2.1 Interface - Overview

Interface

Overview

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Introduction

When starting Blender, the splash screen appears. On the left side are links to official web pages, and on the right are your most recently opened projects.

To close the splash screen start a new project, you can press Esc or click anywhere inside the Blender Window (except on the splash screen).
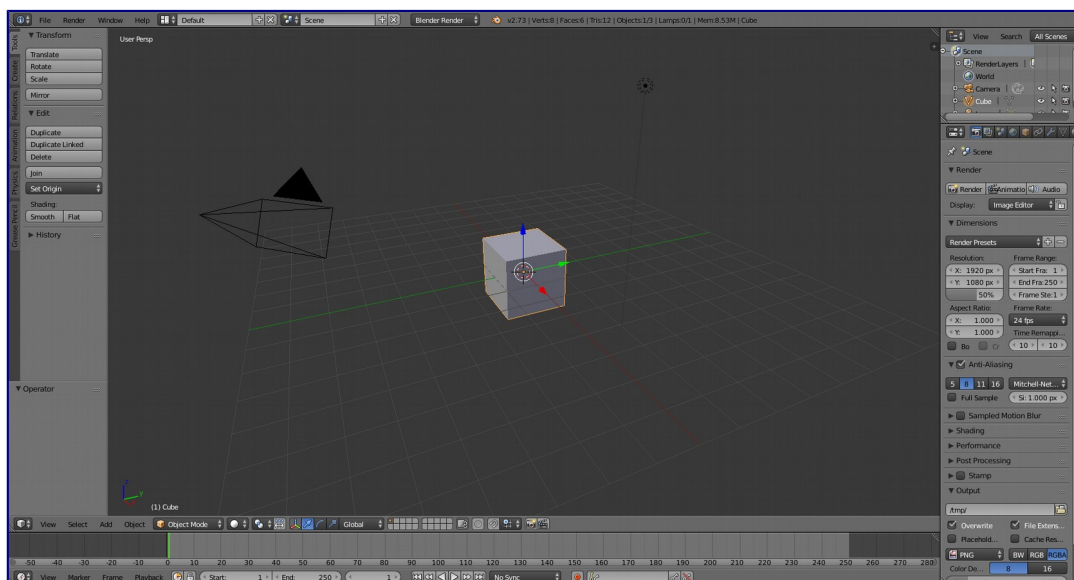
After closing splash screen, this is what the default Blender window looks like.

Blender's user interface is consistent across all platforms. The interface can be customized to match specific tasks using Screen Layouts, which can then be named and saved for later use.

Blender also makes heavy use of keyboard shortcuts to speed up work and allows customization of the *keymap*.

User Interface Principles

This is an example of Blender's multiple window support.

Non Overlapping
> The UI is designed to allow you to view all relevant options and tools at a glance without pushing or dragging editors around.

Non Blocking
> Tools and interface options do not block the user from any other parts of Blender. Blender typically doesn't use pop-up boxes (requiring users to fill in data before running an operation).

Non Modal Tools
> Tools can be accessed efficiently without taking time to select between different tools. Many tools use consistent and predictable, mouse and keyboard actions for interaction.

