Custom Font 3D Wordy

This plug-in works in two stages:

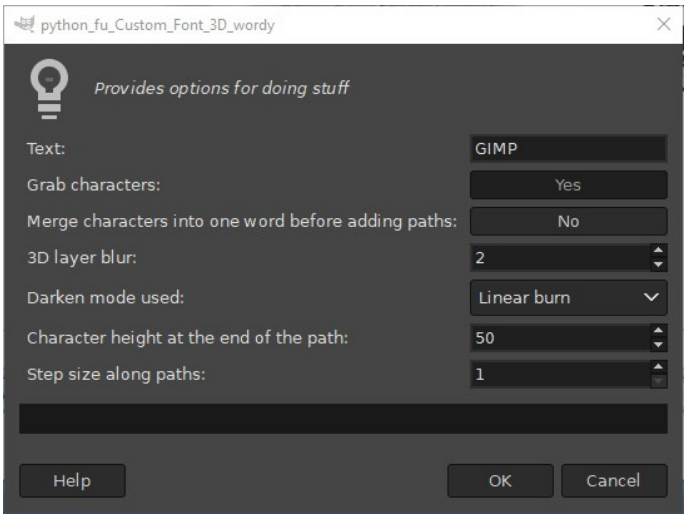
The first step is to grab characters from a custom font and add them to a new image.

The second step requires the user to add a path (or paths) to the new image to indicate the lines of perspective for the characters to follow before using.

Download the filter, extract if necessary and install it to your user plug-ins folder.

Plug-in menu location:

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom Font 3D Wordy...



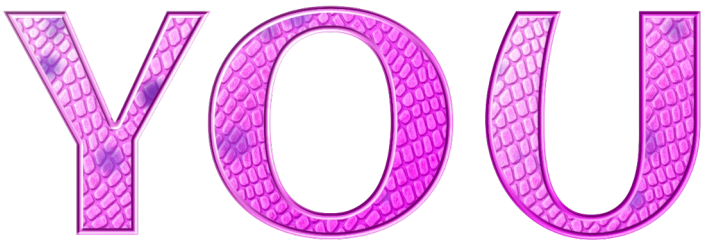
Using the filter

Part 1: Grab your characters

Open a custom font. There are loads to download on GimpLearn if you don't already have any.

Open the filter dialog and enter your text - but keep it short for now. Make sure that the second option (Grab characters) is set to 'Yes'.

Click on 'OK' and the characters will be added to a new image as individual layers (unless you also set the third option to 'Yes' to get the filter to merge the layers for you).



You can include the space character in your text. 3D Wordy will remove the character from the new image but will add the space between the adjoining characters.

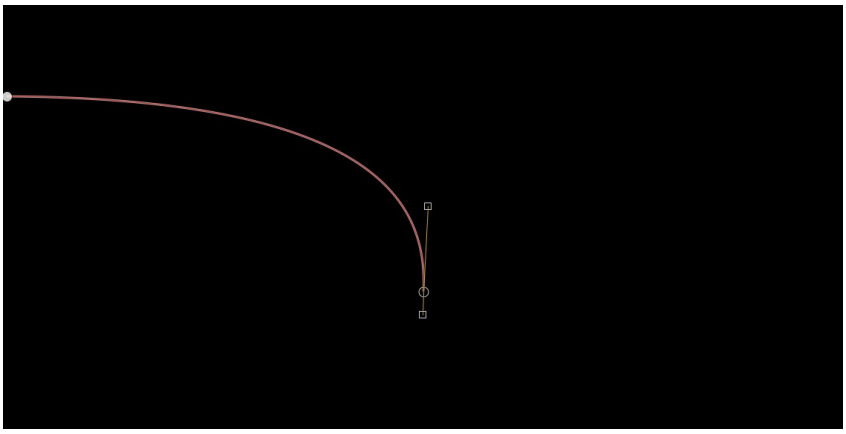
Part 2: Adding paths and re-running the filter

Merge all the characters to one layer (if they are not already merged).

