



Moviestorm User Guide

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Note that all screenshots are taken from Windows versions of the software. Mac versions may differ slightly.

Contents

Introduction.....	4
What you will need.....	4
Using Moviestorm with other tools.....	4
The movie-making process	5
Setting up Moviestorm.....	6
Logging in	6
Using AddOn packs	6
Where's my stuff?	8
Preferences.....	8
Updates.....	8
Basic operations.....	9
Creating new movies	9
Saving movies.....	9
Loading movies.....	10
Creating movies with more than one scene.....	10
Set workshop.....	11
Choosing a stock set	11
Navigating around the set.....	12
Basic building: walls, doors, windows, floors & ceilings.....	12
Props and set dressing	13
Lighting	14
Sky.....	15
Terrain.....	15
Working with stock sets.....	15
Dressing room	16
Viewing characters	16
The cast list	16
Creating characters	16
Director's view	18
Basic Moviestorm directing techniques.....	18
Selecting an actor	19
Placing an actor on set	19
Interacting with other characters.....	19
Interacting with the set	19
Moving	19
Speaking	20
Getting emotional.....	20
Using props	21

Watching the action.....	21
Editing the timeline	21
Advanced techniques.....	22
Filming: the Camera view	23
Framing your shots.....	23
Keyframes: cuts and moves	25
Advanced camera tools.....	25
Lighting in the camera view	25
Taking screenshots.....	25
Working with multiple cameras.....	26
Editing: the Cutting Room	27
Autogenerating a movie.....	27
Playback.....	27
Adding clips	28
Adding external video clips	28
Adding stills	28
Adding audio.....	29
Adding text.....	29
Adding visual effects.....	30
Final production: the Publisher's view.....	31
Rendering your movie.....	31
Watching your movie.....	32
Uploading your movie.....	32
Making 3D movies.....	32
More useful information.....	33
Moviestorm on the Web.....	33
Modding Moviestorm	33
Appendix I: recommended system specifications.....	34
Windows.....	34
Mac.....	34
Appendix II: default mouse controls.....	35
Appendix III: License agreement	36
Appendix IV: Credits	40

Introduction

Moviestorm is a software application that enables you to make animated videos on your computer.

It's a full suite of movie-making tools with which you can quickly and easily create and light your own sets, design and direct your own actors, then shoot, edit and publish your own movies.

It's ideal for all forms of film making; for previsualization and animated storyboards; for movie shorts or feature-length films; from videoblogs to business messages; for engaging, collaborative learning in education, or simply just for creative fun, Moviestorm is a simple and inexpensive way to make animated movies.

Key features include:

- Intuitive click and explore game-style interface
- Pre-made customizable sets, characters and movies
- Thousands of characters, costumes, sets, props and animations , suitable for most film projects
- Flexible personalization options for props, characters and much more
- Import your own assets, including music, models and textures
- A suite of tools that encourages teamwork and fun
- No animation or artist skills required to be creative
- Upload direct to YouTube, or your preferred social network
- A highly supportive community of amateur and professional movie-makers at www.moviestorm.co.uk

As a 3D animation platform, Moviestorm is sometimes known as a machinima tool. Machinima is an animation technique that came from computer games, and as a result, using Moviestorm is a lot like playing a computer game such as *The Sims*, and does not require you to know anything about 3D modeling or animation.

What you will need

- A PC or Mac that's capable of playing recent games such as *World of Warcraft*. For more detailed specs, see the Appendix.
- Speakers or headphones to listen to your audio
- A microphone, if you want to record audio so your actors can talk
- Internet connection

Using Moviestorm with other tools

Though Moviestorm offers a start to finish solution for creating animated movies, it can be part of a tool chain, or work in collaboration with your favorite software.

You can, for example, export Moviestorm footage and edit it in your preferred video editing software, or you can record and edit audio or video in an external application then import it into Moviestorm.

The movie-making process

You can approach film making in any order, but essentially, these are the key parts:



Choose one of the stock sets, or create your own from scratch in the Set Workshop.

You can customize stock sets by adding or moving props and other set dressing, painting the walls and floors, changing the sky, and setting up the lighting. Alternatively if you want complete freedom, you can start with an empty set and build from there, and you can bring in your own images to use as posters or backdrops.



Choose one or more of the stock characters, or create your own from scratch in the Dressing Room.

Every pack that contains a costume also includes stock characters, but if you prefer to design your own, the customize options available will enable you to create yourself, your friends, or famous people.

Use the morph sliders to change the shape of different features, or even the ethnic origin and skin tone. Characters can also have different decals for skin detail, makeup, eyebrows, beards, and much more. Some decals can even change color and be moved. In addition to the face, there are many morphing hairstyles to select and color change, and costumes to color, re-texture or personalize with your own images.



Bring your characters onto set in the Director's View, and direct them like real actors.

You can make them speak by talking into your microphone, and they will automatically lip sync. You can instruct them to move about the set in a variety of walk styles, use props ranging from doors and furniture, through to hand held props such as guitars or phones. They can also interact with other actors, such as kissing, shaking hands, or fighting, or you can portray a broad variety of emotions using facial expressions and body language.



Film the action using the simple camera tools in the Camera View.

Set up your camera shots in 3D space using either manual or auto-framing, then cut or move between the keyframes. There are even advanced features such as optical zoom and depth of field (hardware permitting).



Edit the film in the Cutting Room.

This is where you make the finishing touches before rendering your movie. You can add titles, credits, subtitles, music and sound effects to your film, you can also add filters to get that unique look, import pictures, sounds and other assets, and preview your movie in full screen. If you want to make a more complex film, you can create several scenes within your movie, using many different sets and characters, and you can edit all these scenes together.



Finally you can render your movie in the Publisher View.

There are a variety of different formats, from high definition down to tiny files for playing on a mobile phone or iPod, as well as a 3D renderer. Upload to YouTube or your preferred social destination for fame and feedback!

Unlike traditional film making, Moviestorm doesn't force you to stick to a linear workflow. At any stage you can go back to any part of the creation process and rework it. In many regards an iterative process of creation, render then re-polish is easier and more rewarding. You can decide on the costumes once you've directed and filmed the action, or you can go back and add extra set dressing once you've done the editing if you feel everything looks too sparse. You can easily add in extra cast, move buildings or trees, or change the audio - you can even change your characters completely. And it doesn't stop when you've finished your movie. You can go back and create new versions any time you like - that's a luxury most professional film directors don't have!

It can also help you if your hardware is below standard to add the processor-intensive elements such as background characters and lights after you are happy with everything else. First make a rough cut of the main parts of your movie, then go back and put in the less important bits.

Moviestorm provides plenty of ready-made elements to help you get up to speed faster and to make it quicker and easier to make movies; from stock movies, sets and characters, down to auto-framing cameras, instant titles and credits, and much more. You can use them "as is" or you can customize them to get a more individual look.

Setting up Moviestorm

Logging in

When you start Moviestorm, you will need to enter your username and password on the launch screen before you can go to the main menu.

If you have a fixed duration license (e.g. monthly or annual), you must be connected to the Internet to do this. Once you have logged in, you will normally remain logged in for 14 days, and you do not need to connect to the Internet. After 14 days, you will need to connect to the Internet and log in again.

If you have a permanent license, you will stay logged in permanently and will not need to reconnect to the Internet unless you use Moviestorm on another computer.

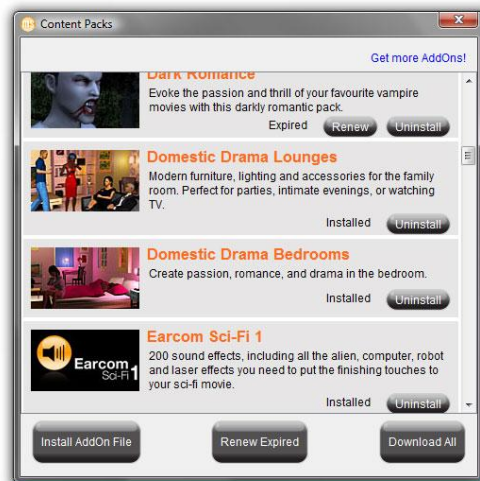
If you share a computer, each user can have their own username and password. When you're logged in to Moviestorm, you will only have access to the AddOn packs licensed by that user. However, you will see the movies and stock sets belonging to the user currently logged in on your computer: these may be different.

Remember: do not share your password with anyone - not even someone claiming to be Moviestorm staff! If you need to change your password, you can do this on the Moviestorm Web site.

Using AddOn packs

Moviestorm consists of the software you use to create movies, plus a number of AddOn packs. These contain the various elements that are used in your movie ("assets"), such as sets, props, costumes, hairstyles, characters, sounds, animations, music, and so on. The more you add, the more variety you can get in your movies!

