

Custom Font PreGiffer for Gimp 2.10

PreGiffer can be used to make gif animation files for custom fonts in Gimp 2.10; it takes a lot of the drudgery out of the process.

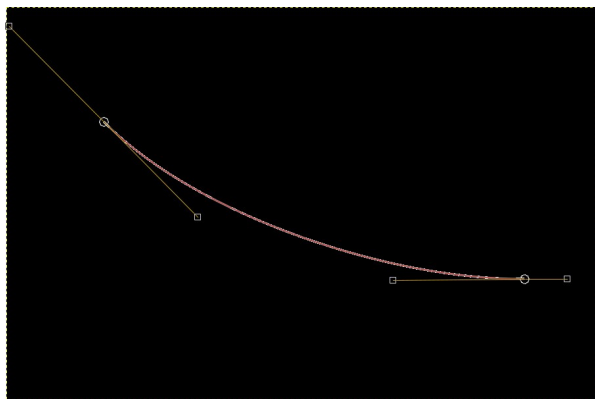
Use Custom Font Trailing version 0.3b to create an image with at least one custom font layer together with a background layer; then use PreGiffer to set the frame timings before applying one of the animation styles.

Download and install the two plug-ins to your user plug-ins folder in Gimp 2.10 before playing.

Open Gimp and create a new image (I used an image with a size of 900x600 px).

Colour your background layer in any way you wish if you do not want to use the background tools available with the Custom Font Trailing filter (I used a plain black fill).

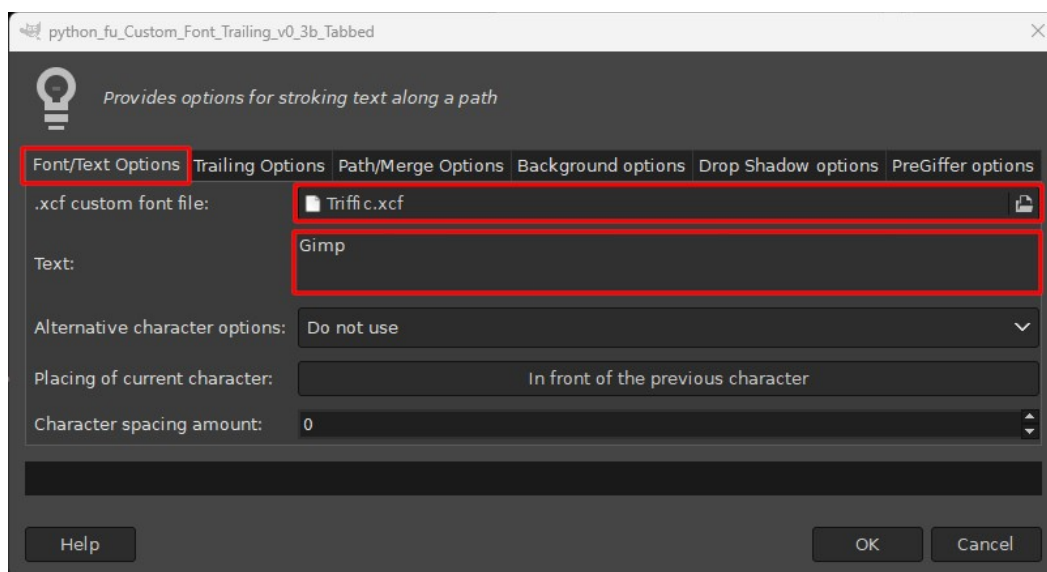
Use the Gimp path tool to add a path to the image.



Call up the Filter dialog:

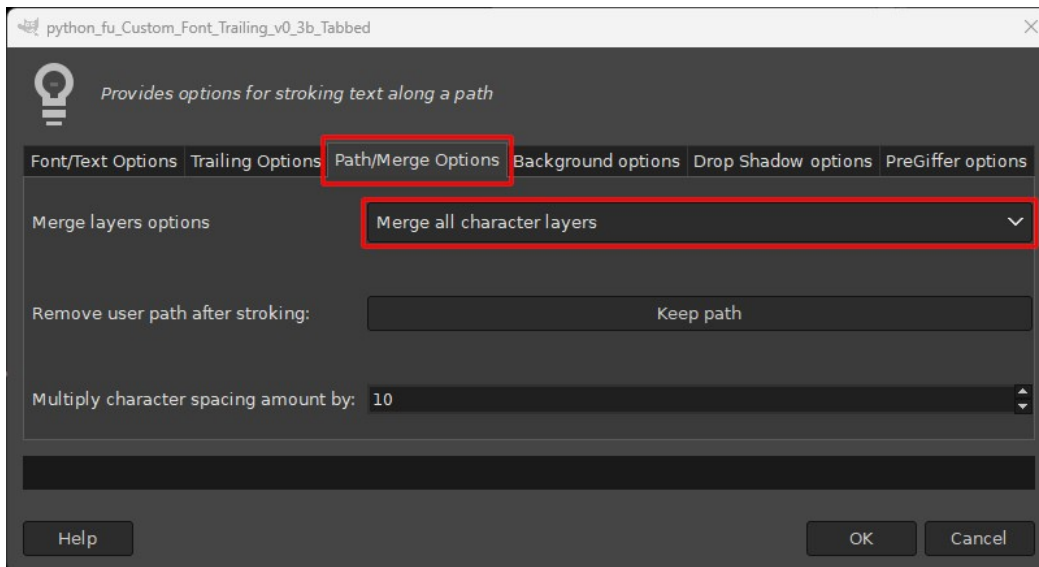
Filters>>Custom Fonts>>Using Tools>>Custom Font Trailing 0.3b...

