

A Proposal for GUI Based Adding and Removing of Property Panel Subpanels in Blender 2.5

courtesy of Cole Reed (0knowledge)

The goal of this proposal is to provide a set of intuitive gui elements for easily adding and removing subpanels within the tabs of the properties panel. These additions will further facilitate the Blender ui objective of allowing users to easily create custom gui layouts tailored to their workflow and level of use.

Analysis

While the current Blender 2.5 interface allows users to expand and collapse subpanels within the properties tab there is no way to completely hide a panel from view without manually editing python files. This functionality is important as it allows the user to better organize their layout by hiding settings that are irrelevant to their workflow or current level of knowledge. Further this problem will only be compounded as Blender 2.5 matures and new scripts that seamlessly blend in to the interface begin to proliferate.

Implementation

Two new ui elements are added to the tabs of the properties panel. An "Add Panel" Button near the top of each properties panel tab, and a "X" (remove) button on each subpanel.

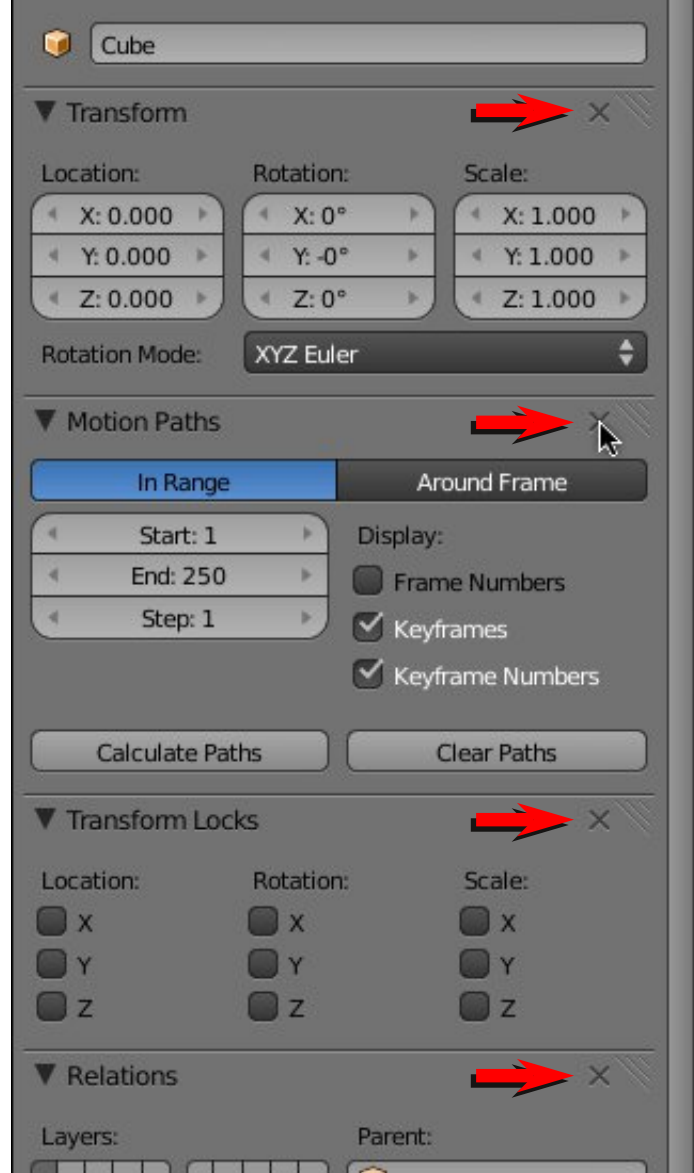


Fig 1: Object tab with new panel editing ui

On clicking the "X" (remove) button the subpanel disappears and if it exists the panel(s) below it then moves up closing the gap. Similar to the action of expanding or collapsing a subpanel in the current ui.