Obtaining AddOn packs



You can get AddOn packs in three ways:

From the Moviestorm Web site. Go to the Content Packs section of the Web site and follow the instructions.

From the launcher. Press the **Get More Content** button to see a panel (shown above) that lists all available AddOn packs. You can download and install packs directly from here, or renew your licenses if you need to (see below).

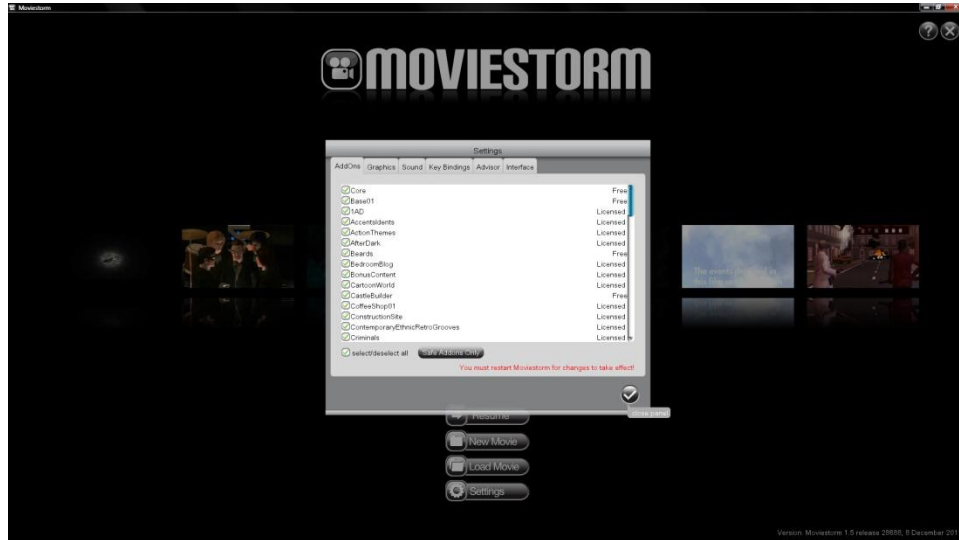
From within Moviestorm. In the Set Workshop or Dressing Room, you may see some items marked as locked. Click on them for more information. You can then go directly to the Web site to get the pack.

Renewing AddOn packs

When you get a pack, you may choose to try it free for 7 days, or get it for a limited period of time instead of purchasing it outright. This is useful if you only need it for a single scene, or if you're on a tight budget. You can renew your licenses from the **Get More Content** screen in the launcher, as shown above.

Enabling or disabling AddOn packs

When you get a new pack, it's enabled by default. If you want, you can disable packs you're not using; for example, if you're making a modern romance, you may not want to bother with sci-fi characters or props, military animations, and so on. You don't need to do this, but some people find it useful not to be distracted by things they're not using.



On the main menu, click **Settings**. Check or uncheck packs as you wish, then click again to accept the new settings. Moviestorm will then restart with your preferred packs enabled.

Third party AddOn packs

There are many AddOn packs created and distributed by people other than Moviestorm. Some are free, others aren't. They can be a great way to expand what Moviestorm can do, but there is one important thing you need to be aware of.

Third party packs are not supported or endorsed by Moviestorm, and you install them at your own risk.

Most of them are perfectly safe, but some may not be compatible with your version of Moviestorm, may cause performance problems or may even cause Moviestorm to crash.

If you experience problems running Moviestorm and you have any third party packs installed, first disable those packs as described above and see if that fixes the problem. (Movies that require those packs will, of course, not load correctly, so you may need to try another movie.)

Where's my stuff?

Moviestorm sets up two folders on your computer.

The main Moviestorm folder holds the program and all the AddOns you've got. You probably don't need to access this.

Your personal Moviestorm folder holds all your movies, stock characters and sets, and it's where Moviestorm stores the logs and other useful files.

Windows defaults:

Main Folder (32 bit windows) C:/Program Files/Moviestorm

Main Folder (64 bit windows) C:/Program Files (x86)/Moviestorm

Personal Folder (Vista, Windows 7) C:/Users/[Your name]/Moviestorm

Personal Folder (Windows XP) C:/Documents and Settings/[Your name]/Moviestorm

Mac defaults:

Main folder: Applications/Moviestorm.app (then right click, select Show Contents, and go to Contents/Resources)

Personal folder: Users/[Your name]/Moviestorm

Preferences



On the main Moviestorm screen, choose **Settings** to alter the graphics settings. You may need to try different settings to find what works best for your computer and get the best balance between quality and performance.

You can also select an alternate microphone or sound input, adjust the default keyboard shortcuts or other settings.

Updates

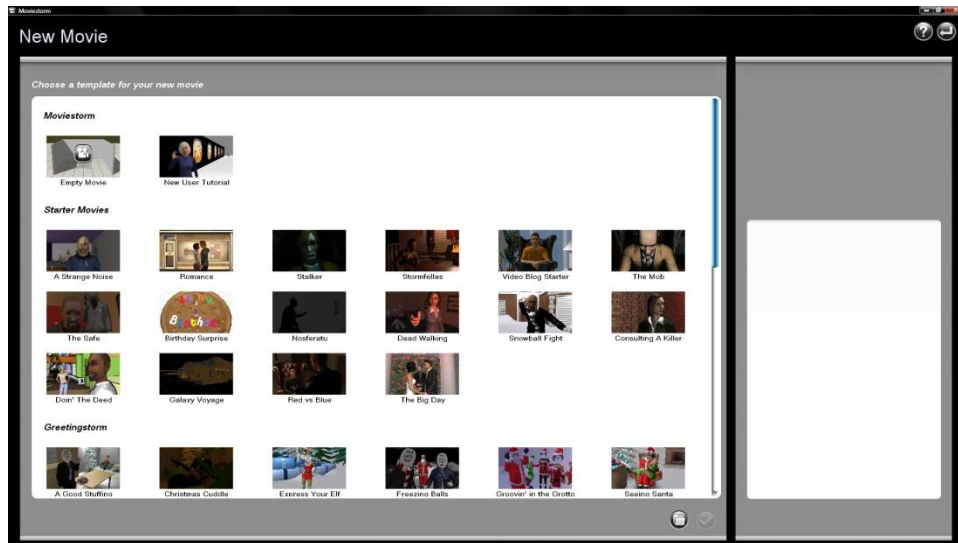
Sometimes Moviestorm will notify you that there is an update available when you start it up. Click the **Update** button on the launcher to get the latest version of the software, including updates to any AddOn packs you got from Moviestorm. You do not need to update Moviestorm as soon as an update becomes available, but we recommend keeping your software reasonably up to date.

Note: Third party AddOn packs do not get automatically updated, and you will need to obtain the updates manually from the original vendor.

Basic operations

How to create, save, and load movies.

Creating new movies



From the main menu, click the **New Movie** button. You'll now see several templates for movies you can make, depending on what AddOn packs you have installed.

Most of the time you will want to use the **Moviestorm** template. This is a blank movie template, ready for you to start from scratch.

The **New User Tutorial** is an interactive tour of Moviestorm. It's not really intended for making movies.

The **Starter Movies** are part-completed movies. You can edit them, add bits to them, change the dialogue, and so on. This is a handy way to learn how Moviestorm movies are assembled.

Saving movies

Saving

You should get into the habit of saving regularly. Movies can get big and complicated, and you really don't want to lose everything in the event of a crash, power failure, or alien invasion. Click the save button in the top left-hand corner of the screen.

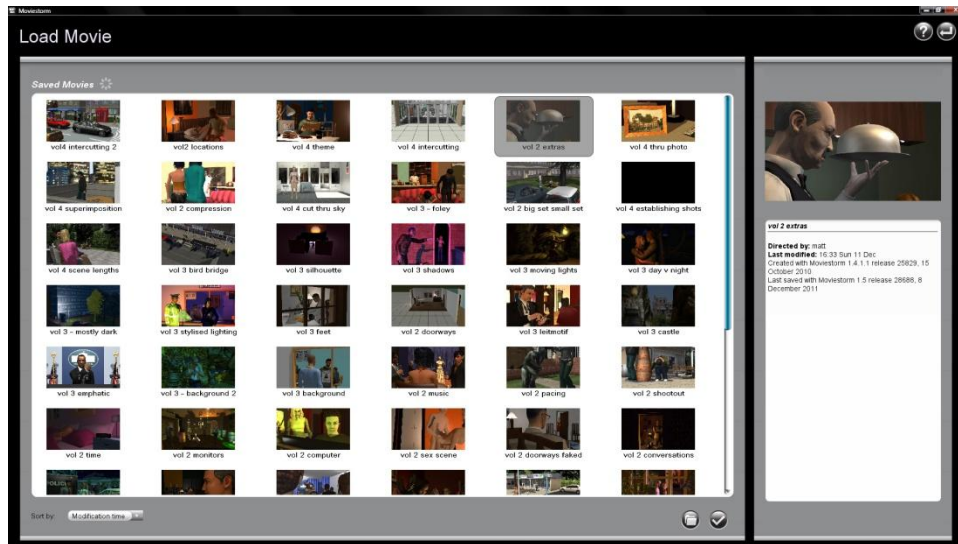
Save As...

