

The Outliner Window

In Chapter 01 of the manual the Outliner Window was briefly mentioned. It was stated that the Outliner Window gives you a display of everything in your scene. It does, but it also does much more. Follow this procedure to discover a little about how the window is arranged and how you can use it.

Step 1

Start with the default Blender screen showing the five default windows.

The Outliner Window is displayed in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

The Outliner Window

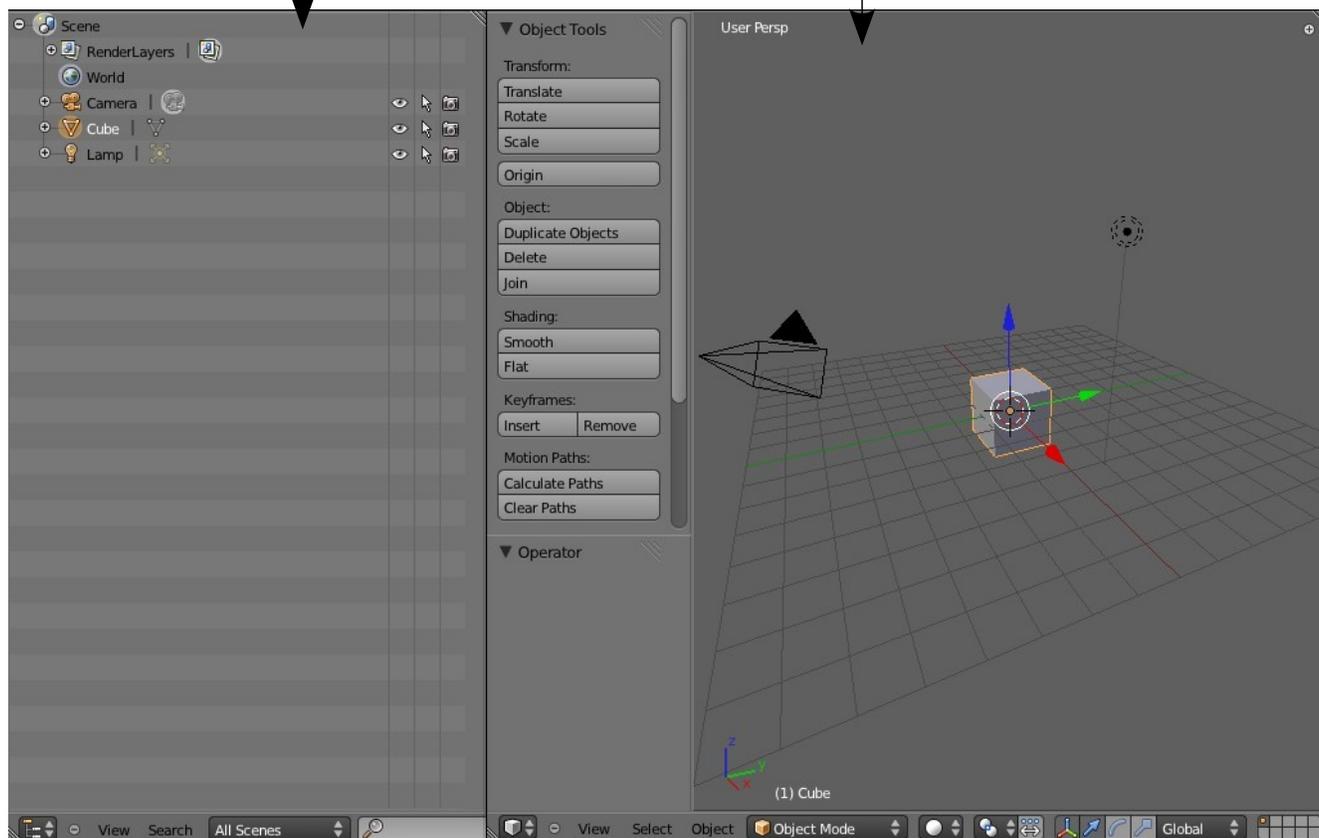


Step 2

To make life a little easier divide the 3D Window in two and change the left hand section into another copy of the Outliner Window. How to do this? Read the manual!

