

# An Introduction to Vuo

Vuo 0.4.8

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# 1 Vuo and You

Vuo is an environment for creating interactive multimedia software. It’s designed for multimedia artists and other creative people who want to combine graphics, audio, special effects, and interactivity into unique compositions.

Making a Vuo composition is easy. You drag and drop building blocks (“nodes”) onto the canvas. You draw lines (“cables”) to connect them. Then you hit the Run button. See, hear, and interact with your composition.

Learning Vuo is easy. Just master one simple concept: information flowing through cables. (In case you were wondering, “Vuo” is the Finnish word for “flow”.) The Vuo website provides tutorials, examples, and forums to help you learn.

With Vuo, you can...

- Modify your composition while it's running – perfect for experimentation and live improvisation.
- Build apps for iOS, Mac, Windows, and Linux.
- Make your own reusable, shareable nodes.
- Embed your composition inside other software.

Welcome to Vuo. Soon you'll be able to create interactive art and music, animations, visualizations, games, special effects, and more.

## 2 Quick Start

### 2.1 Install Vuo

TODO (build, website): how to download and install Vuo

#### 2.1.1 The easy way: Getting the Vuo package

#### 2.1.2 The hard way: Building Vuo from source code

### 2.2 Create a composition

TODO (editor): Screen shots

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

1. Open the Vuo Editor application in your Applications folder and the Vuo Editor will appear. The Node Library will be on the left, and a blank canvas will be on the right.
2. In the Node Library, find the **Fire on Start** node. Drag it onto the canvas.
3. In the Node Library, find the **Display Console Window** node. Drag it onto the canvas.

4. Draw a cable from the **started** port of the **Fire on Start** node to the refresh port of the **Display Console Window** node. (To draw a cable, click and hold over the port you'd like to start from, then drag the cable to the port you'd like to connect to, and let go.)
5. Double-click on the **lineToWrite** port of the **Display Console Window** node. This pops up a text box.
6. Type “Hello world!” in the text box and hit **Return**. This closes the text box.

## 2.3 Run the composition

TODO (editor): Screenshots

Now let's run your composition.

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

## 2.4 Export the composition to a standalone executable

TODO (export): how to export a composition

# 3 The Basics

## 3.1 The ‘flow’ or execution of events

Vuo compositions are driven by events. Some nodes fire new events through a **trigger port**. Based on how you connect these **trigger ports** to other nodes, you have complete control over the timing of events in your composition.

The **trigger port** has spikes on its left side, to indicate that it *fires* events. ***Ka-pow!***

One example is the **Fire Periodically** node's **fired** port. Another is the **Fire on Start** node's **started** port.



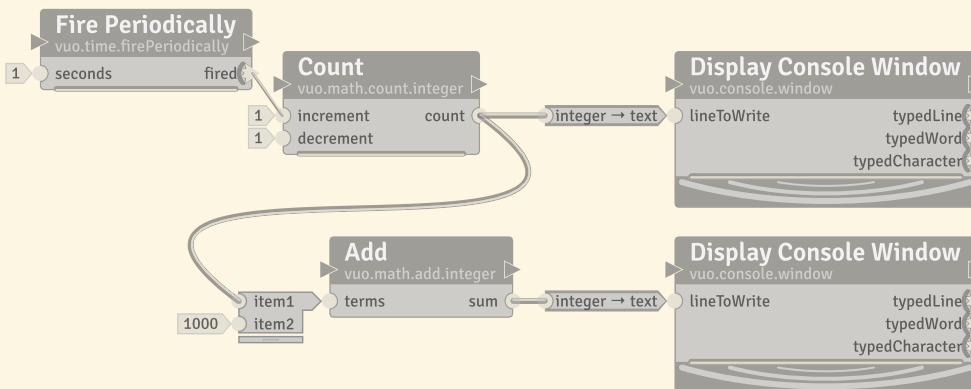
2 nodes with **trigger ports**

See the chapter [Controlling the Flow of Events](#) for more detail.

## 3.2 Nodes, Ports, and Cables

Each **node** performs a task, 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 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.



A composition consisting of 5 **nodes** and 4 **cables**

In the composition above, data and events flow from the **count** output port of the **Count** node to the **lineToWrite** input port of the **Display Console Window** node and the **item1** port of the **Add** node.

More than one cable can be connected to an output port, but only one cable can be connected to an input port.

See the chapter [Understanding Nodes](#) for more detail.

Note for  
Quartz Composer users

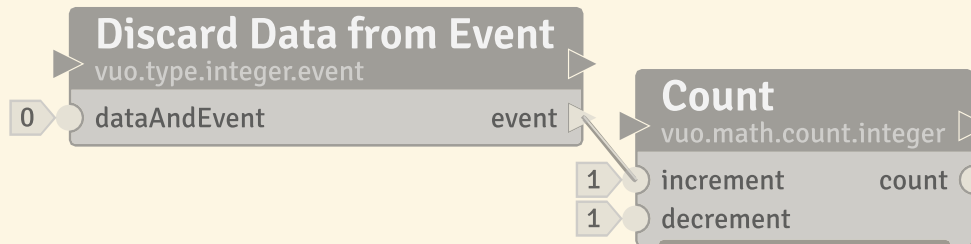
A **node** in Vuo is analogous to a **patch** in Quartz Composer. Unlike Quartz Composer, which typically executes each patch once per video frame, nodes in Vuo can be executed whenever they receive an event — whether it's 60 per second, 44,100 per second, or 1 per year.