By the save button is a small triangle. Click this to save your movie with a new name. This is handy if you like where you've got to, but want to try some experiments.

Backups

Moviestorm will autosave your movie every so often. This is useful for those moments when you realize you've forgotten to press the save button!

Loading movies



From the main menu, click the **Load Movie** button. You'll now see all the movies you've made and stored in your personal movie folder. Double-click a movie (or click and select the check mark) to load it.

You can use the folder icon next to the check mark to locate and load a movie that's held somewhere other than your personal Moviestorm folder.

Resume

If you want to carry on working on the last movie you were making, you can click the **Resume** button from the main menu and skip the **Load Movie** screen.

Note: the Resume button will only appear if there are any unsaved changes from your previous session.

Creating movies with more than one scene



When a movie is created, it only has one scene in it. This is fine for shorter movies, but you'll soon find that you need more.

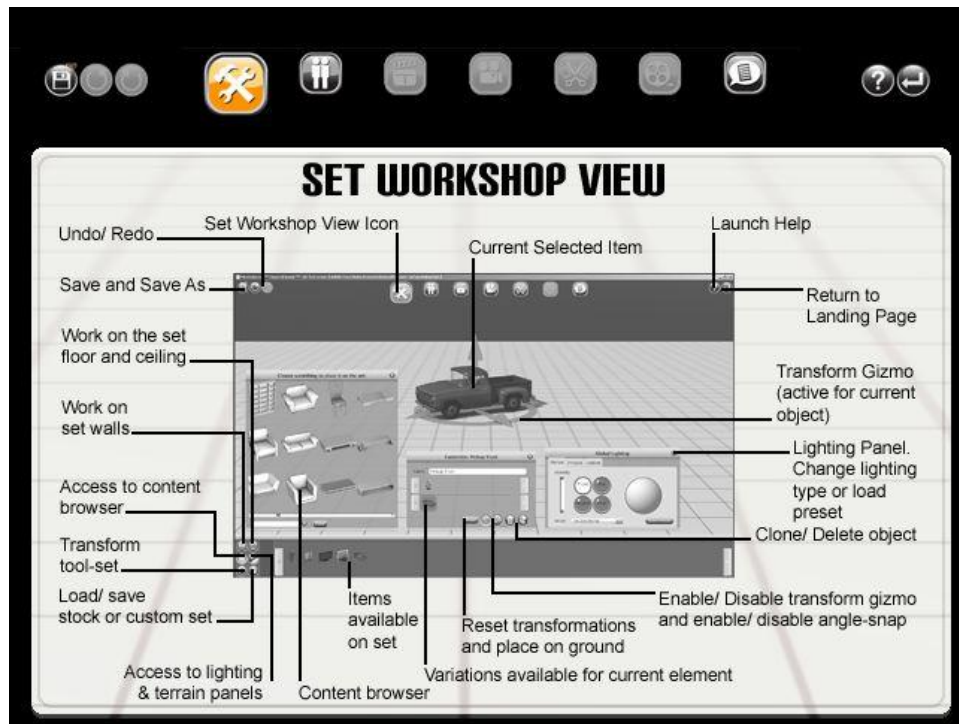
Click on the script button on the top right, and then the + button to add a new scene. Give it a name so it's easy to find. Your new scene has all the same characters as your first scene, but it can take place in a different set.

You can switch between scenes using the script panel. Click on the scene you want to work on. You can also reorder or delete scenes.

Set workshop



The Set Workshop is where you create your sets. You can use the stock sets supplied with Moviestorm, and customize them if you wish. If you prefer, you can build your sets from scratch: interiors, exteriors, everything from the living room to alien planets.



Choosing a stock set

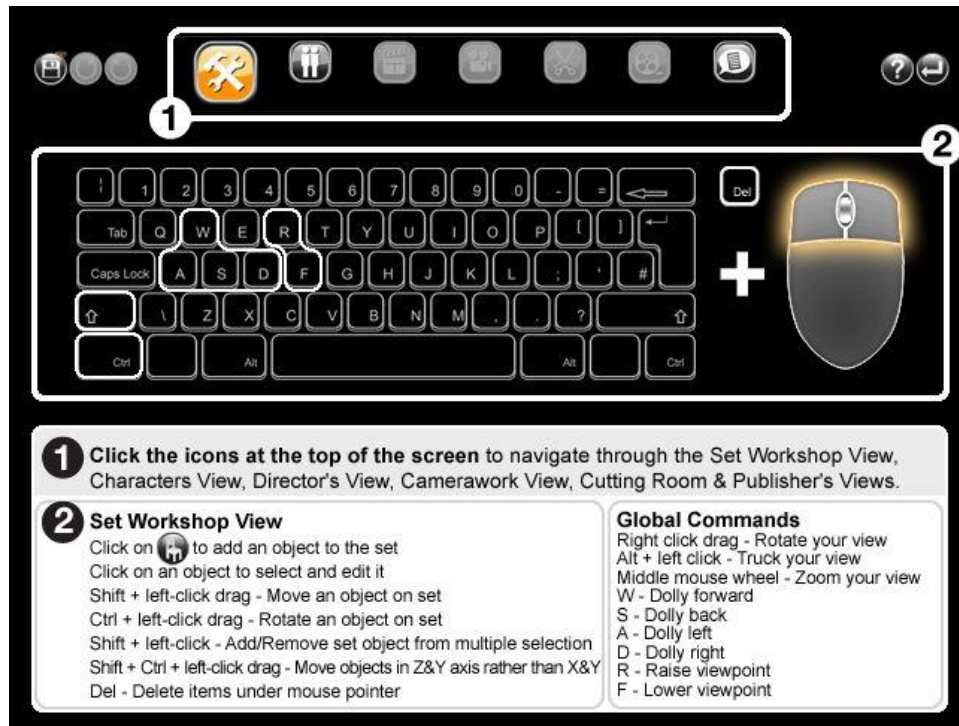
When you create a new movie or a new scene, the first thing you will need to do is choose a set to start with. You'll see different options depending on what content packs you have available.

There are two tabs for stock sets. One holds all the sets supplied by Moviestorm, the other is for sets you create yourself.

Two of the available sets are empty sets, so you can start from scratch. There's a standard size set, and an extra large set if you want to build a bigger environment. It's best to familiarize yourself with Moviestorm using the standard size set first.

Click on a set to select it, then click the check mark (or double-click the set) to enter the Set Workshop and customize your selected set. If you want, you can skip this stage now, start directing, and then work on the set later when you know your scene is going to work.

Navigating around the set



Use the keyboard controls or mouse to navigate around the set as shown above.

Basic building: walls, doors, windows, floors & ceilings

The top two icons in the Set Workshop build panel are for walls, ceilings and floors.

Walls

Create walls by clicking on the **Wall** tool. Click on the floor of the set, and then hold down SHIFT and drag to where you want the wall to end. Walls can be at any angle, they don't have to follow the grid lines.

Right-click on a wall to add wallpaper or color, or to delete it. Alternatively, select the **Paint** tool from the Wall tools menu, select a pattern, and left-click on a wall to add a wallpaper. Select the **Delete** tool from the Transform tools menu and click on a wall to delete it.

Doors & windows

Add doors and windows to walls by clicking on the **Doors** tool. Select the door or window from the panel and click on the wall where you want it to go.

Click on a door or window to customize it. Select the **Delete** tool from the Transform tools menu and click on any door or window to delete it.

Floors

Add floor colorings by clicking on the **Floors** tool. Select a pattern from the panel and then hold down SHIFT and drag over the area you want to color.

Ceilings

Add ceiling colorings by clicking on the **Ceilings** tool. Select a pattern from the panel and then hold down SHIFT and drag over the area you want to color.

To remove a ceiling, select the X pattern, and drag it over the area you want to erase.

Note: Ceilings can only be seen from below once you get on set and start directing or filming. If you look from above a ceiling, the camera can't see it. In the Set Workshop, you can toggle the ceiling on or off with the **Ceiling Hide** tool. This only affects the Set Workshop, it doesn't affect how your set appears elsewhere.

Props and set dressing

Adding props

To add a prop, select the props button. This will bring up the props catalog.

