displayed within a single viewport, you can use the Zoom buttons within the composition window's menubar, or the **View > Actual Size** / **Zoom In** / **Zoom Out** / **Zoom to Fit** menu options, to adjust your view. You can use the scrollbars to scroll horizontally or vertically within the composition. Alternatively, if you have no nodes or cables selected, you can scroll by pressing the arrow keys on your keyboard. You can also grab the workspace by holding down the spacebar while dragging.

#### + Tip

Hold down **⇧** while pressing an arrow key to scroll even faster.

### 9.2.7 Publishing ports

A composition's published ports are displayed in sidebars, which you can show and hide using the menu **Window > Show/Hide Published Ports**.

You can publish any input or output port in a composition. Do this by right-clicking on the port and selecting **Publish Port** from the context menu. Alternatively, drag a cable from the port to the **Publish** well that appears in the sidebar when you start dragging. You can unpublish the port by right-clicking on the port again and selecting **Unpublish Port**.

In the sidebars, you can rename a published port by double-clicking on the name or by right-clicking on the published port and selecting **Rename Published Port**.

#### + Tip

If you copy a node with a published port, that port will be published under the same name (if possible) in whatever composition you paste it into. The published port will be created if it does not already exist, merged if an existing published port of the same name and compatible type does exist, or renamed if an identically named published port already exists but has an incompatible type.

### 9.2.8 Using a protocol for published ports


To create a composition with a predetermined set of published ports defined by a protocol, go to the **File** menu, select **New Composition with Protocol**, and select the protocol you want. Typically, a protocol is used when running a Vuo composition inside another application, such as a VJ or video postproduction app. That application should instruct you about the protocol to select.


The published ports in a protocol appear in a tinted area of the published port sidebars, with the protocol name at the top. You can't rename or delete these published ports. However, you can add other published ports to the composition and rename or delete them as usual.


## 9.3 Running a composition

After you've built your composition (or while you're building it), you can run it to see it in action.



### 9.3.1 Starting and stopping a composition

You can run a composition by clicking the Run button. (Or go to .)

You can stop a composition by clicking the Stop button. (Or go to .)

If you start a composition that was created using , then extra functionality will be added to the composition to help you preview it. Its protocol published input ports will receive data and events, and its protocol published output ports will send their data and events to a preview window. For example, if you run a composition with the Image Filter protocol, then image and time data will be fed into the composition, and the composition's image output will be rendered to a window.


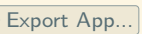
### 9.3.2 Firing an event manually


As you're editing your running composition, you may want to fire extra events so that your changes become immediately visible, rather than waiting for the next time a trigger port happens to fire. You can cause a trigger port to fire an event by right-clicking on the trigger port to pop up a menu, then choosing . Or you can hold down  while left-clicking on the trigger port. If the trigger port carries data, it outputs its most recent data along with the event.

### 9.3.3 Understanding and troubleshooting a running composition


The Vuo Editor has several [helpful tools](#), such as the **Show Events** mode and **Port popovers** to help you understand in more depth what is happening in your composition. These features can help you see exactly what events and data are flowing through your composition. For more information on troubleshooting steps see the section on [Troubleshooting](#).

## 9.4 Exporting a composition to an application




Using the   menu item, you can turn your composition into a Mac application (.app file) that you can distribute to others. Other people can run the application without having Vuo installed.

When exporting a composition that refers to files on your computer (such as images, scenes, or movies), typically the Vuo Editor will know to copy those into the exported app. If you've added these files to your composition by [dragging them onto the canvas](#) (without holding down  — creating a node such as **Fetch Image** or **Play Movie** — then the files will automatically be copied into the

exported app. In fact, the Vuo Editor will automatically copy files and folders for all relative paths found in ports named **URL**, **URLs**, or **Folder**.

If you've held down  while dragging a file onto the canvas, or if you've typed an absolute path into the input editor for a URL, then the Vuo Editor won't copy the file into the exported app. This is useful if you want to refer to a file that you know will be in a certain location on every computer that runs the app, such as an image that comes with the operating system.