Screen Elements
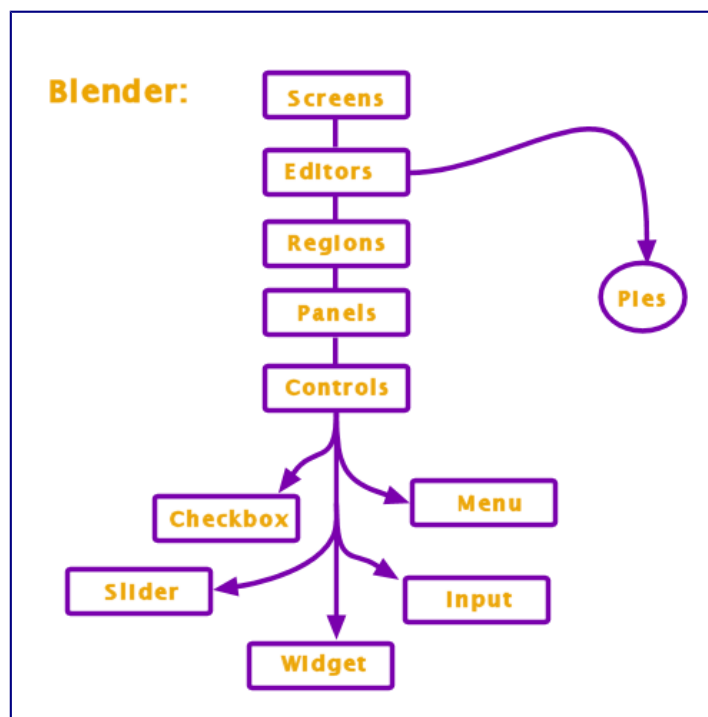
The Blender window is organized into one or more *Areas* with each area containing an *Editor*. Editors are divided into a Header and one or more Regions. Regions can have smaller structuring elements like panels with buttons, controls and widgets placed within them.

The composition of various Areas with predefined Editors in them is called a *Screen Layout*. By default Blender starts up with a layout of 5 Editors as shown in the image below.
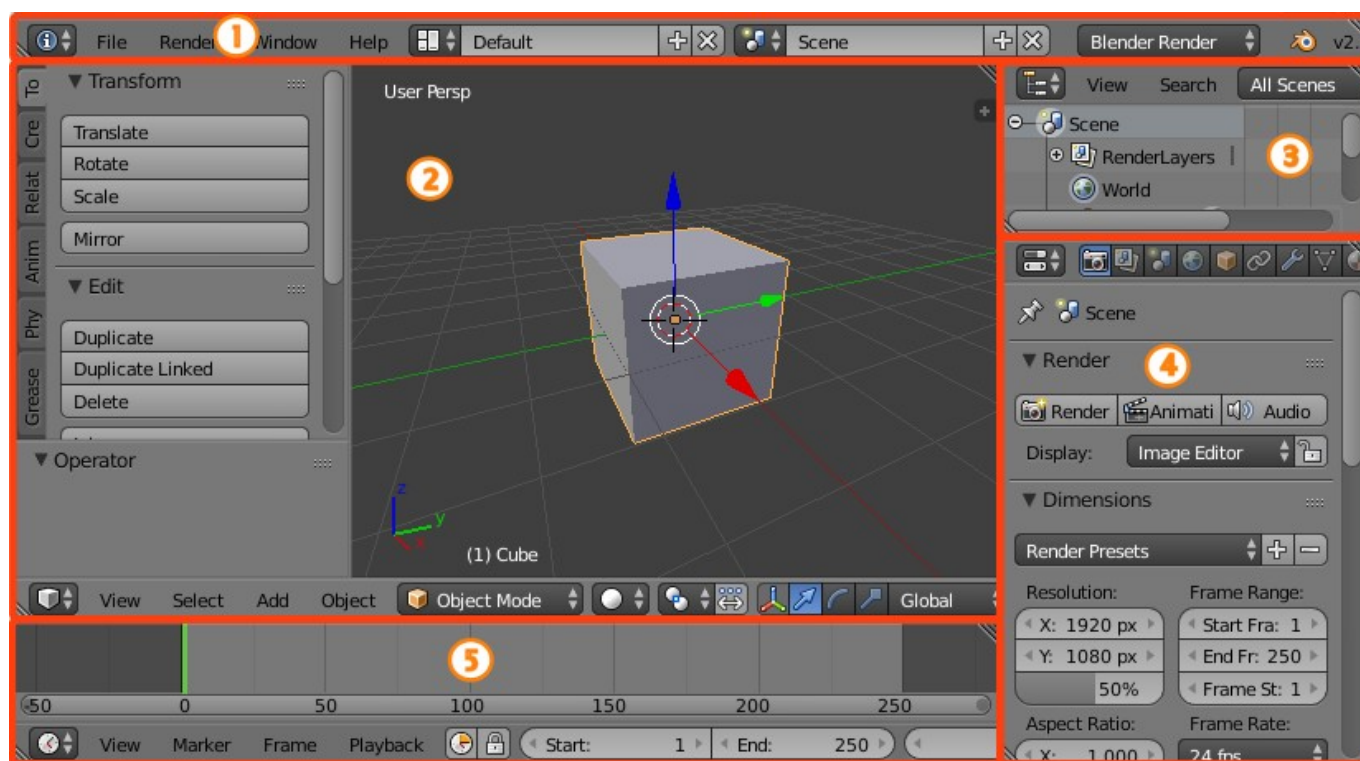
Blender's default Screen Layout with 5 Editors: Info (1), 3D View (2), Outliner (3), Properties (4) and Timeline (5)