On Tab 1 click on the folder icon and navigate to and select the custom font that you want to use.



Click in the text box and for now add just one word.

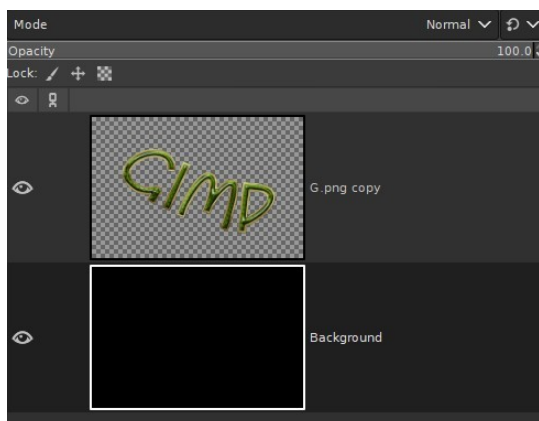
Then Click on the 3rd dialog tab:



Change the 'Merge layer option' to 'Merge all character layers' and then click on 'OK' to let the filter do its work and stroke the text along the path.



The image now has two layers:

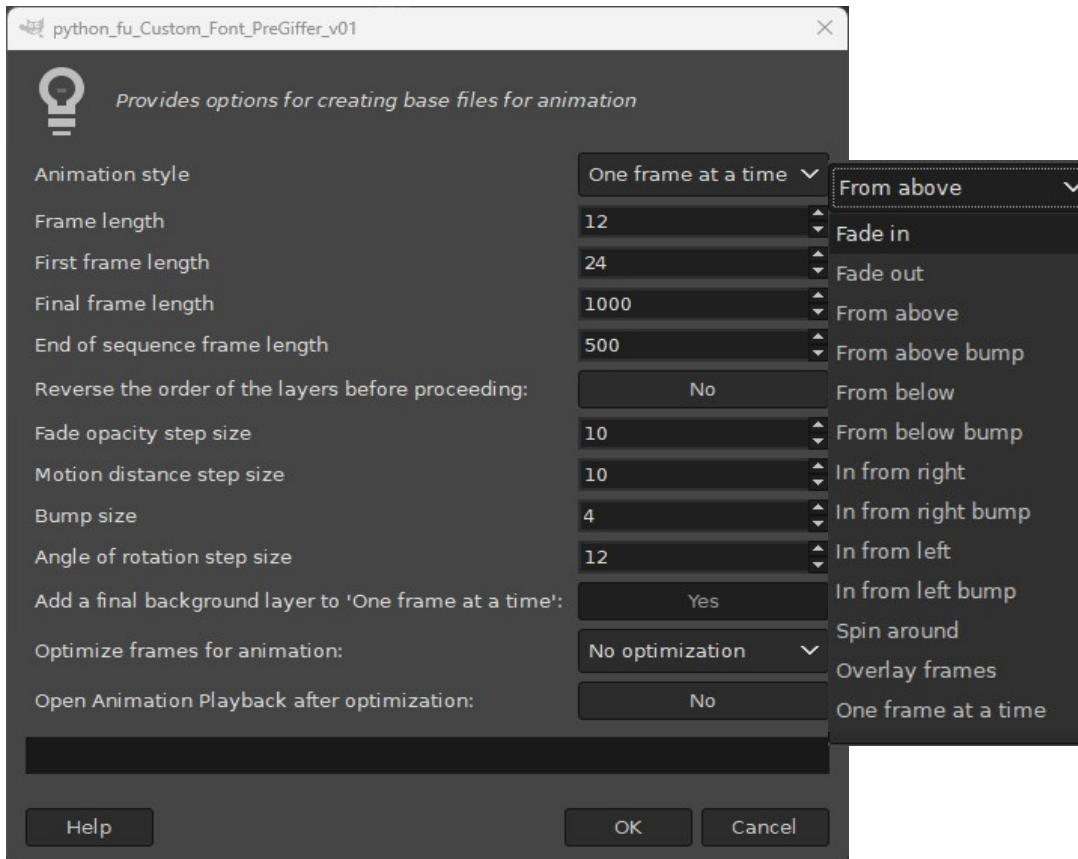


Time to look at the PreGiffer dialog:

Open the PreGiffer plug-in from:

Filters>>Custom Fonts>>Utility Tools>>Custom Font PreGiffer v0.1...