In some cases, you may want a file to be copied into the app, but the Vuo Editor may not be able to figure this out. This may happen, for example, if your composition uses an **Append Text** node to construct relative file paths out of smaller pieces. If the Vuo Editor doesn't copy your files into the exported app automatically, then you can copy them yourself. For example, if your composition uses a file called `image.png`:

- Place `image.png` in the same folder as your composition (`.vuo` file).
- In the Vuo Editor, edit the **Fetch Image** node's **URL** input port value to `image.png`.
- In the Vuo Editor, go to  **Export App...** and create `MyApp.app`.
- Right-click on `MyApp.app` and choose .
- In the package contents, go to the  **Contents** ▶ **Resources** folder. Copy `image.png` into that folder.

## 10 The Command-Line Tools

As an alternative to using the Vuo Editor, you can use command-line tools to work with Vuo compositions. Although most Vuo users will only need the Vuo Editor, you might want to use the command-line tools if:

- You're using the open source version of Vuo, which doesn't include the Vuo Editor.
- You're writing a program or script that works with Vuo compositions. (Another option is the [Vuo API](#).)
- You're working with Vuo compositions in a text-only environment, such as SSH.

A Vuo composition (`.vuo` file) is actually a text file based on the [Graphviz DOT format](#). You can go through the complete process of creating, compiling, linking, and running a Vuo composition entirely in a shell.

## 10.1 Installing the Vuo SDK

- Go to <https://vuo.org/user> and log in to your account
- Click the `Download` tab
- Under the `Vuo SDK` section, download the Vuo SDK
- Uncompress the ZIP file (double-click on it in Finder)
- Move the folder wherever you like

Do not separate the command-line binaries (`vuo-compile`, `vuo-debug`, `vuo-link`, `vuo-render`) from the Framework (`Vuo.framework`) — in order for the command-line binaries to work, they must be in the same folder as the Framework.

Next, add the command-line binaries to your PATH so you can easily run them from any folder.

- In Terminal, use `cd` to navigate to the folder containing the Vuo Framework and command-line binaries
- Run this command:

```
echo "export PATH=\$PATH:$(pwd)" >> ~/.bash_profile
```

- Close and re-open the Terminal window

## 10.2 Getting help

To see the command-line options available, you can run each command-line tool with the `--help` flag.

## 10.3 Rendering a composition on the command line

Using the `vuo-render` command, you can render a picture of your composition:

### Listing 1: Rendering a composition

```
1 vuo-render --output-format=pdf --output RenderTextLayer.pdf RenderTextLayer.vuo
```

`vuo-render` can output either PNG (raster) or PDF (vector) files. The command `vuo-render --help` provides a complete list of parameters.

Since composition files are in DOT format, you can also render them without Vuo styling using Graphviz:

### Listing 2: Rendering a Vuo composition using Graphviz

```
1 dot -Grankdir=LR -Nshape=Mrecord -Nstyle=filled -Tpng -oRenderTextLayer.png RenderTextLayer.vuo
```

## 10.4 Building a composition on the command line

You can turn a .vuo file into an executable in two steps.

First, compile the .vuo file to a .bc file (LLVM bitcode):

### Listing 3: Compiling a Vuo composition

```
1 vuo-compile --output RenderTextLayer.bc RenderTextLayer.vuo
```

Then, turn the .bc file into an executable:

### Listing 4: Linking a Vuo composition into an executable

```
1 vuo-link --output RenderTextLayer RenderTextLayer.bc
```

If you run into trouble building a composition, you can get more information by running the above commands with the `--verbose` flag.

If you're editing a composition in a text editor, the `--list-node-classes=dot` flag is useful. It outputs all available nodes in a format that you can copy and paste into your composition.

## 10.5 Running a composition on the command line

You can run the executable you created just like any other executable:

### Listing 5: Running a Vuo composition

```
1 ./RenderTextLayer
```

Using the `vuo-debug` command, you can run the composition and get a printout of node executions and other debugging information:

### Listing 6: Running a Vuo composition

```
1 vuo-debug ./RenderTextLayer
```



## 10.6 Exporting a composition to an application on the command line

Using the `vue-export` command, you can turn a composition into an application:

### Listing 7: Exporting a Vue composition to an application

```
1 vue-export --output RenderTextLayer.app RenderTextLayer.vue
```

If you run into trouble exporting a composition, you can get more information by running `vue-export` with the `--verbose` flag.





