The Plugin Browser
by
The Dwarf Horde

Rob Tauler, John Robbins, David Issel & Scott Stringer
aka
TechnoRobbo, Red Ochre, BoltBait and Ego Eram Reputo
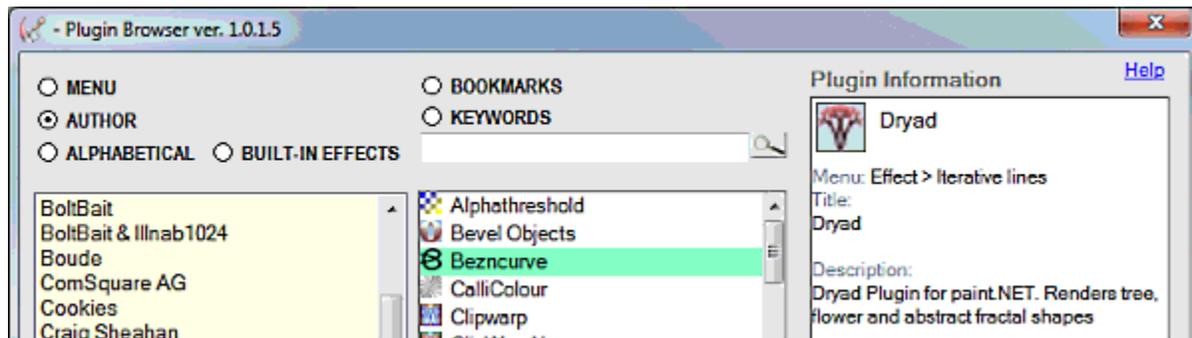
User Guide

Introduction

The Plugin Browser plugin for paint.net is designed to assist users to locate and run third-party effects and adjustments from within the Browser.

The Browser aids effect location by allowing searches with filters for:

1. **Menu –** the effect location within the paint.net menu system.
2. **Author –** who wrote the effect.
3. **Alphabetical –** a listing of all the installed effects (not those built in) in ascending order with digits 0 to 9 preceding letters A through Z.
4. **Built-In Effects –** lists paint.net's default effects, filtering out all the installed plugins.
5. **Keywords –** since the release of Codelab 2.1, plugin developers have been able to add keywords (and preview images!) to their plugins. This search filter uses the plugin keywords to refine searches.

In addition to locating and launching effects and adjustments, Plugin Browser has a bookmarking feature so the user can flag their favorite plugins for quick recall.

The Bookmarking feature supports the addition of user written comments.

Plugin Browser also supports effects which have embedded preview images. These images give a visual clue to the function of the effect or adjustment.

Once a month Plugin Browser connects to the paint.net forum and downloads a copy of the Plugin Index. This file is used to match keyword searches against plugins by parsing the plugin descriptions from the Index. You will receive a prompt before the download goes ahead.

Locating Effects and Adjustments

The Menu filter

Want to know if you have a particular Blur effect installed? What if you wish to find out how many effects you have in the Effects > Distort submenu? Using the **Menu** filter presents the installed effects and adjustments by their parent menu or submenu.

Click the *Menu* radio button to enable the Menu filter.
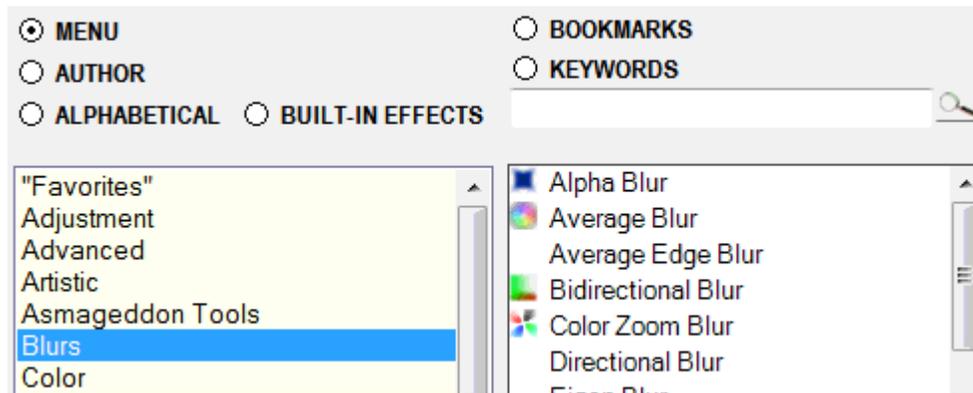
The far left panel will fill with an alphabetical list of all the **effect and adjustment menus and submenus**.

