

INSIDE ATLAS.ti – The QDA Newsletter

Dear ATLAS.ti Users,

Spring is finally here in Berlin and so are the great news regarding ATLAS.ti that we want to share with you in this month's edition of our newsletter.

For starters, we have to announce a new schedule for the ATLAS.ti User Conference in Berlin. Due to administrative issues the conference will now take place from August the 29th to August the 31st. We are sorry for any possible inconvenience that this change might cause you and are looking forward to welcome you to ATLAS.ti's hometown at a time when the city is as stunning as it gets.

In this month's feature article, Ricardo Contreras, Director of the Training & Partnership Development division of ATLAS.ti, discusses hyperlinking as a procedure that allows expanding qualitative data analysis beyond coding. He presents examples and proposes ways of reporting those hyperlinks.

Last September we introduced the first native version of ATLAS.ti for Mac. The positive response was overwhelming. This is why we are happy to announce the implementation of new features that will help you to take full advantage of the powerful ATLAS.ti Mac version. In this newsletter issue, we describe three of the new features that will be included in soon-to-be-released updates.

We would like to extend an invitation to all researchers using ATLAS.ti in innovative and interesting ways to share with us a description of their work and how our software is helping them accomplish their research goals. These case studies will be published in upcoming issues of our newsletter. In the newsletter's next edition we will put a scope on the use of ATLAS.ti in Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs). See the Quick News section for more details.

Also in this month's newsletter we bring you all the learning and training news concerning ATLAS.ti and qualitative data analysis in general.

For now, I wish you a good time with your projects.

Kind regards,

Jörg Hecker
Chief Operations Officer, ATLAS.ti





Quick News

ATLAS.ti USER CONFERENCE RE-SCHEDULED for August 29 through 31.

Due to administrative issues we had to re-schedule the ATLAS.ti User Conference. While Berlin still will be the place where it takes place, the date has changed slightly: It will now take place between August the 29th and 31st. All applications that might have already be submitted are still valid. We are sorry to cause any inconvenience and are looking forward to welcome you to ATLAS.ti's hometown this August.

User Conference - Second Call for Papers

We are still accepting abstract submissions for three categories of presentations: Workshops, individual papers, and roundtable presentations.

Abstracts submissions will be accepted until May 20, 2015. Please visit conference.atlasti.com for details.

ATLAS.ti NPO CASE STUDIES

In a series of feature articles, we will profile interesting and innovative applications of ATLAS.ti. These case studies will show applications from different kinds of organizations and users, and from multiple disciplinary areas. For us at ATLAS.ti it is great to see how people use our software to research and understand complex phenomena.

Therefore, we are calling researchers from all disciplines and kinds of organizations to submit brief profiles describing their research projects and the way in which they use ATLAS.ti. [Simply complete this form](#). Once every three months we will pick one project, which will be featured in the Inside ATLAS.ti newsletter. The users whose projects are picked will receive a free single-user license.

Learning and Training News

- [14th Annual Qualitative Methods Conference in Melbourne, Australia - April 28-30](#)
- [Face-to-Face Seminar in Madrid: Introduction to ATLAS.ti 7 for Windows - April 10](#)
- [Face-to-face seminar in Chicago, USA: Introduction to ATLAS.ti 7 Windows. May 11th and 12th.](#)
- We offer introductory group demo webinars, in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), to teams that are evaluating ATLAS.ti, professors who want to teach it to their students, groups of graduate students working on their theses or dissertations, and those interested in introducing the software at professional conferences. For more information on these courses go [here](#).

- Visit our video tutorials library. There, you will find a set of tutorials on specific functions and procedures and video recordings of our qualitative methodology series. The library can be accessed [here](#).
- Independent consultants are offering courses in the Colombia, Mexico, UK, Netherlands, and Spain. See details [here](#).

For a complete list of all of our training services, please visit our Training website page at www.training.atlasti.com

If you have any specific question regarding ATLAS.ti's training offers please do not hesitate to contact us. training@support.atlasti.com or call us at +1 541-286-4391 (United States Pacific Timezone). We are here to help!