Copy of Outliner Window

3D Window



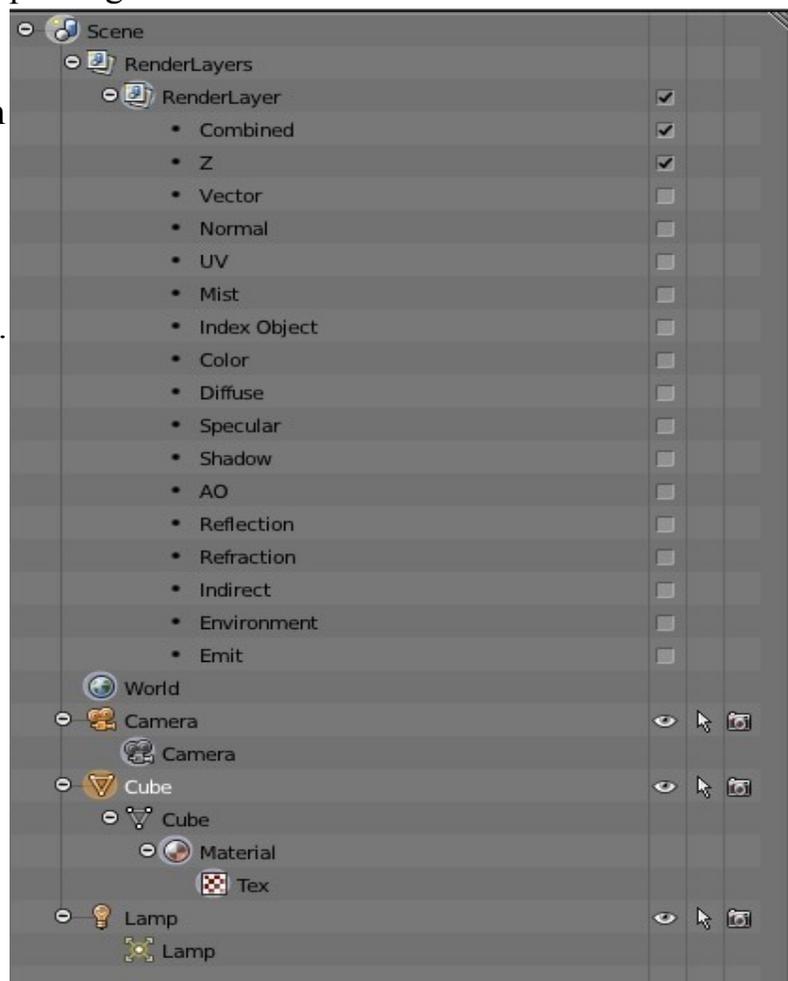
The Outliner Window contains information about the current scene, which in this case is what is shown in the default 3D Window. You see that the default scene comprises a Render Layer, a World, a Camera, a Cube and a Lamp



Each line of information represents a Data block which is a group of data pertaining to something in the scene.

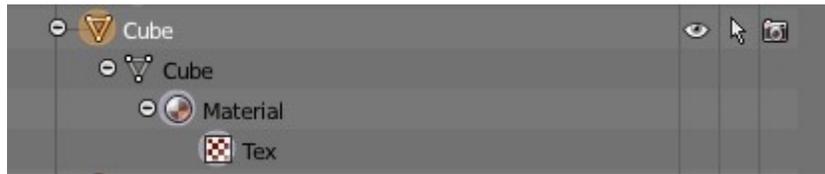
The default Outliner Window shows five groupings but note, before each line there is a small circle with a plus sign in it. This is showing that some information is hidden. After the data block name you see a vertical bar followed by an icon. The icon represents a sub data block. You can click on the plus sign to reveal the sub data.

In the case of our default scene instead of clicking on each plus sign place the cursor in the Outliner Window and press the Num Pad Plus Key on your keyboard three times and you will see all the data blocks and sub data blocks revealed.