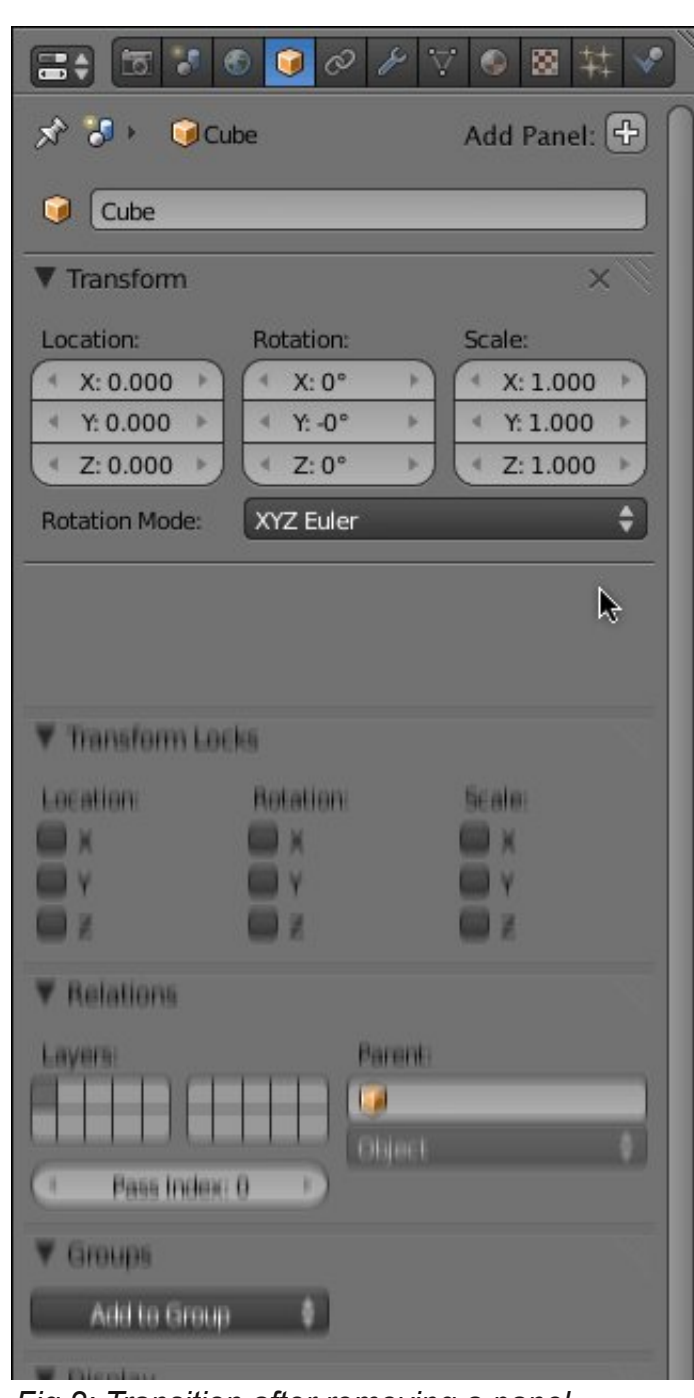


Fig 2: Transition after removing a panel

The panel is now completely removed. By using the user preferences the user can save this simplified layout as their default.

