

# **The Unofficial *Scheherazade* User Guide**

(Under Construction)

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April 7, 2013

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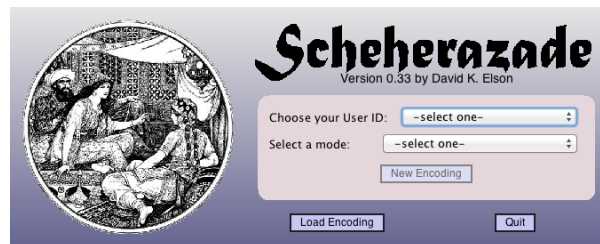
## Introduction

This guide is meant to help users get started in encoding a story using *Scheherazade*, a semantic encoding and annotation tool for narrative developed by David Elson. Users are encouraged to read relevant papers from the tool website for background information: <http://www.cs.columbia.edu/~delson/software.shtml>.

Currently there is no official user guide available. So until we receive one from David, you are stuck with this version. I will update to make it more complete, but whatever is currently here should help you get started. Feel free to contact me for comments/questions/etc.

## Preliminary

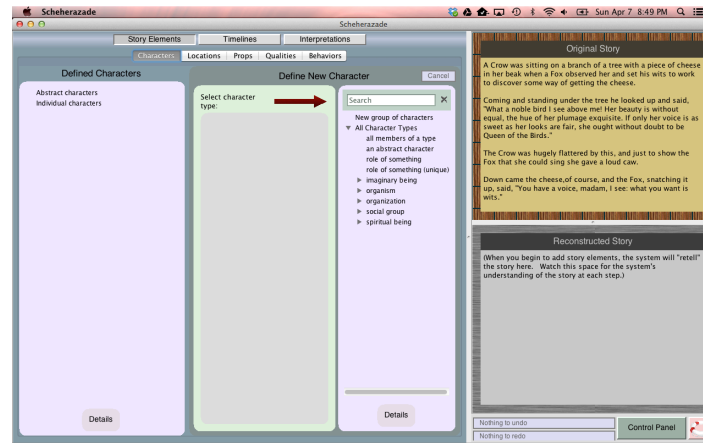
1. Download *Scheherazade* for your platform from the website: <http://www.cs.columbia.edu/~delson/software.shtml>
2. Unzip and follow README.txt to bring up the GUI:



## Encode an Existing Fable

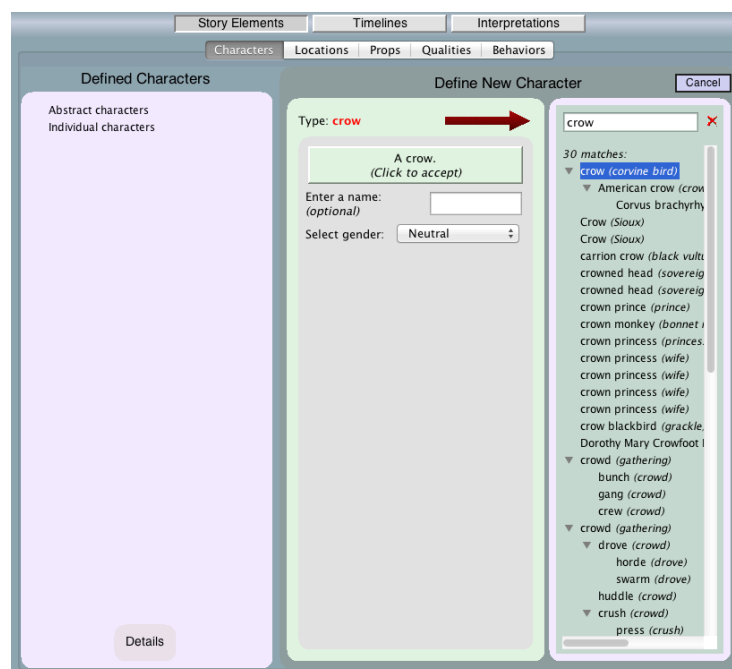
3. Select a **User ID** from the drop-down menu. Any one is fine, but let's say you picked A101.
4. Select a **mode** from the drop-down menu. Scroll down to select *The Fox and The Crow*.
  - 4.1. This story is chosen because the introductory paper *Building a Bank of Semantically Encoded Narratives* (<http://www.cs.columbia.edu/~delson/pubs/LREC2010-ElsonMcKeown.pdf>) uses this story as an example.
5. Select **New Encoding**.
  - 5.1. It will take a while to load all the components, and it will take up your entire screen.
6. A message will pop up that gives you some instructions on how to encode a story. Here's the gist of it:
  - Explore the two main panels by using the top two buttons:
    - "Timeline" shows the actions taking place in the story.
    - "Story Elements" lets you set up characters, props and locations.
  - Start by using "Story Elements" to set up your characters.
  - Use the "Control Panel" on the bottom-right to **save** and load stories. (Note: saved story is in VGL format)
  - Sample story files can be found on the Scheherazade website.
  - Online HELP is available by clicking the icon on the bottom-right corner. (Note: not much there at the moment)
  - See README for recent changes, etc.

