

FREE

THE FACELESS STARTER STACK

THE 4-TOOL STACK

I ACTUALLY USE

I tried 12 tools to run a faceless channel. Kept 4. Here they are — and exactly what each one costs me.

THE WORKFLOW DESK

Start here

Here's the honest version nobody posts: I tried **twelve** AI tools trying to run a faceless channel. I kept **four**. The other eight were noise — subscriptions I cancelled, tabs I closed, "game-changers" that changed nothing.

So this isn't a list of 40 shiny tools you'll never open. It's the exact four that turn a topic into a finished, post-ready video — the real job each one does, and **what each actually costs me**. No inflated "make \$10k a month" math. Just the receipts.

What these four do together: one *writes* the script, one gives it a *face*, one gives it a *voice*, one adds the *captions*. That's a whole video. Swap any tool for a competitor you like — the *four jobs* are the point, not the brand names.



Straight talk on the money: you can start the whole stack on *free tiers* and pay nothing until you're actually posting. Once you go live for real, a finished clip costs me **under a dollar** to generate — the numbers are in each card, and totalled up at the end. Read those before you believe anyone selling you a \$299 "AI content suite."

The 4

1 The Writer · IT WRITES THE SCRIPT

The tool: Claude (or ChatGPT — pick one, don't run both). **The job:** turn a plain idea into a tight, spoken-out-loud script — a hook, the point, a call to action, in about 15 seconds of talking.

Free tier

If you use it daily (I do)

Enough to start — writes real scripts, no card

~\$20/mo (Pro)

WHAT I PAY: the paid plan, because I write in it all day — but you do **not** need to pay a cent to get a good script.

The honest catch: it gives you a strong *first draft*, not a final one. Read it out loud — if a line doesn't sound like something you'd actually say, change it. Thirty seconds of editing is the difference between "AI slop" and yours.

2 The Face · IT GIVES IT A TALKING HEAD

The tool: HeyGen. **The job:** take one photo (a real one or an AI avatar) and make it *talk* — lip-synced to your audio, front-facing, looks shot-on-phone. This is the "faceless" trick: it's a face, just not yours.

Free plan

works, but **watermarked** + limited minutes

What I actually pay

~\$0.65 per ~15-sec clip

WHAT I PAY: pay-as-you-go — no watermark, ~\$0.65 a clip. One video a day is roughly \$20/mo. This is the one tool worth paying for first.

The honest catch: it's only as good as the photo you feed it. A clean, well-lit, front-facing still gets a clean talking head. A busy or side-angle photo looks off. Get the photo right *once* and reuse it forever.

3 The Voice · IT READS IT ALOUD

The tool: ElevenLabs. **The job:** read your script in one consistent, natural-sounding voice — the same voice on every video, so your channel actually sounds like a channel.

Free tier

great for testing — **no commercial rights**

Once you post for real

~\$5/mo (unlocks commercial use)

WHAT I PAY: ~\$5/mo, and each script costs literal pennies (~3¢) of that. The paid tier isn't for volume — it's for the license to post.

The honest catch: pick *one* voice and keep it. The temptation is to try a new voice every week — don't. A recognizable voice is half of why people remember a faceless channel. Punctuation controls the pacing; commas and periods, not run-ons.

4 The Captions · IT BURNS THE WORDS ON

The tool: CapCut (free) — or Submagic if you want it one-click. **The job:** burn the moving, word-by-word captions onto the video. Most people watch on mute — captions are what hold them for the full clip.

CapCut

Free — auto-captions built in

Submagic (optional, one-click)

~\$16-20/mo

WHAT I PAY: \$0 — I burn captions with a free tool. Submagic just does it faster/prettier in one click; only worth it once you're posting every day.

The honest catch: auto-captions mis-hear words — always read them before you post ("for" vs "four," names, brand words). Two lines max on screen, big and bold. Fancy caption animations don't add views; *accurate*, *readable* ones do.

What one video actually costs me

Not the subscription-stacking fantasy — the real marginal cost to make *one* finished, post-ready clip once everything's set up:

One finished ~15-second video

The Writer — script	\$0 (free tier)
The Face — HeyGen talking head	~\$0.65
The Voice — ElevenLabs	~\$0.03
The Captions — CapCut	\$0

Per finished clip

under \$0.70

Plus optional monthly subscriptions *only when you post for real*: ElevenLabs ~\$5/mo (commercial rights) and, if you want it, Submagic ~\$16–20/mo for one-click captions. That's it. No \$299 "all-in-one AI suite" required — I don't use one and neither should you.

The order I'd set them up

- **1. Start 100% free.** Write a script (Claude/ChatGPT), test a voice (ElevenLabs free), make one watermarked HeyGen clip, auto-caption it in CapCut. Post nothing — just prove to yourself you can make one.
- **2. Pay for the Face first.** The watermark is the only thing that screams "amateur." HeyGen pay-as-you-go (~\$0.65/clip) kills it. Now you have a clean video for under a dollar.
- **3. Add the Voice license when you post.** ElevenLabs ~\$5/mo the day you publish your first real video — that's the commercial-rights line, don't skip it.
- **4. Everything else is optional.** Submagic, fancier avatars, a Pro AI plan — add them only when a real bottleneck shows up, not before. Most never will.

What's next

This is the stack. If you want the *whole workflow* — the exact prompts that write these scripts, the settings I use in each tool, and one real automation that ties it together start to finish — that's **The AI Prompt Playbook**.

No fluff, no "40 tools you'll never open." Just the next level, when you want it.

Building your stack? Reply and tell me which of the four you're setting up first — I read every one.

THE WORKFLOW DESK

Practical AI, minus the hype. · More breakdowns + the exact setups → follow [@theworkflowdesk](#)

Prices and free tiers change — these are what I paid at the time of writing, not guarantees, and I'm not paid by these tools to list them. Always check current pricing, read AI output before you post it, and never paste passwords or confidential information into any AI tool.

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