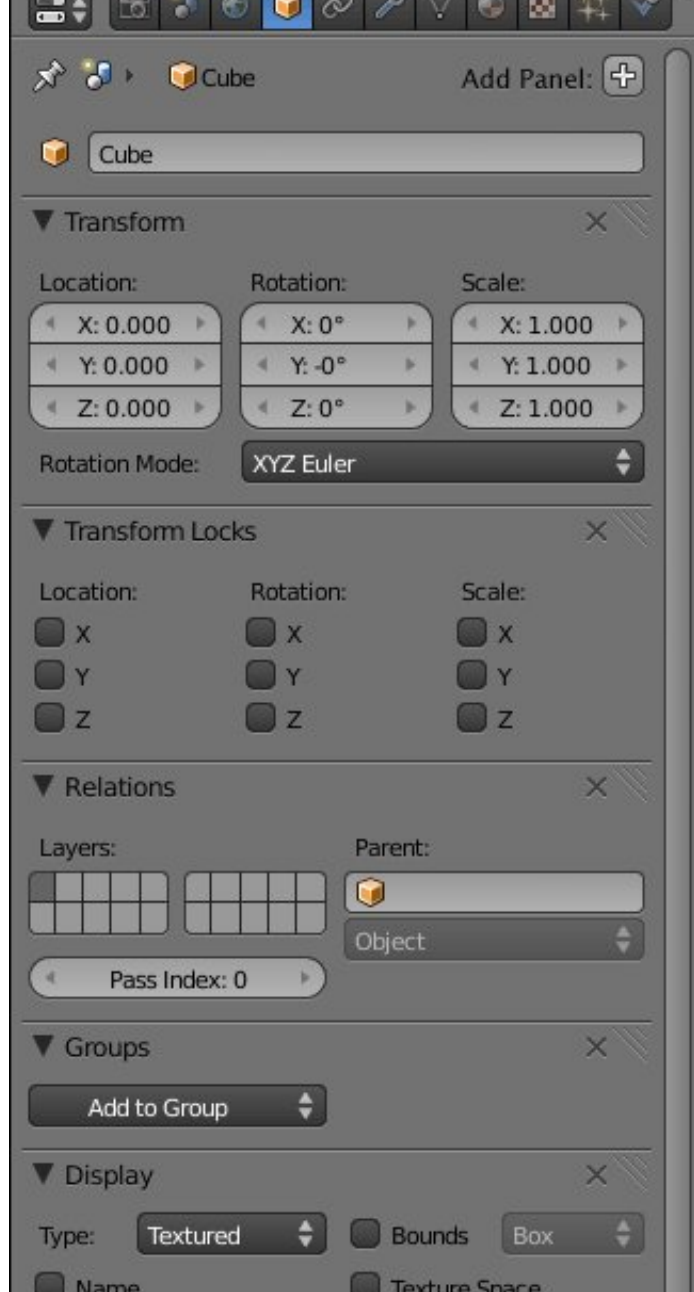


Fig 3: Panel removal completed

The user can click the "Add Panel" button to see a menu showing all available hidden panels.

The menu only shows panels that are hidden and can be displayed in the context of this tab.

The list can also be filtered with the search bar.