7. Press OK to close the message box. You are now ready to encode the story. Your screen should look something like the following:

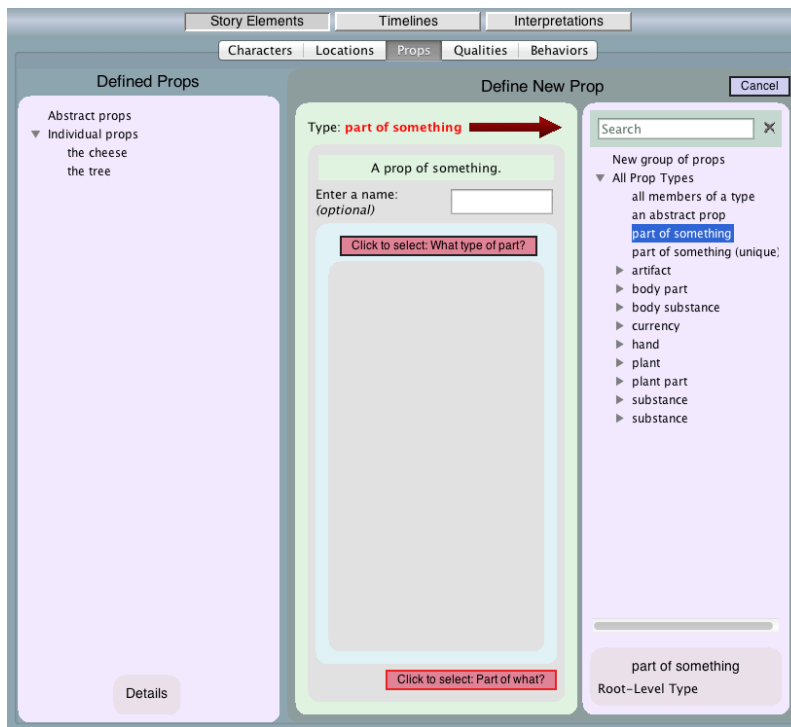


8. The actual story *The Fox and The Crow* is loaded in the upper-right-box labeled “Original Story”. **Read it** – it’s not that long.
9. Let’s encode the story portion: ***A crow was sitting on a branch of a tree with a piece of cheese in her beak.*** We start by defining story elements. Click on **Story Elements**, under which you will see sub-tabs Characters, Locations, Props, Qualities, and Behaviors. We need characters/props: crow, tree, cheese, beak
- 9.1. Click on **Characters** (under Story Elements). We will define a character: a crow.