This command is equivalent to the   menu item in Vue Editor. See the section [Exporting a composition to an application](#) for more information.

# 11 Troubleshooting

What if you run into problems using Vue? This section describes some common problems and how you can fix them. If you need help, you can always check out the additional resources on the [Vue Support](#) page.

## 11.1 Helpful tools

The Vue Editor provides several helpful tools for troubleshooting:

- **Show Events** mode lets you watch the events flow through your composition. You can turn it on and off with the   and   menu items. In Show Events mode, trigger ports are animated as they fire events. Nodes turn opaque as they're executed and gradually become more transparent as time passes since their most recent execution. Using Show Events mode, you can see if certain parts of your composition are executing.
- **Port popovers** let you inspect the data and events flowing through individual ports. A port popover pops up when you click on a port. If you want to keep the port popover open for a while, for example to look at several port popovers at once, click on the popover. While the composition is running, the port popover shows several pieces of information that can help with debugging:
  - Last event — The time of the most recent event through the port, and the average number of events per second.
  - Value — For data-and-event ports only, the most recent data through the port.
  - Event throttling — For trigger ports only, whether the port enqueues or drops events.
- **Node descriptions** tell you how the node is supposed to work. The node description appears in the lower panel of the Node Library whenever you select the node in the Node Library or on the canvas.

## 11.2 Common problems

### 11.2.1 My composition isn't working and I don't know why.

The first step is to take a deep breath and relax! OK, now the second step is to understand the problem. Here are some questions to ask yourself (or go through with a friend or collaborator):

- What do you expect the composition to do?
- What is the composition doing instead?
- Where in the composition does the problem begin?

Using the tools provided the Vuo Editor, try to narrow down the problem. Figure out exactly which nodes aren't working as you expect. Then try some of the more specific troubleshooting steps in the rest of this section.

### 11.2.2 Some nodes aren't executing.

If a node doesn't become opaque in Show Events mode, or if its port popover says "Last Event: (none observed)", then the node isn't executing. If a node isn't executing, that means events aren't reaching it. Here are some things to check:

- Is there a trigger port connected to the node? Trace backward through your composition, starting at the node that isn't executing, and looking at the cables and nodes feeding into it. Do you find a trigger port? If not...
  - Add a node with a trigger port, such as **Fire on Start**, and connect the trigger port to the node that isn't executing.
- Is the trigger port firing? Check the trigger port's popover (or connect a **Count** node, as described above). If the trigger isn't firing...
  - Check the node description for the trigger port's node. Make sure you understand exactly when the trigger is supposed to fire.
  - Check the trigger port's event throttling, which is displayed in the port popover. If it says "drop events", try changing it to "enqueue events". (See the section [Controlling the buildup of events](#).)
- Are events from the trigger port reaching some nodes but not others? Trace forward through your composition, from the trigger port toward the node that isn't executing, and find the last node that's receiving events.

- Look at the input ports on that last node. Do they have walls or doors? (See the section [Event walls and doors](#).) Check the node's description to help you understand when and why the node blocks events. To send events through the node, you may need to connect a cable to a different input port.
- Look at the output ports on that last node. Are they trigger ports? Remember that events into input ports never travel out of trigger ports. To send events through the node, you may need to connect a cable to a different output port.

### 11.2.3 Some nodes are executing when I don't want them to.

A node executes every time an event reaches it. If you don't want the node to execute at certain times, then your composition needs to block events from reaching the node. For more information, see the section [Common patterns for event flow](#).

### 11.2.4 Some nodes are outputting the wrong data.

If your composition is outputting graphics, audio, or other information that's different from what you expected, then you should check the data flowing through your composition. Here are some things to check:

- Where exactly does the data go wrong?
  - Check each port popover along the way to see if it has the data you expected.
  - Add some nodes to the middle of the composition to help you check the data (for example, a **Render Image to Window** node to check the data in an image port).
- Is there a node whose output data is different than you expected, given the input data?
  - Read the node description carefully. The node might work differently than you expected.

### 11.2.5 The composition's output is slow or jerky.

This can happen if events are not flowing through your composition often enough or quickly enough. Here are some things to check:


- Is each trigger port firing events as often as you expected? Check its port popover to see the average number of events per second. If it's firing more slowly than you expected...
  - Check the node description for the trigger port's node. Make sure you understand exactly when the trigger is supposed to fire.