Step 3

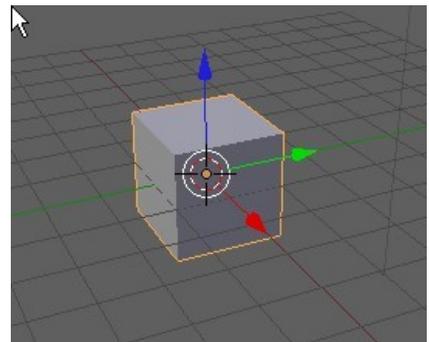
Examine the data block for the Cube Object in the scene.



The first line represents the Cube Object, the second line the Cube Mesh, the third line the Material and the last line the Texture. Each successive line or data block is linked to the next.

When you open Blender the Cube Object in the scene is selected as shown by the orange outline in the 3D Window.

With your mouse cursor in the 3D Window press the A Key to deselect the Cube.



Step 4

In the Outliner Window LMB (left mouse button) click on the Cube line and you will observe that the Cube is again selected in the 3D Window.

Click on Cube



Sometimes Objects in the 3D Window are obscured by other objects or they may even be inside other objects making them difficult to select with the mouse (RMB). You can therefore select them in the Outliner Window.

With the cursor in the 3d Window press A key to deselect the Cube.

In the Outliner Window LMB click on the Cube Mesh data block. The Cube in the 3D Window is selected in Edit Mode.

Click on Mesh



With the cursor in the 3D Window press the Tab Key to go back to object mode.

Step 5

In the Outliner Window look at the three icons at the right hand end of the data block line.

Toggle: Click to disengage, click again to engage. The icon is greyed out when disengaged



Toggles visible in 3D Window

Toggles ability to select in 3D Window

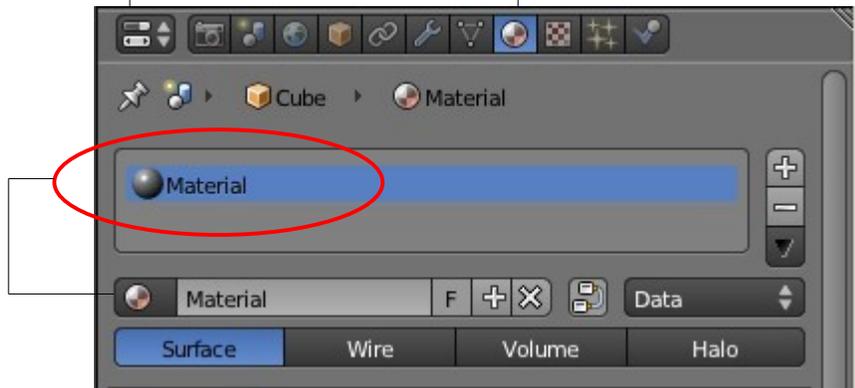
Toggles ability to render object (Press F12 to render)

Step 6

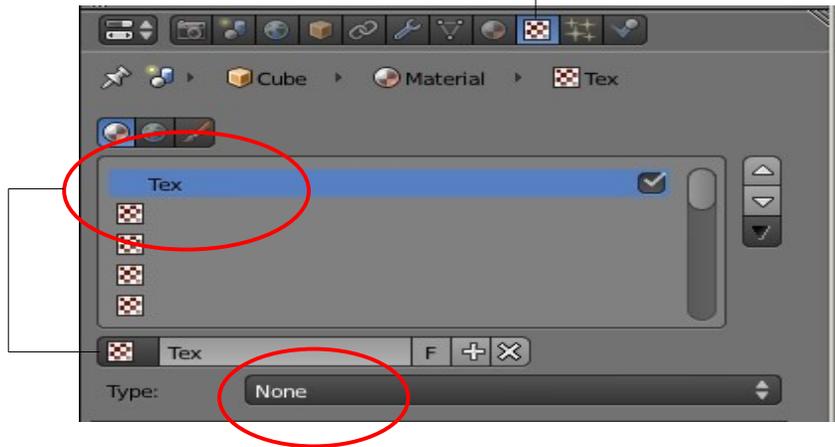
In the Properties Window at the RHS of the screen, WITH THE CUBE SELECTED in the 3D Window, click on the Material button. You will see that the default Cube has a material applied which is named 'Material'.

