

Quick Start Guide to Custom_Font_Effects_Only_v010 for Gimp 2.10

This guide accompanies a resource pack containing all the resources you will need to start using this Gimp plug-in which will allow you to apply emboss, bumpmaps and bevels to each of the character layers in a custom font. You can do this one layer at a time but life is too short and there are many more exciting things to do in Gimp.

The Resources

The zipped folder contains the ready made resources for this guide; you will need to download and then extract the contents to your computer:

The Contents:

Two Gimp python plug-ins that need to be added to your user plug-in folder

Custom_Font_Face_Maker_v003.py - for adding a decorative face to a custom font

Custom_Font_Effects_Only_v010.py – for adding effects to the custom font

A set of Gimp xcf files containing custom font files and images as layers that need to be added to a location of your choosing.

Colwell_White_Base_Kerned – a plain, white custom font with additional kerning paths



Colwell_ABC_Tester – a small subset of characters for use with the package

Three_Gradient_Fills – three simple gradient layers for creating custom fonts to use effects with



Three_Pattern_Fills – three pattern fill layers (plus a lined texture layer) for using with the bumpmap effect



You can make your own layers to add to this texture bank or use any texture images that you already have. Just make sure that the layers are at least as big as the custom font image.

Preparing a Custom Font with FaceMaker:

I suggest that you use the tester Colwell custom font, to save time, while you are getting to know the Effects Only plug-in.

Open the Colwell_ABC_Tester custom font in Gimp from the location you saved it to:

File>>Open

Add the decorative layers from the file called Three_Gradient_Fills to the WhiteBase characters with:

File>>Open as Layers

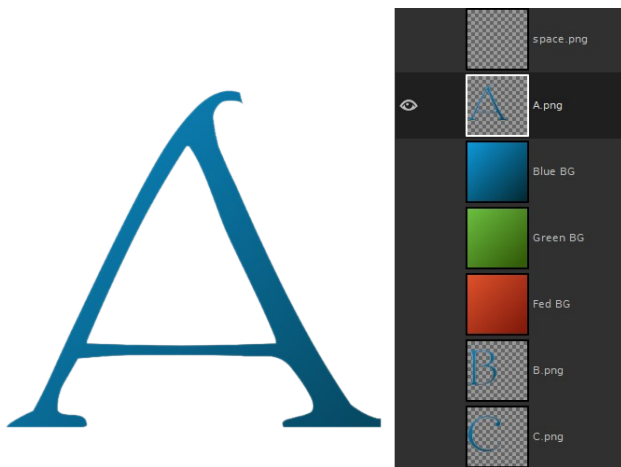
Drag the colour layer that you want to use for your plays above the other colour layers (or delete the ones you do not want to use). You can see, below, that I have moved the blue layer above the other colour layers.

Call up the FaceMaker plug-in with:

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Face_Maker_v003

Leave all the options as they are and click on 'Ok'; let the filter do its job.

You should now have a more colourful, if rather flat-looking, set of characters.



Make a duplicate (Ctrl + D) of this to use later in the guide.

Time to call up the Effects Only filter...

N.B. Earlier versions of the Effects Only filter had an extra option – to add a Shine effect. This option has been extended and now lives in its own filter dialog. You may have used this in an earlier Quick Start guide.

Applying an Emboss

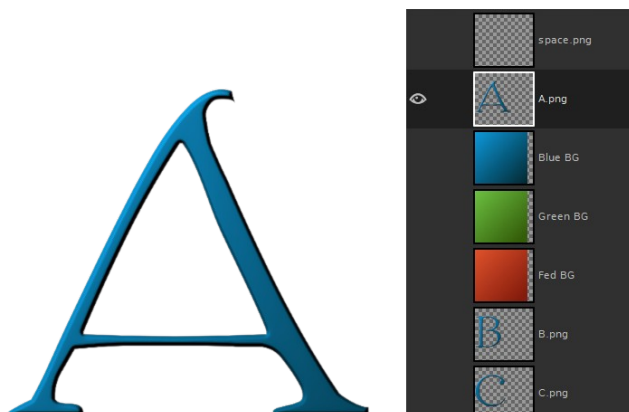
Call up the filter dialog using

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Effects_Only_v010



Set the first option to 'Yes' and click on 'OK'

You should now have a set of embossed characters (it never ceases to amaze me at how much difference this simple illusion of depth adds to a flat, coloured character).