To see the animation styles, click on the style option drop-down menu:

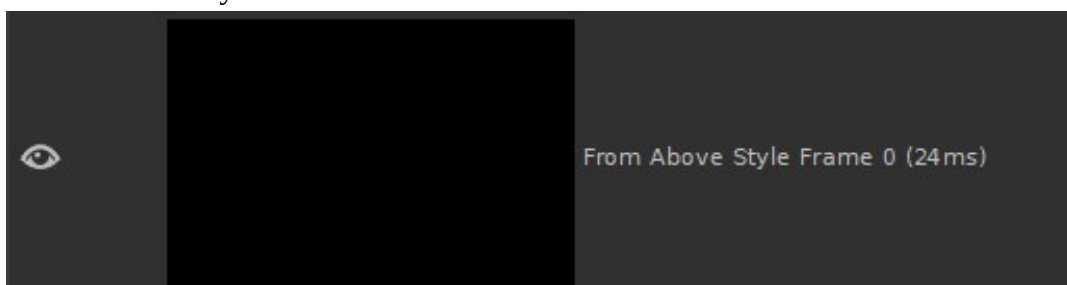


Some options relate only to certain animation styles but the 'Frame length' options apply to all styles.

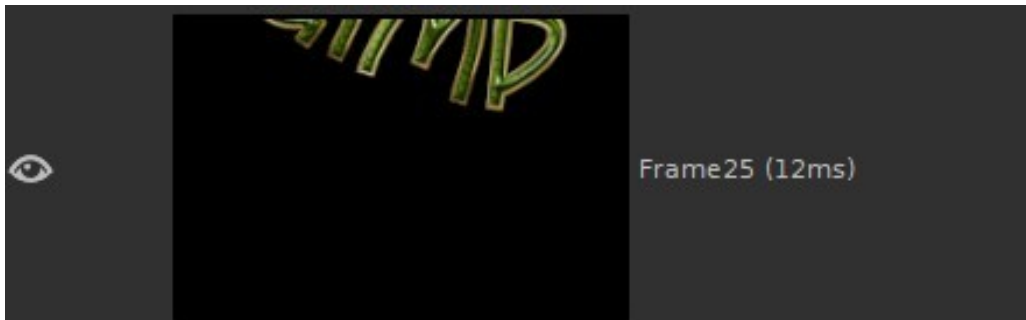
Use the default style and settings with your image in Gimp and click on 'OK'.

PreGiffer will create a new image and generate the layers or frames (58 in my case) required to make it appear that the word 'Gimp' drops down from above into it's original position.

The first frame layer thumbnail:



A mid-range frame layer thumbnail shows the apparently falling word:



And the final frame layer thumbnail – back in place:

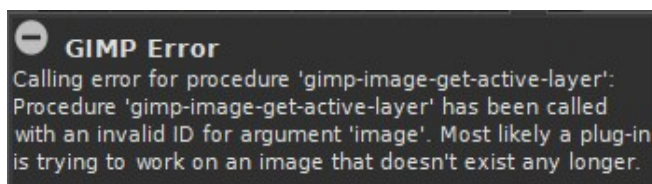


If you want to see how the gif looks like in action, use the Playback filter:

Filters>>Animation>>Playback...

Discard this image (you could save it if you really wanted) so that we can look at the next style, 'From above bump'. Return to the original image and call up the PreGiffer filter dialog again. This time click on the 'From above bump' item from the 'Animation style' drop-down menu option. Use the default options again and click on 'OK'.

The filter will send a message to the error console in Gimp, but will still create a new image.



This new image will contain more frames than the last one – 62 in my case. If you use the Animation Playback plug-in to view the gif animation you will see that the reason for the increase was to simulate a bump effect as the word returned to its original position on the screen.

The error message merely indicates that PreGiffer had tested to see if the last image it created was still available for use but could not be found. If it had been available, PreGiffer would have added the new frames to that image instead in order to build up a chain of animation styles.

End of Sequence Frames

When there are more than two layers in the base image in PreGiffer you can make use of the 'End of sequence frame length' timings in the filter dialog.

Create a new image with your custom font tools using the word 'Gimp' and with each letter on a separate layer and with a background layer. The image below therefore is made up of five layers.



Open the PreGiffer dialog and select the 'In from right' item from the 'Animation style' option drop-down menu and click on 'OK'.

Let PreGiffer generate the frames/layers in a new image (my new image contained 35 layers). Use the 'Animation Playback' filter to play the animation; you will see that now each letter slides in from the right to its original position in the word and that there is a short delay before the next letter slides into place. The length of this delay is set by the 'End of sequence frame length' option setting in the dialog.



The default setting is for 500ms but this can be changed in the dialog to suit your needs.

The distance value option affects the amount of movement applied to this style of animation (i.e. 'from left', 'from right', 'from above' and 'from below' – with or without 'bump').

The 'Spin around' animation style makes use of the 'Angle of rotation step size' option which obviously affects the number of layers created in the new image. Smaller steps make for a smoother animation sequence but you may wish to lower the 'Frame length' to then speed up the rate of playback.