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.

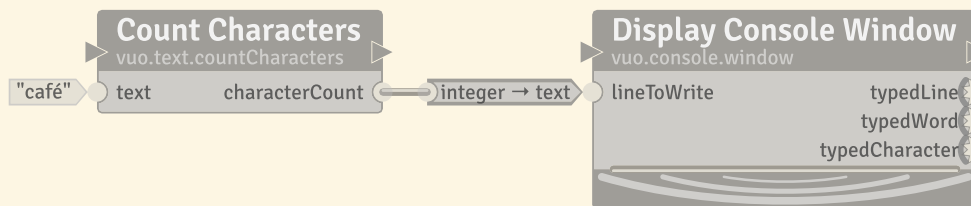
### 3.2.1 Passing data and events between nodes

All cables carry events. An example of a cable that carries only an event is the cable into the **Count** node's **increment** port:



**Event-only cables**, like the one above, are thin.

Some cables also carry data. For example, the cable coming out of the **CountCharacters** node's **count** port carries an event plus some data: the character count.

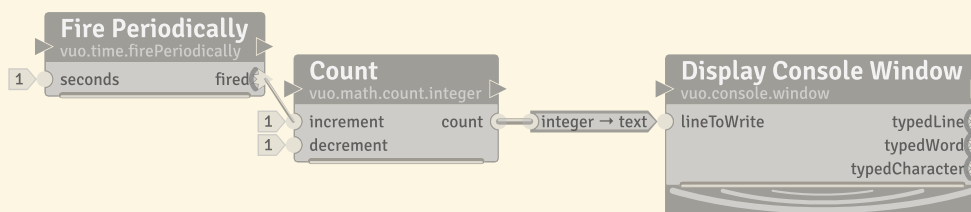


**Data-and-event cables**, like the one above, are thicker than **event-only cables**.

## 3.3 Creating a composition

The easiest way to make a composition is in the Vuo Editor. Once you've installed Vuo (see the chapter [Quick Start](#)), you can find the Vuo Editor in your Applications folder.

See the chapter [The Vuo Editor](#) for more information on the Vuo Editor.



Above is a **composition** that counts. It displays a blank window, then, every one second, it writes a number upon the window: 1, 2, 3, 4, ... etc. Let's take a closer look.

**Fire Periodically**, **Count**, and **Display Console Window** are **nodes**. Each node performs its own task. Information always flows from the left side to the right side of a node. Inputs are on the left, outputs on the right. **integer** → **text** is a **type converter**; its job is to convert (or translate) information from one **type** to another.

This composition begins with the **Fire Periodically** node and ultimately flows to the **Display Console Window** node. Information travels between nodes by exiting **output ports**, flowing through **cables**, and entering **input ports**.

The **Fire Periodically** node's only task is to tell other nodes when it's time to perform their function. It does this by *firing events* out of its **fired** port. (See the section on firing events for more information.) How often it fires an **event** is dictated by the value present at its **seconds** port. It sends events out its **fired** port, then along the cable to the **Count** node's **increment** port.

When an event from the **Fire Periodically** node flows through the cable and hits the **Count** node, it tells **Count** that it's time to execute. The **Count** node keeps track of a count. When an event hits its **increment** port, the node adds 1 to its count. The count starts out at 0, becomes 1 after the first event, 2 after the second event, and so on. The **Count** node sends the new count *and* the event out its **count** port, along the cable, to the **integer** port of the **integer** → **text** type converter.

The **integer** → **text** type converter takes the value in its **integer** port (a number in binary format) and converts it to text. That's because the next node, **Display Console Window**, only works with text, not numbers. Type converters appear automatically when two nodes that are using different formats of information are linked together.

The final node, **Display Console Window**, creates a blank white window and writes the count upon it.

In summary:

- **Fire Periodically** node fires events every 1 second, which flow along the cable into **Count**.
- **Count** receives the events and outputs them plus their corresponding numbers.
- **integer** → **text** converts the numbers to text and sends the events and numbers into **Display Console Window**
- **Display Console Window** creates a blank window and displays the numbers upon it, every one second.

### 3.4 Troubleshooting

Why isn't my composition executing? How do I make things happen in my composition? Both questions have to do with first checking to see if you are generating events and if those events are moving through the composition as you expect. You can see this more clearly using the Vuo Editor's **Show Events** mode, under the "Run" menu.