You can filter it by searching for specific objects (*e.g.* "chair") or by using the tags to find specific classes of object ("ornament") or AddOn packs ("Criminals"). You can use multiple tags and searches to refine your search even further (*e.g.* "vase", "domestic" & "flower"). Use the **Reset** button to clear all your filters.

If a prop is locked, you don't have a license for it, and will need to buy or renew one.

Click on the prop you want and then click on the set where you want it to appear.

Cloning and copying props

Props you have already placed on set are shown in the lower panel. Click on a prop in that panel and place it on the set to create a copy of the prop. This won't include any customization - it will just give you the default version of the prop.

You can also add props by cloning them. Select the **Clone** tool from the Transform tools or the prop customizer and click on any prop to clone it, then place it as above. When you clone a prop, you get an exact copy, including any customization you've already done on it.

Moving props

Select a prop, then move it as follows:

- Hold down CTRL and drag to rotate it
- Hold down SHIFT and drag to move it
- Hold down ALT while SHIFT-dragging to prevent props stacking on top of each other
- Hold down SHIFT and CTRL and drag to raise and lower it

When an object gets near a wall, it will snap to the wall.

If you have a prop with other objects stacked on it, such as a table, all the stacked objects will move with it.

You can select several objects stacked on top of the same objects by holding down CTRL and clicking. You can then move them as a group.

Note: sets created prior to Moviestorm 1.5 may exhibit slightly different stacking behaviors.

Note: you can place objects so that they go through the floor, float in mid-air or intersect with other objects. This gives you a lot of flexibility in set design.

Moving props with the gizmo



You can get more flexibility using the "gizmo". Select the **Gizmo** tool in the prop customizer, then use the rings to rotate an object or the arrows to drag it. With the gizmo, you can place an object at any angle, anywhere in space.

The **Gizmo Snap** tool restricts you to 30° movements.

Customizing props

Most props have customization options. Click on the prop to bring up the prop customizer. This may allow you to do things such as:

- Scale the prop to make it larger or smaller;
- Choose between different variants of the prop;
- Add color to the prop (or parts of the prop);
- Add custom images to a prop;
- Change light settings;
- Delete a prop;
- Clone a prop.

Deleting props

You can delete most props from their prop customizer. If that's not available, you can select the **Delete** tool from the Transform tools menu and click on any prop to delete it, or use the DELETE key on your keyboard to delete the selected prop.

Lighting

Global lighting

Click the **Lighting** tool (located under the **skies/lighting/terrain** icon) to bring up the global lighting panel. You can select from several preset lighting setups, or create your own.

Lighting objects

Some props, such as street lamps or are also lights. When you customize them, you can change the light settings. These are a lot more subtle and flexible than the main lights, and give you more control over the look of your film.

Sky

Change the sky by clicking on the **Skies** tool (located under the **skies/lighting/terrain** icon). Select the sky pattern you want from the panel.

To select a plain sky, select the **X** sky to clear the sky pattern. You can then use the **Sky Color** picker at the bottom right of the screen to select any color you want.

Terrain

The terrain controls (located under the **skies/lighting/terrain** icon) allow you to change the shape and color of the "mountains" that surround the set. You probably won't need to do this if you're using an interior set. This is mostly useful when you have a large exterior set and you want to change the shape of the horizon.

Working with stock sets

Saving a stock set

If you like your set and want to use it in other movies, you can save it as stock. It will then be available under **My Sets** when you pick a stock set.

Click the **Stock** tool, and then **Export as Stock**. Give it a useful name so you can find it again, and add any descriptive text you need.

Note: if you're using a stock set, then any changes you make in the Set Workshop will not affect the stock set. It will only affect the movie you're working on. Next time you pick that set to use in another movie, it'll be exactly the same as it was before.

Loading a stock set

You can replace your current set with a stock set at any time - either one supplied by Moviestorm or one you've created yourself. However, if you do this, everything you've filmed so far in that scene will be lost, and you'll have to redo all your directing, camerawork, and editing. This isn't a problem if you're still in the early stages, but is probably something to avoid later on in the filming process!

Using the same set in more than one scene

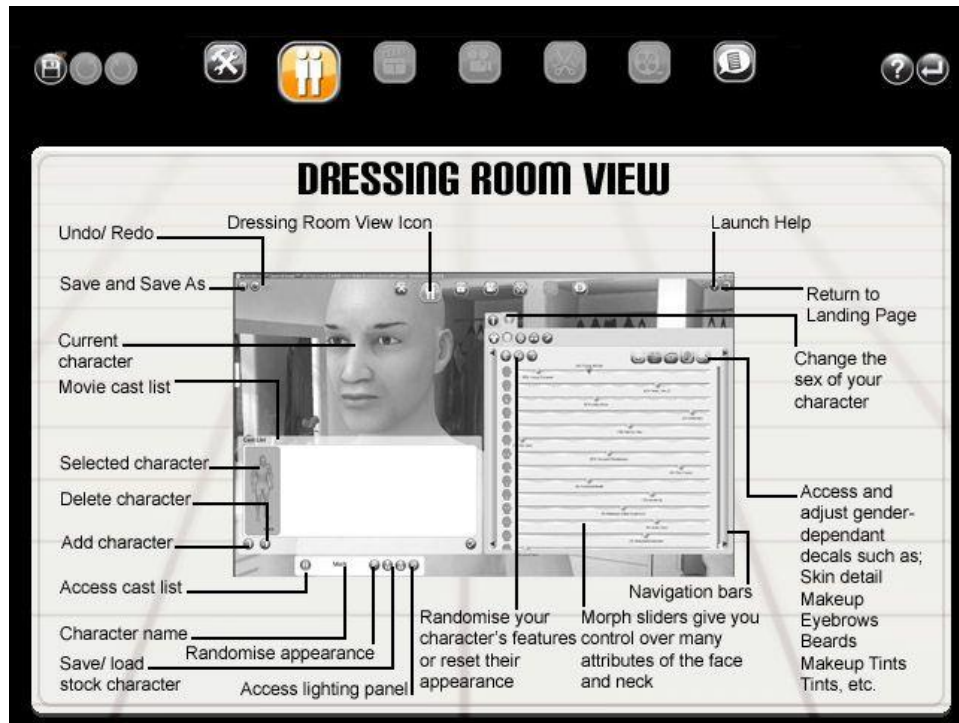
If you use the same set in more than one scene, any changes you make in the Set Workshop will only apply to the scene you're currently working on. This means you can easily create two versions of a set: one daytime and one nighttime, for example.

If you want to make changes that affect several scenes, you'll either have to do them all individually, or save your new version to stock and load it into each scene.

Dressing room



The Dressing Room is where you create your cast. You can use the ready-made stock characters and customize them as much as you like. They can appear quite normal or quite grotesque - it's up to you!



Viewing characters

Drag with the left button to drag the character round the screen.
Drag with the right mouse button to rotate the character.
Use the scroll wheel to zoom in and out.

The cast list

Access the **Cast List** to see all the characters in your movie. Select a cast member to delete or edit them, or press **Add Character** to create a new character.

Creating characters

Moviestorm provides you with a lot of quick ways to create characters. This is fine when you're starting out, or for minor background characters, but you'll probably want to spend more time on your lead characters.

Using stock characters

When you click **Add Character**, you'll see a selection of ready-made characters you can use right away. Select one you like, and press **OK**.

You can change the default name and add info about them if you like.

Creating random characters

Click the **Random** button to get a random character. Some work better than others...!

Changing gender

Use the **Male/Female** buttons to switch gender.

Costumes

Select the **Costumes** tab and then pick a costume.

If the costume has an **M** icon, you can morph it.

If the costume has a folder icon, there are several variations of the costume available.

Click on different parts of the costume to customize it. You may be able to select different patterns or colors. Not all costumes are customizable.

Faces

Select the **Faces** tab. You can select **Randomize** to generate a random face, or you can set it up manually. This involves several stages.

- Drag the morph sliders to control the shape of the face.

- Alter the skin tone (this will affect the rest of the body)

- Add skin details such as pimples or freckles

- Define the eyebrow shape and color

- Add make-up

- Add facial hair (male only)

- Add special effects such as scars, tears or wounds

Hair

Select the **Hair** tab and then pick a hairstyle. Note that the hat is part of the hairstyle.

Some hairstyles have morph controls allowing you to change the length, shape, or volume of the hair. Most hairstyles allow you to change the color of the hair. Some hairstyles have two or more sections you can color separately.

If the hairstyle has a folder icon, there are several variations available. These are usually different length hair to go with each hat.

You may also be able to customize the hat by clicking on it.