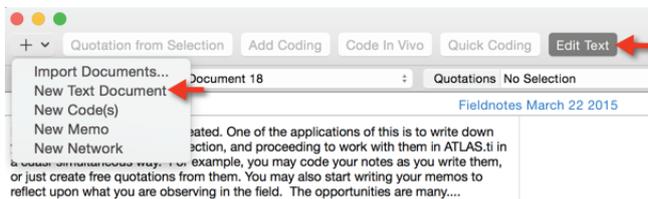


ATLAS.ti for Mac - Updates

In the upcoming weeks will see a lot of new features for the Mac version of ATLAS.ti. In this edition of our newsletter we want to give you a glance of the most important things to come:

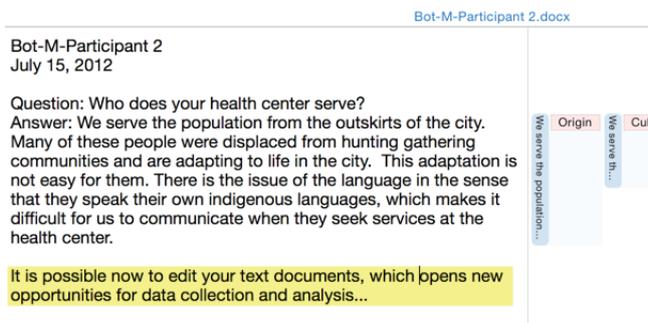
Creating New Text Documents

It is now going to be possible to create internal new text documents. This will facilitate, among other things, writing field notes and observation notes within the analysis project itself. Thus, the notes can be described and analyzed as they are written.



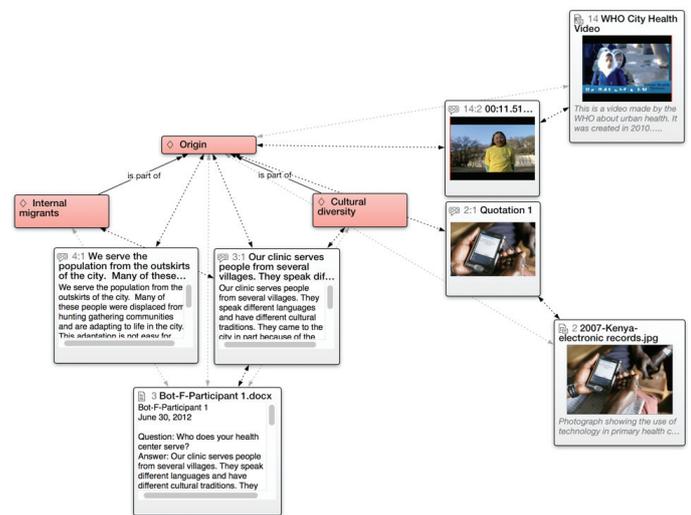
Editing Text Documents

Word and other text non-PDF documents can be edited within the ATLAS.ti analysis project. That is, text can be deleted and new text can be added.



Richer Network Views

Quotation and document previews will now be visible in the network view. This enriches the visualization of the linkages that make up every analysis project with ATLAS.ti Mac. Additionally, new layout options are going to be possible, as well as different forms of aligning the nodes of a network view.



Please find a list of all upcoming features [here](#).



Hyperlinking in ATLAS.ti: Expanding the Boundaries of Data Exploration

By Ricardo B. Contreras

Introduction

Data segmentation in ATLAS.ti is the process of selecting fragments from the sources of information (i. e., documents) and transforming them into quotations. A unique characteristic of these quotations is that they are independent objects. This means that they can be created without having to immediately link them to codes. This opens the doors to freely explore the data in a rather open-ended way, identifying passages that may call the researcher's attention, and storing those passages so that they can be revisited later.