## 4 Controlling the Flow of Events

### 4.1 How ports and nodes work with events

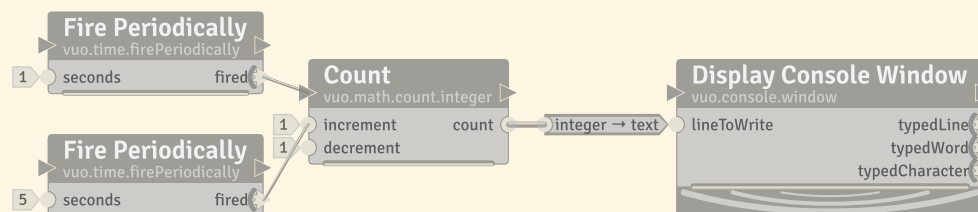
To understand how to control what happens in your composition, you first need to understand node **input ports** and node **refresh ports**, as well as how ports may be **conductive**, **semi-conductive** or **non-conductive**.

#### 4.1.1 Input ports

An input port is the location on the left side of the node where you can enter data, or connect a cable carrying either an event only or data + an event to the node. Remember, cables can carry events only, or data and events together, but never only data.

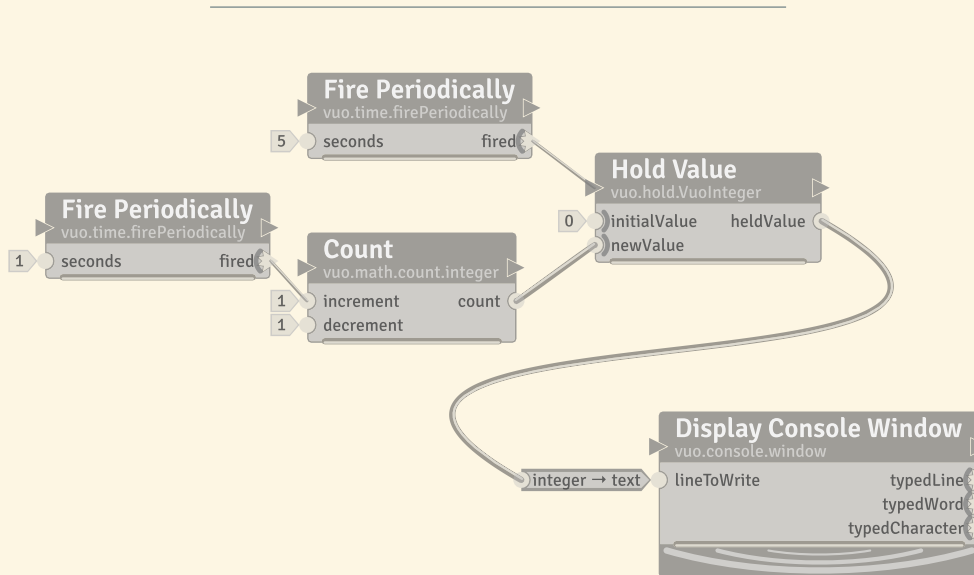
#### 4.1.2 Refresh ports

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-specific function.



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.



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

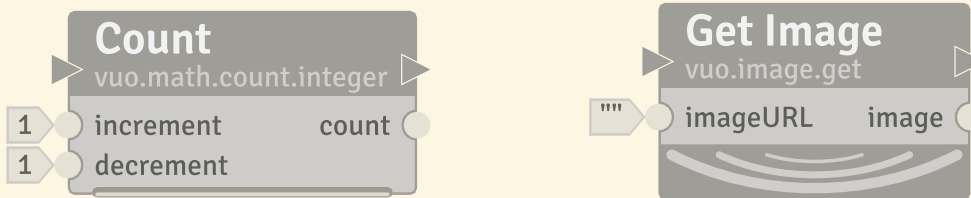
When the left **Fire Periodically** node executes, the count is transmitted to the **Hold Value** node — and stops there. The **Display Console Window** node doesn't execute.

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.

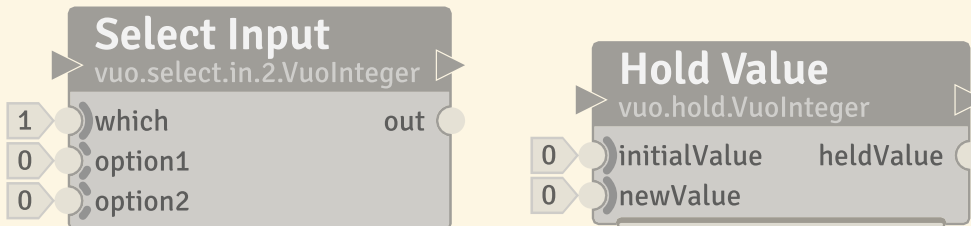
### 4.1.3 Conducting events through a node

When an event flows along a cable and reaches a node, it causes the node to **execute**. In all of the examples so far (except the **Hold Value** example above), the node would then transmit the event through its output ports to downstream nodes. But sometimes a port blocks the event so it doesn't flow to downstream nodes.

Nodes that are **always conductive** will always transmit an event from any input port to all output ports. Examples of always-conductive nodes are the **Count** node and the **Get Image** node:



Nodes that are **semi-conductive** may or may not transmit an event to a given output port. It depends on the type of node, the node's input data and events, and the node's state. Examples of semi-conductive nodes are the **Select Input** node and the **Hold Value** node:



Ports that always block events have a solid semi-circle (like the **which** port above). This solid semi-circle is called an **event wall**.