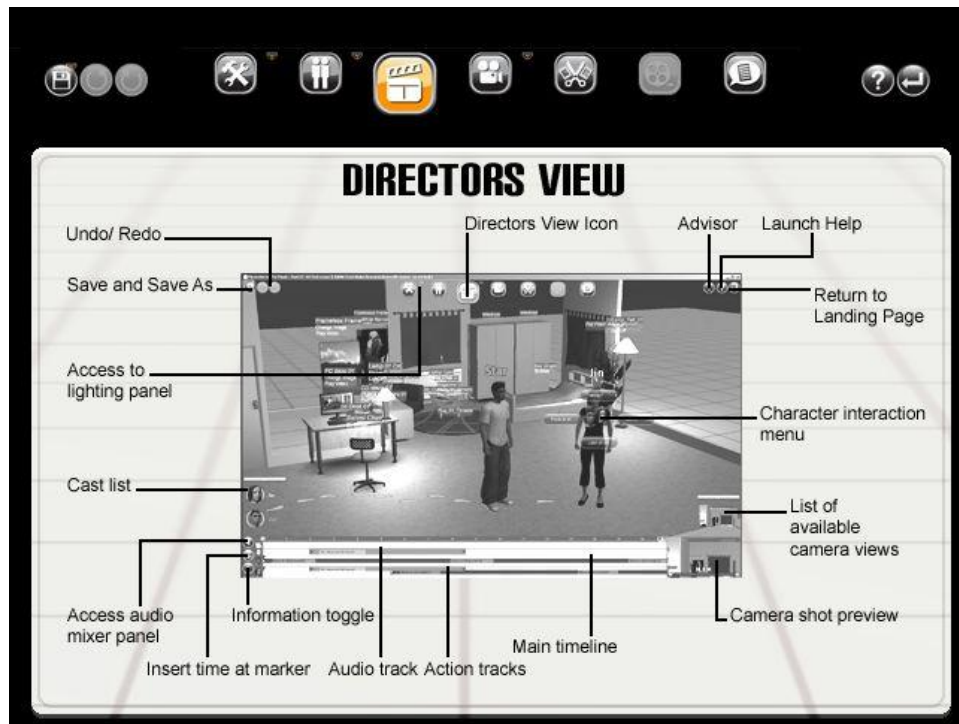
Accessories

Select the **Accessories** tab and then click on an item to put it on or take it off. Characters can wear more than one accessory. You will need to check they don't interfere with each other - make sure they're only wearing one pair of glasses!

Director's view



The Director's View is where you will probably spend most of your time. This is where you tell your cast what to do - where to go, what to say, how to behave, and so on. The more effort you spend in here, the better your movie will be!



Basic Moviestorm directing techniques

Although directing seems quite complicated at first, there are only three basic techniques you need to know. It's then just a matter of learning all the different things your actors can do and how to get the best out of them.

First, select an actor.

Next, right-click on an object or person to make your actor interact with it. If you right-click on the selected actor, they will do something by themselves. This will create an activity in the timeline.

Right-click on activities to edit them, delete them or click and drag to move them.

Repeat until you've finished your scene!

Selecting an actor

On the left of the screen is the cast list. Click on an actor in the cast list to select them. Their name will highlight both in the cast list and on set to show you they're selected.

Alternatively you can click on an actor on the set to select them.

Placing an actor on set

Right-click on the floor and select **Place Here** from the menu. The character will appear on set at that time.

Remember to check the timeline - if you're part-way into a scene, the character will appear as if by magic! If that's not what you want, select **Place Here at Start of Scene** from the menu instead, and they'll appear at the beginning.

Interacting with other characters

Right-click on another character and then **Interact**. This will bring up a menu of all the things the two characters can do. What you get will depend on what AddOn packs you have: they could, for example, shake hands, kiss, or fight.

The lead character will move to the secondary character to do the activity: this will place a walk activity on the timeline as well as the interactive activity.

Some activities, such as fighting, will bring up a custom interface that allows you to give more precise directions.

Some activities may require the characters to be in a specific state before they are available. For example, "cuddle in bed" is only available when both characters are in a bed and not doing something else, such as reading a book.

Interacting with the set

Right-click on a set object. This will bring up a menu of all the things the characters can do with that object. What you get will depend on what AddOn packs you have. Some activities, are independent and do not need a character to do them.

If necessary, the selected character will move to the object to do the activity: this will place a walk activity on the timeline as well as the interactive activity.

Some activities will bring up a custom interface that allows you to give more precise directions.

Some activities may require the character or object to be in a specific state before they are available. For example, "close window" is only available when the window is open.

Not all objects can be interacted with. Some are just static (though you can always look or point at an object). To see what objects are interactive, use the **i** button to the left of the timeline or press **F2** to display all available interactions.

Moving

Right-click on the floor and then select **Move Here** from the menu. This will place a mark on the set, and the character will now walk to it. He will open any doors in between, but will walk through other characters or props. (This is actually quite useful at times: if you're in close-up, you sometimes need characters to be in impossible positions. On a real set, you'd move the furniture for the shot. In Moviestorm, you don't have to.)

Right-click on the walk activity on the timeline to customize it. You can adjust the speed and the gait to make the character run, jog, and so on.

Move the timeline partway through the walk, and SHIFT-drag the character to put waypoints into the walk path.

Click on a mark and drag with SHIFT or CTRL to move or rotate it.

Speaking

Right-click on the selected actor and choose **Say** from the menu. This brings up the dialog controller.

If you have a microphone, you can record your lines straight into Moviestorm. Press **Record** to start recording, and **Stop** when you're finished.

If you have lines you've recorded externally, you can load them in.

You can type text into the text field and press the **Text to Speech** button to generate dialog.

Actors in Moviestorm lip sync to the audio automatically. However, you get much better results if you type the lines into the text field. You can adjust the amount of mouth movement and the volume using the sliders.

If you want to have a character singing over a piece of music, try singing or speaking the lines into Moviestorm at the right speed, then turn the mouth movement up and the volume down. She'll now move her mouth in time to the music, and nobody will hear your vocals!

Getting emotional

Making your actors really *act* is one of the key skills of a good director, and Moviestorm is no exception. Spend as much time as you can applying animations to your actors to get them to convey emotion. Some may be quite subtle, and you may only notice them in close-up. Others are much more dramatic!

Posing

Right-click on the selected actor and choose **Posture**. The character will adopt that posture, such as kneeling, lying down, or slouching in a chair.

Some postures require characters to be in a specific posture already, or may require them to be using a specific prop.

Changing mood

Click on the selected actor and choose **Change Mood**. This brings up the mood controller. Select a mood from the list. This will affect both the character's facial expression and the way they act. They will improvise occasional gestures that show their mood.

Sometimes, the improvisation gets in the way and you want to take complete control over your actors. Open up the script panel, go to **Settings**, and turn off **Allow Improvisation**. Now your actors will only do exactly what you tell them. This will affect your whole movie. If you just want to switch off the improvisation for one actor for a specified period, select the **No Improvisation** mood from the mood controller.

Note: even if you turn improvisation off, they'll still continue to breathe and blink automatically.

If you want more control over the moods, use the **Advanced** setting in the mood controller to create your own custom presets.

Gestures

Gestures are the most powerful of Moviestorm's dramatic controls. Click on the selected actor and choose **Gesture**. This brings up the gesture controller (known as the "Gesturizer"). Add as many gestures as you want. Actors can perform several gestures at once (look around, wave their hands, and step back in horror, for example).

Click the **+** button to view the list of available gestures, and then **>** to add the one you select. If you add another gesture, it will be added after the first.

To add simultaneous gestures, click the **+** button on a new line of the Gesturizer. You can drag gestures on the timeline to combine them in different ways.

If you create a gesture sequence you like and want to use often, you can save it to stock. Click the **Stock** button on the Gesturizer and then **Save** to save the current gesture sequence. Give it a useful name and description so you can find it again easily. You can load a stock gesture by clicking **Stock** and then **Load**. Stock gestures you've created for male characters can normally be used for female characters, and vice versa.

Using props

Right-click on the selected actor and choose **Use Prop** from the menu. This brings up the props chooser.

Select a prop, and this will bring up the props controller. You can add prop activities as you wish.

Some prop activities may require the character to be in a specific state before they are available. For example, "talk on phone" is only available when the character is already holding the phone. You may need to chain several activities together to get to the activity you need.

Watching the action

Use the player controls at the lower right to play, pause, rewind or fast forward the scene. You can also drag the timeline marker to a specific point on the timeline. Pressing the Space bar will play and pause the action.

Editing the timeline

The timeline doesn't show everything that's going on - only the dialog, the camera cuts, plus the activities for the selected actor and one other person or object.

To see the activities for a specific actor or prop, select them, or right-click on them while another actor is selected.

Moving activities

Select an activity and drag it to move it to a new point on the timeline. Sometimes this may give unusual results or Moviestorm may even prohibit you from doing this to prevent inconsistencies. For example, you can't move a "Stand Up" activity to a point before the character has actually sat down. Some activities can be combined (for example, an actor can walk and talk at the same time), others can't.