Selecting one of the entries in the alphabetical list populates the second panel with all the effects found in the selected menu or submenu. For example, in the image above, the Blurs menu has been selected and has a highlight. The effects residing in the Blurs submenu are shown alphabetically in the middle panel.

The Author filter

Need to find that ace plugin by BoltBait? The **Author** filter presents the installed effects and adjustments separated by the author or developer.

Click the *Author* radio button to select the Author filter.
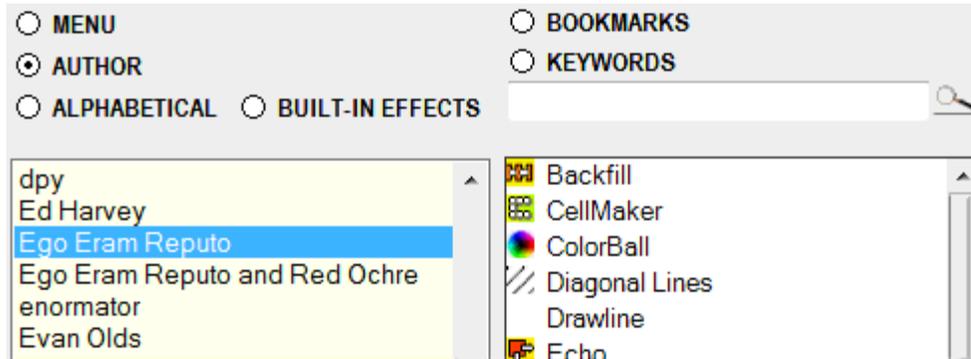
The far left panel will fill with an alphabetical list containing all the **names of the authors** of the installed effects and adjustments.

Selecting one of the entries in the alphabetical list populates the second panel with all the effects and adjustments credited to that author.

In the image above, Ego Eram Reputo has been selected. The effects which have been developed by EER are listed alphabetically in the middle panel.

Note the entries below the one that is selected and highlighted. Where more than one author has been credited with developing an effect or adjustment, all the authors are listed as a separate entry. This feature gives the user the ability to find effects developed by a single author or to locate just those effects which are the result of collaboration.

The Alphabetical filter

Q: How do you find a plugin by it's name regardless of where it is located?

A: Use the **Alphabetical** filter, because this filter simply generates one large list of all the installed effects and adjustments.

Click the *Alphabetical* radio button to select the Alphabetical filter.
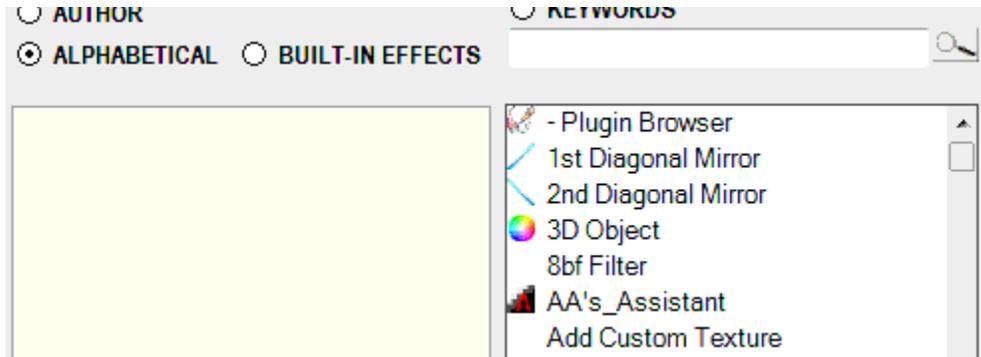
Note that the alphabetical filter does not populate the far left panel. As you can see from the image above, only the middle panel is filled.
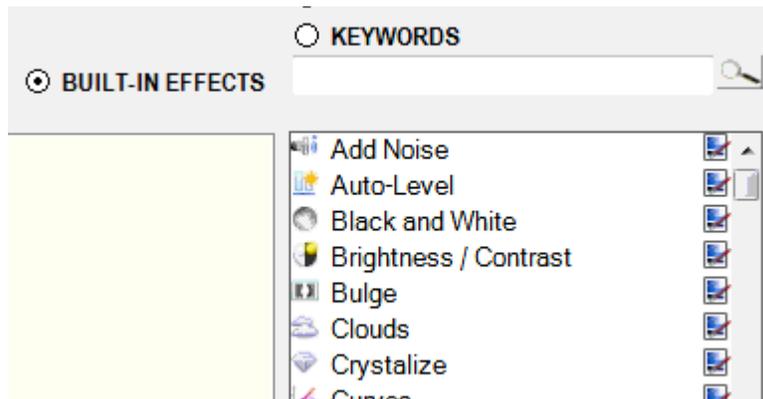
The list of all the installed effects and adjustments is presented in ascending order with **symbols** preceding **digits** which are followed by the letters **A** to **Z**.