Select the Path tool (press the ‘B’ key) and add a path to the image. Place the first point, or anchor, of the path at roughly the centre of the layer.

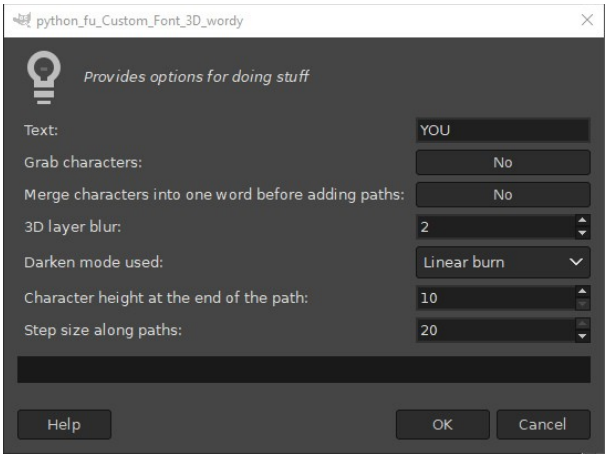
If you switch to the Move tool (press the ‘M’ key) and click and hold over a visible part of the layer you will see the small cross that Gimp uses to indicate the layer centre; you can use this as a guide to place this first point.

Now use the Path tool to add more points – often you will only need a first and last point. Drag the handles out to create a smooth curved path (unless you wish to use straight lines).



My path (two anchor points) shown on black to make it easier to see.

Call up the filter dialog and set the ‘grab’ option to ‘No’.



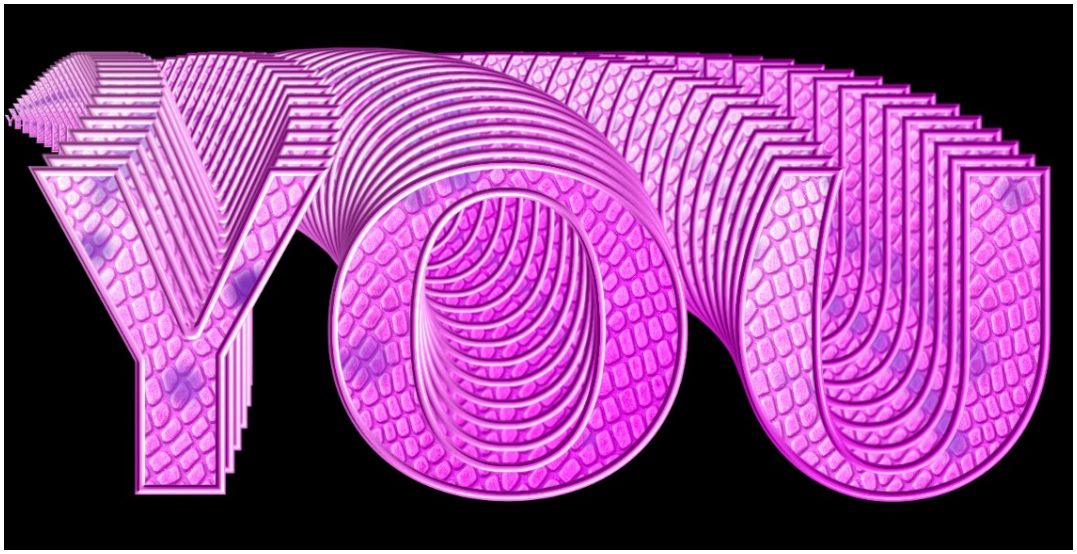
Set the ‘Character height’ option to your chosen value and (very importantly) set the ‘Step size’ option to 20.

Click on ‘OK’ and wait patiently. This may take a while if you have drawn a really long path.

The filter will check that there is the same number of paths as there are layers – and will complain if this is not the case.

If happy, it will create a series of character layers, merging and scaling them as it goes, along the path. The idea is a very simple copy, position and merge process. It helps to know that each layer is position centred on the path.