Ports that sometimes block events have a broken semi-circle (like the **option1** port above). This broken semi-circle is called an **event door**.

Vuo also has special type-converters that strip events from data.

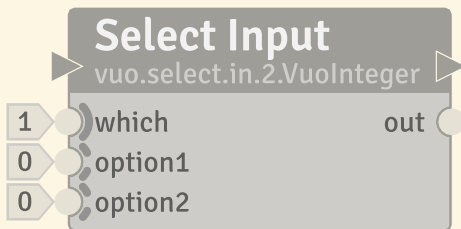
TODO: create composition to illustrate.

## 4.2 Controlling node execution

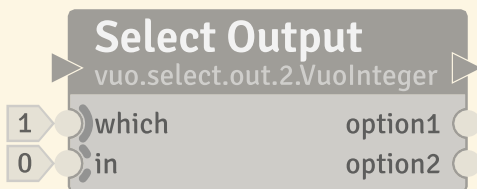
A composition can be as simple as a straight line of nodes, one executing after the other. But it doesn't have to be. A composition can make decisions. It can have feedback loops. It can execute more than one node at a time — you can create compositions that use control flow and concurrency.

### 4.2.1 Switches

A **Select Input** node lets you select a value from different input ports and route it to the output. When the **Select Input** node executes, it looks at the number 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 **option1** port will be outputted.




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.



 Note for  
Quartz Composer users

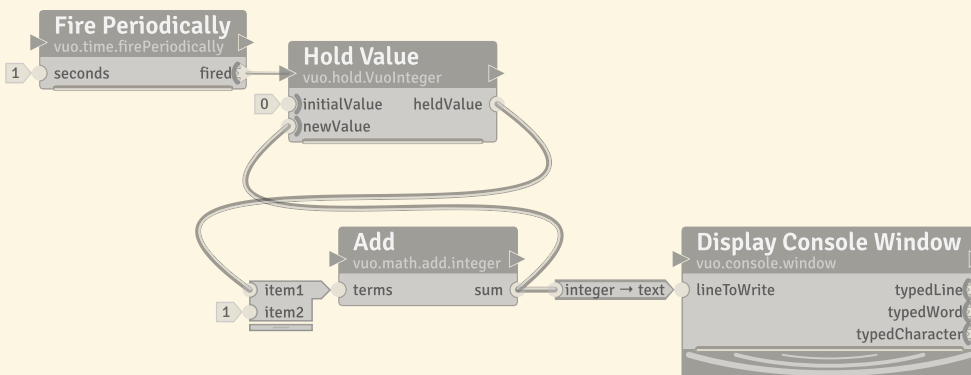
Vuo's **Select Input** node is similar to Quartz Composer's Multiplexer patch. Vuo's **Select Output** node is similar to Quartz Composer's Demultiplexer patch.

 Note for  
text programmers

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

### 4.2.2 Feedback loops

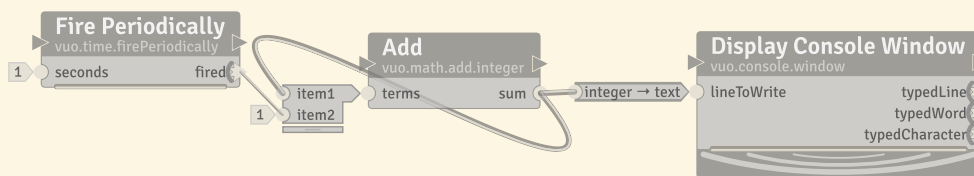
You can use a **feedback loop** to do something repeatedly or iteratively. An iteration happens each time a new event travels around the feedback loop.



This composition writes a count: 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 travels along the cable to the **Hold Value** node — and stops there, because **Hold Value** doesn't conduct events through its **value** port.

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.



TODO: mark as counter-example

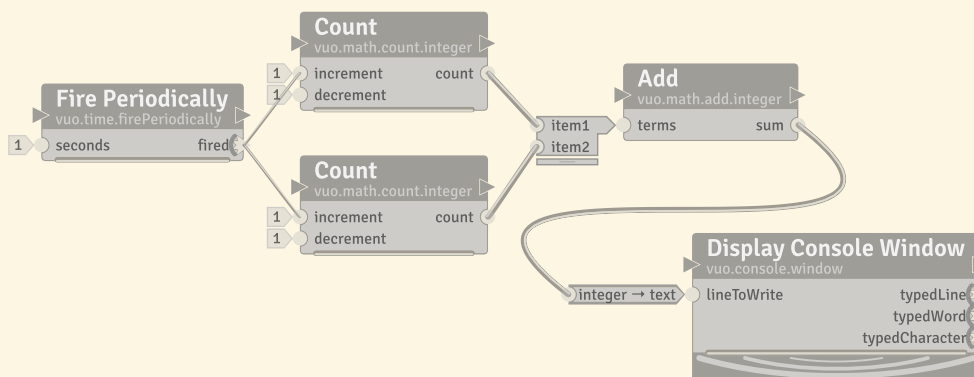
This composition is invalid. That's because any event from the **Fire Periodically** node will get stuck forever traveling in the feedback loop from the **Add** node's **sum** port to its **in0** port. Every feedback loop needs a semi-conductive or never-conductive node like **Hold** to block events from looping infinitely.

