

ATLAS.ti 6

Features Overview



atlas.ti
the knowledge workbench



Software for qualitative data analysis,
management, and model building.

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Interface

Intuitive interface

The interface emulates the traditional paper & pencil desktop style. Source data is displayed on the left side of the screen while marked segments, codes, and notes about the data appear in the margin area on the right-hand side.

Great usability

All functions can be either accessed via the main menu, the tool bar, context menus and keyboard.

Quick access

All object types are easily accessible via combo boxes and independent object managers.

Logical structure

The structure of the menus is based around the main object types and therefore it is easy to quickly find the options one is looking for.

Multi-tasking

ATLAS.ti allows any combination of functions to be open together.

Intelligent margin area

ATLAS.ti offers an interactive and flexible margin views. View and modify coded segments, codes, attached memos and comments and hyperlinks in the margin view. Choose between viewing only codes, memos or hyperlinks, or a combination.

Line wrapping

When viewing data within the software, ATLAS.ti provides line wrapping of text when the window size is reduced / enlarged.

Data Management

Huge number of supported data formats

Use text documents in plain text, Rich Text or PDF formats, work with audio files in mp3, au, wma, or wav format, with video files in mpeg, wmf, or avi formats, with graphic files like tif, multi page tif, gif, emf, jpeg formats, or with live Google Earth documents, kml and kmz formats (and many more).

Intelligent data file management

ATLAS.ti uses an external referencing system for your data files. This makes it possible to work with a large data files like video files or with a large amount of data files. The ATLAS.ti project file remains rather small, as it only stores the information that you generate about your data, but not the data itself.

Editable data sources

Coded text can be modified if needed, e.g. to correct typing errors, add missing or new data, to add further information like tables and figures. Color your written text or highlight text segments using a marker. Embedded object can be activated and edited from within the application.

Multilingual

ALL languages and characters can be used in every function of the program.

Text Export

All text files can be exported as PDF, complete with codings and line/parahgraph numbering.

Easy backup

Copy Bundle tool stores the entire project in one compressed data file. The user can determine which data files are included in / excluded from the bundle. Use the bundled project file as secure backup or to transfer a project between computers / users.

Embedded object

Access all embedded OLE objects.

Organization and Usability

Object Explorer

The object explorer functions like a directory of your entire project. It displays all objects and their related sub-objects (documents and their quotations, codes and their quotations, memos and their linked objects, families of objects and their members, network views with the objects they contain) in a hierarchical tree view. Access your data via the various sub trees directly.

Drag & Drop coding

The Code Manager and Code Forest can be used for drag & drop coding.

Powerful, integrated object management

The powerful object managers help you stay organized by providing overview of the various object types like primary documents; quotations (i.e. coded segments), codes, memos and saved network views.

Document Management

Lets you manage all assigned documents and indicates if there are problems (such as unavailable paths, drives, etc.).

Quotation Manager

Lets you manage all coded data segments. You can name or rename each quotation ID, sort, filter or delete quotations, write comments or review commented segments.

Code Management

Gives you a full overview of all codes at any time and lets you manage (sort, rename, merge, delete) your codes conveniently.

Memo Manager

Gives you a full overview of all memos at any time and lets you manage (sort, rename, delete, apply) or review your memos.

Link Management

Gives you a full overview of all links at any time and lets you manage (sort, modify, rename, delete) your codes conveniently .

Coding

Fine-grained units of analysis

Text: character / image: pixel / audio: millisecond / video: frame.

Automatic segment selection

When selecting text, precise text segments (word, sentence, or paragraph) can be selected via a double click.

Interactive and flexible coding

Various ways of coding via the main menu, the context menu, icons in the tool bar or via drag & drop from the code manger or code forest.

Coding always visible

It is easy to see immediately how codes are building up at the document level as you proceed; you see the codes in the margin area appearing simultaneously as you code.

Unlimited codes

There are no limits in terms of number of codes, or levels of overlapping codes. Multiple codes can be applied to one data segment.

Code transparency

A variety of information types are provided for each code, such as the code name, frequency, linkages to other codes, author, date of creation and modification. This information can be used to sort the codes in multiple ways.

Powerful Code Manager

Quick and easy access to all codes and all coding options. Code views and code colors can be changed to suit different purposes. Codes and coded segments can be easily modified. Code definitions are at all times visible during coding.

Interactive margin area

The codes in the margin area are interactive, a right click opens a context menu with relevant options, codes can be moved around and attached to other segments, duplicated, exchanged. Coded segments can be resized.

