NppSnippets Documentation

Release 1.6.0

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

NppSnippets is a plug-in for Notepad++. It adds the possibility to add code snippets to the current document by selecting it from a simple list.

How to install or upgrade

The easiest way to install this plugin is by using the Plugin Manager: from the "Plugins" menu, choose the "Plugin Manager" and "Show Plugin Manager". Select the "Snippets" plugin and choose "install" and follow the instructions on the screen.

To manually install the plugin, copy `NppSnippets.dll` to the `plugins` directory and copy `Template.sqlite` to the `plugins/config` directory in the user's "Application Data" directory and name it `NppSnippets.sqlite`. On my Windows 7 machine this directory is `C:\Users\Frank\AppData\Roaming\Notepad++\plugins\config`. Then (re)start Notepad++.

You can place the database in the `plugins/config` directory in the Notepad++ installation directory typically in the `Program Files` directory, but this could result in a read-only database due to file permissions and/or User Account Control (UAC). Therefore it is advised to put it in your `AppData` directory.

> From issue #9: I noticed when I change files with different languages of my progect it takes 2-3 seconds delay when plugin load snippets for this language (for example HTML to PHP).

You can also specify a custom path (like a shared network path or your Dropbox directory) for your database by manually editing the `NppSnippets.ini` file and adding a `DBFile` entry pointing to the full path name of the database. The `NppSnippets.ini` is normally in your `AppData` directory.

When you automatically upgrade through the Plugin Manager your database is not touched. If you are manually upgrading at least replace the existing dll. It is up to you if you override your own database with the template database provided in the archive. If you have not changed existing snippets or added your own, it is recommended to use the database in the archive.

How to use

To open the Snippets window, click on the `jigsaw` button on the toolbar, or via the menu `Plugins`, `Snippets`, `Snippets`.
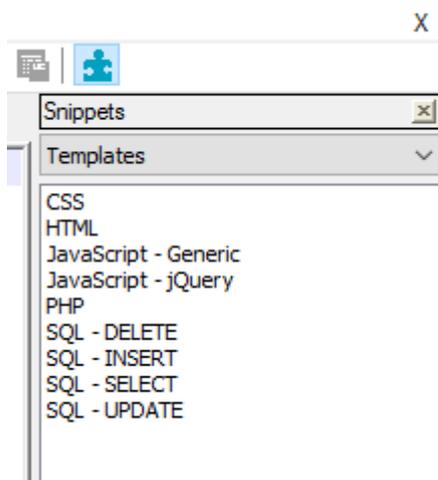
The window consists of two parts. A combobox where you can select the library and underneath it is the list of snippets in the chosen library. In the sample above the library is named `Templates`.

To insert a snippet simply double-click on the item in the list and the snippet is inserted at the current cursor position.

When you switch to a document with another language the snippets for that new language are read from the database.