### 4.2.3 Logic Nodes

TODO: explain how logic nodes can control flow

### 4.2.4 Executing nodes in parallel

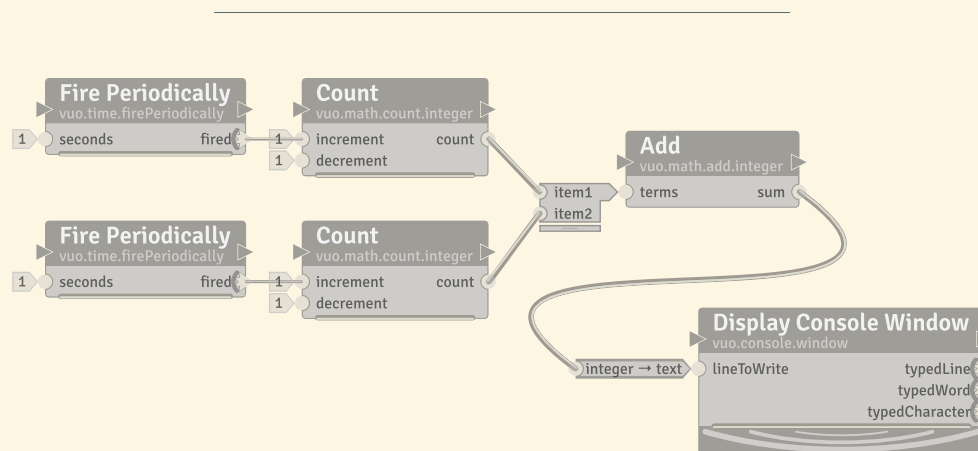
Vuo is a **parallelizing compiler**. It figures out which parts of your composition are safe to execute at the same time. It executes those parts concurrently to make your composition run faster.



In this composition, the two **Count** nodes are independent of each other, so it's safe 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**.

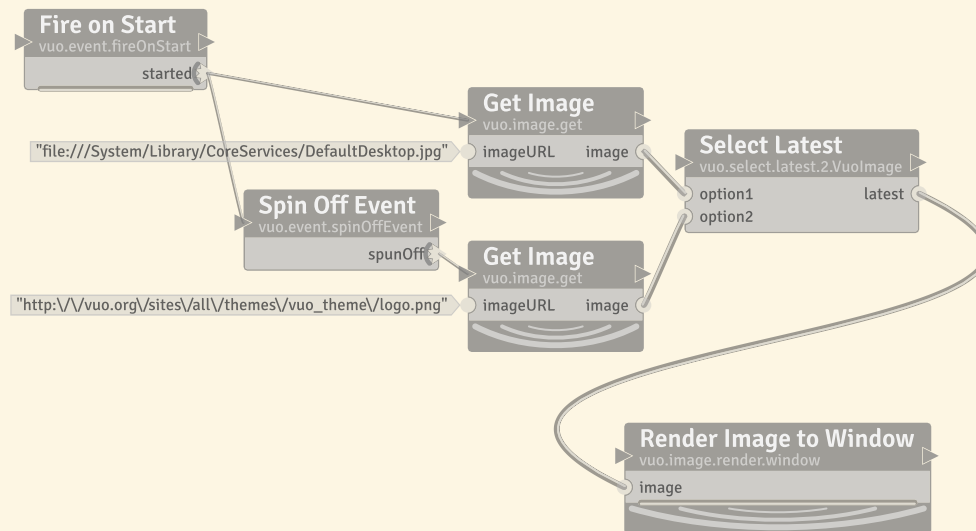
If the **Fire Periodically** node fires an event, then fires a second event before the first has made it through the composition, then the second event waits. Only when the **Display Console Window** node has finished executing for the first event do the **Count** nodes begin executing for the second event.



In this composition, the **Add** node executes each time either **Fire Periodically** node fires an event. If one of the **Add** node's inputs is pushed, 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.