- Check for any nodes downstream of the trigger port that might take a long time to execute, for example a **Fetch Image** node that downloads an image from the internet. Change your composition so those nodes receive fewer events. (See the section [Common patterns for event flow](#).)
- Check the trigger port’s event throttling, which is displayed in the port popover. If it says “drop events”, try changing it to “enqueue events”. (See the section [Controlling the buildup of events](#).)
- Check the event throttling of each other trigger port that can fire events through the same nodes as this trigger port. If the other trigger port’s event throttling is “enqueue events”, try changing it to “drop events”.
- Is each node receiving events as often as you expected? If not...
  - Check if there are any event doors that might be blocking events between the trigger and the node. (See the section [Event walls and doors](#).)
- Is the composition using a lot of memory or CPU? You can check this in the Activity Monitor application. If so...
  - Check if any parts of the composition are executing more often than necessary, and try not to execute them as often. (See the section [Common patterns for event flow](#).)
  - Export the composition to an application. When run as an application instead of in Vuo Editor, compositions use less memory and CPU.
  - Quit other applications to make more memory and CPU available.
  - Run the composition on a computer with more memory and CPU.

### 11.3 General tips

Finally, here are a few more tips to help you troubleshoot compositions:

- If you’re having trouble with a large and complicated composition, try to simplify the problem. Create a new composition and copy a small piece of your original composition into it. It’s much easier to troubleshoot a small composition than a large one.
- If you’re having trouble with a composition that has rapidly firing trigger ports, try to slow things down. For example, in place of the **Render Scene to Window** node’s **Requested Frame** trigger port, use a **Fire Periodically** node’s **Fired** trigger port connected to a **Count** node’s **Increment** port.
- If your composition used to work but now it doesn’t, figure out exactly what changed. Did you add or remove some cables? Were you using a different version of Vuo? Knowing what changed will help you narrow down the problem.
- Check the Console application (in your Finder application folder,  **Console.app**) while running your composition. Some nodes send console messages when they have problems.

- Try rearranging your nodes and cables so you can see the flow of events more clearly. If your nodes and cables are nicely laid out, then it can be easier to spot problems.
- Don't be afraid to experiment (but first save a copy of your composition). If you're not sure if a node is working as you expect, try it with various inputs.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. For help, go to [Vuo Support](#).

## 12 Keyboard Shortcuts

Vuo has [keyboard shortcuts](#) for working with your composition and the Vuo Editor.

In the keyboard shortcuts below, these symbols represent keys in Mac OS X:

Symbol	Definition
⌘	Command key
⌥	Control key
⌥	Option key
⇧	Shift key
⌫	Delete key
↵	Return key
⌘	Escape key

### 12.1 Working with composition files

Shortcut	Definition
⌘N	New Composition
⌘O	Open Composition
⌘S	Save Composition
⇧⌘S	Save Composition As
⌘W	Close Composition

## 12.2 Controlling the composition canvas

Shortcut	Definition
⌘=	Zoom In
⌘-	Zoom Out
⌘9	Zoom to Fit
⌘0	Actual Size
⌘⇧	Show Node Library
Spacebar Drag	Move the canvas viewport.

## 12.3 Creating and editing compositions

Shortcut	Definition
⌘A	Select all
⇧⌘A	Select none
⌘C	Copy
⌘V	Paste
⌘X	Cut
⌘Z	Undo
⇧⌘Z	Redo
⌘⌫	Delete
⌘ Drag	Duplicate selected nodes and cables.
↑↓←→	Move nodes and cables around on the canvas. Hold ⇧ to move further.
⇧	Hover over a node title and press ⇧ to edit it.
⇧	Select one or more nodes and press ⇧ to edit their titles.
⇧	Hover the mouse over a constant value and press ⇧ to edit it. Press ⇧ to accept the new value, or ⌘ to go back to the old value.

## 12.4 Running compositions

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Shortcut	Definition
⌘.	Stop
⌘R	Run
⌘ Click	Do this on a trigger port to manually fire an event.

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## 12.5 Application shortcuts

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Shortcut	Definition
⌘Q	Quit the Vuo Editor
⌘H	Hide the Vuo Editor

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