Color-coded codes

Different colors help to orient the user regarding the allocation of codes to the various segments. This is especially useful when printing or saving coded data.

Grouping and filtering codes

Codes can be grouped e.g. to higher order concepts using the code family tool. Code families can be used as filter, to facilitate searches or as a means to visualize the coding schema.

Auto-coding

Automatic coding is possible (see text search).

Weightable codes

Weight your codes using a user-defined syntax. Weighted codes can be used as ordinal variables in SPSS.

Code lists

Entire code lists, code definitions, can be exported and imported .

Memos and Comments

Fully annotatable

Every object in ATLAS.ti can be annotated: documents, quotations, codes, memos, project, all types of families, network views, relations between data segments or codes.

Output all annotations

All comments and annotations can be output together with the object they belong to.

Document comments

Write down meta information about each document.

Quotation comments

Note down ideas that you may have about a coded segment, first interpretations, ideas for linkages, etc.

Visualisation and output

Quotation comments are visualised in the margin area and included upon request if output is created.

Code comments

This is the place to write down a definition for each code.

Extremely flexible memos

Memos are independent objects, they can be "free" or they can be attached to other objects (such as codes, quotations and other memos).

Always identifiable information

Memos can be identified and searched by title, author, date and content. The number of linkages to other objects is also shown. Via a short-cut or the memo menu, the date can be inserted before an entry is made.

Multiple purpose memos

Memos can be used as planning device, as space to write down methodological notes in from of a research diary, as a space for analytical notes attached to data, as a tool to support team work, etc.

Multiple use memos

You are free to define any type that suits your needs. Types can be used to sort and filter your memos.

Quick access

Quick and easy access via the Memo Manager, serves as a point of easy contact without moving away from the main text.

Full visualisation

Memos can be visualized in network views with their linkages to other objects.

Flexible output

Output only the list of memos, the content of one or more memos in rtf format, or the memo content including the text of or information about the hyperlinked data segments. In addition, memos can be exported as XML.

Hyperlinking

Linking at data level

Point-to-point jumping around the dataset at data level is similar to clicking on a link in the World Wide Web: Point out a connection within a text or letting your data come alive by linking a text passage to a video segment. As images and audio/video documents are stand alone documents in ATLAS.ti, there is no need to link to an external document.

Atomic Linking

Link data precise fragments of any media type. Link data fragments of any media type (text, image, audio, and video) within or across documents. Link very specific segments within the files, not only the documents as a whole.

Intelligent links

Name the relation of a link by adding information like: "discusses," "explains," "supports," "continued by," "shows," " " or anything you like in any language you want.

Easy navigation

Hyperlinks are easily navigated by clicking. Alongside text and images, they are flagged in the margin area.

Full control

The hyperlink manager provides easy overview, point of navigation, and modifications of your relations.

Visualization

Visualize all your work

All objects (documents, quotations, codes, memos, families of objects and icons of other network views) and their relation to each other can be graphically displayed.

More than mere pretty pictures

Network views are not just a pictorial display of your objects. You can always call up the data behind them, check the data for consistency, or add an extra layer to a presentation by letting the data "speak" to your audience.

Visual categories

Visualize your categories through the display of code families in network views.

Visual indexing

Create an index of content for your graphical documents using thumb nail images.

Visual display of links and relations

Code-code and quotation-quotation links can be linked via named relations. ATLAS.ti offers a set of predefined relations for quote-quote relations. In addition, you are free to create as many new relations in any language as you like and need. Existing relations can be modified or deleted. Different sets of relations can be saved and loaded if needed.

Color-coded relations

In addition to the name, differentiate your relations also by color and/or by the display of the line (line width, dashed or solid). Relations can be directed like "is part of" or non-directed like "is associated with." Thus, you are free to create hierarchical links but you are not limited to them.

Visualize co-occurring codes

Gain full overview of co-occurring codes by importing them into the visual interface of the network views.

Export network views as regular images

Network views can be exported fully or in part as standalone image files and/or copy & paste them into different applications.

Images always in view

Primary documents that are graphical images are displayed as thumbnail pictures.

Working with Variables

Intelligent data handling

The Primary Document Family tool allows you to group documents by criteria like age, gender, profession, education, year, status, type, etc.

Import existing variables

If a list of variables already exist, these can be imported via an Excel table, thus allowing for a smooth integration of qualitative and quantitative data.

Exporting variables

In ATLAS.ti created variables can be exported as Excel table to provide an overview or to feed the data back into a statistical analysis.