The Built-In Effects filter

Q: How do you generate a list of paint.net's built-in effects?

A: Use the Built-In Effect filter!

Click the ***Built-In Effects*** radio button to activate the Built-In Effect filter.

The Built-In Effects filter does not populate the far left panel. As you can see from the image above, only the middle panel is filled.

The list of all paint.net's default effects and adjustments is presented in ascending order with **digits** preceding the letters **A** to **Z**.

The Keyword(s) filter

With the release of the Plugin Browser, plugin authors are being encouraged to add keywords to their plugins as an aid to identification and categorization of effects. The Keywords search filter uses these embedded keywords to refine searches.

In addition to author defined keywords, the Plugin Browser connects to the paint.net forum once a month and downloads a copy of the Plugin Index as a binary data-file. This file is used to extend keyword searches by parsing plugin descriptions from the Index. You will receive a prompt before the download goes ahead.

Click the *Keywords* radio button to select the Keywords filter.
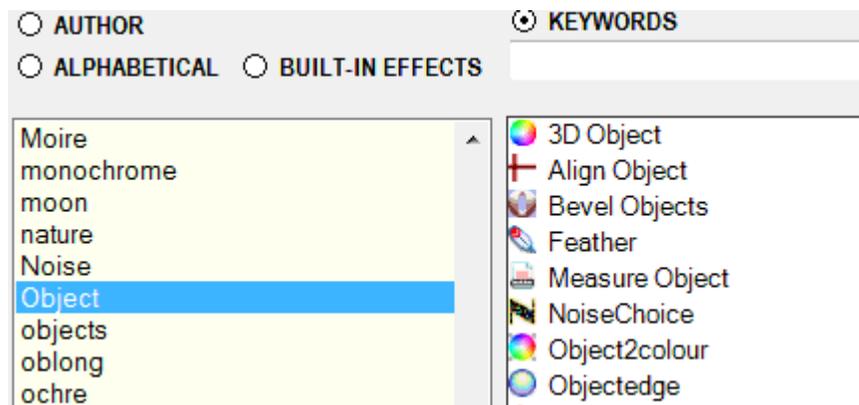
The far left panel will fill with an alphabetical list containing all the keywords found in the installed plugins. In addition, the plugin name is also defined as a keyword/keywords and included in the list. If the plugin has a built-in description any terms mentioned are also included. The Plugin Index descriptions will be added if you choose to allow the monthly download.

Selecting an entry in the alphabetical list populates the middle panel with all the effects and adjustments that share the selected keyword.

In the image above, the "object" keyword has been selected. All the effects which use the term "object" in the plugin name, description or list of keywords are listed alphabetically in the middle panel.

The Keywords field can function as a **text search tool**. Type your keyword(s) into the text box and click to magnifying glass icon to perform a search for the typed keyword(s). The search returns matches from the plugin name, description and list of keywords.
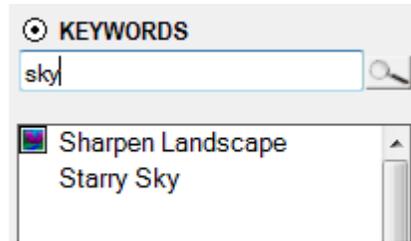
Here, the keyword "sky" has been used. Two results are returned. If we add a second keyword, further results are returned if matches are found.

Here are the results for "sky" and "moon" keywords.
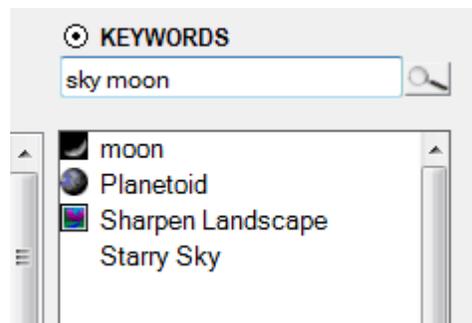
When the Keywords filter is active, the far left panel supports **multi-selecting**. You can click on multiple entries to extend the number of effects returned in the middle panel. Selections can be toggled off again by clicking the highlighted selection or clicking the Clear Selection button.

