Tutorial for Harry Raver's Plugin Commander

Presentation

This tutorial on the use of **Harry Raver's Plugin Commander** (from now on, "**PiCo**") is intended for beginners. It is **Paint Shop Pro** oriented because that's the only **Filter Factory** compatible program I'm familiar with. **PiCo** can seem a little overwhelming at first, but the job it tries to do is difficult: organizing hundreds of FF Plugins into a coherent and easily accessed system. This tutorial will first take you step by step through some of **Pico**'s basic functions, and then describe one of the many possible ways in which it can help you to create.

Two disclaimers: First, I've only been working with **PiCo** a couple of weeks and I'm sure there's a lot I've missed. Second, please keep in mind that these observations are purely personal: They're my own method of working with Pico to create the kinds of graphics that interest me. If you'd like to disagree or add observations of your own, your comments will be posted on the Pico Board (which will soon be up)!

Finally, you can also consult [another Plugin Commander Tutorial](#) by [Stephanie Cornwell](#).

[Index](#)

Converting the ffl Files into Plugins

As a demo, we'll use the [19 Filter Factory Gallery Plugins](#), A-U. First create a subdirectory to your **PSP** directory called "ffl", or whatever, then another called "plugins". Extract the .ffl files from the *ff_galry.zip* files to the ffl directory.

Now open **Pico**:
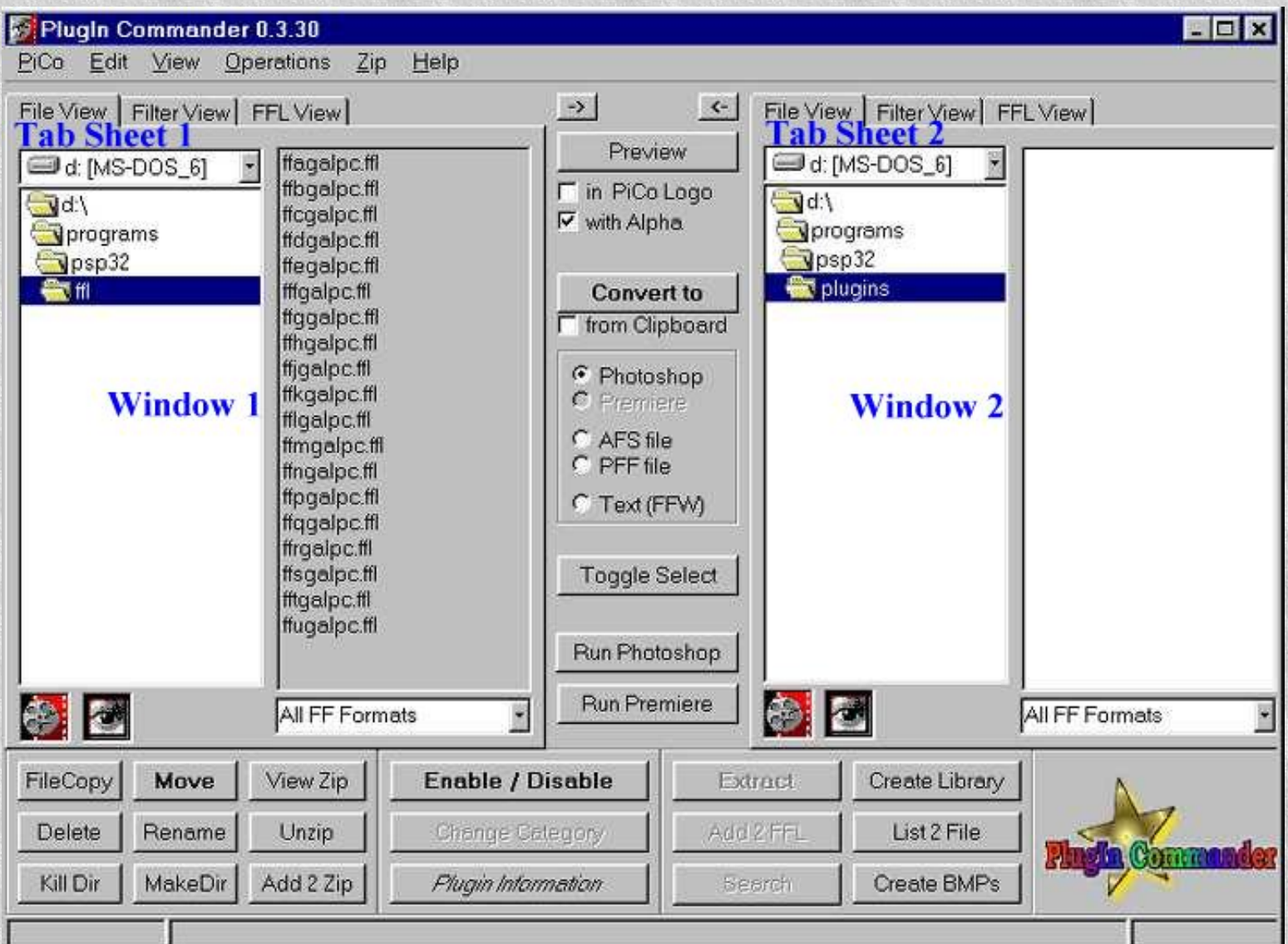
There are two Tab Sheets with two windows in each. Each Tab Sheet offers either a **File View**, **Filter View** or **FFL View**. For now, we want the **File View** in Tab Sheet 1 and want to go to the directory where we have the .ffl files installed. Now in the second Tab Sheet go to the empty plugins directory.