### 4.2.5 Executing nodes in the background

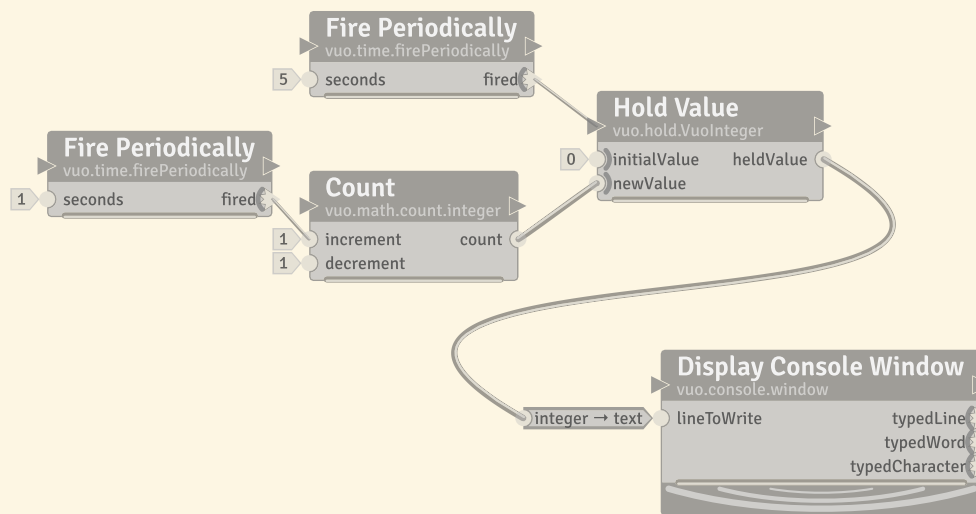


This example shows how a composition can do some work in the background (asynchronously). It displays one image while downloading another image from the internet, then displays the second image.

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.

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 **Get Image** node, **Select Latest**, **Place Image in Scene**, and **Render Scene to Window**. All of these nodes execute without waiting for the lower **Get Image** node. Meanwhile, the **Spin Off Event** node fires a new event, the lower **Get Image** node downloads the image, and eventually the new event travels onward through **Select Latest** and **Render Image to Window**.

### 4.2.6 Executing nodes at a steady rate



This composition writes a count to console every 5 seconds. The count updates every second.

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

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

### 4.2.7 Branching and merging

If you fire an event and then send it to two different nodes, you can reliably merge the results downstream. If you try to merge events that are fired independently, even if they are supposedly fired at the same time, your results will be unpredictable.

## 4.3 Troubleshooting

The Vuo Editor provides two ways to review the event flow in your composition.

The first is the using the **Show Events** mode.

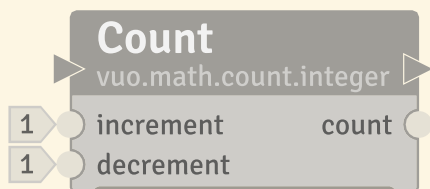
The second is to use **port popovers**. **Port popovers** appear when you hover your mouse over a node's port. The popover gives you information about the port — the type of data (if any) it holds, and how it conducts events. When the composition is running, it also shows the current data value (if any), and when the most recent event passed through the port. By dragging a popover, you can detach it, to keep it visible while you work on other parts of the composition.

TODO: Better information on troubleshooting with “Show events” and popovers.

## 5 Understanding Nodes

### 5.1 Node names

Each node has 2 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.integer”. The class name reveals the following: Team Vuo created it, “math” is the category, “count” is the specific function (and title name), and “integer” is the type of information it works with.

### 5.2 Setting a constant value for a port

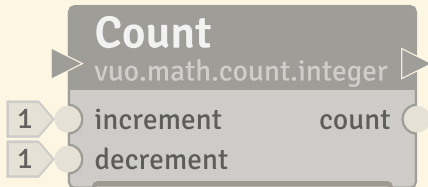
Instead of passing data through a cable, you can give a data-and-event input port a **constant value**.

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.

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

### 5.3 Using the default value of a port

If a data-and-event input port isn't connected to a cable and doesn't have a constant value, then it reverts to 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.

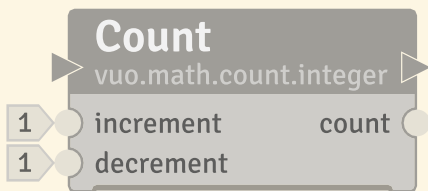


### 5.4 Initial value

TODO: explain initial value

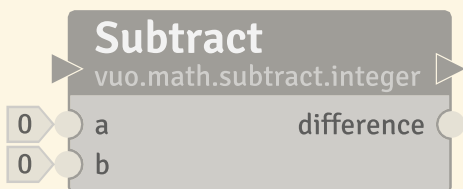
### 5.5 Storing information

Some nodes have **state**. They remember information from previous times they were executed. An example of a **stateful** node is **Count**. If a **Count** node is told to increment, its state (the count) changes.



**Stateful** nodes have a thick bar along the bottom that looks like an upside-down **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 remember anything about previous times it was executed. If you give it the same inputs, it'll always give you the same outputs.



**Stateless** nodes have a thin bottom border.

## 5.6 Types of information and type converters.

Nodes are sensitive to **data type**. When you connect two ports with a cable, the types of the ports have to match. You can connect an integer port to an integer port, or a text port to a text port, but you can't connect an integer port to a text port. (If you want to convert an integer to text, use the **Convert Integer to Text** node.)

