

NOVA WORKBENCH

Nova Recorder

Record SketchUp demos through OBS — zero setup, a pre-record check, chapter markers, and YouTube-ready chapters the moment you stop



User Guide — version 2.0.0

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Nova Recorder is a small SketchUp panel that drives OBS Studio: Start, Pause, Stop and chapter markers, without ever touching OBS yourself. It reads OBS's own connection settings, starts OBS if it isn't running, checks your microphone and encoder before you commit to a take, and — when you stop — leaves a chapter file next to the video that pastes straight into a YouTube description.

1 · Install

1. In SketchUp, open **Window** → **Extension Manager**.
2. Click **Install Extension** and select `nova-recorder.rbz`.
3. Restart SketchUp. You will find **Nova Recorder** under **Plugins** → **Nova Recorder**, and a matching **Nova Recorder** toolbar (three buttons: panel, Set marker, Next step) — enable it from **View** → **Toolbars** if it isn't showing.

2 · Requirements & first run

- **Windows** — Nova Recorder talks to OBS through Windows-specific system calls; it does not run on macOS.
- **SketchUp 2021 or newer**.
- **OBS Studio 28 or newer** — free at obsproject.com. OBS 28 is the first version with the WebSocket server (obs-websocket v5) built in, which is what Nova Recorder connects to.

Nothing else needs to be configured by hand before your first recording:

- Nova Recorder reads OBS's own WebSocket configuration file directly the first time you press **Start** — there is no address, port or password to type in.
- If OBS isn't running yet, it launches OBS **minimized** in the background (with OBS's "improper shutdown" recovery prompt suppressed) and waits for the WebSocket server to answer.

- If the WebSocket server has never been turned on, Nova Recorder turns it on itself — but only while OBS is closed, and it keeps a backup of the original file (`config.json.nova.bak`) alongside it.
- In the current OBS scene it creates (or reuses) a screen-capture source named "**Skjerm (SketchUp)**" and points it at your primary monitor automatically.

The one thing that stays manual: your microphone. Add an audio source in OBS yourself (Settings → Audio, or an Audio Input Capture source set as one of OBS's Mic/Aux channels) if you want narration. Nova Recorder will warn you in the pre-record check if none is found or it's muted, but it will not create one for you.

Output folder. Recordings land wherever OBS is already set to record (Settings → Output → Recording Path) — Nova Recorder doesn't move that unless you point it at a folder of your own by editing `%APPDATA%\Nova Enginera\nova_recorder.json` (key `"output_root"`). When that key is set, each take gets its own `<output_root>\<plugin name>\<date>\` sub-folder, matched to the title of the model you were recording.

3 - The panel

Open it from **Plugins → Nova Recorder → Nova Recorder** or the toolbar icon — a small utility panel that floats above SketchUp. It follows SketchUp's own language automatically (Norwegian locale → Norwegian labels, everything else → English); there is no manual language switch.

Control	What it does
Start	Runs the pre-record check (chapter 4). Disabled while already recording or paused.
Pause / Resume	Pauses OBS recording. Paused time is excluded from the clock and from every marker timestamp after it. Disabled unless a take is active.
Stop	Stops OBS and writes the marker/chapter files (chapter 8). Disabled unless a take is active.
Status row	A coloured dot (green = recording, amber = paused, red = ready — the plugin's own colour code, not a warning), the state text, a running clock, and the marker count. The clock runs in the panel itself and costs nothing in SketchUp.
Marker field + Marker	Type an optional label and click, or just press <code>Enter</code> in the field. Disabled unless recording (chapter 5).
Filming plan card	Next step , AI plan , the step list, and a collapsible "Paste / edit plan" box (chapter 6).
Tools card	Demo mode toggle (chapter 7).
Done card	Appears after Stop: the finished filename, a one-line summary, an Open folder button, and — only when a local <code>claude</code> CLI is available — a Copy /demo button (chapter 8).

A red banner can appear at the bottom of the panel for errors (OBS/WebSocket problems, "not recording", and similar) — it clears itself after about six seconds.

4 · Pre-record check

Clicking **Start** always runs this check first — you never go straight from idle to recording.

- **Thumbnail** — a small screenshot fetched from OBS of exactly what its current scene sees right now, not a SketchUp render.
- **Microphone line** — green with the mic's name if an unmuted microphone is set up in OBS; red naming it if a mic exists but is muted in OBS; red with a warning if no microphone is configured in OBS at all (the take will be silent).
- **Encoder line** — green if OBS is using a light/hardware encoder; amber if OBS is set to the CPU encoder (x264), with a direct tip: switch to NVENC/hardware in **OBS** → **Settings** → **Output** so SketchUp keeps the whole machine to itself.

Nothing here blocks you. Click **Record** to proceed regardless of what the check shows, or **Cancel** to go back to idle. Record then runs a 3-2-1 countdown overlay (3 seconds by default) before OBS actually starts recording.

5 · Markers & keyboard shortcuts

Three ways to drop a chapter marker while recording:

1. The **Marker** button in the panel — with or without a label.
2. Pressing **Enter** in the marker label field.
3. The **Plugins** → **Nova Recorder** → **Set marker** menu command — this one works even with the panel closed, and is meant to be bound to a keyboard shortcut in **Window** → **Preferences** → **Shortcuts** for one-key marking without touching the panel at all.

Plugins → **Nova Recorder** → **Next step** is a second bindable command: it advances your filming plan (chapter 6) by one step and drops a marker labelled with that step's text — bind both commands and you can march through an entire plan with two keys, hands never leaving the keyboard.