3.1 Edit a snippet

To edit a snippet, right-click the item and choose `Edit...`.
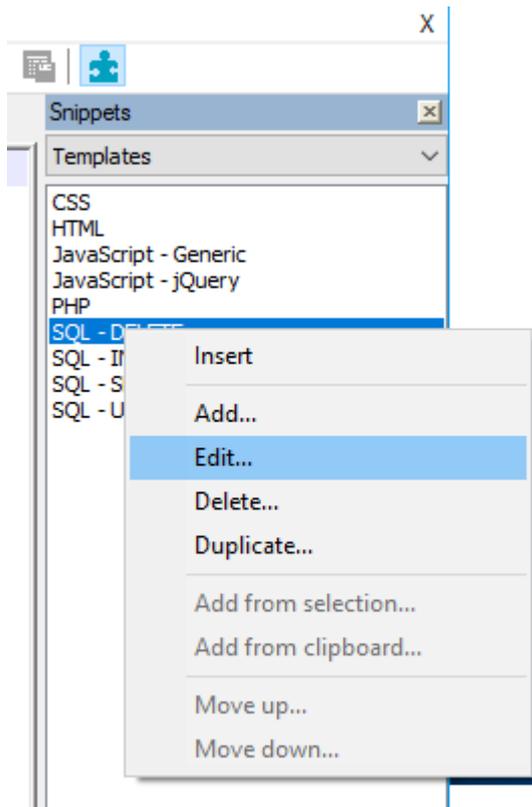
A dialog will appear where you can edit the selected snippet.
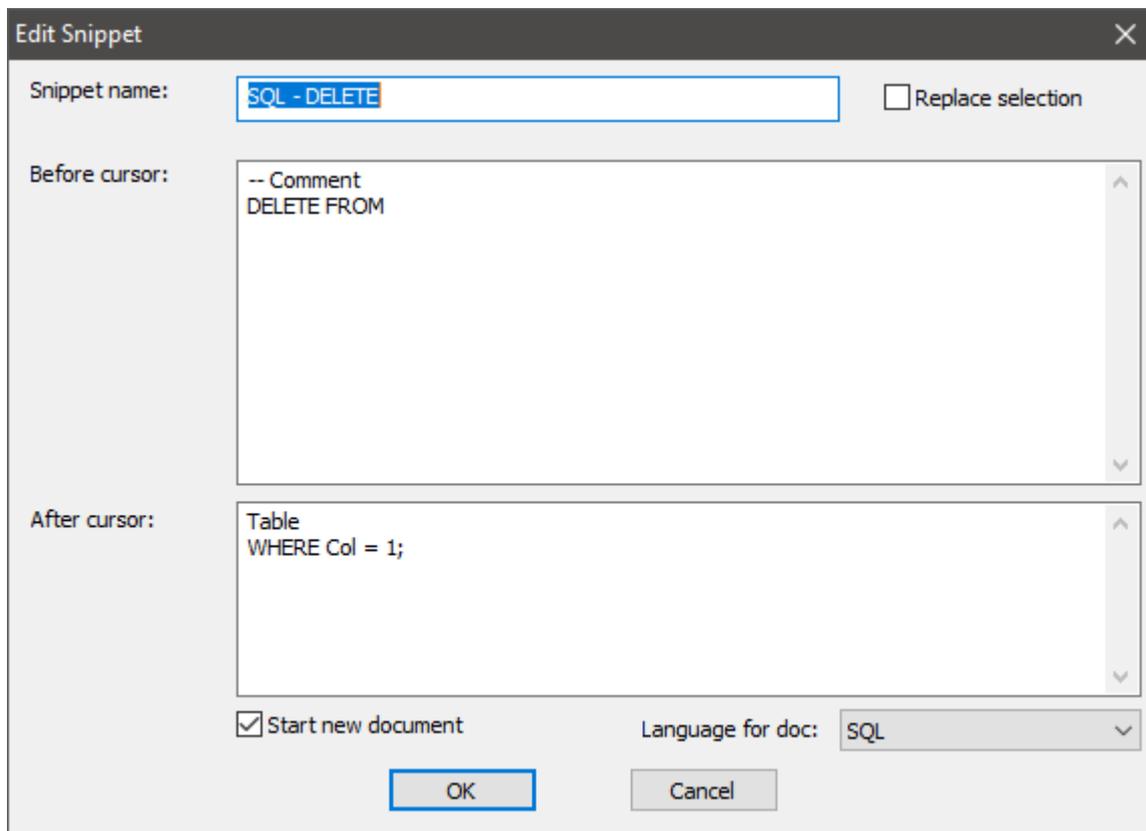
3.2 Edit a library

To edit a library, right-click the name of the library. A context menu will appear and choose `Edit library....`