The remaining two style options may offer a more flexible approach to animating custom fonts. The basic difference between the two styles is that 'One frame at a time' uses a copy of each layer in the original image – whereas the 'Overlay' style adds the contents of each layer to the previous layer.

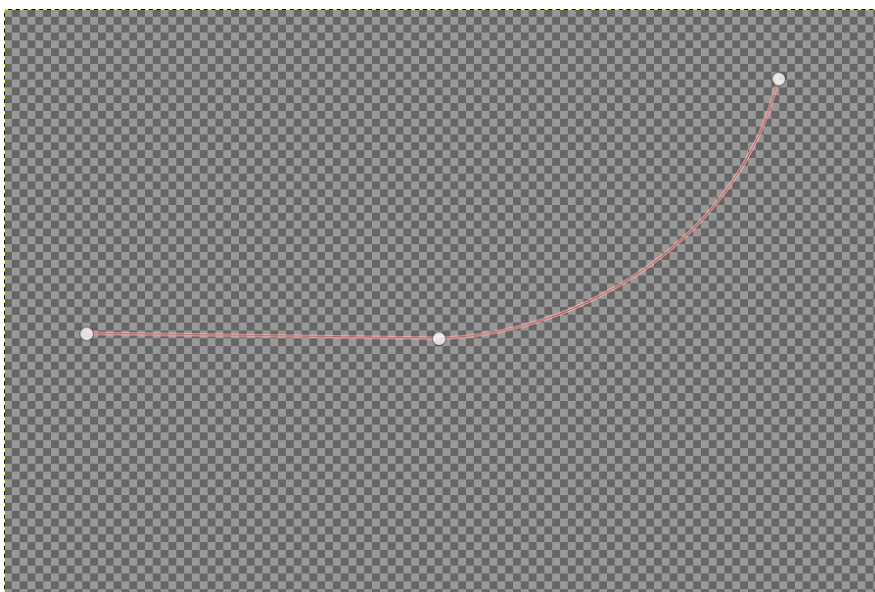


Using One frame at a time for Expanding text:

To achieve this effect use Custom Font Trailing to create the base image. Tab 6 of the dialog has some PreGiffer specific options:

Add a new image to Gimp (900 x 600 for me) with a coloured background.

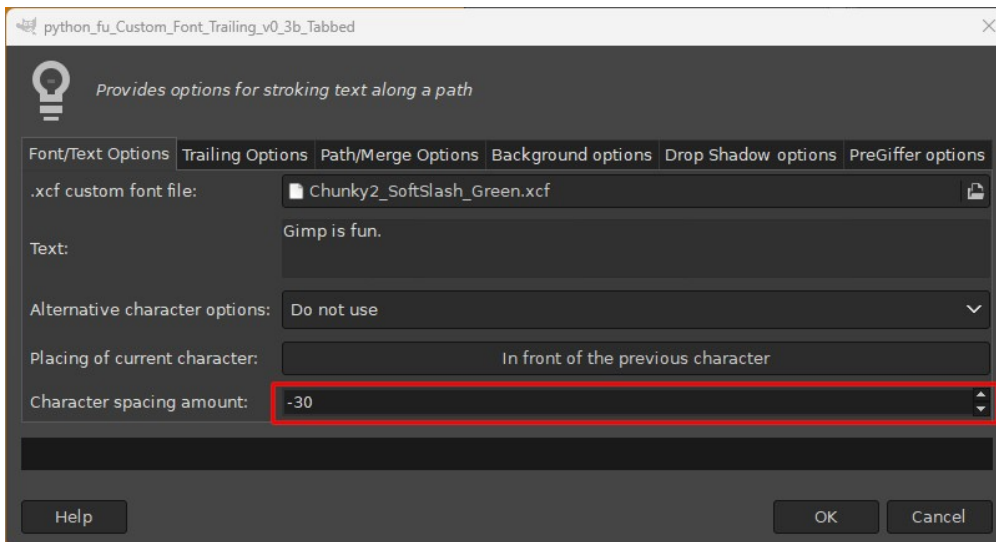
Add a path to the image with path tool (background not visible in the image below):