Components of an Editor

In general an editor provides a way to view and modify your work through a specific part of Blender.

The image below shows the 3D View as an example of an editor.
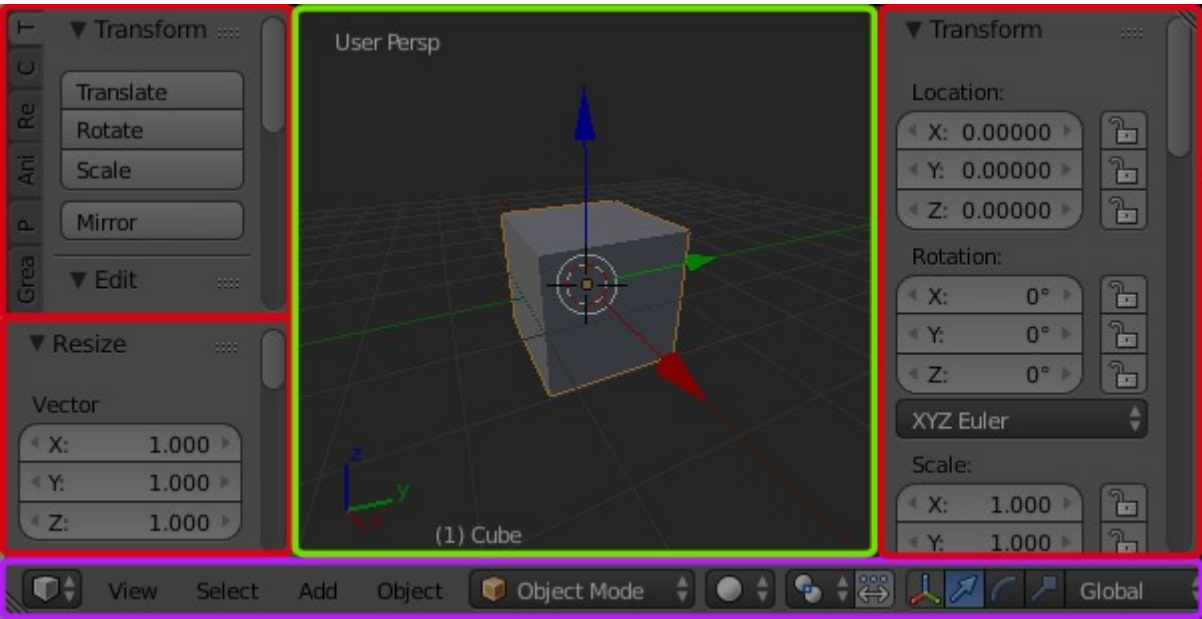
The 3D View

Editors are consistently organized into following parts:

Regions

At least one region of an editor is always visible. It's called the main region and is the most prominent part of the editor. In the 3D View above this is marked with a green frame.

Aside from that there can be more regions available. In the 3D View above these are the *Toolshelf* (toggle visibility with T) on the left side and the *Properties* (toggle visibility with N) on the right side. They're marked with red frames. Additional regions mostly show context-sensitive content.

Each editor has a specific purpose, so the main region and the availability of additional regions are different between editors. See specific documentation about each editor in the *Editors* chapter.