Libraries and Snippets
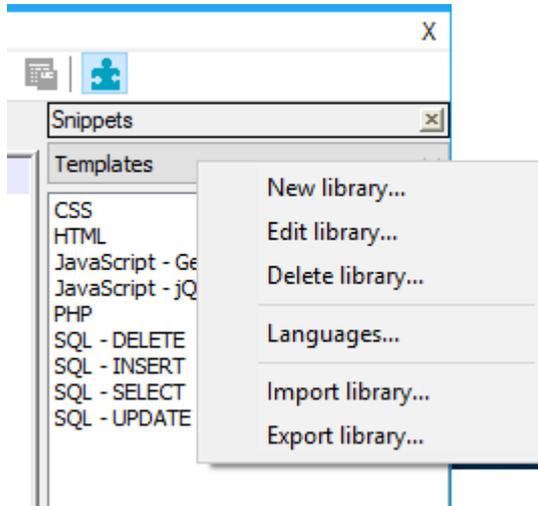
4.1 How to add or edit libraries or snippets

To add or edit a snippet, right-click the snippet in the list and edit. To add or edit a library right-click the combo-box where you select the current library.

A library can be useful for multiple programming languages. You can specify for which language the library is visible.

To add a lot of snippets, I suggest that you look at the section *Database* that describes the database structure and import your data with your favorite SQLite management tool.

4.2 Importing and exporting libraries

NppSnippets has an option to import and export libraries. When you right-click the combo-box where the current library is selected, you have two options. When you import a library, select the database you want to import from. After that a dialog appears that lets you select the library to import. Note that the imported library could a for a different programming language then you are currently using. Therefore the library may not appear at first.

When you export the current library, you can create a new database or you can export to an existing database. This way you can combine various libraries for one programming language in one database.

Note that when you want to share libraries with other users with your organization there is also *an option* to specify the full path to the database. Maybe you want to put one database on a network share.

4.3 Provided Snippets Libraries

At this moment the template database is filled with these libraries. If you upgrade from a previous version your databases is not changed. If you want to try any of the new libraries, you must manually import those libraries from the template database.

Library Name	Languages	By
ANSI Characters	All	FFes
Templates	All	FFes
HTML Tags	HTML, PHP, ASP	FFes
HTML Characters	HTML, PHP, ASP	FFes
Greek Characters	HTML, PHP, ASP	FFes
W3C Doctypes	HTML	FFes
CSS2 Tags	CSS, HTML	FFes
CSS2 Tags & Values	CSS, HTML	FFes
JavaScript - Basic	JavaScript, HTML	FFes
JavaScript - Date	JavaScript, HTML	FFes
JavaScript - Math	JavaScript, HTML	FFes
PHP Language	PHP	jvdanilo
XML Tags	XML	jvdanilo

4.4 User generated libraries

From version 0.7 it is possible to import libraries from another NppSnippets database. This way redistributing user generated libraries becomes easy. If you have created your own library and think it can be useful for others, export that library and *send it to me*. I will put them on my website.

Database

NppSnippets uses a SQLite database named `NppSnippets.sqlite` to store all the content.

In the archive is a file named `NppSnippets.sql`. With this you can generate a new (almost empty) SQLite database. At least SQLite 3.6.19 is needed because a foreign key constrains are used and the plug-in will need this when editing the data through the GUI. So be sure not to create the database with an older SQLite management tool that breaks this.

You should only update, insert or delete records and not modify the structure of the database. That can cause the plug-in (and as a result of that Notepad++ itself) to crash.

5.1 Why a SQLite database and not plain text files?

All the snippets are stored in one SQLite database. SQLite is fast and easy to use. With SQLite most of the file and storage handling is taken care of. This is much more efficient then designing my own (complex) file format and implementing a parser and a writer, although I understand that editing a SQLite database is not as easy to edit for some as editing plain text files. But there is a *user interface* for editing the snippets.

5.2 Database structure

The database structure is quite simple. There are four tables *Library*, *LibraryLang*, *Snippets* and *LangLastUsed*. There are one-to-many relations between Library and LibraryLang, between Library and Snippets and between Library and LangLastUsed. They are all linked to each other with the LibraryID field. It is possible to have multiple libraries per language and one library can be used for many languages. For every library at least one record in the LibraryLang and Snippets tables is needed.

The current schema version of the database is stored in `user_version` and is 3.