Besides being connected to codes, quotations can be renamed, commented, linked to memos, and linked to each other through hyperlinks. This flexibility means that much can be done in terms of description and analysis without having to resort exclusively to coding. Following Saldaña (2009:3), coding is a process whereby summative labels are assigned to the data, and by doing that, data are reduced, complexity is somehow simplified. But what if we do not want to rush too soon into data reduction, what if we prefer to first describe and explore openly in an effort to develop preliminary understandings of the data in all of their complexity? The independent nature of quotations allows for that. In this short article I will describe the role of hyperlinking in data analysis with ATLAS.ti.

Hyperlinking: Building Webs of Meanings Between Units of the Discourse

Hyperlinking is the process of connecting quotations to quotations through meanings in an effort to describe how study participants build their arguments (see Friese 2014:256). Through hyperlinking, it is possible to identify strong examples of contradictions in the discourse, show how one argument may follow or complement another, demonstrate how a picture may illustrate what its oral or written description cannot fully express, describe how the movement represented in a video frame may help to support what was found in the interview text, among other things. Quotations can be hyperlinked within a document or across documents, allowing the researcher to build webs of relationships among units of the discourse that can span across as many sources of information as desired. Silver and Lewins (2014:53) stated that through hyperlinking in ATLAS.ti "it is possible to analyse qualitative data without using coding tools at all."

ATLAS.ti comes with a set of standard hyperlink relations but the researcher can create new ones as needed, preferably guided by a theoretical framework. The standard relations are the following:

- Continued by
- Contradicts
- Criticizes
- Discusses
- Expands
- Explains
- Justifies
- Supports

These relations can be used to describe and illustrate how units of the discourse (i.e., quotations) relate to each other as arguments are being constructed. Through hyperlinking it is possible to describe how a single individual builds an argument and how arguments are built across study participants. An example of a hyperlink across documents is given by the following example, in which contradicting opinions regarding the role of social relations in shaping one's own happiness are given in two sources of information:

Quotation From Source A	Relation	Quotation from Source B
<p>Nobody Else Has the Power to Make You Happy</p> <p>Life is a great unknown, but one of the most important lessons I ever learned came straight from the mouth of an 80's pop icon: Be good to yourself because nobody else has the power to make you happy...</p>	<i>Contradicts</i>	<p>Having Friends Leads to Happiness</p> <p>In a 2010 study by Harvard researchers published in the journal American Sociological Review, it was discovered that people who went to church regularly reported greater life satisfaction than those who didn't. The critical factor was the quality of friendships made in church.</p>

Table 1: An example of a hyperlink using the "Contradicts" relation.



Another example of hyperlinking across documents is given by the following two quotations, both of which support the same idea: a person's happiness cannot be shaped by external factors.

Quotation From Source A	Relation	Quotation from Source B
<p>Money Does Not Make One Happy</p> <p>In the 1970s, researchers followed people who'd won the lottery and found that a year after they'd hit the jackpot, they were no happier than the people who didn't.</p>	Supports	<p>An Unhappy Person Will be Unhappy Regardless</p> <p>Children, spouses, jobs, houses, cars, money – nothing can 'make' you happy. A happy person is happy, no matter what life throws at them. An unhappy person – if they were given whatever they 'want', whether it's a house full of kids, or a billion dollars – would still be unhappy.</p>

Table 2: An example of a hyperlink using the "Supports" relation.

Of the hyperlink relations that come standard with ATLAS.ti 7, the "Continued by" one is particularly useful as a complement to coding. Let's say that close to each other, but not in the same paragraph, there are two mentions to the same idea in the same document. Given this, the researcher has three options if a decision to code has been made: to code the entire segment with same code, to create two quotations and code them with the same code, or to create two quotations, but code only one of them. Following, the one quotation would be hyperlinked to the other using the "Continued by" relation. The benefit of this approach is that the central idea is captured and the quantitative significance of the code is not artificially inflated.