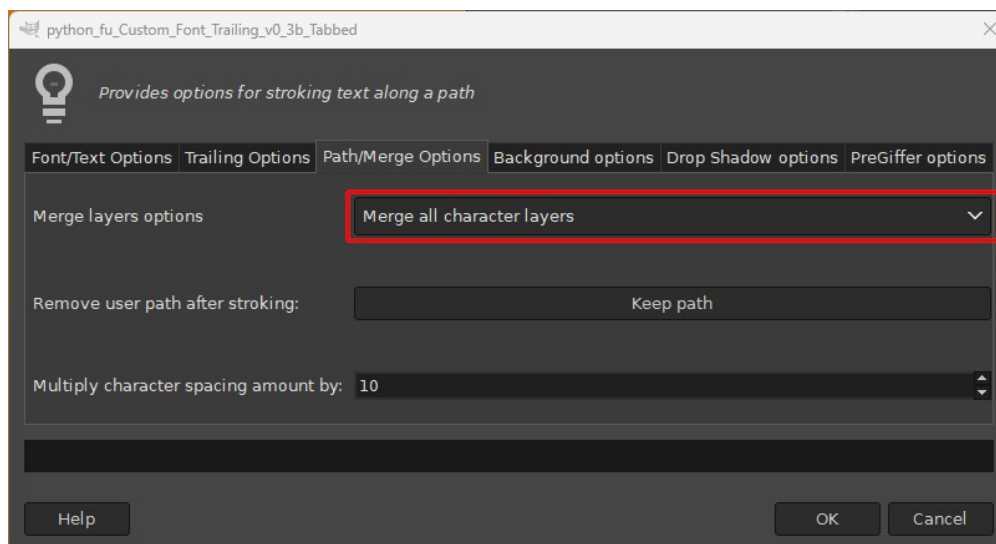
Open the Custom Font Trailing filter:

Filters>>Custom Fonts>>Using Tools>>Custom Font Trailing 0.3b...

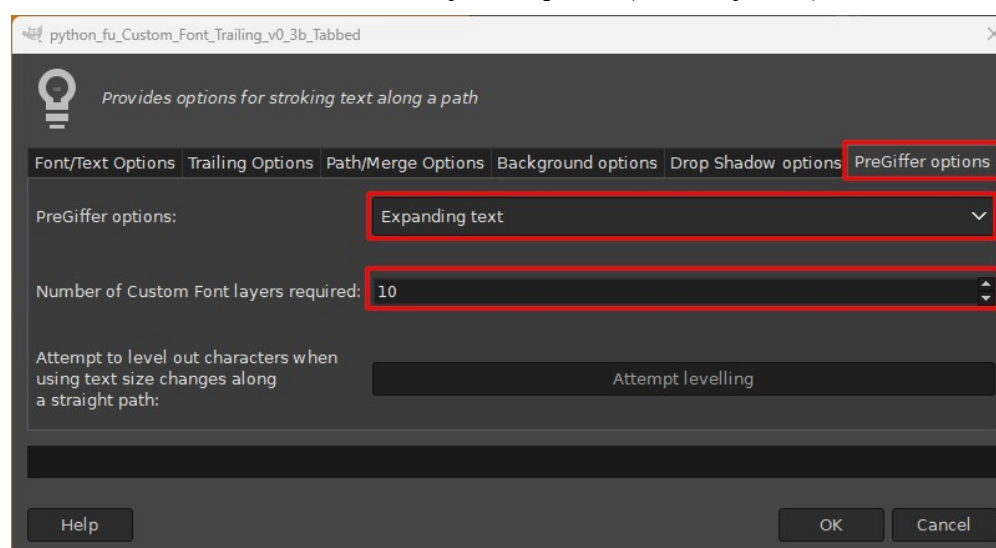
On the first tab, choose a custom font and set the 'Character spacing amount' to -30.



And on the second tab, set the 'Merge layer options' to 'Merge all character layers':

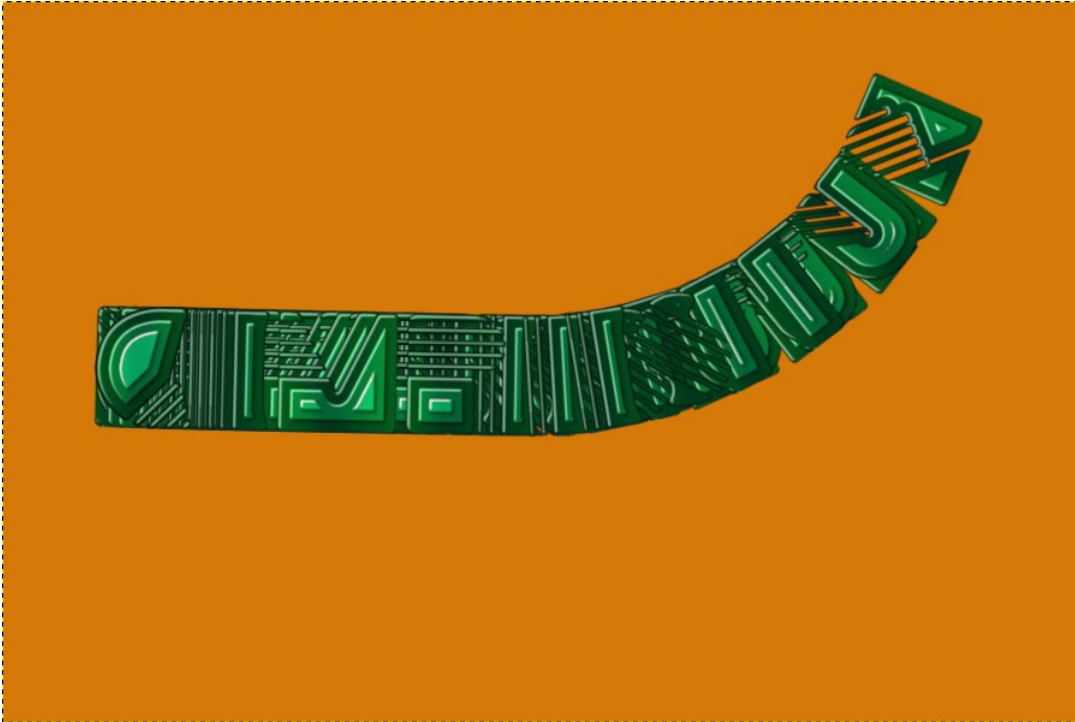


On the 6th tab choose the 'Expanding text' item from the drop-down menu for PreGiffer options and set the 'Number of Custom Font layers required (10 in my case).