- A marker left with no label still gets a timestamp; in `chapters.txt` it appears under a generic placeholder ("Kapittel") that you can rename before pasting into YouTube.
- Every SketchUp tool change is also logged automatically in the background — this is separate from the markers above. Camera moves (orbit/pan/zoom/walk) are filtered out, and the same tool firing again within two seconds isn't logged twice. These automatic entries land only in `markers.json`, never in `chapters.txt`.

6 · Filming plan & AI plan

The filming plan is a simple numbered checklist that lives with the recording:

- **Paste your own** — open "Paste / edit plan", write one step per line (leading numbers, dots or bullets are stripped automatically, first 20 lines are used), then click **Use plan**.

- **Or let AI write one** — click **AI plan** (only enabled if a local `claude` CLI is found on your PATH). It asks for 8 numbered steps, each one visible action worth at most six words, opening with the finished result as a hook and closing with where to find the extension.

Never blocks SketchUp. The AI plan runs the Claude CLI in its own separate, minimized process — never inside SketchUp — so the panel stays fully responsive while it thinks. AI plan is only available before you start recording; it's disabled once a take is active.

Next step (button, menu command or shortcut) walks the plan one line at a time: it marks the current step done, highlights the next one, and drops a chapter marker labelled with the step you just finished.

7 · Demo mode

One click — the panel's **Demo mode** button or **Plugins** → **Nova Recorder** → **Demo mode** — hides construction geometry, section-plane symbols, the axes, dimensions and sketch axes: the clutter you don't want on camera.

- Click again to restore exactly what was showing before. Nothing is deleted — only hidden — so it is fully reversible.
- Independent of recording: arm it before you start, mid-session, or whether or not Nova Recorder is recording at all.

8 · What you get when you stop

Clicking **Stop** ends the OBS recording and writes two files next to the finished video:

- `markers.json` — video filename, plugin name, start time, total duration, every manual/step/plugin marker, every pause, every automatic tool-change event, and the filming plan you used.
- `chapters.txt` — a plain chapter list built from the manual, step and plugin markers only (`0:00 Intro` is prepended automatically unless your very first marker already lands within the first second) — ready to paste straight into a YouTube video description.

Windows Explorer opens automatically with the video file selected. The panel's **Done** card repeats the filename and a one-line summary ("N markers · M auto events · chapters.txt written"), with an **Open folder** button and — only when the `claude` CLI is available — a **Copy /demo** button that copies a ready `claude "/demo <video path>"` command to your clipboard for one-click follow-up editing.

If SketchUp crashes mid-recording, the OBS video itself is safe — OBS writes it independently of the panel — but `markers.json` and `chapters.txt` are only written by the Stop step, so they won't exist for that particular take.

9 · Troubleshooting

Symptom	Fix
"OBS Studio is not installed" on Start	No <code>obs64.exe</code> found in the default install locations, and OBS isn't already running. Install OBS Studio 28+ from obsproject.com to its default location, then try Start again.
"Enable the WebSocket server in OBS"	OBS is running with its WebSocket server switched off — it can only be switched on while OBS is closed. Go to OBS → Tools → WebSocket Server Settings , tick Enable WebSocket server (default port 4455), Apply, and try Start again.
"OBS did not start" after a long wait	Nova Recorder launched OBS but its WebSocket server never came up (about 45 seconds). Start OBS by hand once, confirm the WebSocket server is enabled (above), close OBS, and try again.
Pre-record check shows a red microphone warning	No usable microphone is assigned in OBS, or it's muted. Add an Audio Input Capture source in OBS (or unmute the existing one) — you can still record without one; the take will just be silent.
Pre-record check shows the encoder warning	OBS is set to the CPU encoder (x264). Switch to NVENC (Nvidia), AMF (AMD) or Quick Sync (Intel) in OBS → Settings → Output so SketchUp doesn't have to share the CPU with video encoding.
Recording is black, or shows the wrong screen	The auto-created "Skjerm (SketchUp)" source in OBS is pointing at the wrong monitor — this can happen after reconnecting or changing a second display. Right-click it in OBS's Sources list → Properties and pick the monitor SketchUp is actually on.
Panel says "OBS stopped recording outside the panel"	OBS's recording was stopped, or OBS itself was closed, from outside Nova Recorder. The panel only checks every 15 seconds while recording, so it reflects this with a short delay; markers and chapters are not written in this case — only the raw OBS video remains.
New menu items missing after an update	Restart SketchUp — menus are only built once, at startup.

10 · FAQ

Does this work on a Mac? No — Nova Recorder talks to OBS through Windows-specific commands; Windows only.

Do I need to start OBS myself? No — press Start in the panel and Nova Recorder launches OBS minimized in the background if it isn't already running.

Does Nova Recorder record the audio/video itself? No — OBS does the actual recording; Nova Recorder only drives OBS's Start/Pause/Stop and adds the marker/chapter files next to the finished video.

Is there any performance cost while recording? Essentially none. The clock in the panel runs in JavaScript, not SketchUp, and the only traffic between SketchUp and OBS during a take is one short check every 15 seconds to confirm OBS is still recording.

Where do I change the countdown length? It defaults to 3 seconds; the value lives in `%APPDATA%\Nova Enginera\nova_recorder.json` (key `"countdown"`, 0–10 seconds).

Can other Nova plugins drop markers into my recording? Yes — any other extension can call `NovaRecorder.chapter("label")` (guard with `if defined?(NovaRecorder) && NovaRecorder.respond_to?(:chapter)`) to drop a "plugin" marker while you're recording, and it shows up in both `markers.json` and `chapters.txt`.

Does the AI plan send my model to Claude? No — the prompt only asks for a generic filming-plan outline for the named extension; nothing about your SketchUp model or document is sent.

Why does `chapters.txt` sometimes contain a Norwegian word? An unlabeled marker is always written with the same placeholder ("Kapittel"), regardless of the panel's language — rename it before pasting into YouTube if you'd rather it read "Chapter".

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