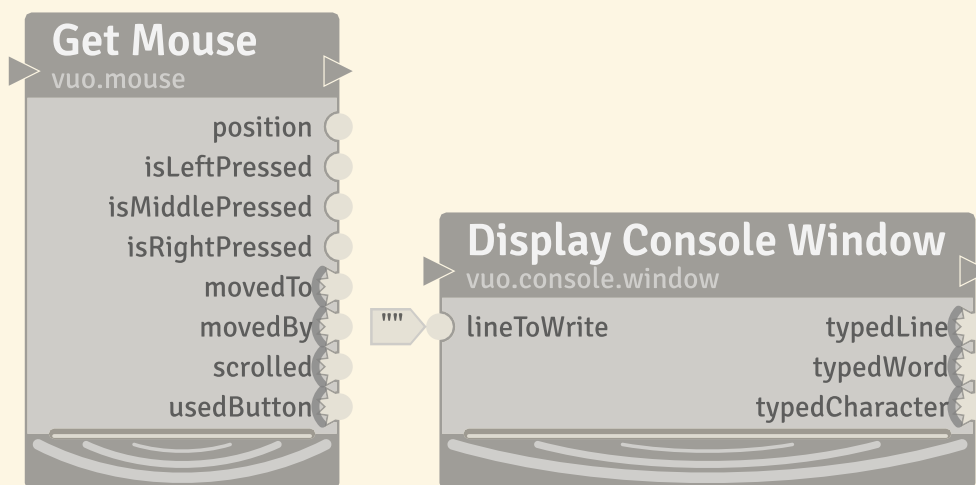
You can connect a data-and-event output port to a data-and-event input port, but you can't connect a data-and-event output port to an event-only input port. (If you want to convert a data-and-event cable to an event-only cable, use a **Discard Data from Event** node.)

(You *can* connect an event-only output port to a data-and-event input port. That's because, as explained below, the port has data in it even if no cable is connected.)

## 5.7 Interacting with the environment

Some nodes interact with the world outside the composition — 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 **Get Mouse** node, which outputs the position and clicks of the mouse. Another example is the **Display Console Window** node, which reads text typed in a console window and writes text to that window.



### 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.

**Interface** nodes have three radio arcs along the bottom edge, symbolizing that they send or receive data with the world outside your composition.

## 5.8 Troubleshooting

Use port popovers or node descriptions to learn about a node’s specific properties.

TODO: expand on how port popovers and node descriptions can help understand nodes.

# 6 The Vuo Editor

## 6.1 Drawing nodes and cables to create a composition

TODO (editor): screenshot of Node Library with one node class selected

When you create a composition, your starting point is always the **Node Library** (**Window > Show Node Library**). 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.

TODO (build): directory(ies) from which nodes are loaded; what to do if you don’t see a node – link to section “Installing a node class”

You can add a node to your composition by dragging it from the Node Library to the canvas. (Or you can double-click on the node in the Node Library.)

You can delete a node by selecting it and hitting **Delete**.

TODO (editor): screenshot of node with input editor

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 hitting **Return**.) When the input editor is open, press **Return** to accept the new value or **Escape** to cancel.

TODO (editor): screenshot of drawing a cable

You can draw a cable by dragging from an output port to a matching input port. (Or you can drag backwards from an event-only *input* port to a matching *output* port.) When you drag a cable, the ports you can connect it to are highlighted.

You can delete a cable by dragging the end away from the input port and releasing it. (Or you can select the cable and hit **Delete**.)

### 6.1.1 Running and stopping a composition

TODO (editor): screenshot of Run and Stop buttons

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

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

### 6.1.2 Exporting compositions

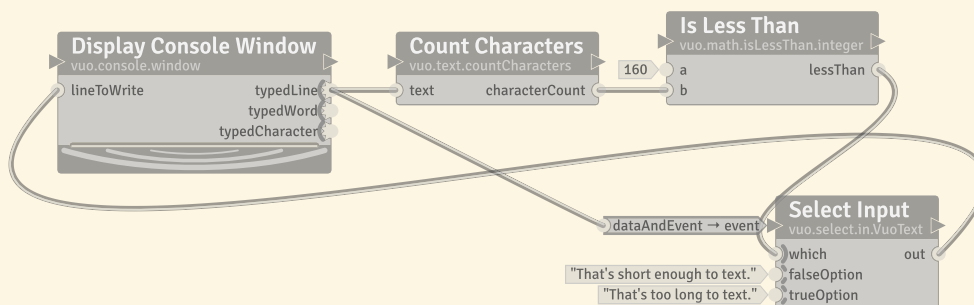
TODO (export): how to export a composition

## 6.2 Creating compositions with a text editor and running them with a shell

Sometimes you may want to work with compositions outside of the Vuo Editor. Maybe you want to write a script that compiles and runs compositions. Or maybe you want to edit a composition over SSH. Or maybe you just want to peek under the hood and learn what the Vuo Editor is doing. You can.

### 6.2.1 Writing a composition in a text editor

Composition files are in [Graphviz DOT format](#), an open format for describing nodes and edges (cables).