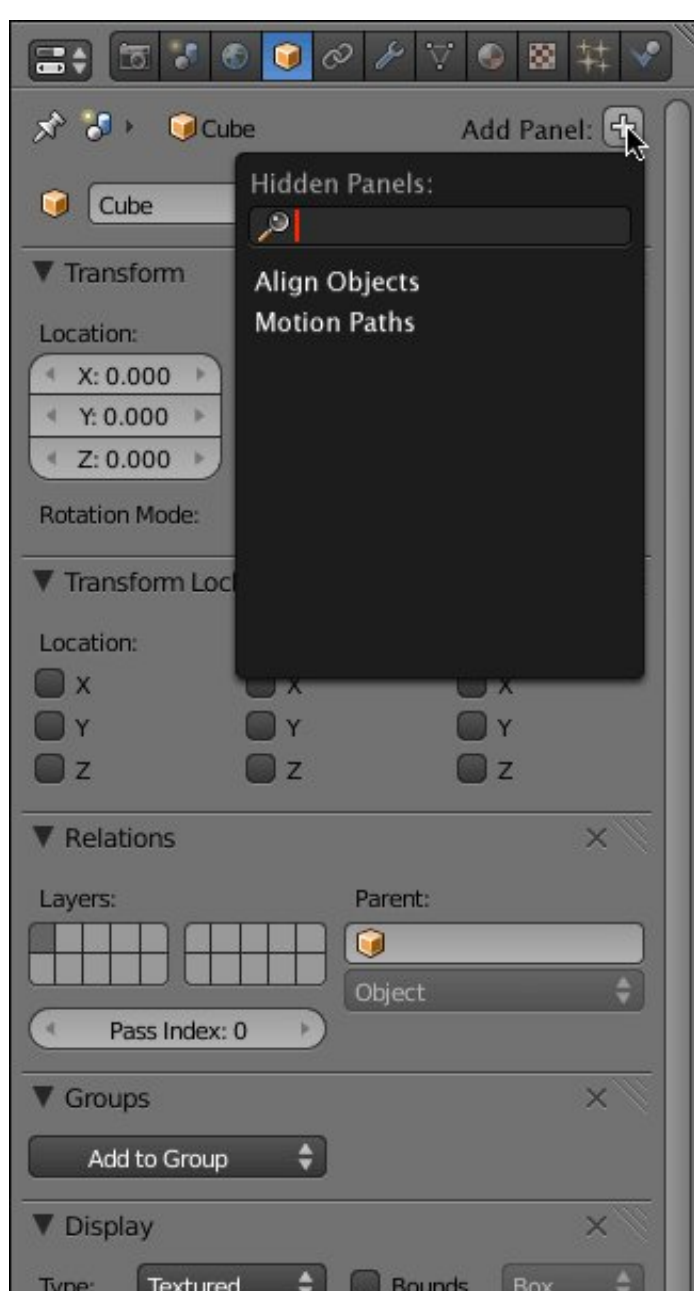


Fig 4: Clicking Add Panel button

The user can select a panel from the list to add it to the current tab.