All that has happened is that the filter has cycled through the character layers and applied Gimp's (Legacy) Emboss plug-in to each layer.

Time for you to have an embossing option play.

Undo the effects of the Effects Only filter, either from the Edit menu or by pressing Ctrl + Z (or whatever keyboard shortcut your operating system uses).

Try running the filter again and changing the Emboss options before clicking on 'OK'. I generally use the maximum value of 65 for 'Emboss depth' and a value of between 5 and 30 (depending on the thickness of the stems of the characters). Disappointingly, the effect seems to become over-blown when using values above 30.

Use Gimp's undo each time, before trying new values (Values of 1, 5 and 10 shown below).



Of course if this wasn't a play you would normally save the results of your work, at this point, as a new custom font. Leave a couple of plays active in Gimp for use with the next activity.

You could also have a play with the 'Effect elevation' and 'Effect azimuth' values, to see how the characters look when the light direction and angle is changed.

Move on when you are ready.

Applying a bumpmap effect

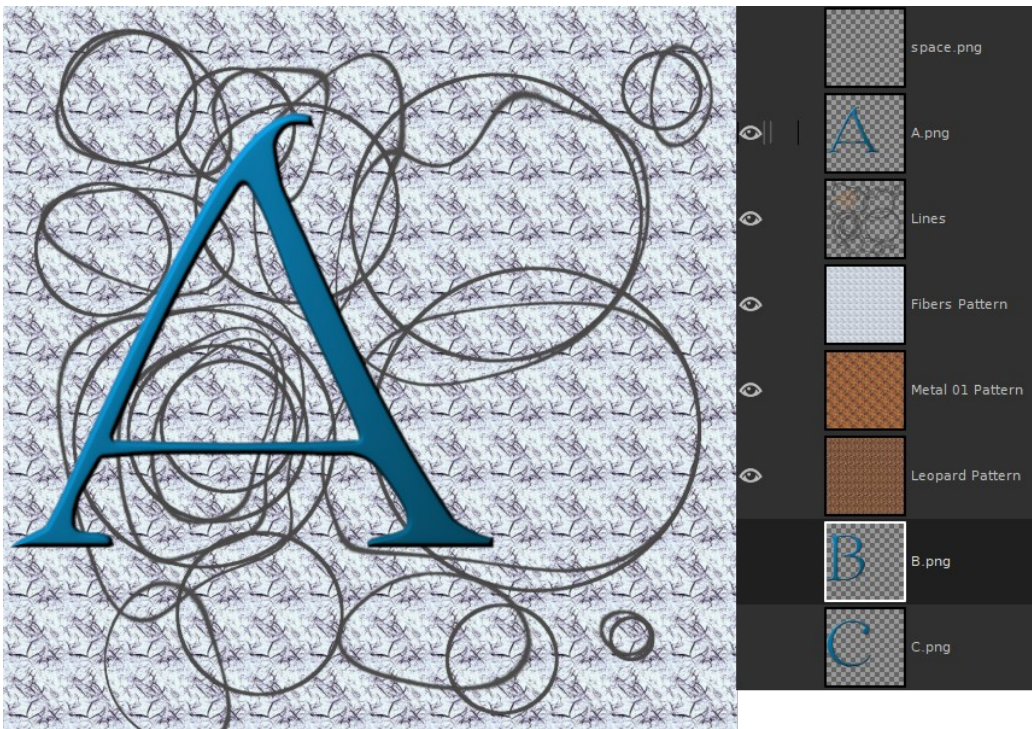
This feature requires an extra layer for the filter to use for the bumpmapped texture. Again the filter simply cycles through the character layers and applies the same bumpmap to each layer using Gimp's own plug-in.

Use one of the embossed character sets you have made to add a bumpmap layer to with:

File>>Open as Layers

Navigate to the Three_Pattern_Fills file location.

The filter will attempt to use the topmost non-character layer as the bumpmap. In our case this should be the layer called 'Lines'.