To convert the ffl files into plugins, all we have to do is highlight an ffl file, choose "Photoshop" under the **Convert To** button, and then click **Convert To**. Twenty *.8bf* extension filters should appear in the second window of the second Tab Sheet:
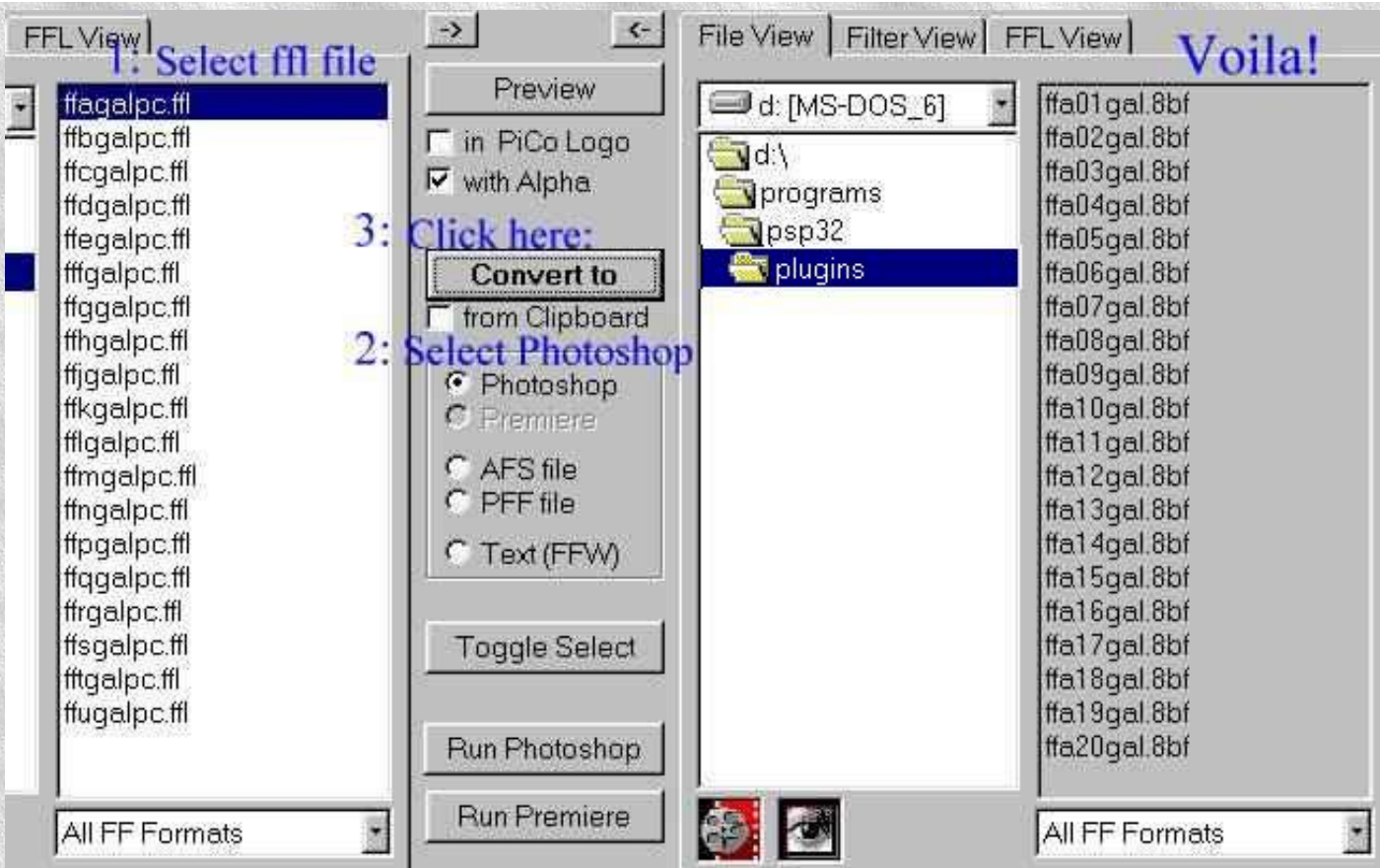
Now we simply do the same with each of the 18 remaining ffl files, and we end up with 384 plugins (with extension *.8bf*) in our plugins directory. Next, in Tab Sheet 2, hit **Filter View**:
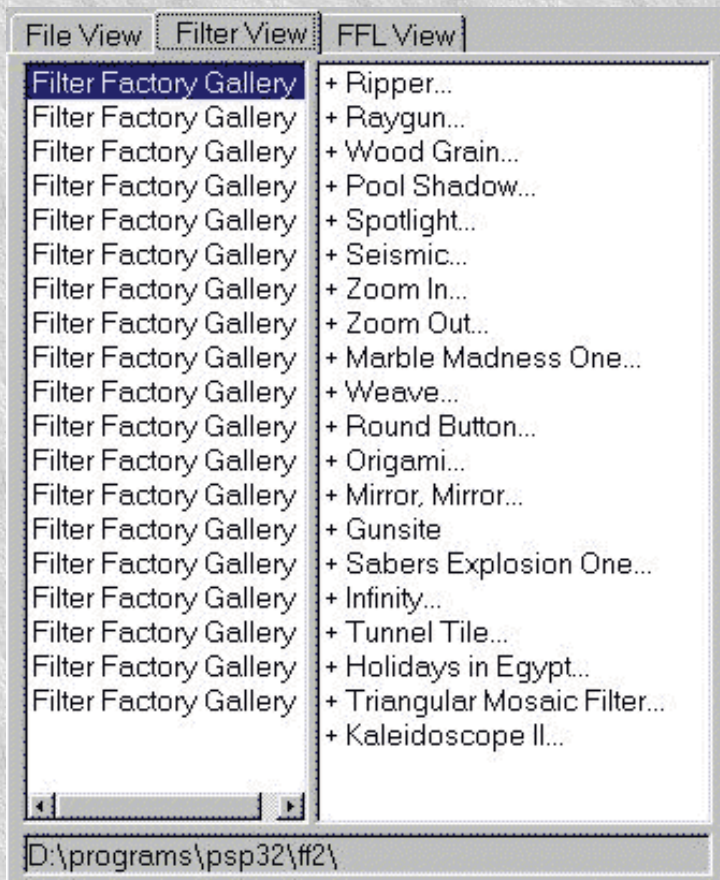
Hmmm... Not very useful. We can't see the full names of the Filter Categories unless we scroll. So in the next section we'll see one of the great things about ffl files.