Useful Hotkeys	
T	Toggle visibility of Toolshelf Region
N	Toggle visibility of Properties Region
F5	Flip the Region under the mouse pointer to the opposite side

Header

A header is a small horizontal part of an editor and sits either at the top or bottom of the area. It acts as a container for menus and commonly used tools. Much like additional regions the header can be hidden.
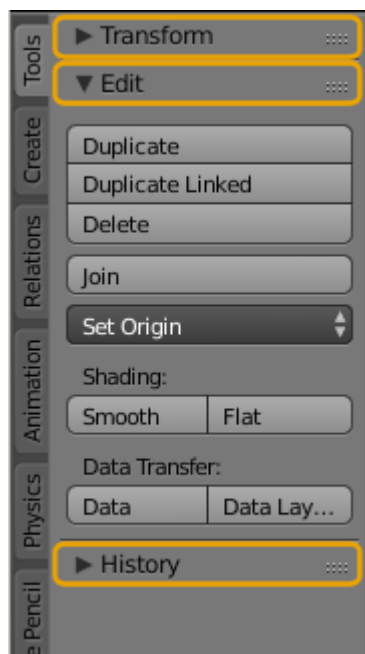
The 3D View above the header is marked with a purple frame.

Useful Hotkeys

| F5	Move Header from Top to Bottom (mouse pointer must be over it)

See: *Headers* for details.

Panels

The smallest organizational unit in the user interface is a panel, which can be collapsed to hide its contents by clicking on its header. This is where the buttons, menus, checkboxes, etc. are located.

Panels are usually found in the side regions of an editor, but also make up most of the *Properties Editor*'s main region.

In the image on the right there are 3 panels: *Transfor**, *Edit* and *History.* The edit panel is expanded and the other 2 panels are collapsed. Note that you can change the order of panels by clicking on the handle in the upper right corner of a panel's title.

See: *panels* for details.

Tabs
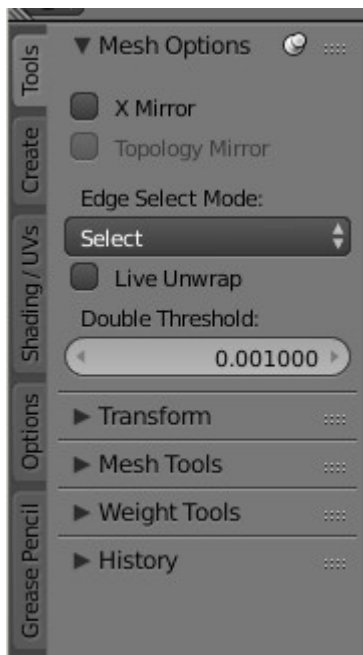
The Toolshelf has been further structured into a set of context sensitive vertical tabs.

In the image to the right you can see the tabs: **Tools**, **Create**, etc. The **Tools** tab is currently selected, showing a set of panels containing various tools.

Pinning

Often it is desirable to view panels from different tabs at the same time. This has been solved by making panels pinnable.

A pinned panel remains visible regardless of which tab has been selected. You can pin a panel by `Shift` clicking its header, or by right clicking on the header and choosing *Pin*.

Shown in the image above is an example of the *Mesh Options* pinned in the tools tab.

Input Devices

Blender supports various types of input devices:

- Keyboard (recommended: keyboard with numeric keypad, english layout works best)
- Mouse (recommended: 3 button mouse with scroll wheel)
- NDOF Devices (also known as *3D Mouse*)
- Graphic Tablets

Usage of Mouse Buttons

In Blender the `RMB` (Right Mouse Button) is generally used for Selection and the `LMB` (Left Mouse Button) initiates or confirms actions.

The mouse usage summarized:

RMB	To select an item
Shift-RMB	To add more items to the selection
LMB	to perform an action on the selection

Video: Learn more about Blender's Mouse Button usage

Exceptions from the Rule

There are a few corner cases where LMB is used for selection. For example, the *File Selector.*

Non English Keyboard

If you use a keyboard with a non-english keyboard layout, you still may benefit from switching your computer to the UK or US layout as long as you work with Blender.

Blender corrects Gamma by default

Note
You can also change the default keymap and default hotkeys from the *User Preferences*, however this manual assumes you are using the default keymap. *Read more about Blender configuration*