PLUG-INS (Add-ons) Tutorial - Introduction
By Hummie

QUESTION: "I have a bunch of plug-ins that I have downloaded. They all do something, I just don't know what and I have no idea how to install them. Any suggestions would be appreciated :) Thanks"

OH MY! That is a BIG question!

The term "plug-in" for PSE is widespread and covers so many sub-titles under it. Each one is handled in a different way. If you have gone on a download frenzie (as I did) you are going to have some organizing to do. What is a plug-in? A plug-in is software (or files) that plugs into other software and works in conjunction with it. For example, your virus protection most likely plugs into your software which you use for e-mail so that it can scan the messages as they come in.

Many new Digital Scrapbookers go on a download frenzie as these plug-ins are so easy to find for free on the internet. Just search for "free layer styles" or "free photoshop actions" and see the results.

First of all, DO NOT start dropping them in your Adobe folders until you know what you are doing. It will bog down the program when trying to open it and then when you want to go back and delete them, you may accidentally delete some default files that came with the program. Not good!

Different types of plug-ins for PSE are best handled in different ways. In addition, they are handled in different ways for different versions of PSE! It is best to carefully read the instructions when you download plug-ins. If the instructions are only on the website where you made the free download, take special time to copy and paste them in a text file with the plug-in on your hard drive for future reference.

**The following tutorials will cover plug-ins of these types:**

1) Self-installer Plug-ins. These plug-ins will have a .exe file within them. They will self-install an entire folder of necessary files into the appropriate place in the Adobe folder when you use their installer.

## 2) Loading Plug-ins/Presets/Preset Manager

There are four types of files installed in the Presets folder directly and through the Preset Manager.
File extensions are the last three letters after the dot in the name of a file.
.pat - Patterns
.abr - Brushes
.aco – Swatches
.grd – Gradients
.psd – Textures

## 3. Presets/Non-Preset Manager

Some files do not have an option to "load," and, therefore, they must be manually placed in the Preset folders.

.csh – Shapes
.asl – Styles (only for the shapes toolbar)

## 4) Filters   .8bf - Filters

## 5) Layer Styles   .asl - Layer Styles

## 6) Actions   .atn - Actions


XML Files

Within the Layer Style Tutorial and Actions Tutorial you will find instructions for xml. files.  A file with an .xml extension at the end is a file that is readable by a software program.

You could think of it as a file with rules for the program to follow.

You could think of it as similar to html files as it contains coding that the software programs read.

In this case, the .xml file is a metadata file.

What we are doing in PSE is telling PSE through these files what category/groups we want the program to show the actions and styles in (in the drop down menu).