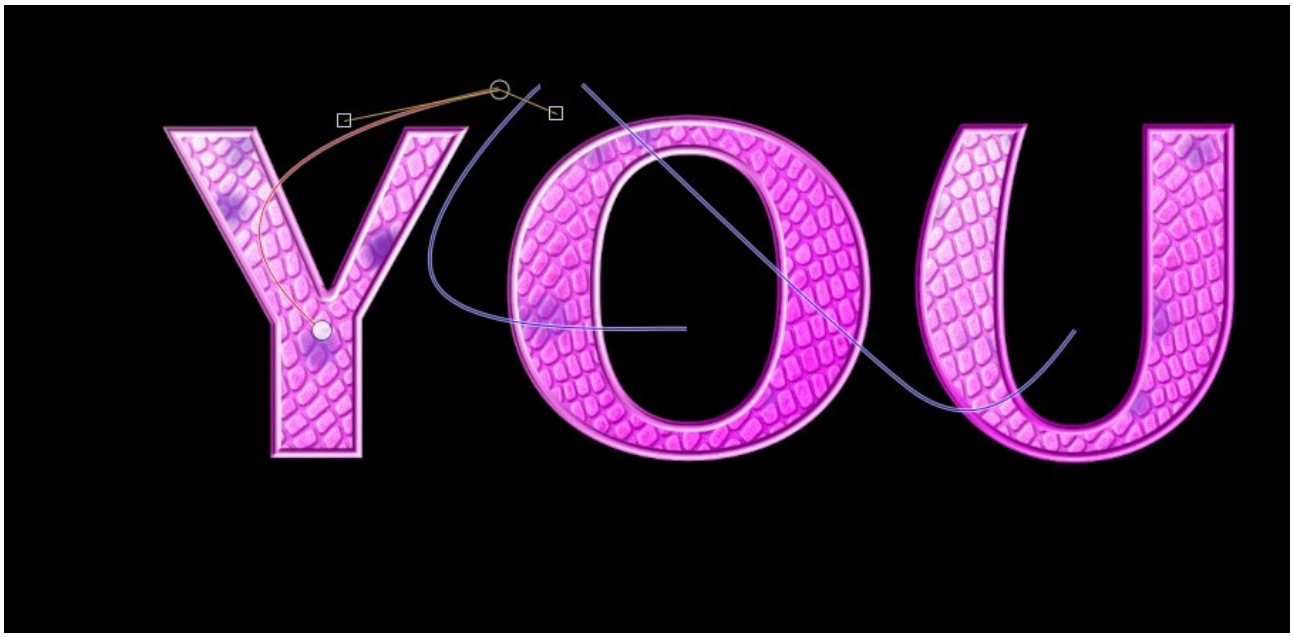
My outcome on a black background.



Using more than one path

This allows you to set a different line of perspective for each character but also requires more time to complete; three paths for three characters etc.