The following example illustrates this kind of hyperlinking. There is one quotation that consists of the name of a writer and another one that includes his biography. Only the quotation with the biography is coded. At the same time, the quotation with the name of the writer is hyperlinked, using the "Continued by" relation, with the one with his biography. This makes sense because one complements the other and both are really part of the same idea. This is shown in Figure 1.

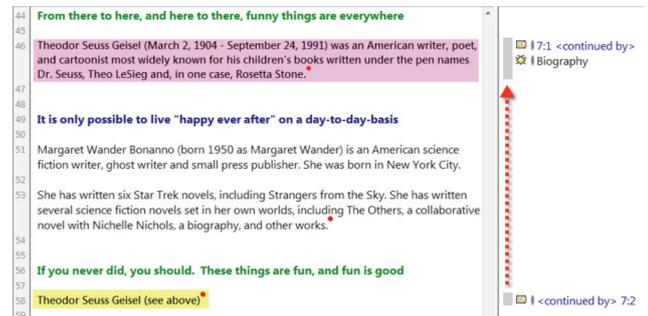


Figure 1: Screenshot showing the hyperlinked quotations on the margin.

This hyperlink is summarized in the table below:

Quotation From Source A	Relation	Quotation from Source B
<p>Theodor Seuss Geisel</p> <p>Theodor Seuss Geisel</p>	Continued by	<p>Who is Theodor Seuss Geisel?</p> <p>Theodor Seuss Geisel (March 2, 1904 - September 24, 1991) was an American writer, poet, and cartoonist most widely known for his children's books written under the pen names Dr. Seuss, Theo LeSieg and, in one case, Rosetta Stone.</p>

Table 3: Example of hyperlink using the "Continued by" relation.

The written output, after editing it a little bit, may look like this:

Report: Biography

P 7: Transcript of video - 7:2

Theodor Seuss Geisel (March 2, 1904 - September 24, 1991) was an American writer, poet, and cartoonist most widely known for his children's books written under the pen names Dr. Seuss, Theo LeSieg and, in one case, Rosetta Stone.

Hyper-Links:

7:1 Theodor Seuss Geisel (see above) <continued by>
Theodor Seuss Geisel (see above)

Figure 2: Report on a code showing hyperlinked quotations.



Reporting Hyperlinks Through Summary Tables and Network Views

There is the option of reporting hyperlinks using summary tables, network views or written reports. Here I will say a few words about summary tables and network views. Although ATLAS.ti will not create the summary tables for you, it is easy to make them using your favorite word processor. It is a good idea to summarize the key hyperlinks around specific topics in this way. For example, if we explore the topic "Arguments that participants are making in relation to happiness" we find that there are arguments that support each other and some that contradict each other. Thus, the summary tables would look as follows:

Arguments About Happiness - Mutually Supportive Arguments Across Sources of Information

Quotation A	Quotation B
<p>Don't Worry, Be Happy</p> 	<p>Happiness is Something to Love, Something to Do, and Something to Hope For</p> <p>Happiness is something to love, something to do, and something to hope for. Kids can give you all three of those things, but you can find answers to those blanks in other places too.</p>
<p>Money Does Not Make a Person Happy</p> <p>In the 1970s, researchers followed people who'd won the lottery and found that a year after they'd hit the jackpot, they were no happier than the people who didn't.</p>	<p>A Person is Happy Independent of External Factors</p> <p>Children, spouses, jobs, houses, cars, money – nothing can 'make' you happy. A happy person is happy, no matter what life throws at them. An unhappy person – if they were given whatever they 'want', whether it's a house full of kids, or a billion dollars – would still be unhappy.</p>
<p>Smile All of The Time</p> <p>Science suggests that when you smile, whether you feel happy or not, your mood will be elevated. So smile all the time!</p>	<p>Smiling is Good</p> 

Table 4: Summary table showing mutually supportive arguments.