Use variable for searching

Use of variables in searches (see query tool) or as filter to zoom into a particular group of data.

Searching and Data Retrieval

Text Searching

Powerful regular expression (GREP) searches

Regular expression patterns can be used to search through your data corpus.

Re-usable searches

Search expressions can be stored for later reuse.

Auto-coding

Results of text searches can be coded automatically. Hits can be extended to the word, the sentence, the paragraph, or even multiple paragraphs.

Multiple document searches

Apply automatic coding to a select document or extend it to an entire group of documents.

Deep object searches using the Object Crawler

Search through all objects and through all text fields. The first hit within a particular object is displayed in its context. Jump from the hit list to the original source. Employ regular expressions here as well.

Searches and Filters

Simple code retrieval

Data segments coded with a particular code can be retrieved by double-clicking on a code.

Utilize family ties

Data segments belonging to a group of codes can be retrieved via their respective code families .

Intelligent retrieval

Retrieved segments can be displayed in context or in a rich text editor.

Find without searching.

Powerful filters let you zoom in quickly and easily on select parts of your dataset without even opening the search tools. Variable filter settings show you just the objects you need to see to find answers to your questions.

Query Tool

Dedicated Query Tool

The unique Query Tool lets you search for coded segments based on a combination of codes.

Flexible query formulation

A query can simply be clicked by selecting codes and operators. If you prefer to write your queries, you can manually enter proper query syntax.

Boolean, semantic and proximity operators

Three sets of operators, a total of 14 operators, are available to formulate stringent queries over your data.

Full set of Boolean operators

Boolean operators for AND, OR, XOR or NOT combinations.

Semantic operators

Semantic operators let you retrieve coded data based on specific relationships created between codes. Functional relationships of this kind are embodied in transitive (or hierarchical) links (such as "is a", "part of; "causes" etc.). Data can be retrieved based on transitivity: Collect all coded data down a certain branch of your tree, up a certain branch, or all coded segments that are on the same level.

Proximity operators

Proximity operators find the coded segments based on intersections or co-occurring coded across the data set. The co-occurring codes can be viewed by right clicking on a code in the Query tool (see also "Co-occurrence Explorer").

Restrict searches to part of the data set

Restrict searches to any sub groups of data that you define via the scope button in the query tool. For example, restrict a search to all women, from city x, age 30-39 and 10 years of professional experience as compared to those of the same age and experience level in city y.

Reusable queries

Queries can be saved in form of super codes.

Using supercodes for queries

Super codes are listed and executable in the main codes list and thus provide an obvious signposts to later tasks involving the rerun of searches. The syntax on which the super code is based can be edited.

Reusable search results

Search results can be added to the thematic database as new coding (snapshot codes) which can be used for further fine coding or as a means to test hypotheses.

Export of search results

Search results can be exported and stored as rich text file. For image, audio and video segments, their full references and comments are contained.

Co-Occurrence Explorer

Powerful Co-occurrence Explorer

The Co-occurrence Explorer offers a cross tabulation of 'codes by codes.' Within each cell, access to the coded data segments is provided. Results of a cross-tabulation are displayed as tree view or in a table. View either quotation content or frequencies of occurrence. ATLAS.ti also offers a c-coefficient as an indicator of the strength of the relation between two codes.

Co-occurrence Explorer Output

Output the content of all co-occurring segments as rtf file. Output the number or co-occurrences as Excel table. A restriction to certain groups of codes and documents is possible to limit the output to meaningful units and sub units.

Quantification

Frequency of codes by documents

The Codes-Primary Document-Table shows the frequency of codes by documents and can be exported as Excel / Calc table (or as text file). Instead of code frequencies, a further option is to let ATLAS.ti count the words within the coded segments per code.

Word Frequency

Word frequency for one file only or for all files can be exported as Excel / Calc table. Words can be excluded via a stop list.

SPSS output

All codings can be exported as SPSS syntax file. The SPSS data matrix displays codes, super codes and code families as variables, coded segments as cases.

SPSS variables

Additional variables are number of the primary document, primary document group, start and end marker for each quotation, data of creation. This information can be used to aggregate the data in various ways. The codes-primary document table (see above) provides aggregated data based on the criteria "document" and can also be used in SPSS or other statistical software.

Import of variables

If descriptive information like age, gender, family status, etc. in form of an Excel / Calc table is already available for your data, you can import this information. ATLAS.ti automatically creates document families (see above) from this information and groups the documents accordingly.

Export of variables

This type of information can also be exported. Variables created in ATLAS.ti via the document family tool can be exported as Excel / Calc table.