Hold down SHIFT to select several activities and move them as a group.

Deleting activities

Right-click an activity and click **Delete** to remove it from the timeline, or use the DELETE key on your keyboard to delete an activity or group of activities. Be careful of unexpected or unwanted side-effects: if you delete one of a series of moves, the following move will take a different path and the duration will be affected. This may also affect any camerawork you already have set up.

Customizing or editing activities

Select an activity and click **Customize**, **Edit** or **Redo** to bring up additional options or change the current version. Not all activities can be customized.

Changing the duration of activities

You can drag the end of some activities to change their duration. In some cases, the actor will repeat the action until the end of the activity, in other cases the speed of the activity will adjust to fit the new duration. This does not work for all activities.

Inserting time

Sooner or later you'll realize that you need to add a bit into the beginning of a scene. Rather than move all the activities you've created so far, you can add in some extra time. Put the timeline marker where you want the extra time to appear, and click the **Insert Time** button. If you insert time partway through an activity, Moviestorm will do its best to compensate, though you may have to adjust some things manually.

Advanced techniques

Hiding objects

Most objects on the set can be hidden. This means they'll appear on set, but the camera won't see them. This is really useful when, for example, there's a tree in the way of your shot. You can unhide objects when you want them to show again.

Moving props

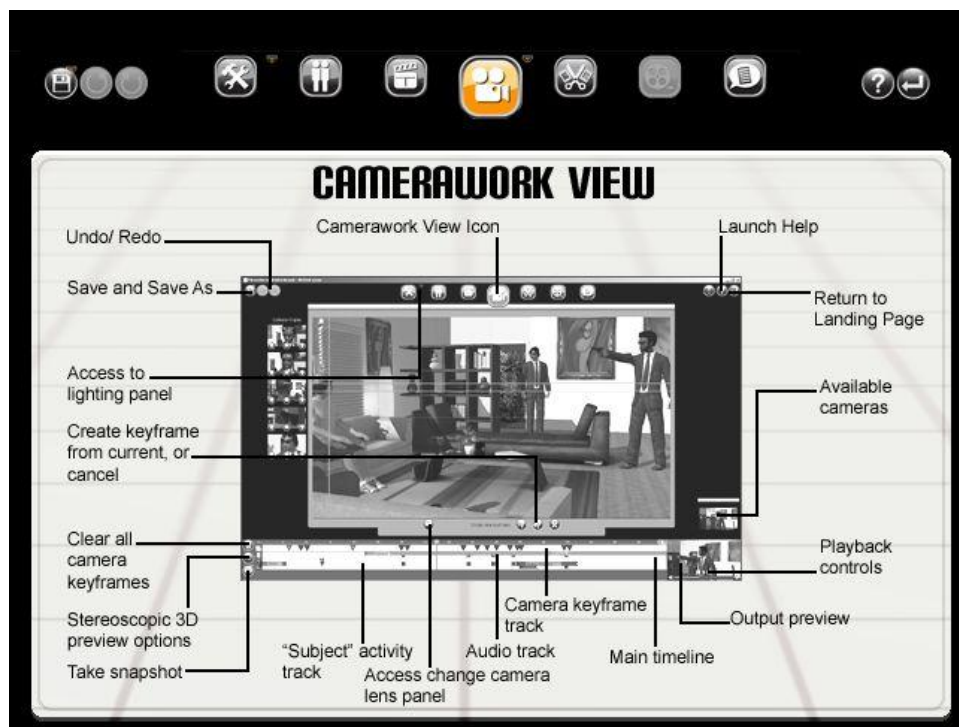
Some props, such as cars, can move by themselves. SHIFT-drag the prop to a new position, and it will move there. You can customize the movement by adding waypoints as you do with actors, or by adjusting the duration to change the speed.

Filming: the Camera view



A movie's not a movie until you film it. This is where you set up your shots. It's not the final stage, though. You'll be able to edit your clips in the Cutting Room later.

Moviestorm's cameras are a little different to what you may be used to from games or other animation tools. They take a bit of getting used to, but once you've understood how they work, you'll find them faster and easier than other ways of working.



Framing your shots

The key to Moviestorm camerawork is that it doesn't matter where the camera is. Moviestorm will work that out for you. **What matters is what you see on the screen.**

You compose a shot by moving the items on the screen into the position you want them to appear. So, if you want a close-up on your lead character, you select the lead character, resize his image until it's as big as you want it, drag it until it appears in the right place on the screen, and rotate around until you get the angle you want. Then you set that shot.

One-shots

The shot you'll use most often is probably a one-shot. This means the shot is aimed at one person on screen; although you may be able to see others. Double-click on a person, and you'll see three yellow framing lines and the camera controls appear.



Use the scroll wheel to get the person larger or smaller in the frame. The framing lines will adjust to mark different parts of their body depending on how close you are.

Drag the horizontal framing lines for finer control on the size and placement.

Drag the vertical framing line to move the person left or right in the frame

Drag any other part of the image to rotate left/right or up/down.

Target shots

When in framing mode, click on anything on the screen. This now becomes your target. It can be a person, a tree, a building, anything. If you select a person, you can focus on a hand, a foot, or some other part of the body. The yellow framing lines will now disappear.



Use the scroll wheel to get the target larger or smaller in the frame. The framing lines will adjust to mark different parts of their body depending on how close you are.

Drag the target to place it where you want on the screen.

Right-click and drag any other part of the image to rotate left/right or up/down.

Free shots

When in target shot mode, click to get a free shot. This has no target, but puts the camera in position. This is more like controlling a camera in a game by using first-person view.



Drag with the left mouse button to move left/right and backwards/forwards.

Drag with the right mouse button to "look around".

Use the yellow triangles to tilt the screen

Click again on an object to get a target shot, or double-click on a person to get a one-shot.

Re-using shots

On the left of the screen are your preset shots. There's one view for each character plus any other targets. Click on that view to reuse a shot in your library. You can scroll through the shots or open the library for that target using the arrow keys.

Note: The important thing about reusing shots is that it's not dependent on where the character is or where the camera was. It's the same *camera angle*. If you created a profile shot of your character earlier in the scene, you can get a matching profile even if she's now in a different place or sitting down.

Keyframes: cuts and moves

Once you've got your shot framed the way you want it, click the cut or the move button to create a keyframe.

If you create a cut, the camera will jump to the new shot; if you create a move, it will start moving at the previous keyframe and stop in the new position. If you want to hold a shot for a while and then start moving, you will need to add in an extra keyframe to mark the start of the move. This is where re-using shots becomes invaluable!

Deleting and editing keyframes

Right-click on a keyframe in the timeline to bring up the menu and delete it, or use the DELETE key on your keyboard.

You can move keyframes along the timeline by dragging them. This can sometimes produce odd results, particularly if you drag keyframes out of sequence, so experiment until you're comfortable with this.

Advanced camera tools

In framing mode, click the **Change lens** tool. You can now adjust the lens (zoom or wide-angle), and the focus (hardware permitting). This gives additional control over the composition of your shots and allows you to draw the viewer's attention to particular parts of the screen.



Lighting in the camera view

By the set icon at the top of the screen is a triangle that brings up the set sub-menu. This allows you to change the global lighting on the set and see the effects immediately in the camera view.

Taking screenshots

If you want to grab a screenshot, for making promo images or storyboards, use the **Snapshot** tool in the bottom left. You can choose between several different resolutions. Your screenshot will be placed in your movie folder.

Working with multiple cameras

You can usually do everything with just a single camera and using cuts to get to new positions, but occasionally it's useful to have several cameras. By the camera icon at the top of the screen is a triangle that brings up the camera sub-menu. This allows you to create a new camera. You will then have access to the footage from both cameras in the Cutting Room.