Click on 'OK'.

My output shows all the separate custom font layers stacked on top of each other:



Now open the PreGiffer dialog, set the 'Animation style' to 'One frame at a time' and the 'Add a final background layer' to 'No'. Click on 'OK'.

Test out the animation generated to the new image with the Playback plug-in.

Using One frame at a time for Text Tremor:

Add a tremor or trembling effect to your custom font text or to a part of the text.

Create a new image and add a background colour.

The image below shows how the text will look without any effect added:



The aim is to add a tremor to the larger word 'GIMP'.

Add a path for the lower line of text – this is to be the part which will not have a tremor.

Open custom Font Trailing (reset any of the Pregiffer options if you have just been using them); on the first tab of the dialog select a custom font and enter the text for the lower line – in my case 'IS FUN.' On the third tab of the dialog set the 'Merge layer options' to 'Merge all character layers'.

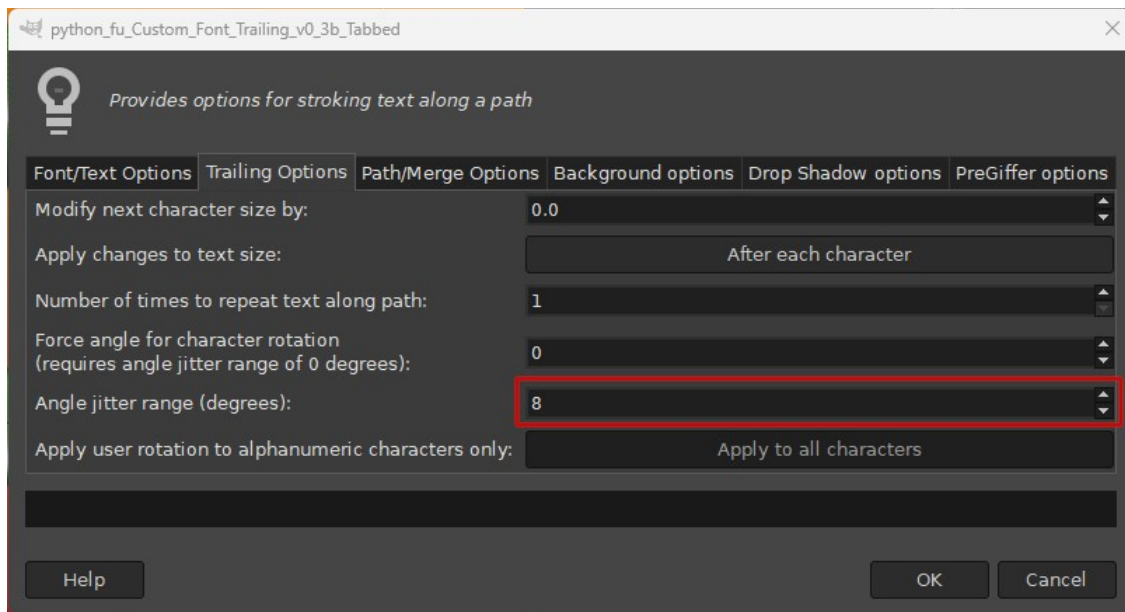
Hit 'OK' and then merge the text layer down onto the background layer:



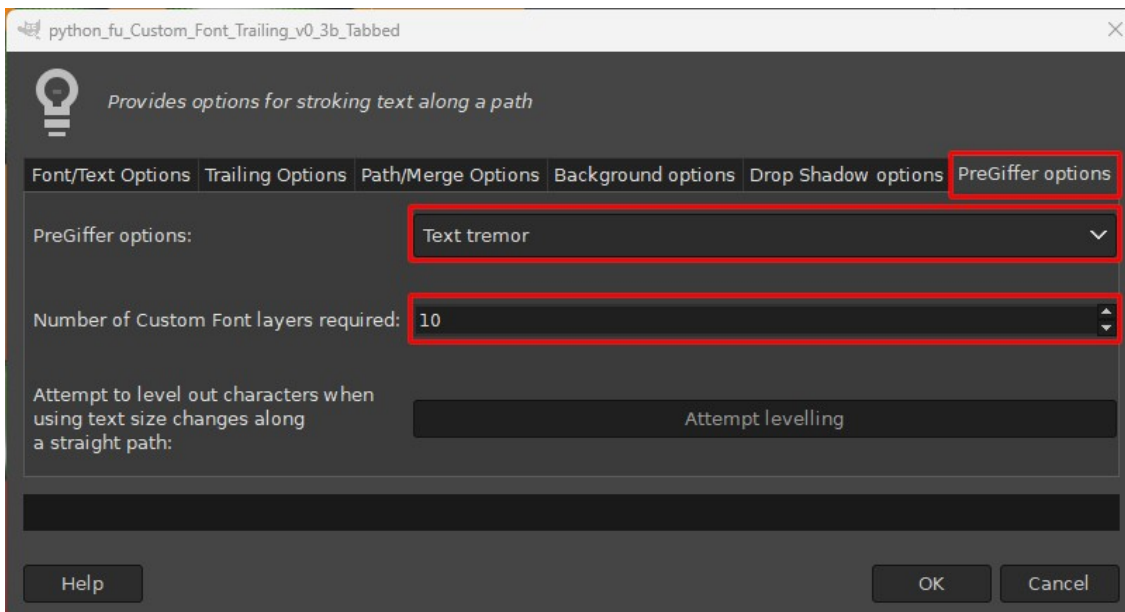
Add another path to the image to hold the word 'GIMP'. Open the Custom Font Trailing filter again and enter the text. Hit 'OK' to create the new layer.

GIMP

Re-open the filter and on the second tab enter a value of 8 for the 'Angle jitter range' (higher values produce a more marked shaking effect rather than a slight tremor).



On the 6th tab (PreGiffer Options) select the 'Text tremor' item from the 'PreGiffer options' drop-down menu and enter a value for the 'Number of Custom Font layers required'.



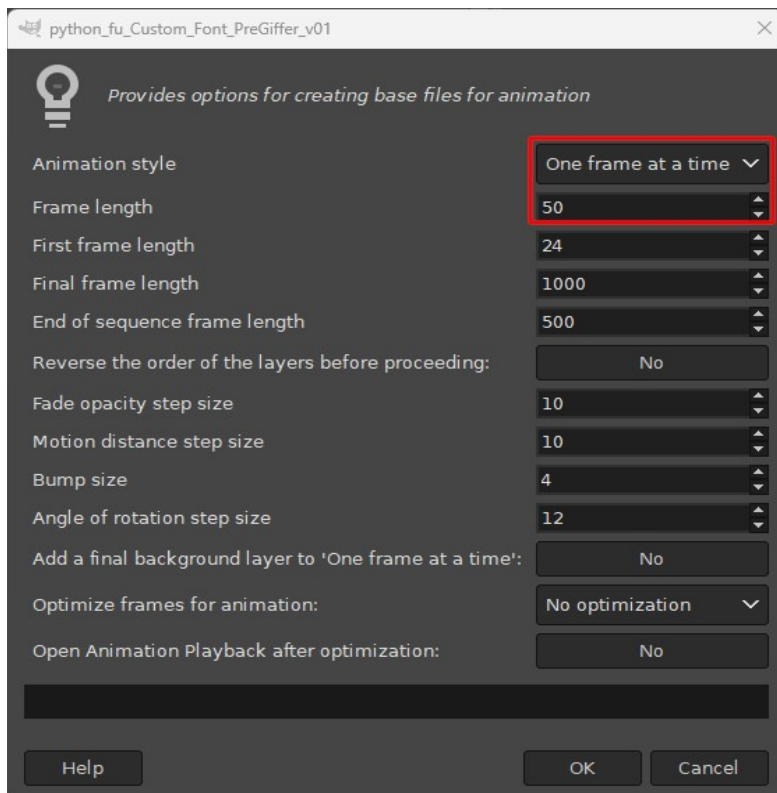
Click on 'OK' to add the layers to the image.

Although it is hard to see, the screen snap below contains all eleven layers containing the word 'GIMP'



Although not essential, I would duplicate the layer without any text jitter (the one just above the bottom background layer) and put this copy at the top of the layer stack.

Now open Custom Font PreGiffer and set the options as shown below:



Click on 'OK'.

Examine the frame layers generated by PreGiffer and delete the bottom layer (this removes a slight stutter from the gif). Now use the 'Playback' filter to see the effect of the animation.