Arguments About Happiness - Contradictory Arguments Across Sources of Information

Quotation A	Quotation B
<p>Only You Can Make Yourself Happy</p> <p>Life is a great unknown, but one of the most important lessons I ever learned came straight from the mouth of an 80's pop icon: Be good to yourself because nobody else has the power to make you happy.</p>	<p>Make Friends Who Share Your Beliefs</p> <p>In a 2010 study by Harvard researchers published in the journal American Sociological Review, it was discovered that people who went to church regularly reported greater life satisfaction than those who didn't. The critical factor was the quality of friendships made in church.</p>
<p>Stay Close to Family</p> <p>Or move to where other members are- so you can see them more. We live in a mobile society, where people follow jobs around the country and sometimes around the world. We do this because we think increases in salary will make us happier, but the fact is that our relationships with our friends and family have a far greater impact on our happiness than our jobs do.</p>	<p>Everyone is Responsible for His/Her Own Happiness</p> <p>My mother expects that my brothers and I are responsible for her happiness and can't accept the fact that she alone is responsible for her happiness.</p> <p>Own Happiness Does Not Depend on Others</p> <p>Since when does our individual happiness depend on others? Those poor children and spouses who carry the burden of making another person happy! You have to be happy as individual, from within, on your own- period. If your happiness depends on a spouse, children, possessions, or external factors – you will forever be vulnerable to circumstances beyond your control.</p>

Table 5: Summary table showing contradictory arguments.

It might also be useful to include network views of hyperlinks in your study report, particularly when there are several quotations hyperlinked to each other, or when there is one quotation that is rather central in relation to other quotations. For instance, see the network view below:

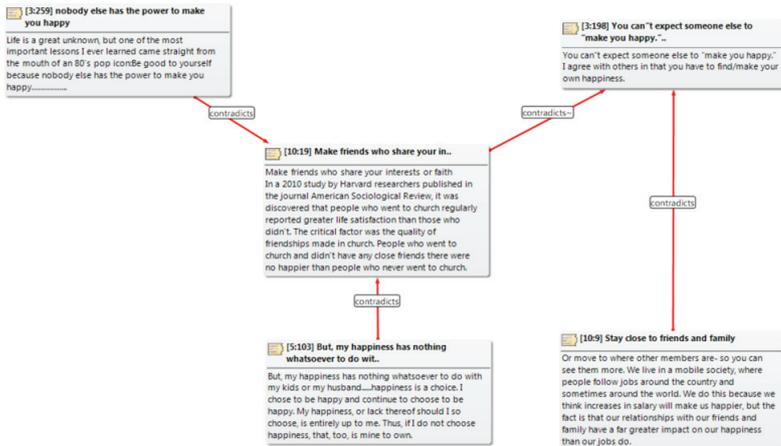


Figure 3: Network view showing a web of hyperlinks.

In this network view, there are two quotations that represent arguments that are contradicted by other arguments. Quotation 10:19 is contradicted by quotations 3:259 and 5:103, while quotation 3:198 is contradicted by quotations 10:19 and 10:9. Representing these contradictory arguments in a network view, as a web of relationships, may help illuminate interesting aspects of the reality under study.

Conclusion

Hyperlinking in ATLAS.ti expands the boundaries of qualitative data analysis by providing an opportunity to describe, analyze, and interpret the data without having to resort exclusively to coding. Hyperlinking allows for the exploration of relationships between units of the discourse rather than between conceptual constructs. From that point of view, it helps to keep the researcher close to the data, close to the voice of the participant. Importantly, the researcher can create her own set of hyperlink relations and in that way approach the analysis of the data from the theoretical framework of her choice.

References Cited

- Friese, S. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.ti* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Silver, C., & Lewins, A. (2014). *Using Software in Qualitative Research: A Step-by-Step Guide* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

About the Author

Ricardo B. Contreras directs the Training & Partnership Development division of ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH. His undergraduate training is in sociocultural anthropology (Universidad de Chile) and his graduate degrees are in applied anthropology (University of South Florida). Ricardo is also a sociocultural research consultant.



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And we welcome your feedback and suggestions!**

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