PRACTITIONER · 7 MINUTE READ

Video generation with AI: the models and how to use them well

> AI video tools make short clips and presenter videos; plan shot by shot, get consent for real people, label the result and review every frame.

What it is

A **video model** creates a short clip from a written description, a still image or a reference clip; some also create sound, including speech. **Avatar tools** turn a script into a video of a digital presenter speaking, often in many languages.

Think of a fast film crew that forgets each scene unless you remind it. You are the director.

Main tools, as their makers describe them (as of November 2026; check the maker's page):

Tool	What the maker offers	Where
Veo (Google)	Clips with native sound, reference images for characters and style, scene extension, 1080p and 4K	Gemini app, Flow, Google Vids, API
Runway	Gen-4.5 video model, plus editing and ad-variant tools	Website
Kling AI	Kling 4.0 video model with sound, motion control tools	Website
Luma	Ray video models with control over frames and continuity across cuts	Website
Pika	Video Studio for clips up to 30 seconds, extending clips, models from several other makers	Website
Synthesia	Avatar presenter videos in 140+ languages, dubbing, brand kits, export to learning systems	Web app, API
HeyGen	Custom avatars, translation into 175+ languages with matched lip movement, slides to video	Web app, API

Limits shared by all of them: short clips, uneven text and hands, credit-based plans; check each maker's terms for commercial use and likeness.

OpenAI's Sora app was discontinued in April 2026, according to OpenAI's help centre.

Why it matters

- Training clips, explainers and announcements without a studio.
- Each clip can take minutes and uses plan credits, so careless iteration wastes time and budget.
- Realistic video of real people can mislead, damage trust or break the law.

How to do it

1. **Check** which video tools your organisation approves; never upload confidential material or anyone's face or voice unless allowed (see guide 10).
2. **Write** a short script and a **shot list**: one line per shot with subject, action, setting, camera (close-up, wide, slow pan), lighting and sound.
3. **Generate** one shot at a time; clips last seconds, not minutes, so plan to join them.
4. **Keep** consistency: reuse the same reference images and repeat key descriptions word for word in every shot.
5. **Add** sound deliberately: generated sound, a recorded voice-over or music you have rights to (see guide 38 for AI voice).

6. **Review**: a named person watches every frame for odd hands or faces, wrong text or logos and anything misleading, then approves.
7. **Label** the video as AI-generated and keep a record of the tool, prompts and consents.

Example

A team needs a one-minute clip explaining how to book a meeting room.

Before: "make a video about booking rooms" gives 8 seconds of random office footage. **After:** a shot list.

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Style for every shot: bright modern office, flat soft lighting,
calm pace, no logos, no readable screens.
Shot 1 (wide): an employee walks to a meeting room door with a
tablet beside it. Sound: quiet office background.
Shot 2 (close-up): a finger taps a green "Book" button on the
tablet. Sound: soft click.
Shot 3 (medium): two colleagues sit down in the room and open a
laptop. Sound: quiet office background.
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The team adds a voice-over and on-screen steps in their editor, checks every frame, and opens with "This video contains AI-generated footage".

Common mistakes

- **Using a real person's face or voice without consent.** Fix: get written consent; avatar makers such as Synthesia and HeyGen say they require on-camera consent or identity checks for custom avatars.
- **Trusting text and screens in the video.** Fix: add text afterwards in an editor.
- **Publishing without a label.** Fix: say clearly that the video is AI-generated.

Try it this week

1. Pick an approved tool and a non-confidential topic with no real people (2 minutes).
2. Write a three-shot list using the format above (5 minutes).
3. Generate shot 1, then change one detail and generate again (5 minutes).
4. Watch both versions frame by frame and note every error (3 minutes).

Going further

- Never make a **deepfake** of a real person without their consent and a clear purpose.
- **EU AI Act, Article 50** (European Union; general information, not legal advice): from 2 August 2026, organisations that use AI to create deepfake content in their work must disclose it clearly, at the latest when people first see it; makers of the tools must mark output in a machine-readable way (tools already on sale have until 2 December 2026). Evidently artistic or satirical work needs only a disclosure that does not spoil it. Ask your legal team.
- Veo videos carry Google's **SynthID** watermark; it does not replace your own visible label.

Key words

- **Video model**: an AI that creates video clips from text, images or reference clips.
- **Avatar**: a digital presenter that speaks a script on screen.
- **Shot list**: a plan of each scene, with camera, action and sound.
- **Deepfake**: realistic synthetic media of real people or events that could be mistaken for genuine.

Sources

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