An example of using 'Overlay style' to create an animated message

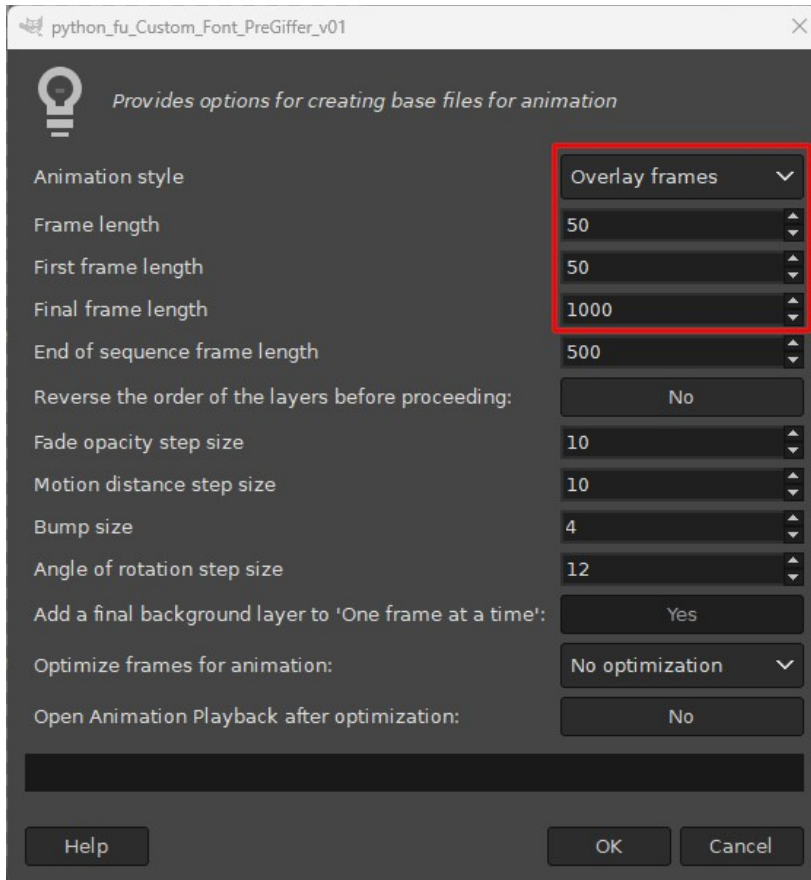
Create a new image and add a background (I added some text that I wanted to be in every frame of my background).



Then I added a number of words (layers) adding different paths with different custom fonts using Custom font Trailing.



When done with the word layers, open PreGiffer. Set the 'Animation style' to 'Overlay frames' and adjust the frame times to suit your needs; Too short and the viewer will not have time to read any of the words.



Click on 'OK' to generate the new image for playback.



Chaining animation Styles

PreGiffer does it's best to remember which image is being used as the image which is being used for animation purposes. As said earlier, this can be used to chain styles together to make a longer animation.

For example, you may create a set of layers containing the letters of the word 'GIMP' and a background layer. You could then use PreGiffer to make the letters...

'Fade in'

'Spin around'

'Fade out'.

Once a new image has been added by PreGiffer it will continue to use this new image as the target for adding animation frames – until you remove that particular image. You can create another image to build up layers for PreGiffer to use and PreGiffer will still send the frames to the target image if that has not been removed.

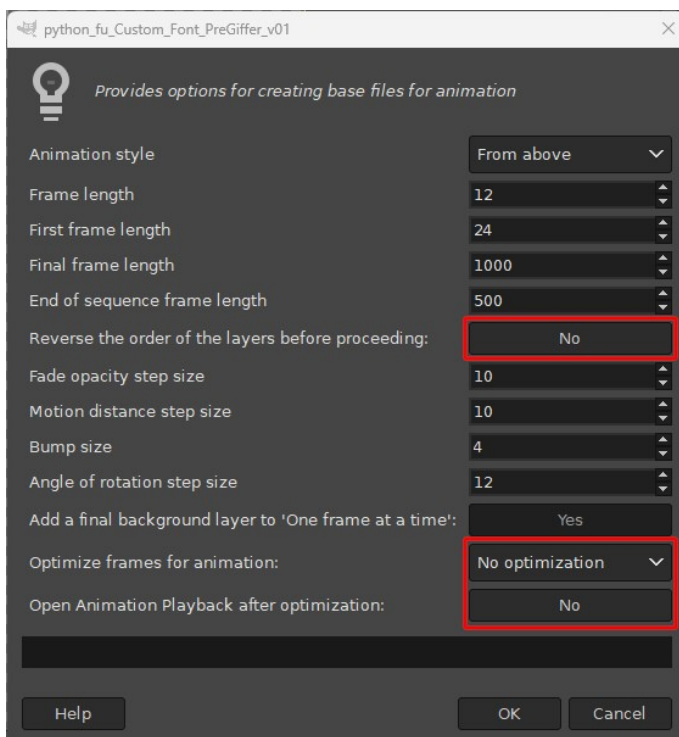
Reverse option

This option provides a small amount of variety by reversing the order of the layers in the original image (apart from the bottom/background layer). Remember to turn it off unless you want to continue using the reversed order.

A simple chain could be used with the expanding text idea. Make your expanding text layers with Custom Font trailing as described earlier.

Open Pregiffer and set the 'Animation style' to 'One frame at a time' and the 'Add a final background layer' to 'No'. Click on 'OK' to generate the frames in your new image. Re-open PreGiffer, set the 'Reverse frames' to 'Yes' and click on 'OK'. Examine the frames in the new image and remove any from the middle of the output that contain just the background image.

Playback and Optimization options



I have added these options for the sake of completeness: Be aware that when you choose to show the playback window the PreGiffer dialog will remain on screen until you close the playback window.