5.3 Table definitions

5.3.1 Library

Field	Description
LibraryID	The unique identifier of this library
Name	Name of the library
CreatedBy	Who created this library
Comments	Comments about this library
SortBy	Which fields of Snippets are used to sort: 0. "Name, Sort" 1. "Sort, Name"

5.3.2 LibraryLang

Field	Description
LibraryID	The library this item is part of
Lang	LangType from Notepad_plus_msgs.h. There are two special cases: • Libs with Lang = -1 are shown when there is no library for the current language • Libs with Lang = -2 are shown for every language

5.3.3 Snippets

Field	Description
SnippetID	The unique identifier of this snippet
LibraryID	The library this item is part of
Name	The name of the snippet
BeforeSelection	The text inserted before the current cursor / selection
AfterSelection	The text inserted after the current cursor / selection
ReplaceSelection	Replace a selection or ignore the selection and insert
NewDocument	Create a new document before inserting this snippet?
NewDocument-Lang	Change the language of the new document to this language
Sort	Can determine the order of the snipping in the list. Depends on Library(SortBy) how the list is sorted.

5.3.4 LangLastUsed

Field	Description
Lang	LangType from Notepad_plus_msgs.h
LibraryID	This library is the last one used for this language

Frequently Asked Questions

6.1 Can I assign a shortcut key to a certain snippet?

This is on the wish list, but I don't think it is possible. Shortcut key are assigned to menu items when the plug-ins are loaded. But individual snippets are not menu items. And shortcut keys need to be dynamic. When you change the library, the key assignments need to change on the fly.

Consider `Ctrl-B`: this could be `bold` in HTML, `break` in a c-styled languages and a `begin`/`end` block in Pascal.

But a pointer to a way to implement this is, or even better a pull request that fixes this is much appreciated.

Options

To edit the settings of the plug-in, select `Options...` from the `Plugin` menu.

You can also edit the ini-file manually to change the settings. This ini-file is normally found in your "Application Data" directory and is named `NppSnippets.ini`. On my Windows 10 machine this directory is `C:\Users\Frank\AppData\Roaming\Notepad++\plugins\config`.

These are the default settings:

```
[Options]
Show=1
ToolbarIcon=1
Indent=1
DBFile=
```

When `Show` is set to `0` the tree will not be shown.

When `ToolbarIcon` is set to `0` no icon will be shown on the toolbar.

When `Indent` is set to `0` the snippet will not be indented when it is inserted.

`DBFile` can be used to override the default location of the database `NppSnippets.sqlite` by specifying the full path name of the database. When it is not set the plug-in will look in the same directory as where `NppSnippets.ini` is located.

CHAPTER 8

Wish List

The wish list is in random order.

- Real template handling: variables in the snippets
- Select a text, right-click that selection and add as new snippet.
- If possible, drag-and-drop from the list to the active document.
- Assign keyboard shortcut keys to a snippet.
- Add tooltips for the snippets (#7).
- Remember the last select snippet from the list. Useful when switching between different languages.
- Add support for multiple selections (#2).
- Easier sorting for non-alphabetic libraries. (move to top, move to bottom, dragging?)
- Copy a certain snippet to another library.
- Make the snippets aware of the replace tabs with spaces setting of the current document.
- Libraries can be hard to find when there is something wrong with the languages that are set for this library.

Known Issues

- Closing the snippets window with the x does not update toolbar icon and menu item. And as a result of that the state is not remembered properly. I need to find the notification that is send to the window on clicking the x (#26).

- When a library is not alphabetic sorted, and you move an item up or down, this is slow. This is because the Sort-field of all the snippets of that library need to be updated in the database.

- The icon on the docking tab is inverted for some strange reason.

- When there is no write-access to the database, this is not properly handled.

Contact

The project's web page can be found at http://www.fesevur.com/nppsnippets.

The downloads, issue tracker and git repository can be found at https://github.com/ffes/nppsnippets.