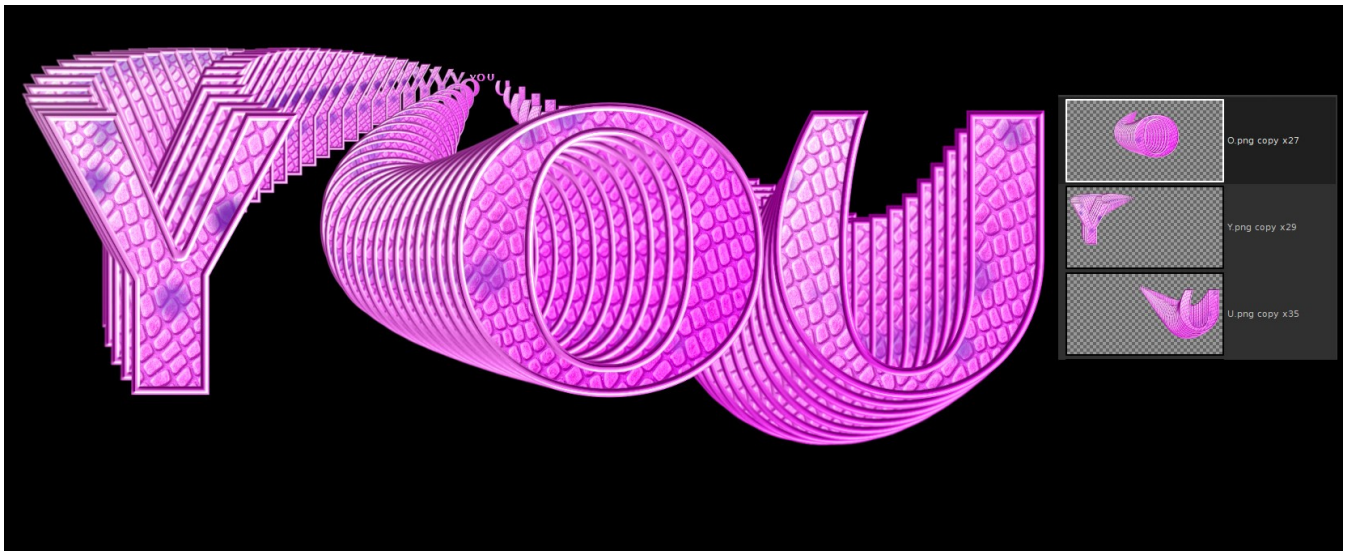
Here are the same initial characters as separate layers with three different paths.



TIP: Start with the path for the last character and work your way backwards. This will mean that the paths will be in the right order when you are ready to click on ‘OK’. Remember that each character requires it’s own individual path.

Make sure that the step size is set to the maximum size to reduce computing time. If your paths do not give you the results you hope for, this will help reduce the waiting time before committing to the final image.

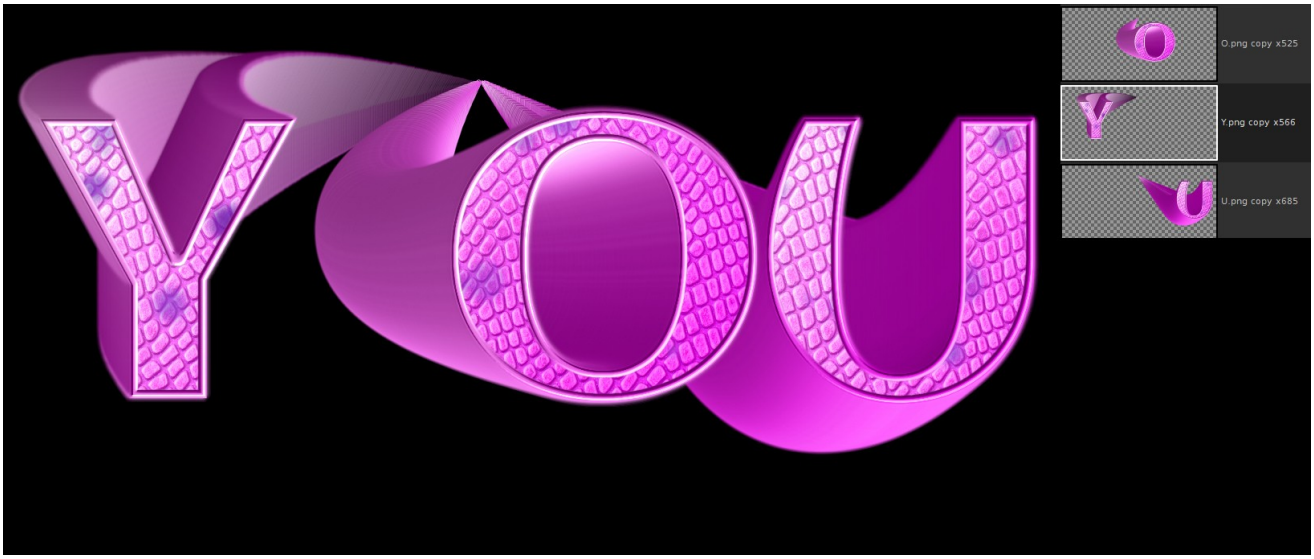
My outcome:



I have added a snapshot of the layer dock display to the image to show that I re-ordered the layers to improve the appearance. The numbers at the end of each layer name shows how many intermediate layers were used along that layer's path.