Creating ffl Libraries

First we'll go back to **File View** in Tab Sheet 1 and highlight all 384 plugins. Then open the ffl directory in Tab Sheet 2. Now activate Tab Sheet 1 and hit **Create Library**. A window pops up where we can choose a file name. We'll use *filters_a-u.ffl*. Now hit OK.
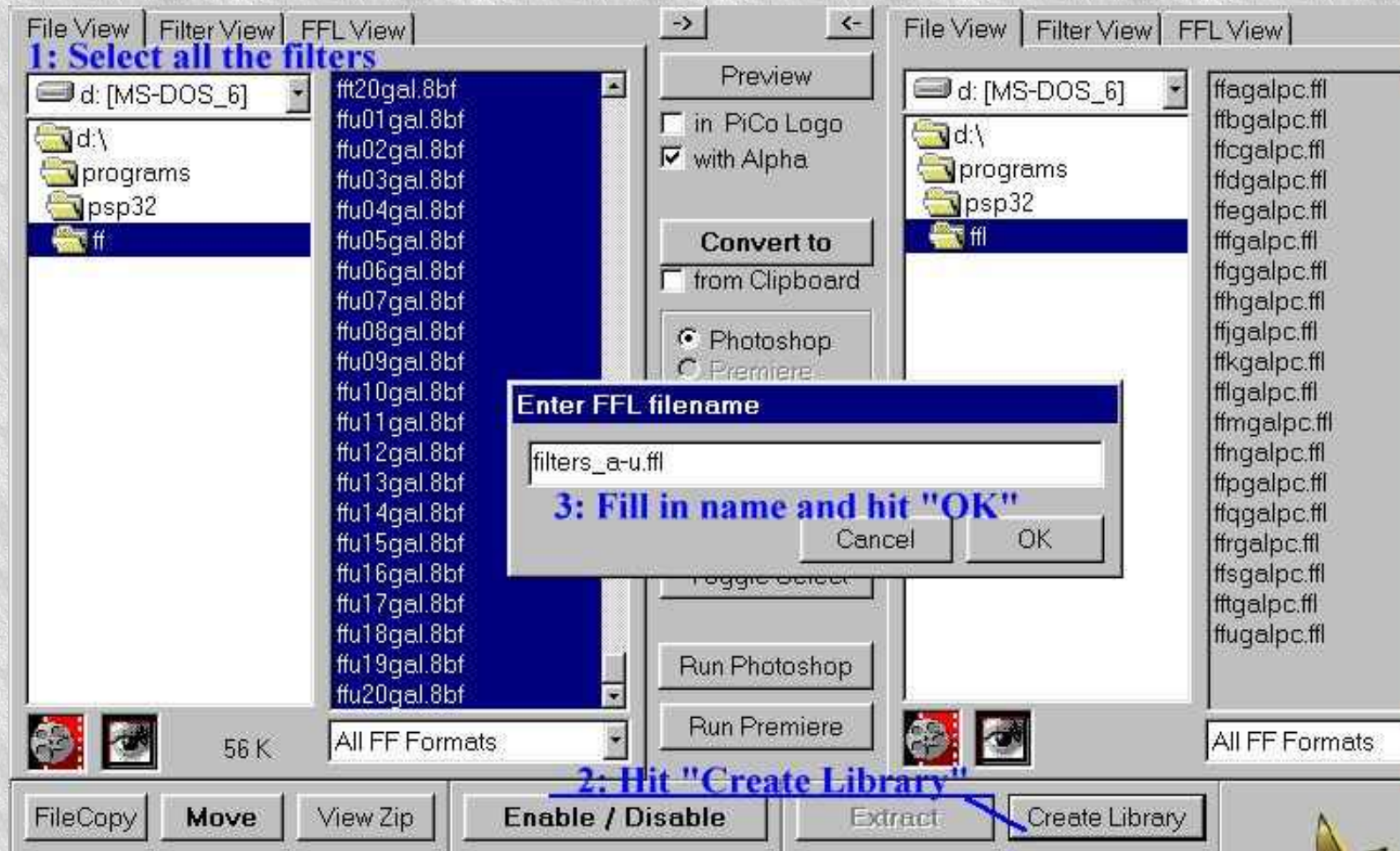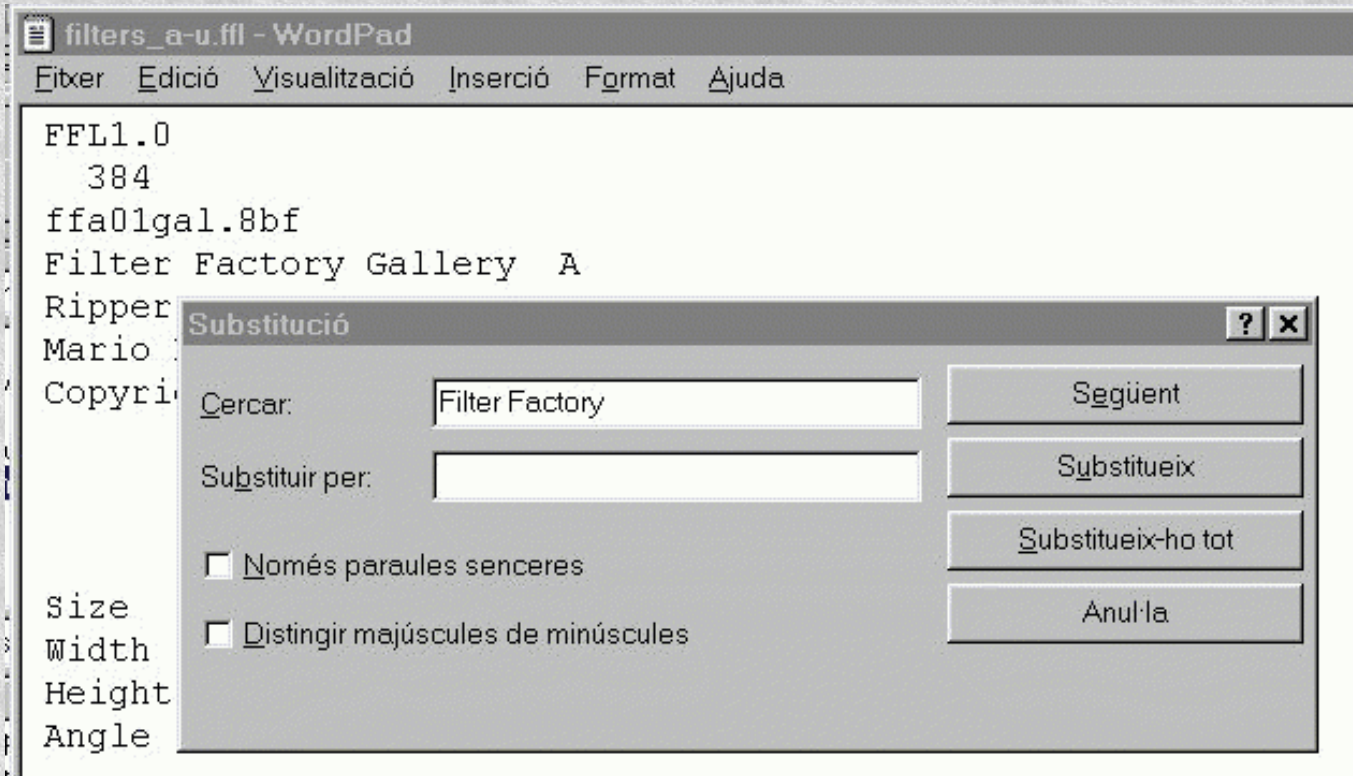