Properties Window

Material Button



Texture button



Still in the Properties Window click on the Texture button. You see a texture applied and note that the texture type is 'None'. In other words there is a texture data block without any texture data in it. Blender is made up of data blocks. Sometimes these data blocks do nothing until such time as you modify them. This is the case here.

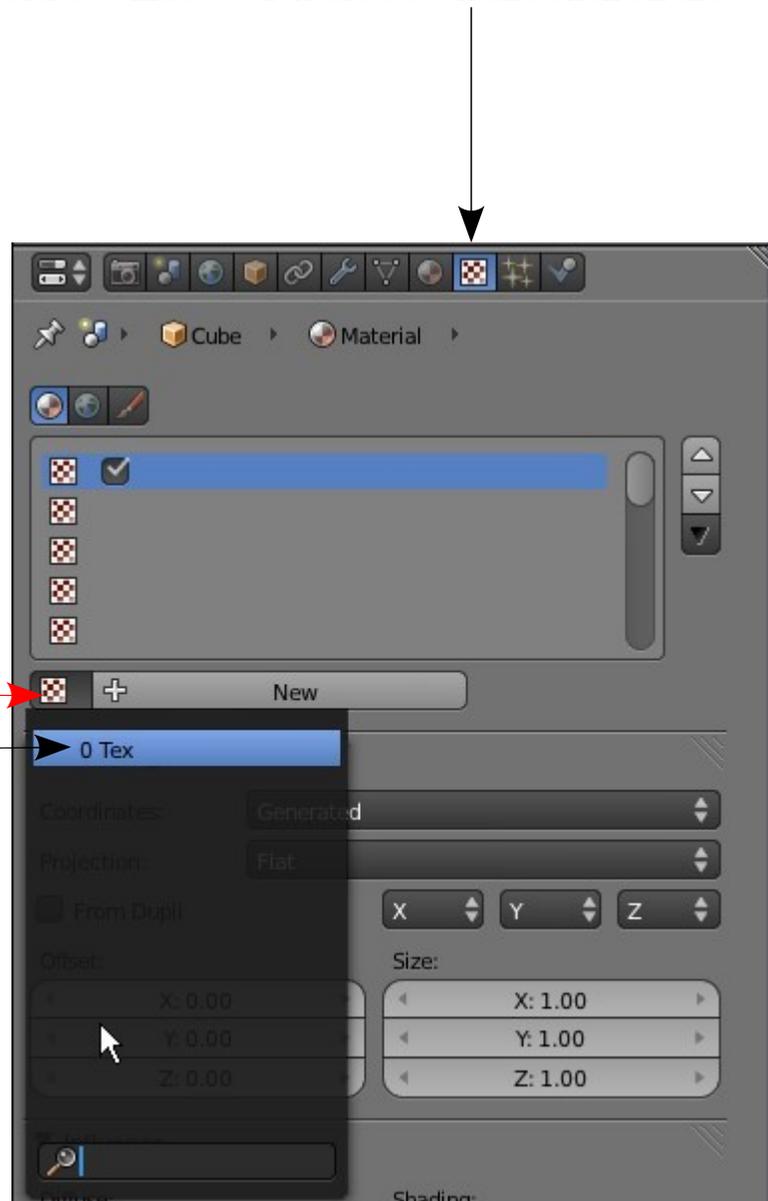
The Outliner Window shows data blocks linked in a chain as demonstrated by the Cube data block.

In the Outliner Window **right** click on the Cube Texture data block line. In the pop up panel that displays select 'Unlink'.

You will see in the Properties Window that the Cube's texture data is deleted.

To reinstate the texture go to the Properties Window – Texture button and click on the texture drop down icon.

In the drop down panel select 'Tex'.

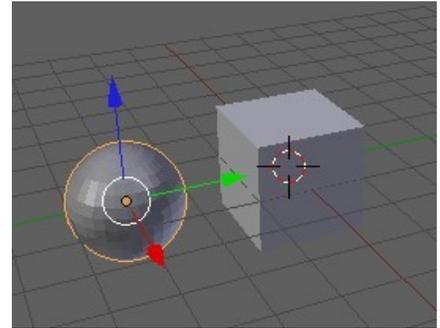


If you right click on the Cube's Material data block in the Outliner Window and select 'Unlink' both the Material and Texture are deleted. This occurs since before a Texture can be applied a material must first be in place.