If you have problems with, questions about or suggestions for NppSnippets you can contact me at fesevur@gmail.com.

How to compile

To compile NppSnippets you can use Visual Studio. Project files for VS2019 are provided and actively used. The free Visual Studio Community gets the job done. Obviously the paid versions work as well. To compile with another versions of Visual Studio you can convert an existing project file.

There is also a MinGW-w64 makefile, using their 64-bit compilers. It can be used from Cygwin, MSYS2 and various Linux distributions including WSL. It compiles, but the resulting dll is not recognized by Notepad++.

11.1 Building the documentation

The documentation of NppSnippets is written in reStructuredText and hosted on Read The Docs.

To build on Windows you need Python Sphinx. When using Cygwin you can install the `python-sphinx` and `make` packages.

Use `make html` in the `docs` directory to generate the documentation. Other forms of output are not used, but might work.

If you want the local docs the look like Read The Docs:

- Clone the Sphinx RTD Theme.

- Create a directory named `_themes` in the `docs` directory.

- There you need to create a symlink to the `sphinx_rtd_theme` subdirectory in the cloned repo.

License

This plug-in is published under the GPL-2 license. See *GNU General Public License* for the full license agreement. You can download the sources from https://github.com/ffes/nppsnippets.

Changelog

13.1 Version 1.7.1 (4 October 2022)

- ARM64 build (pr #37).

- Keep using the plugins dark mode to workaround bug introduced in Notepad++ 8.4.3 (issue #45).

13.2 Version 1.7.0 (25 November 2021)

- Add box above the list of snippets to filter that list (issue #32).

- Add options dialog

- Modernize some snippets in the Template database (issue #35).

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.36.0

13.3 Version 1.6.0 (23 August 2020)

- Indent the snippet when it is inserted. Since this is a new feature and I can't test it for all possible programming languages indenting may not always works as indented, so you can disable it in the *Options*.

- Make the plugin more keyboard friendly (issue #31). It adds two menu items to the `Plugins` menu to set the focus to the lists of libraries and the lists snippets. In `Settings`, `Shortcut Mapper...` you can assign your own keyboard shortcuts to these actions. Apart from these menu items the plugin is generally more keyboard friendly.

- Add more images to the page *How to use*.

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.33.0

13.4 Version 1.5.1 (13 January 2020)

- Fix crash when `Before Selection` was left empty and a snippet was saved (issue #16)

- Make the Edit Snippet dialog bigger and add scrollbars (PR #25)

- Make sure to use the proper line endings when creating a snippet from selection or clipboard (issue #27)

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.30.1

13.5 Version 1.5.0 (15 May 2019)

- Adapt to Notepad++ 7.6.x (issue #20)

- Fixed "Creating Snippet from Selection crashes Notepad++" (issue #14)

- Add entry to the plugin menu to open the online manual

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.27.1

13.6 Version 1.4.0 (24 May 2017)

- Provide a 64-bit version of the plug-in.

- Added the possibility to *export a library* for easier sharing.

- The color of the plug-in match the current Notepad++ theme.

- Converted the documentation from DocBook to reStructuredText. The documentation is now hosted at Read The Docs.

- Fixed bug #6 at Google Code and its GitHub duplicate issue #8. When a snippet had an empty first line it could not be saved.

- Removed all references to Google Code because that service has retired. All things that were still on Google Code have been moved to GitHub.

- Internally use my SqliteDB-class to communicate with the database.

- Added *option* `ToolbarIcon` to hide the icon from the toolbar.

- Update icon on toolbar. It is now a puzzle piece.

- Fixed issue that sometimes new libraries and/or new snippets could not be added.

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.19.0

13.7 Version 1.3.0 (June 2013)

- Fixed problem with inserting UTF snippets (issue #3).

- Fixed wrong title of Import Library dialog.

- Fixed some potential bugs found when trying to fix GCC compilation.

- Converted the documentation from ODT to DocBook. Because of that an on-line version of the documentation is available as well.