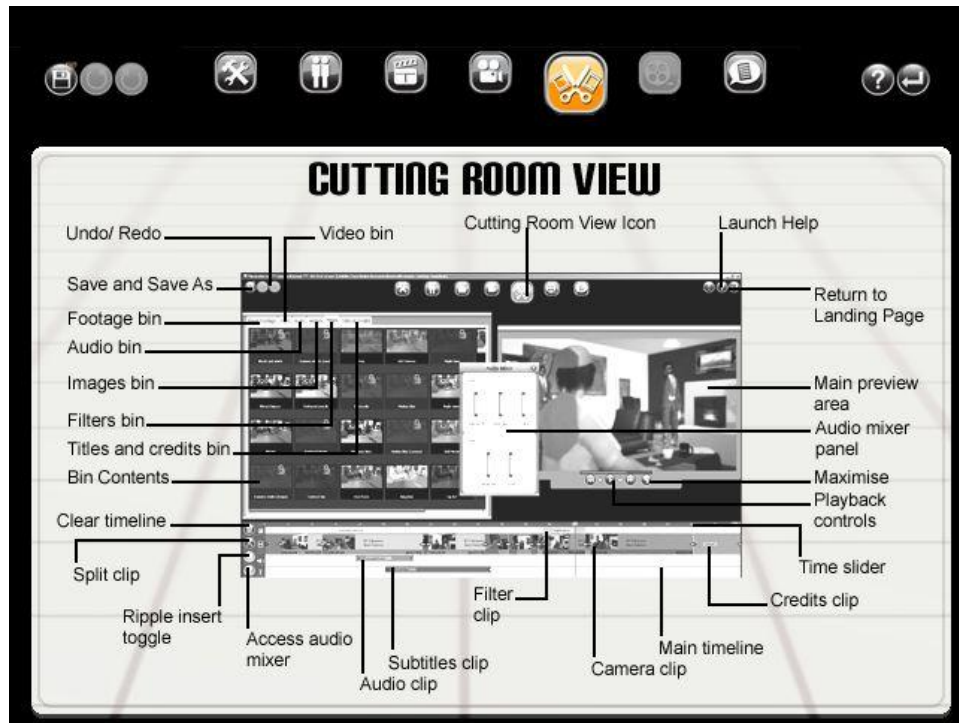
Switch between cameras using the camera list on the right of the screen.

Note: if you hide an object on-set, it will be hidden from all cameras.

Editing: the Cutting Room



The **Cutting Room** is where you assemble your movie. You edit your footage, apply visual effects, add music and sound effects, and build the title sequence and credits. If you want subtitles, you can add those too.



Autogenerating a movie

The easiest way to create a movie is to press **Autogenerate Movie**. This will add all your clips, and a basic title and credits sequence. If you've only got a very simple movie, this is a good way to get started. However, you'll soon find you want to do much more!

Playback



You can preview your movie as you build it up using the playback controls. The large arrows move to the start and end of the movie, the small arrows jump to the next edit on your timeline. Playback can be a little jumpy in preview mode, but this won't come out in the final render.

The button at the end allows you to preview your movie full-screen.

In full-screen mode, you can also preview it in 3D.

Adding clips

You can quickly add all the clips in a scene to the timeline by pressing **Add all clips**. This will add them in order. If you've got several scenes in your movie, you'll have to add the clips for each scene individually.

If you prefer to do it manually, you can drag clips one at a time into the timeline. If you drag a clip on top of another clip, Moviestorm will insert it before the clip that's already there.

You can duplicate a clip that's already in the timeline: right-click on it to get the menu and select **Duplicate**. It will be placed immediately after the clip where the timeline slider is currently located.

Moving clips

To move a clip, drag it on the timeline to the new position. You can't have blank space in the video track, so Moviestorm will close up any gaps automatically. If you need blank space, add a still (see below).

Note: if you have audio clips in your timeline, when you move a video clip, any audio clips that start during that clip will be moved with the clip. This includes clips that are automatically moved when you add new clips or extend previous clips. If you don't want this to happen, switch off the **audio/video sync** button (located to the left of the timeline, below the scissors icon). Your audio will now stay in the same place when you adjust your video.

Editing clips

Place the timeline slider at the point where you want to split a clip, and then press the scissors button. This will cut the clip in two, and you can now move each part individually.

At the start and end of each clip is a small arrow. Drag that to trim the beginning and end of each clip. Note that if you trim the start, the end and all following clips will move back along the timeline to compensate.

Deleting clips

Right-click on a clip to get the menu and select **Delete**. If the clip is used more than once, you can select **Delete all instances** to remove all copies of it.

Adding external video clips

First, you need to fill your video bin with clips. Go to the **Video** tab and click **Import**.

Imported videos need to be in the WebM format. This is a new high-quality open video format from Google. You can convert your video to WebM using the free Miro converter (<http://www.mirovideoconverter.com/>) or Any Video Converter (http://www.any-video-converter.com/products/for_video_free/). You may also need to install additional video codecs. You can find more information about WebM and additional resources on the Moviestorm Web site (<http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/docs/webm.html>).

Note: Imported clips will be stretched to a 16:9 aspect ratio, so make sure your clips are appropriately sized before you import them.

Once you have clips in your video clip bin, you can drag them to the timeline and treat them like any other video clip.

Adding stills

Adding stills is sometimes useful for building up credits sequences, or for intertitles in silent movies.

First, you need to fill your image bin with images. Go to the **Images** tab and click **Import**. Select **Load Image** to choose any image file on your computer. You can also select **Create blank image** to create full screen solid color images which are useful for background behind text. Black is a good way to insert space in a movie where you just have sound, particularly at the start.

Drag the image onto the timeline. It will be one second long by default. You can edit, move and delete stills in the same way as clips (see above).

Adding audio

First, you need to fill your audio bin with clips. Go to the **Audio** tab and click **Import**. You can now choose an audio file from your computer. You also have quick access to the audio files included in Moviestorm content packs, or you can record audio directly if you have a microphone on your computer. This is particularly useful for voice-overs.

Note: WMA and some other audio formats are not supported. Convert them to another format before importing them.

Once you have clips in your audio clip bin, drag them to the timeline.

Moving audio clips

To move a clip, drag it on the timeline to the new position. You can have blank space in the audio track, so other audio clips are not affected. You can have several audio clips simultaneously, which allows you to have background sounds, music, and sound effects all at once if you want.

Editing audio clips

At the start and end of each clip is a small arrow. Drag that to trim the beginning and end of each clip. Note that if you trim the start, the end will not be affected, unlike trimming video clips.

Deleting audio clips

Right-click on a clip in the timeline to get the menu and select **Delete**.

Right-click on a clip in the audio clip bin and you can then remove it from the timeline or from the clip bin. Removing it from the clip bin also removes it from the timeline.

Audio mixing

Right-click on a clip to get the menu and select **Edit**. You can now change the volume of that clip.

Click the audio mixer button to bring up the mixer controls. These affect the entire movie, so you may need to adjust individual clips as well. The **Live** controls affect the sounds that come with your movie footage, and the **Post** controls affect the sounds you added in the Cutting Room.

Adding text

To add text to your movie, open the **Titles & credits** tab and drag a template onto your timeline. The templates determine where the text appears and whether it moves.

If the template has an image behind it, the text will be overlaid onto your movie. If the template has a solid orange background, it is a clip, and will be inserted into your movie. You can have more than one text overlay at a time if you want.

You can adjust the size, font and color of your text as you wish.

Adding visual effects



Split screen shot showing the effect of adding a filter

Visual effects make a huge difference to the style of your movie. To add an effect, open the **Filters** tab and drag the effect onto a clip. The filter will affect the whole clip, so if you only want to affect part of a clip (for example, if you want to add motion blur to a punch in a fight, split the clip to isolate the part you want to affect. You can immediately see the effect of your filter in the playback window.

You can only have one filter on each clip. If you add a filter to a clip that already has a filter, the new filter will take precedence.

Editing filters

Some filters, such as the *Bleach Bypass* can be modified. Right-click on them in the timeline and bring up the menu. If there is a **Presets** option you can use this to get different versions of the filter.

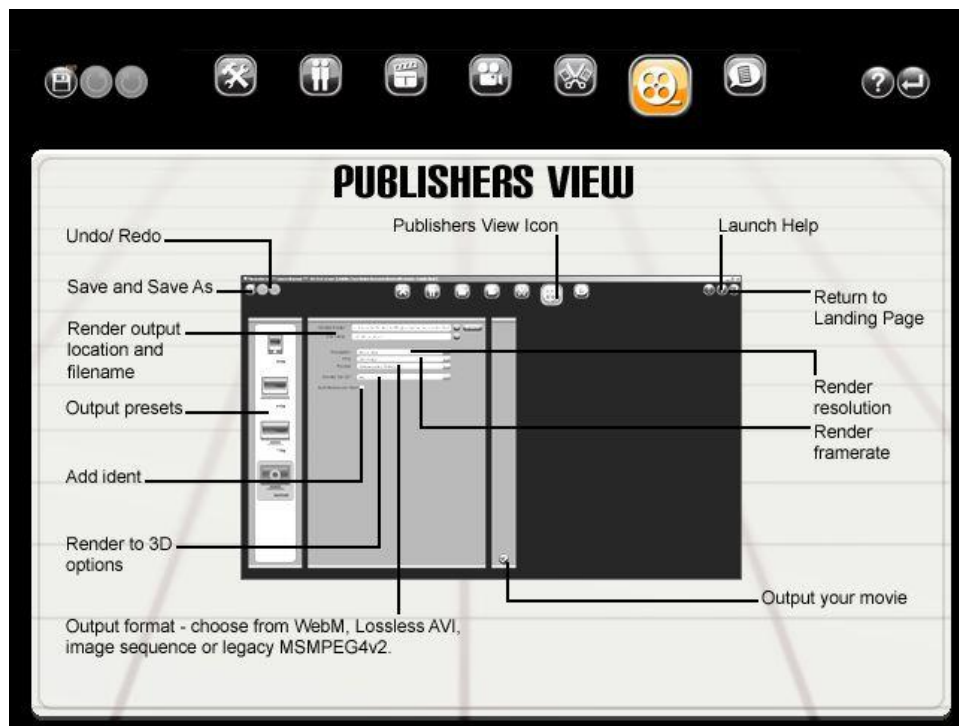
Deleting filters

Right-click on a filter in the timeline to get the menu and select **Delete**.