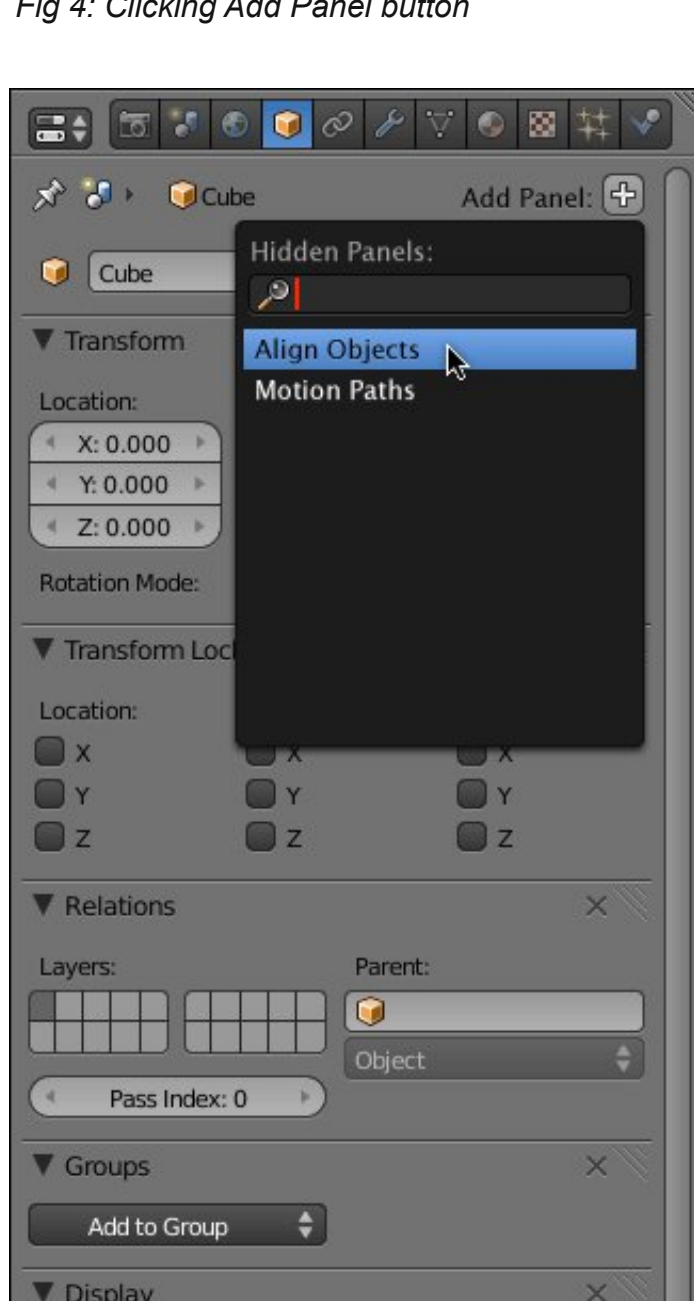


Fig 5: User selects an available subpanel

After clicking the selected panel the gui is updated and the new panel is stacked on top of the previous panels where the user likes.

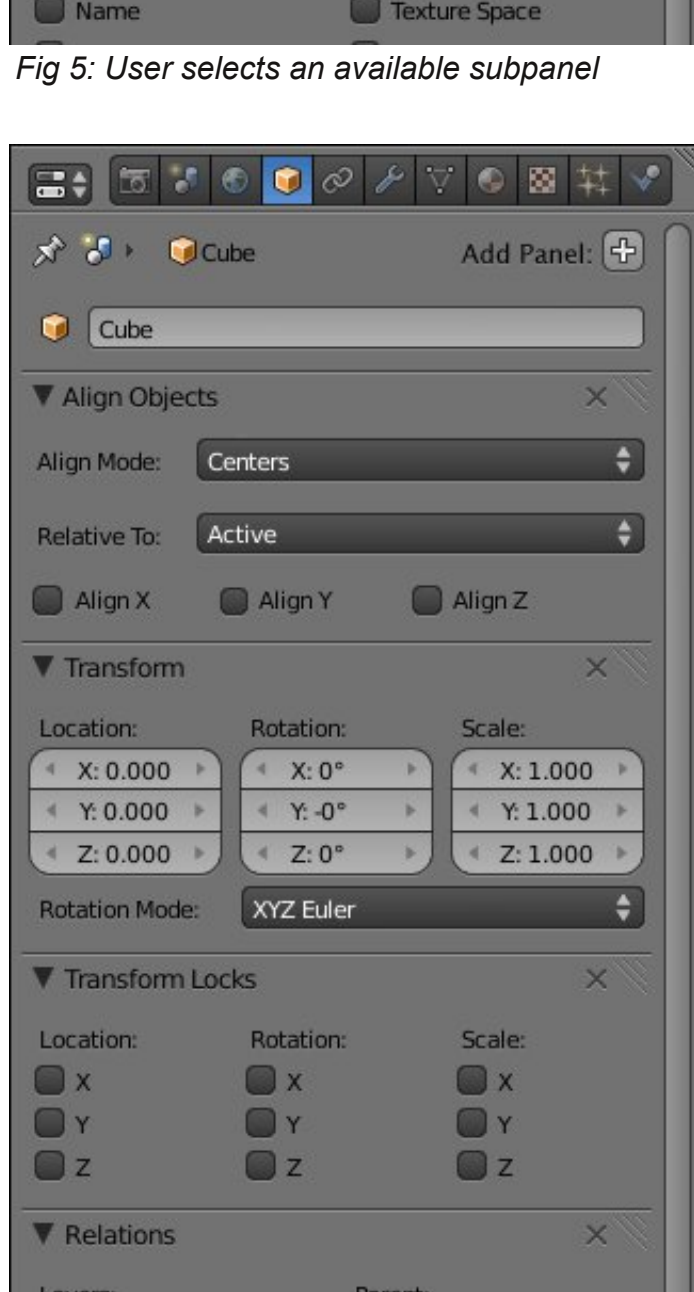


Fig 6: New subpanel has been added to ui

Conclusion

By allowing users the ability to interactively add and remove subpanels from the properties panel tabs we help to ensure that users can easily maintain organized and relevant panel layouts well into the future.