Patience. **PiCo** is now creating a 232 Kb ffl file from our 384 filters. When it's done, we'll see the *filters_a-u.ffl* file in the ffl directory of Tab Sheet 2.

Now we have to leave **PiCo**, go into Windows Explorer, double-click on the *filters_a-u.ffl* file, and Windows will ask us what to open it with. Choose any good text editor that *doesn't* add its own markup: **Wordpad**, yes, **Microsoft Word** or **Corel Wordperfect**, no.

OK, so we've opened *filters_a-u.ffl* in a text editor. Open the Search and Replace window and write in "Filter Factory " (including the space) in the search part and leave the "replace with" part empty. Hit "Substitute All", or whatever (as you can see, our Win95 is in Catalan, but you get the idea).

```
filters_a-u.ffl - WordPad
Fitxer   Edició   Visualització   Inserció   Format   Ajuda

FFL1.0
   384
ffa01gal.8bf
Filter Factory Gallery  A
Ripper
Mario
Copyri
```

Substitució   [?] [×]

Cercar: Filter Factory   **Següent**

Substituir per: **Substitueix**

☐ Només paraules senceres   **Substitueix-ho tot**

```
Size
Width
Height
Angle
```
☐ Distingir majúscules de minúscules   **Anul·la**

Now, and this is very important, go to "Save as" and be sure the format is set to "Plain text document". It should say this by default, but be sure you don't save this ffl file as anything "marked up", like rtf. OK, save it. Now go back to PiCo, open the ffl directory in Tab Sheet 1 and the plugins filters directory in Tab Sheet 2. Highlight the file *filters_a-u.ffl* and hit **Convert to**. Patience again. When PiCo's done converting this huge .ffl file into filters, hit **Filter View** in Tab Sheet 2. You should see the Filter Category Letters now:

File View	Filter View	FFL View
Gallery A	+ Ripper...	
Gallery B	+ Raygun...	
Gallery C	+ Wood Grain...	
Gallery D	+ Pool Shadow...	
Gallery E	+ Spotlight...	
Gallery F	+ Seismic...	
Gallery G	+ Zoom In...	
Gallery H	+ Zoom Out...	
Gallery J	+ Marble Madness One...	
Gallery K	+ Weave...	
Gallery L	+ Round Button...	
Gallery M	+ Origami...	
Gallery N	+ Mirror, Mirror...	
Gallery P	+ Gunsite	
Gallery Q	+ Sabers Explosion One...	
Gallery R	+ Infinity...	
Gallery S	+ Tunnel Tile...	
Gallery T	+ Holidays in Egypt...	
Gallery U	+ Triangular Mosaic Filter...	
	+ Kaleidoscope II...	

D:\programs\psp32\ff\

In the second part of our tutorial, [Working with the Filters (page 2)](#), we'll see more ways in which these ffl files can be useful

organizational tools.

Creating a File of an ffl Library

We now have 184 plugins in our plugins directory. (Gallery P is missing filter number 18 and has 5 "extra" filters: 21-25. Hence, 184 filters; I might add that Gallery P's readme file is the same as Gallery N's). Hmmm, that's a lot of plugins. It should be obvious right away that we're going to have to do a little organizing. Naming the Categories A-U doesn't really tell us much about the plugins as individuals. We'll start out by creating 2 new indexes organized by Author and Filter Name.