If you multiply that number by the step size you will be able to tell how many layers will be created when a step size of one is used (and estimate how much longer you will need to wait for your machine to finish). Perhaps you can plan on making a coffee or lunch while it is busy.

For the final image I used a 'Step size' of 1 and a 'Blur' value of 10. I hit the 'OK' button and went off to do a job in the garden.



Thankfully, the outcome was satisfactory (you could also do a test image with just one character and path to test out the values). The layer order was adjusted, as before, so that the wrong layer was not obscured.

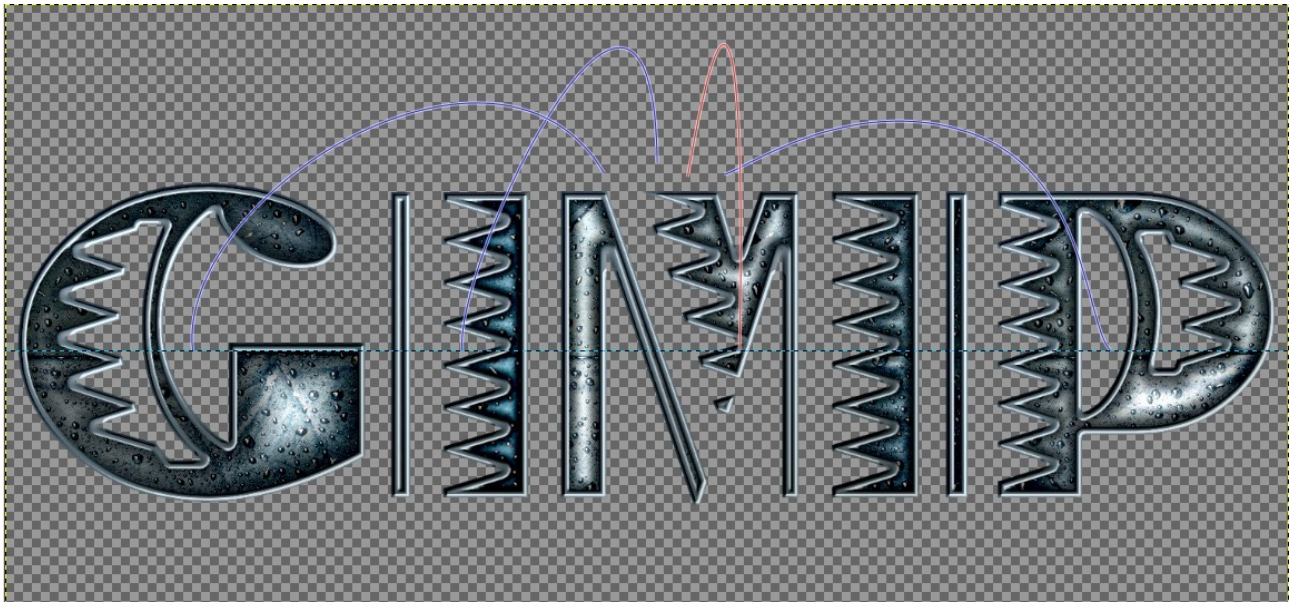
The inserted screenshot shows the number of layers used with the step size value of 1 (a total of 1776 layers - to save you from having to do the maths). No wonder I had time to do a job!