Step 7

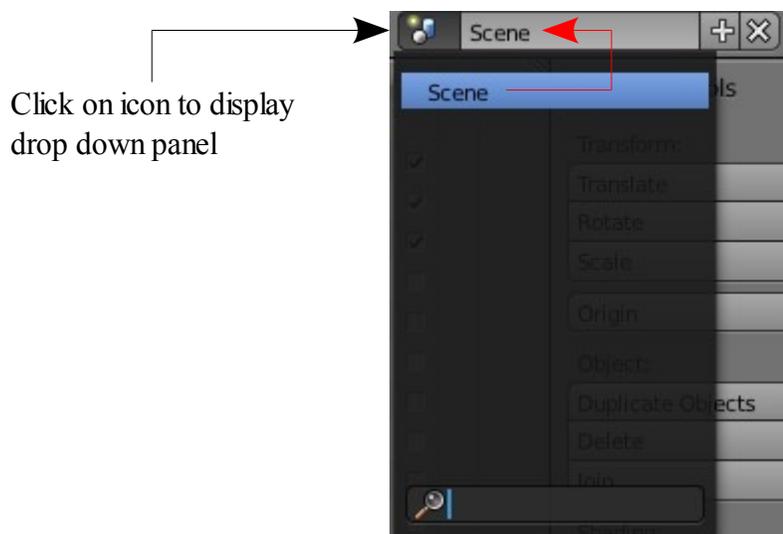
In the 3D Window press the A Key and deselect the Cube then press Shift + A Key and add a UV Sphere.

You will see that a Sphere data block is added into the Outliner Window.



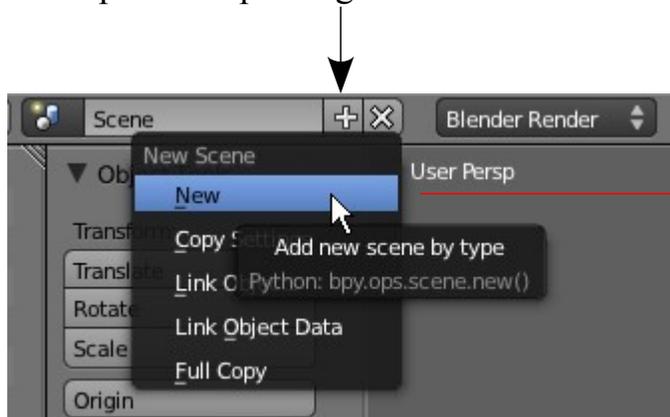
Click on the little plus sign at the beginning of the line to display the Spheres Mesh data block. Note that there is no Material and no Texture. New objects added to a scene come in without material and texture data blocks. You add these in the Properties Window and then they show up in the Outliner Window.

Go to the Info Window Header at the top of the screen. Click on the icon and in the drop down panel you see that the Blender file contains one scene named 'Scene'.