1. First, in Tab Sheet 1, open the ffl directory in **File View**.

2. Highlight the file *filters_a-u.ffl* and hit **FFL View**. We see all the filters organized by category (there's one slight discrepancy, but it isn't important). Now hit the **Filename** radio button. Again, with one small discrepancy, we now have all the filters organized by name:
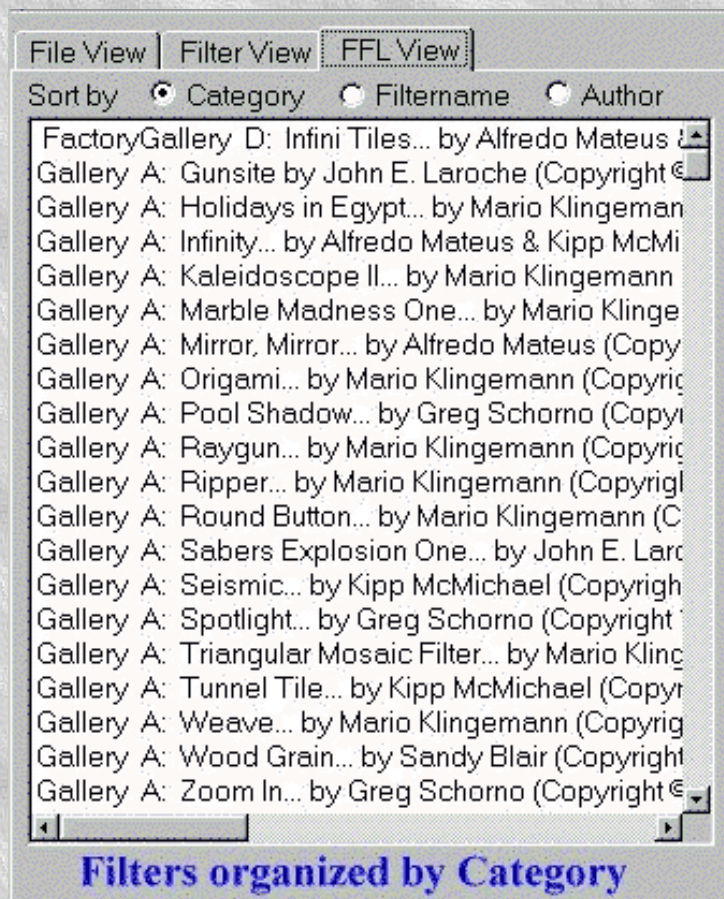
3. Now let's create a plain text file of the **filename** list. First select all the filter names in Tab Sheet 1. In Tab Sheet 2 open a directory where you want to put your text files: **filtertxt**, for example. Activate Tab Sheet 1 again and press the **List to File** button; a window should pop up asking you for a name. We'll use *names_a-u.txt*. Press OK.
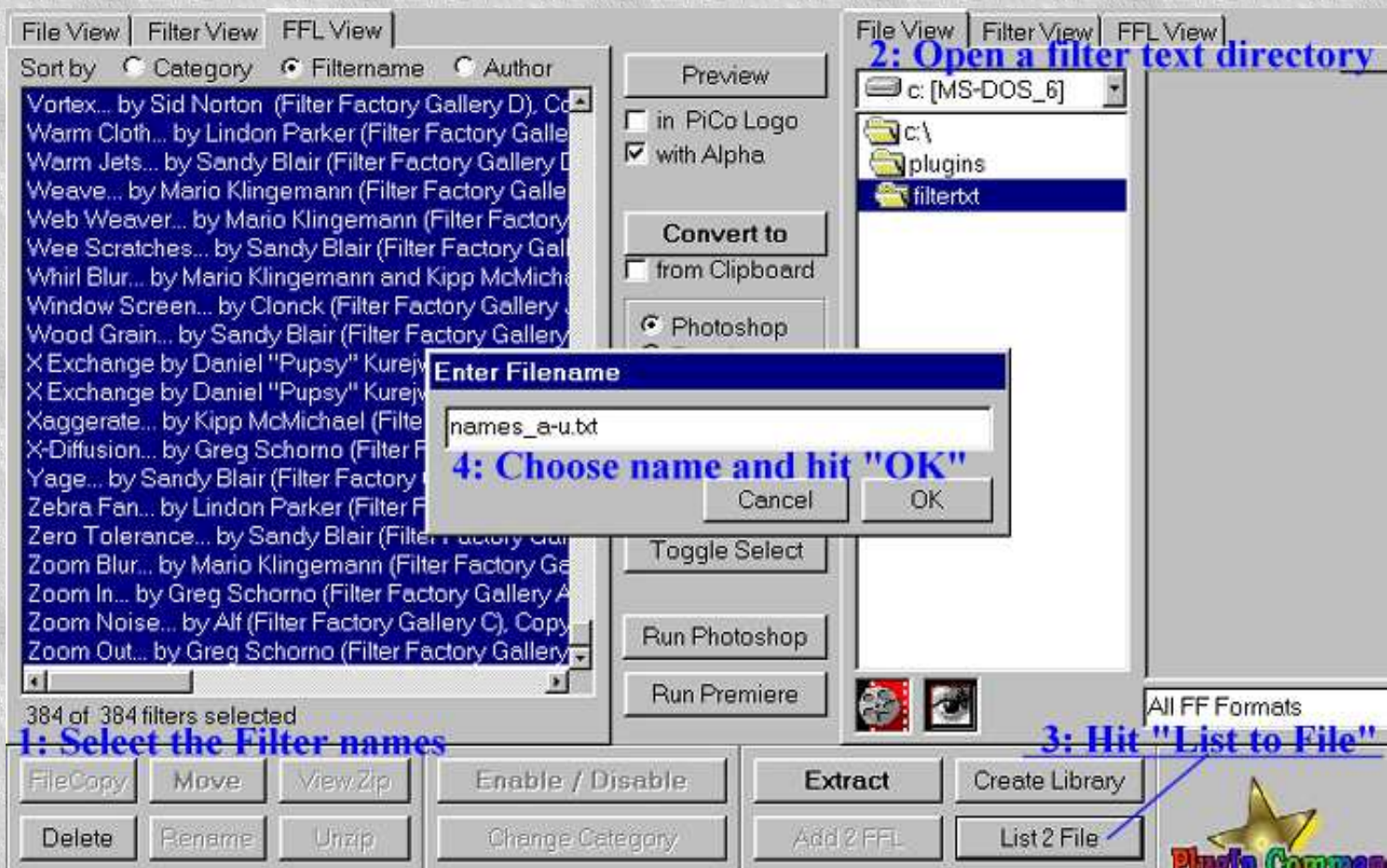
4. Voila! *names_a-u.txt* is created in the filtertxt directory in Tab Sheet 2. Open it in a text editor (you should be able to double click right in **PiCo**) and you have all the filters in an alphabetized file. This will be very handy in the future.

5. Finally, hit the **Author** radio button. This time there are a few more discrepancies, but nothing serious. (Note: These discrepancies are due to two spaces being put before certain authors' names. In the case of HSB, the author category wasn't properly entered. You can edit the ffl file to correct these errors.) Create an alphabetized author file the same way you created the name file. Again, knowing a filter's creator is a good way to get to know it as an individual.

[Index](#)

[Working with the Filters](#)

26 II 98

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