Darken Modes:

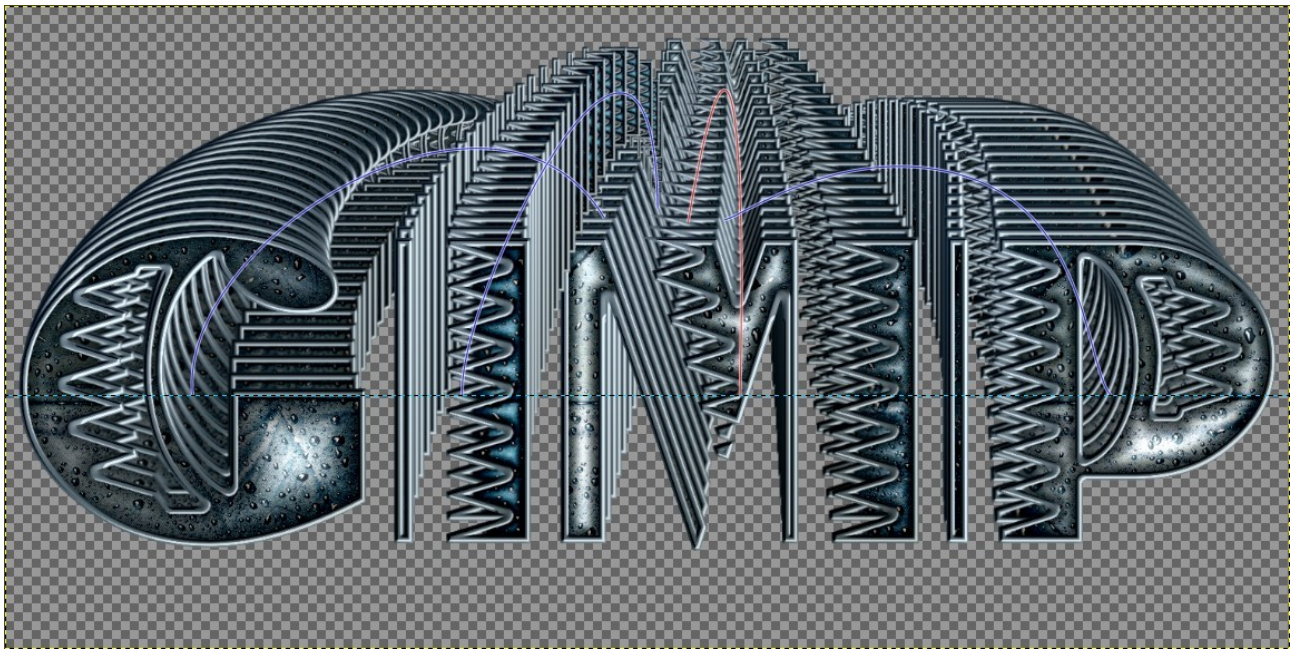
These help to accentuate the perspective line illusion. I tend to use Linear burn mode with lighter character faces and Darken only mode with darker character faces.

Another set of example using multiple paths:

Characters with paths:

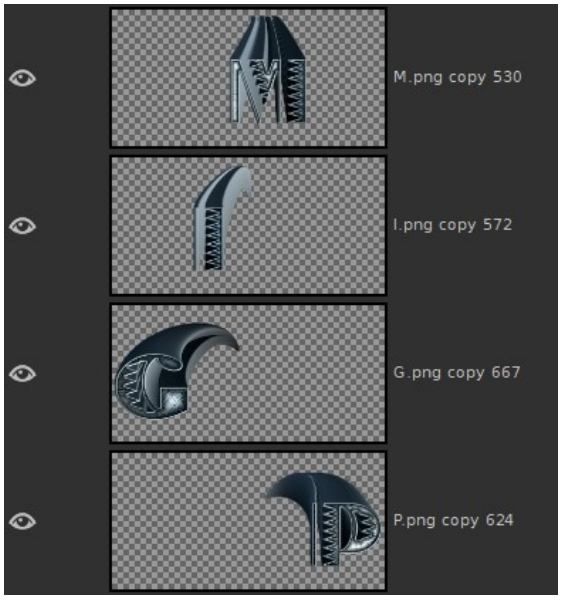


Step size of 20:
You can just see the guide I used to help position the first anchor of each path more accurately.



The finished image with background:

And, just for interest, an image to show the layer order I used to improve the finished look:



Have fun.