Plugin Information and the Preview Image

Once any of the searches has returned results in the middle panel, clicking an entry in the panel populates the right panel with information about the selected effect. If present, the preview image showing the effect will also be displayed in panel.

Here is the information and preview image for TechnoRobbo's Strange Attractor effect.
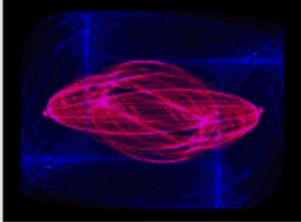
Bookmarking and Adding Comments

Locating your favorite effects is all well and good. What you want – what you really, really want – is a way to find them again quickly. Right? Welcome to Plugin Browsers Bookmark feature!

Once the middle panel has an item selected highlight, the item can be bookmarked using the *Bookmark Effect* button.

Once you click the *Bookmark Effect* button, a pop-up dialog will give you the option of adding a comment to the bookmarked effect.
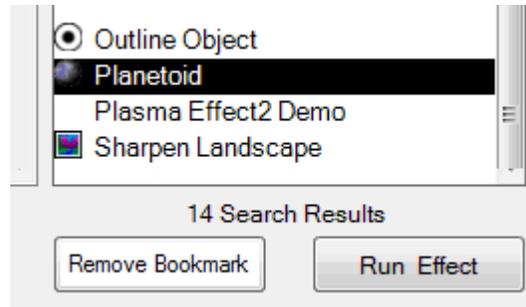
This comment will show up at the bottom of the right (Effect Information) panel.
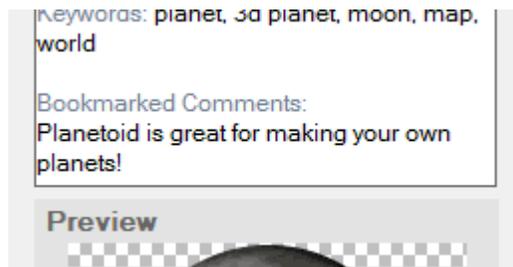
Bookmarked effects show up in the middle panel with a green highlight to visually mark them as different from other effects.
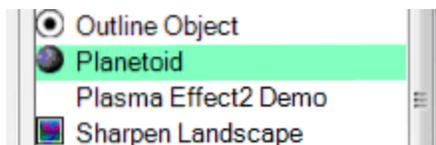
To remove a bookmark, select the green highlighted item and click the *Remove Bookmark* button.

The ***Remove Bookmark*** button is in the same location as the ***Assign Bookmark*** button.   The button changes depending on whether a selected effect is bookmarked or not.

To see which effects you have bookmarked, click the ***Bookmarks*** radio button. The list of your bookmarked effects is returned in the second panel. These effects are highlighted green to denote their bookmarked status.
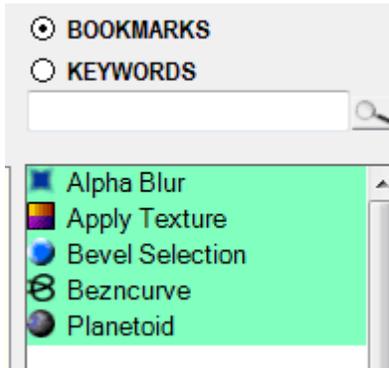
Running effects from within Plugin Browser

Effects and adjustments can be run from within Plugin Browser. To run an effect, click the effect name when listed in the second panel followed by the ***Run Effect*** button. The effect dialog will open and Plugin Browser will close allowing you to adjust the effect parameters and controls via the effect dialog.

Cancelling the effect from it's dialog returns control to the Plugin Browser.

Accepting the effect by clicking OK in the effect dialog finishes the effect and returns control to paint.net.
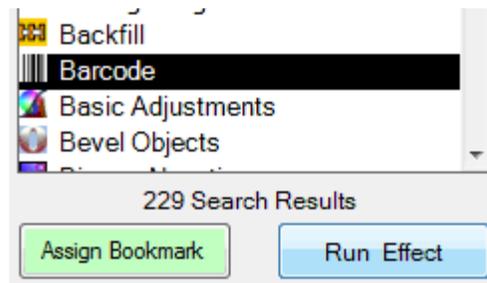
Here the Barcode effect can be run by clicking the ***Run Effect*** button.