Call up the filter dialog again using

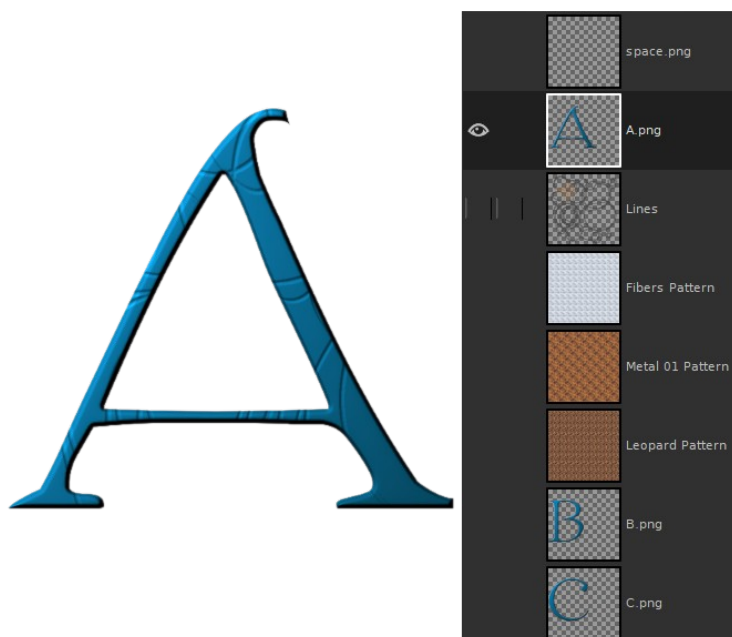
Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Effects_Only_v010

Turn off the 'Add emboss, option by setting it to 'No'.

Turn on the Bumpmap effect option by setting 'Add bumpmapped texture' to 'Yes'.

Set the 'Bumpmap depth' option value to 5.

Click on the filter dialog 'OK'.



The process is quite quick and adds another level of textured interest to the characters.

Time again for you to play. Use undo and then try out the other bumpmap layers and run the filter again. All you need to do is to drag the texture layer you want to use above all of the other non-character layers.

Applying a bevel effect

The bevel effect is based on code used in the Chisel or Carve filter by Rob Antonishen. I personally prefer this effect when using it with narrow stemmed custom fonts – but that’s just me.

Use one of the plain coloured sets of characters that you created earlier and call up the filter dialog once more using:

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Effects_Only_v010

Set the ‘Add bevel’ option to ‘Yes’ (you can turn off any other effects for now).

Leave the other bevel options at their default values and click on ‘OK’.

This is the slowest of the three effects and can take a while to run through a full set of wide characters (a coffee break time perhaps) but well worth the time taken.



If, when working with more of a patterned face, you notice that the bevel produces noticeable artefacts you retry the filter using increased values for the Artifact blur radius and the Artifact blur delta amounts to reduce the unwanted by-product of the process.

Time for you to have a play, using the other textured pattern fill layers. Try out different ‘Bumpmap depth’ values with your plays.

Using More than One Effect

You can apply more than one effect at a time with this filter, but since emboss and bevel tend to cancel each other out, it is probably better to use a bumpmap texture with either the emboss or the bevel option.

Start by returning to the duplicate copy of the coloured, flat characters that you made right at the beginning of the session.

Add the textured layers to this image:

File>>Open as Layers

Navigate to the Three_Pattern_Fills file that you saved earlier.

Drag the layer that you want to use and raise above all the other non-character layers

Open the Effects Only filter dialog with:

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Effects_Only_v010

Make sure that the 'Add emboss' option is set to 'No'.

Make sure that the 'Add bumpmapped texture' option is set to 'Yes'.

Set the 'Bumpmap depth' value to 10.

Make sure that the 'Add bevel' option is set to 'Yes'.

Set the 'Bevel width' value to 30.

Set the 'Bevel depth' value to 65.

Click on the filter 'OK' and let it do its job.

In the example below I used the Fibers Pattern layer as my bumpmap texture.



Plain and Fiber texture with bevelled blue:



Leopard and metal texture with bevelled blue:



Have filter fun...