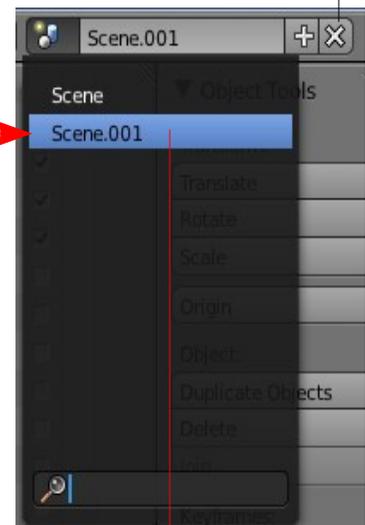


Click on icon to display drop down panel

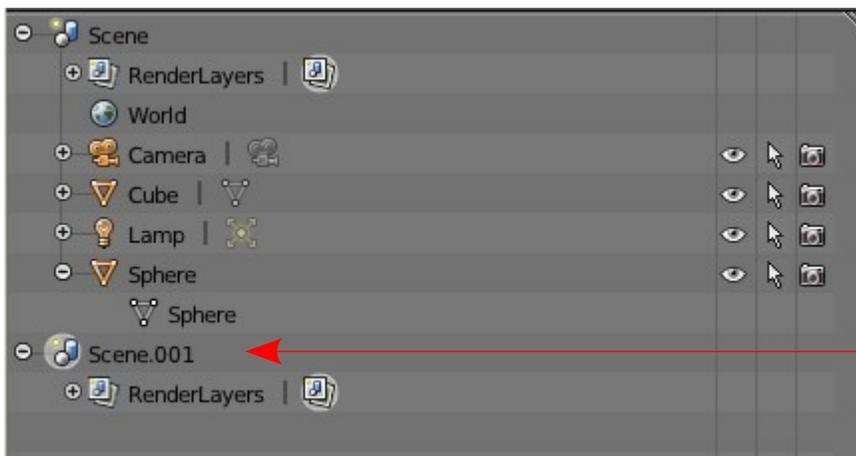
Now press the plus sign and select 'New' to add a new scene to the file.



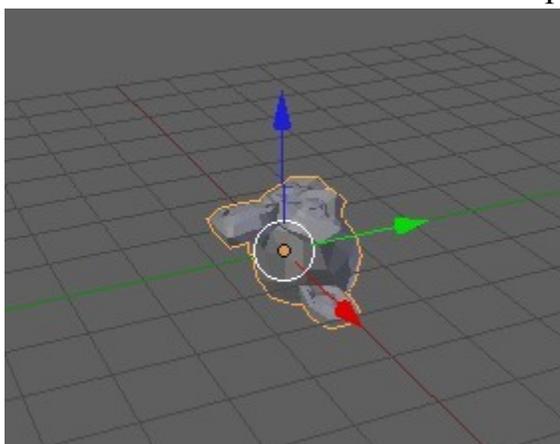
Press X to delete a Scene



You will 'Scene.001' added to the Outliner Window.



With the cursor in the new scene 3D Window press Shift + A key and add a Monkey object.



Monkey is entered laying on its back

The Monkey data block is added into the Outliner Window and by clicking on the plus sign you expand the links. As with the UV Sphere added to the previous scene, Monkey has no Material or Texture.



How come Monkey in this scene and the UV Sphere in the previous scene displayed grey in the 3D Window when they had no Material data? Obviously they have data but it is hidden. When you add Material, and for that matter Texture, you are modifying these hidden data blocks.

When you click on the Scene icon in the Info Window header you will see the two scenes in the file.

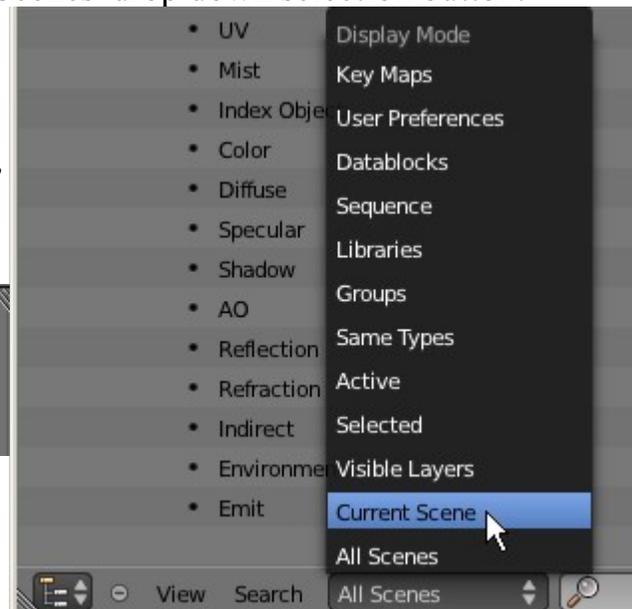
Step 8

In the Outliner Window header there is a 'All Scenes' drop down selection button.

If you select 'Current Scene' in the drop down, only the data block for the scene showing in the 3D Window is displayed.



This is very handy when you have a complicated file with many different scenes.



This has been a brief introduction to the Outliner Window which explains some of its features. It is recommended that you consult the Blender Wiki for further detail.