Listing 1: CheckSMSLength.vuo

```

1  */
2
3  digraph G
4  {
5  CountCharacters [type="vuo.text.countCharacters" version="100" label="Count Characters
    |<refresh>refresh\l|<text>text\l|<done>done\r|<characterCount>characterCount\r"
    pos="370,71"];
6  DiscardDatafromEvent [type="vuo.type.text.event" version="100" label="Discard Data from
    Event|<refresh>refresh\l|<dataAndEvent>dataAndEvent\l|<done>done\r|<event>event\r"
    pos="376,202"];
7  DisplayConsoleWindow3 [type="vuo.console.window" version="100" label="Display Console
    Window|<refresh>refresh\l|<lineToWrite>lineToWrite\l|<done>done\r|<typedLine>
    typedLine\r|<typedWord>typedWord\r|<typedCharacter>typedCharacter\r" pos="122,71"]
    ;
8  IsLessThan [type="vuo.math.isLessThan.integer" version="100" label="Is Less Than|<
    refresh>refresh\l|<a>a\l|<b>b\l|<done>done\r|<lessThan>lessThan\r" pos="568,56" _a
    ="160"];
9  SelectInput [type="vuo.select.in.VuoText" version="100" label="Select Input|<refresh>
    refresh\l|<which>which\l|<falseOption>falseOption\l|<trueOption>trueOption\l|<done>
    done\r|<out>out\r" pos="648,191" _falseOption="\That's short enough to text.\""
    _trueOption="\That's too long to text.\""];
10
11 CountCharacters:characterCount -> IsLessThan:b;
12 DiscardDatafromEvent:event -> SelectInput:refresh;
13 DisplayConsoleWindow3:typedLine -> CountCharacters:text;
14 DisplayConsoleWindow3:typedLine -> DiscardDatafromEvent:dataAndEvent;
15 IsLessThan:lessThan -> SelectInput:which;
16 SelectInput:out -> DisplayConsoleWindow3:lineToWrite;
17 }

```

Let's look at CheckSMSLength.vuo. It declares each of the nodes (**Fire on Start**, **Read from Console**, etc.) followed by each of the cables (**Start:started** -> **ReadfromConsole:refresh**, etc.). For each node, it gives the type (e.g. `vuo.event.fireOnStart`) and a label listing all of the node's ports. The label is hard to read, but don't worry about typing it exactly right — you can just copy and paste the node declaration from the output of this command:

Listing 2: Showing all node classes

```

1 vuo-compile --list-node-classes=dot

```

For each node, CheckSMSLength.vuo also gives a constant value for each data-and-event input port that isn't connected to a cable. For example, the **a** port of the **Is Less Than** node has a constant value of 160.

For each cable, CheckSMSLength.vuo gives the starting port and the ending port. For example, **Start:started** -> **ReadfromConsole:refresh** declares a cable extending

from the **started** output port of the **Fire on Start** node to the **refresh** input port of the **Read from Console** node.

## 6.2.2 Rendering a composition on the command line

### Listing 3: Rendering a composition

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

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

### Listing 4: Rendering a Vuo composition using Graphviz

```
1 dot -Grankdir=LR -Nshape=Mrecord -Nstyle=filled -Tpng -oSMSLength.png CheckSMSLength.vuo
```

## 6.2.3 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 5: Compiling a Vuo composition

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

Then, turn the .bc file into an executable:

### Listing 6: Linking a Vuo composition into an executable

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

(These are separate steps because you might use a compiled .vuo file as a subcomposition inside another .vuo file, instead of as a standalone executable.)

You can run the following commands to see more options:

### Listing 7: Compiler and linker help

```
1 vuo-compile --help
2 vuo-link --help
```

### 6.2.4 Running a composition on the command line

Run the executable you created just like any other executable:

**Listing 8: Running a Vuo composition**

```
1 ./CheckSMSLength
```

### 6.2.5 Running a composition inside a C/C++/Objective-C program

TODO: building a composition to .bc, linking your code with that .bc, and calling the composition's main function

### 6.2.6 Dynamically compiling and running compositions inside a C/C++/Objective-C program

TODO: explain programmatically invoking the compiler and using our wrapper around LLVM's `ExecutionEngine->getPointerToFunction()`

## 7 Adding node classes to your Node Library

**Node class** is the technical term for “type of node”. Vuo comes with a built-in set of node classes, all of which are listed in the Node Library in the Vuo Editor. A node class is like a blueprint or cookie cutter for creating nodes. You can create a node by picking a node class from the Node Library and dragging it onto the Canvas.

There are many reasons that you might want to add node classes to your, or someone else's, Node Library:

- You find yourself making the same subcomposition over and over in different compositions. You want to make it once and reuse it.
- You made a cool subcomposition that you want to share, so other Vuo users can add it to their Node Library.

- You want to create node classes as a front end or wrapper to let Vuo users use an existing library.

First, let's talk about how to install a node class created by someone else. Then we'll talk about creating a node class of your own.

## 7.1 Installing a node class

A node class is distributed as a .bc (LLVM bytecode) file. To install a node class, just place the .bc file in one of these folders:

- 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, go to the Go menu, and pick Library.
- In the top-level folder on your hard drive, go to Library > Application Support > Vuo > Modules.

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

You can organize the files in subfolders inside your nodes folder any way you want. Vuo will search the nodes folder and all of its subfolders for node classes.

## 7.2 Creating a node class in the Vuo Editor

TODO (subcompositions)