Final production: the Publisher's view



The Publisher's view allows you to render your movie in a variety of settings. When you're finished, you can then upload your movie to the Moviestorm Web site or other video sharing sites, or you can import it into your preferred video editing tools and keep working on it.



Rendering your movie

On the left of the screen are the settings for rendering. The smaller settings create smaller files and render quicker, but don't look as good. Experiment to see what works best for you. If you're just doing a quick test, or you're only going to be viewing on a small screen such as a phone, then the small setting may be adequate. However, if you want to get the best quality and you don't mind waiting or creating large files, then go for the large setting or even a custom setting. Some video sites have file size limits, so be careful not to overdo it if you're making a long movie.

Choose where to put the file and what to call it, then click the **check mark** (tick) to render your video. While your video is rendering, do not use your computer for anything else. If you pop other windows over the area where Moviestorm is rendering, those may appear in your final movie.

Custom settings

If you select **Custom**, you can adjust the following settings:

Image size (up to 1920x1080, which is 1080p if you're used to HDTV terminology)

Frame rate (up to 60fps)

Video formats (or render as a sequence of still images)

Remove the Moviestorm watermark that appears at the bottom left of the video.

Watching your movie

When your movie has finished, you can watch it by pressing **View Movie** in the Finished Rendering panel. If you want to go back and work on it some more, you can. You can change anything you like - the costumes, the cameras, the lighting, the music, or even add whole new scenes.

If you want to access the movie file directly, you can click on the folder icon in the Finished Rendering panel. You will normally find it in the Movies folder of your personal Moviestorm directory. There's a folder for each movie you create.

Uploading your movie

If you're happy with your movie, you can upload it straight to the Internet. Click the **Upload video** button to go to a Web page which gives you quick access to Moviestorm, YouTube and Vimeo.

You'll be asked for some details, depending on which site(s) you choose, then you can just sit back and wait while it goes up. It may take a while to upload, and it may take a bit longer while the Web site processes your video, so don't get impatient and post it again unless you're sure it's failed.

Making 3D movies

Making 3D movies is just as easy as making a normal movie. When you render your movie, choose the **Custom** setting, and then check the **Render for 3D** option. This will generate a somewhat odd-looking version of your movie with the left and right images next to each other, and slightly squashed. Don't worry: this is how YouTube processes 3D movies.

When you upload your movie to YouTube, you'll need to enter the following tags so YouTube knows it's a 3D movie. It'll resolve into one single image with the left and right overlaid onto one another properly.

```
yt3d:enable=true yt3d:aspect=16:9 yt3d:swap=true
```

If you upload your 3D movie directly from Moviestorm, it'll add the tags for you.

Now watch it with your 3D glasses on, and see things pop out at you!

More useful information



At any time, you can press the **Help** icon in the top right hand corner of Moviestorm to bring up the help system. This will show you the main controls and features for the screen you're currently on.



The **Advisor** button, located next to the **Help** button, will alert you to potential problems or suggest things you can try which may improve your movie. You can disable or customize this from the **Settings** button on the main menu and select what you want the advisor to tell you.

In the main Moviestorm folder, you'll find a handy "cheat sheet" ([moviestorm_printable_cheatsheet.pdf](#)). You can print this out to remind you of the controls in each view and the keyboard controls. You can also access this from the help system inside Moviestorm. If you fold it into a triangle, you can keep it by your keyboard as quick reference.

Online help

On the Moviestorm Web site, you'll find several ways to get more help if you need it:

Video tutorials: the easiest way to learn Moviestorm is by watching the video tutorials, *Moviestorm Made Easy*. Each one is just a few minutes long, and focuses on a specific tool, technique or effect. They're also available on YouTube, Vimeo and Facebook.

Forums: ask the Moviestorm community for help. The Moviestorm support team check the support forums every working day (Mon-Fri, excluding UK holidays), and aim to respond within a day.

Support Web site: there's more useful information at <http://support.moviestorm.co.uk/>, including an FAQ, technical information, and data on known issues. You can discuss issues with the staff and with other users, or you can opt for your discussion to remain private. Private discussions are only visible to yourself and the support staff.

Email support: support.team@moviestorm.co.uk

Wiki: there's a growing wiki for useful Moviestorm information on <http://wiki.moviestorm.co.uk/>. This is created and maintained by Moviestorm users, and includes a lot of unofficial but very handy information! This also includes a section on Moviestorm modding, so that you can create your own AddOn packs.

(Please don't post support queries on YouTube, Facebook, or other external sites. These aren't monitored by the support team, and you'll only get referred to contact the support teams using one of the methods above.)

Moviestorm on the Web

You'll also find information about Moviestorm, and the best user-made movies on the following sites:

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Moviestorm>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/Moviestorm>

Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/channels/moviestorm>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/Moviestorm>

Modding Moviestorm

Once you're familiar with Moviestorm, you may find you want to go further and start creating your own characters, animations, props, and so on. There's more information and tutorials on the Web site at <http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/modding>

Appendix I: recommended system specifications

Windows

Minimum specifications:

Microsoft Windows 2000

PC with 1.5GHz processor

1GB of RAM

5GB of available hard disk space

32-bit color display, capable of 1024×768 pixels resolution

Broadband internet connection

3D-capable graphics card with the latest OpenGL drivers.

Your card should support DirectX 9 and Shader Model 2. We recommend at least a NVIDIA 5200 or equivalent.

Recommended specifications:

Microsoft Windows XP, Vista or Windows 7

PC with 2.4GHz processor

2GB of RAM

10GB of available hard disk space

32-bit color display, capable of 1280×960 pixels resolution

Broadband internet connection

3D-capable graphics card with the latest OpenGL drivers.

Your card should support DirectX 9 and Shader Model 3. We recommend at least a NVIDIA 7600 or equivalent.

Mac

Recommended specifications:



























Intel Macbook Pro or better

MacOS X 10.4 (Tiger), 10.5 (Leopard), 10.6 (Snow Leopard) or 10.7 (Lion)

Broadband internet connection

The nVidia Cg toolkit (supplied with Moviestorm; also available free from nvidia.com) ***This is required even if you do not have an nVidia graphics card.***

Appendix II: default mouse controls

Director's View	Set Workshop	Camera Framing
 Rotate viewpoint.	 Rotate viewpoint.	 Select new camera target for a target-shot, or remove the existing target to get a free-shot.
 Move viewpoint horizontally. (ALT+LMBD) Move viewpoint in the plane of the screen.	 Move viewpoint horizontally. (ALT+LMBD) Move viewpoint in the plane of the screen.	 Make a one-shot on selected character.
 Center the viewpoint on the point you clicked.	 Zoom viewpoint in and out.	 Rotate the view.
 Zoom viewpoint in and out.	 Move an set object or paint floor textures, draw walls, or adjust the terrain.	 In a target-shot - adjust target's position within frame, or change to a free shot.
 Select an actor as the subject.	 Rotate a set object.	 In a target-shot - move the camera in and out from the target.
 Bring up options for interacting with the object and show it's timeline	 When dragging, stop the object from stacking on other objects.	 In a one-shot - adjust the framing lines or rotate the camera.
 Move an actor's mark on set. Add a waypoint for a character that is already moving. Move a mobile prop.	 Move the set object vertically.	 In a one-shot - move the framing in or out.
 Rotate an actor's mark on set. Add a waypoint for a character that is already moving.	 Customise a set object.	 In a free-shot - move the camera horizontally.
	 Center the viewpoint on the point you clicked, or the character that you select is the Cast List.	 In a free shot - move the camera in the plane of the screen.

Appendix III: License agreement

Moviestorm User Agreement

GENERAL RELEASE VERSION

Effective from 29 July 2008

YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT, UNDERSTAND IT, AND AGREE TO BE BOUND BY ITS TERMS AND CONDITIONS. YOU FURTHER AGREE THAT THIS IS THE COMPLETE AND EXCLUSIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

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