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Numark NuVJ - Video Mixing Console and Performance Tool

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Guide Rating - ★★★★★



Numark NuVJ
www.Numark.com

With reviewing the NuVJ, it is important to define what a video jockey (VJ) is, as there are two types. There are VJs who are similar to light jockeys, who construct a visual journey to fit the music of an event or performance by an artist or disc jockey. The second type of VJ performs on their own, programming the music and video for an event on their own. The Numark NuVJ is a superior product and program that is perfect for the first type of VJ.

The NuVJ system consists of a hardware mixing console and software that runs on both Mac and PC. The console is laid out very intuitively with two sets of control, one for each channel. There are 9 pad buttons that allow quick selection of loaded video segments and a tactile shuttle wheel that enables exact manipulation. The way that DJs scratch a record is the best way to describe the control that the shuttle wheel allows. The faders are similar to a DJ mixer with two controlling speed for each channel and a cross fader that determines which is the dominant visual on the screen.

Syncing video with audio is easy – either via audio line or BPM tap. The NuVJ will recognize an audio signal from the audio input of a line in and allow you to sync to it. If that kind of direct link to sound is not available, the BPM tap button is a great feature allowing the VJ to tap the tempo of the music and have the visualizations match perfectly. The sync button locks the temp of the two visuals together.

As easy to use as the controller is, the software is what really makes the NuVJ shine. Installation was a breeze. The installation CD finished in less than two minutes on both test systems (MacBook and PC desktop) and the USB controller was instantly recognized as well. The computer did not require a reboot. The software is laid out almost exactly as the controller. Instead of seeing the pad 1 button on the controller, you see the actual visual that it will trigger. When you move a slider on the controller, the slider on screen moves. Across the top, there are three views, one for each channel and the middle one is the master – or the output.

A major strength of the NuVJ is not only the ease of use but the customization. You can plug the system in out of the box and be ready to go in 10 minutes for an amazing night of VJing. As you get better, you can download additional visualizations and create your own. I experimented with some MP4 videos and they worked perfectly. Another great feature is the ability to record programs for future play.

All this is good talk but how does the NuVJ work in a real life club situation. I brought the NuVJ controller and software down to a gig I was spinning and asked the light guy to set it up. In less than 5 minutes, he had it up and going on the PC used for visuals. Without looking at the manual, he loaded in a bunch of clips and did a great show playing with the luma levels, contrast, and brightness – even transposing two of the same clips on top of each other. Most importantly, the system ran the entire six-hour shift with no hiccups, crashes or lapses. There isn't a stronger testament to the quality of a piece of gear - except, of course, at the end of the night when the light guy begged me to let him keep it to use.

The NuVJ is very powerful and will be useful to many - video jockeys looking for a solid hardware/software combo that is programmable and easy to use; touring artists with a setlist can set up a program, have it recorded, and be ready to go; video editors looking to create video wallpaper for background sequences... The system is billed as the "ultimate hardware and software visualization system" and at the reasonable price point of \$300, I can agree and strongly recommend it.

Bullet points:

What is it: a hardware controller and software program for visualizations

Who is it for: video jockeys who need to create visual programs for a musical program

How long does it take to set up: less than 10 minutes

What is required for its use: a PC or MAC

Difficulty level: 2/5 (1 is easy, 5 is difficult)

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