Variable types

Even though variables are treated as dichotomous variables within ATLAS.ti, you can import or export numerous categories per variable following an easy naming convention (#gender; #age groups; #income groups; #family status, etc.).

Transcription

On board transcription

Audio or video files can be transcribed inside ATLAS.ti using the new A-Docs function. Transcripts can be synchronized with the associated audio or video file so that you can jump from a particular point in the transcript to the original recording.

Import of synchronized documents transcribed elsewhere

If your data has already been transcribed, there is a good chance that you can import the transcripts including the synchronized audio/video files into ATLAS.ti. Currently transcripts from f4, Transcriber and Transana can be imported. Others will be added.

Geo data

Use the whole world as your data source

ATLAS.ti embeds Google Earth™ and makes its functionality available from inside the program. All features of Google Earth™ are available (including camera angle and height over ground).

Bi-directional interaction between ATLAS.ti and Google Earth

Not only can you access Google Earth from inside ATLAS.ti. Work done in ATLAS.ti can be directly introduced into Google Earth. Comment on a marked location in ATLAS.ti, and your comment will be displayed in Google Earth™.

Treat Google Earth segments exactly the way you are used to

Freely move around the (virtual) world and mark any section that interests you. Code places, comment, and link them to other objects. Use direct hyperlinks from other primary documents for supporting your arguments and for purposes of evidence or illustration.

Google Earth layers fully supported

Leverage the immense power of community as embodied by GE layers. Exchange and directly import Google Earth™'s KMZ files (complex community-created "overlays").

Google Earth snapshots

Create screenshots from any Google Earth™ view and assign them as graphical primary documents. This "snapshot" helps you save system resources and makes sure that your reference is secured against changes.

Survey Import

Import complete surveys

With one click, import a complete survey

Use any kind of survey

All surveys can be imported - from online survey systems as well as from other sources.

Auto-creation of complete projects

When importing a survey, a complete project is automatically created for you: One primary document per respondent, quotations, codes.

Work with any type of questions

Your surveys can contain any type of question, including opened-ended.

Teamwork / Project Management

Powerful user management

Each team member logs in under her/his own name.

Clear ownership model

All entries are stamped with the user name as author, so it becomes visible who has done what.

Multi-level access rights

Users can be provided with administrative or standard access rights. Project files can be restricted to certain users.

Security

Projects can be password protected.

Work on a shared data base

Team members can access the same data if stored on a server from their own individual project files (simultaneous work on the same project file is not possible).

Powerful and safe project merging

Sub-projects can be easily merged. ATLAS.ti ensures that same documents are not edited simultaneously. After a document has been modified, all other project files are synchronized.

Flexible merging strategies

Depending on the project needs, different merge strategies are provided. After selecting a main merge strategy, manual fine tuning is possible. Groups of objects can be excluded from the merge process.

Intelligent merging

The code analyzer finds redundant codings; redundant quotations can be cleaned via the merge quotations option to clean up after merging. All project file are synchronized prior to merging if documents have been edited.

Intercoder reliability testing

Intercoder reliability can easily be calculated via web-based open source tool CAT (<http://www.qdap.pitt.edu/cat.htm>). A video tutorial about preparing ATLAS.ti data for upload is provided.

Multiple code list export/import options

Export and import code lists, including their definitions, via the XML export option. Simple code lists can be copied into a memo and imported from there.

Exchange of coded documents via PDF

Coded documents as you see them on screen (including the ATLAS.ti paragraph numbering) can be exported as PDF file. Share the PDF output of coded documents with others who do not work with ATLAS.ti (e.g., in team meetings, reports, etc.) .

Output Types and Formats

RTF

Coded segments, search results, memos, code lists, code with definitions, and code relations.

PDF

Coded documents, exactly as you see them on your screen (original layout, no conversion).

Excel / Calc

Frequency of codes by documents, word frequency, list of variables and distribution per document.

SPSS

Syntax file: codes, super codes, code families as variables, coded segments as cases plus some additional variables that can be used as criterion for aggregation.

HTML

Your entire project can be exported as HTML file. Preference settings control the objects to be included or excluded. Network View images can be inserted as well.

XML

Entire projects can be exported as XML file. Codes and Memos can also be exported separately.

On-board XML/XSLT converter

A number of powerful XSLT style sheets are provided to display and transform the XML output in various ways. You are free to modify existing style sheets or write your own, to create the exact output that you need. Unlimited power for reporting, data conversion, and much more.

Images

Network Views can be exported as bmp or wmf files.