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.8.0.2

13.8 Version 1.2.0 (8 January 2013)

- There was an inconsistency between the documentation and code about the name of the option to specify your custom path for the database. Use `DBFile` from now on. For backwards compatibility the `DBPath` entry will still be recognized.

- When a snippets creates a new document and the current document is empty, it reuses the current one and does not start a new.

- Added `Duplicate` snippet function to context menu.

- New (simple) templates library.

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.7.15.1

13.9 Version 1.1.0 (13 December 2011)

- You can now add a new snippet to a library based upon the current selection or based upon the content of the clipboard. Right-click the snippets list to use these items.

- Installation has been improved. A template database is provided and when the plug-in tries to find an existing database and it can't find it, it copies this template database to the AppData plugin-config directory.

- The About dialog now shows the change-log.

- When you upgrade the very first time the change-log for the current version will be shown.

- When you didn't select a specific library for a certain language, the automatic selection of the library is improved. The first language specific library is preferred over the first general library.

- Resized the edit snippet dialog.

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.7.9

- Moved the download to Google code. This gives me statistics about downloads and an issue tracker. The project's web page stays where it is.

13.10 Version 1.0.0 (6 September 2011)

- The selection or cursor position are now restored after inserting a snippet.

13.11 Version 0.7.1 (28 August 2011)

- Fixed a bug in the dialog to edit the languages for a certain library. This bug could cause a problem that libraries turn invisible, since all the records in LibraryLang table for that library were deleted and no new records were added.

- Added a JavaScript - Math library.

13.12 Version 0.7.0 (1 August 2011)

- A user interface for editing the language selection for libraries has been added. You need at least Notepad++ version 5.93 for this feature.

- You can import a library from another NppSnippet database.

- Start a new document for a certain snippets, and allow that snippet to set the language of that new document. There were already fields in the database for this. It can be very useful to start a new CSS-file or JavaScript-file from HTML, etc.

- Added an option DBPath to the ini-file to override the default location of the database. Made this mainly for my own testing, but maybe it is useful for others as well (corporate database). You need to manually edit the ini-file to use this.

- Added an icon to the tab of the docking interface.

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.7.7.1

13.13 Version 0.6.0 (15 June 2011)

- It is now possible to add, edit or delete the snippets and the libraries from within Notepad++. It is not yet possible to edit the languages for a library.

- Added a new ANSI-characters library for all languages.

- Deleted the useless General library.

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.7.6.3

13.14 Version 0.5.0 (21 December 2010)

- Upgrade to SQLite version 3.7.4

- The focus is returned to the Scintilla window at start-up and after inserting a snippet.

- The plug-in remembers if it is shown.

- Added another special language to the table LibraryLang: `Lang = -2`. Libraries with this language will always be shown for all languages.

- The languages last used is now stored in a separate table. The database schema version is 3. With this the libraries with special languages (negative language ID's) can be remembered as last used as well.

- Error message when the database can not be opened.

13.15 Version 0.4.0 (8 April 2010)

- The database schema is updated and is now at version 2. The most important difference is that the "language" and "last used" field of the library are now in a separate table, allowing it to be one-to-many. Existing databases will be converted automatically to the new schema.

- When there are multiple libraries for a language, changing to another library works and the last used library is remembered.

- The plug-in now first tries to find the database in the user's plug-in config directory. On my Windows XP machine that is `C:\\Documents and Settings\\Frank\\Application Data\\Notepad++\\plugins\\config`. If the database can't be found there it looks in the `plugin\\config` directory in the Notepad++ installation directory, in my case `C:\\Program Files\\Notepad++\\plugins\\Config`.

- Small improvements to the About dialog.

- There are now 4 HTML libraries, 1 PHP libraries, 1 XML library and 1 (rather useless) General library.

13.16 Version 0.3.0 (10 February 2010)

- First alpha version, released under the GPL2 license.

- The basics work, no User Interface yet to edit the snippets.

13.17 Version 0.1.0 (22 January 2010)

- Internal proof of concept.

GNU General Public License

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