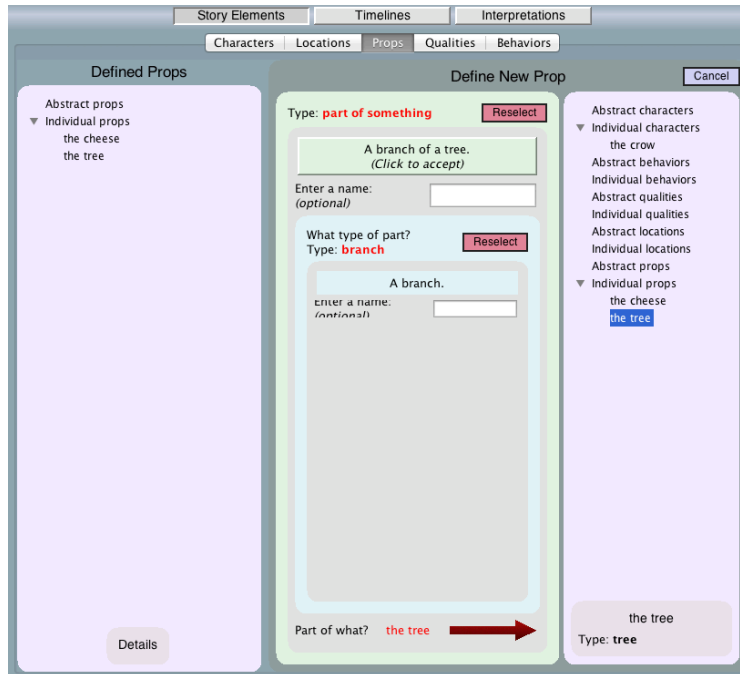
- 9.1.1. To define a new character, in the search box type “crow”. A list of potential matches is displayed. Select “crow (corvine bird)”, which should be the first match. This will populate the middle column with **Type: crow** (see figure below). Click to accept. This will add “the crow” as an individual character (first column).



- 9.1.2. If you need to modify or delete the character, click on “the crow” that you just defined (in the first column), and on the bottom you will see: Add Attribute, Edit Definition, and Undefine.
- 9.2. Click on the tab **Props** (under Story Elements). We will define four props here: tree, cheese, branch of a tree, and beak of the crow.
- 9.2.1. Search for tree and select “tree(woody plant)”, click to accept.
- 9.2.2. Search for cheese and select “cheese(dairy product)”, click to accept.
- 9.2.3. To define branch of a tree, click on prop type “part of something”, located under the search box. This will populate middle column with two red boxes asking you to further define it. See figure below.



- 9.2.4. In the middle column, click on the upper red button “Click to select: What type of part?” Then in the search box type “branch” and select “branch(stalk)”.
- 9.2.5. Click on the bottom red button “Click to select: Part of what?” Then a list of previously defined characters/props should show up (the crow, the cheese, the tree). Select “the tree”. The definition of the prop (middle column) should now be: **A branch of a tree (Click to accept)**. See figure below.



9.2.6. Click to accept this new prop. Now you should have three individual props: the branch of the tree, the cheese, and the tree.

9.2.7. To define beak of the crow, follow the same process as before by (selecting prop type “part of something”, search for “beak”, etc.)

9.2.8. You should have four individual props: the beak of the crow, the branch of the tree, the cheese, and the tree.

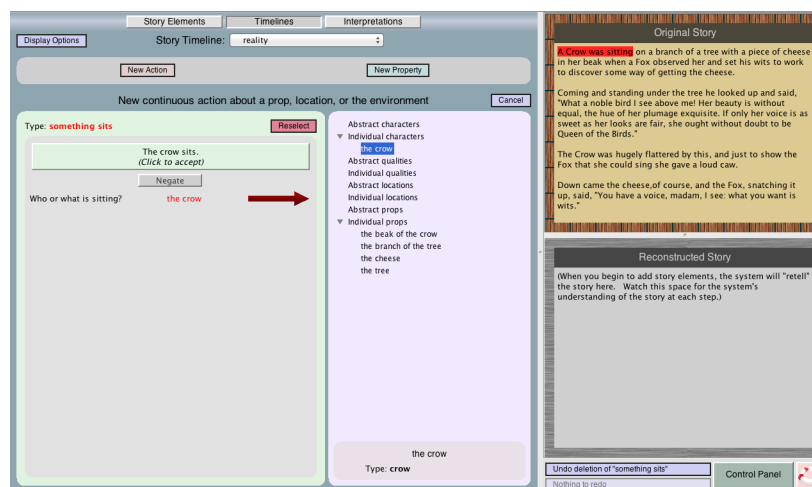
10. Click on **Timelines**. We are ready to define story points.

10.1. Click on **Opening Story Point**, and then click on button **New Action**.

10.2. In the Original Story box (upper-right), highlight “A Crow was sitting”. We will define an action based on this selected text.

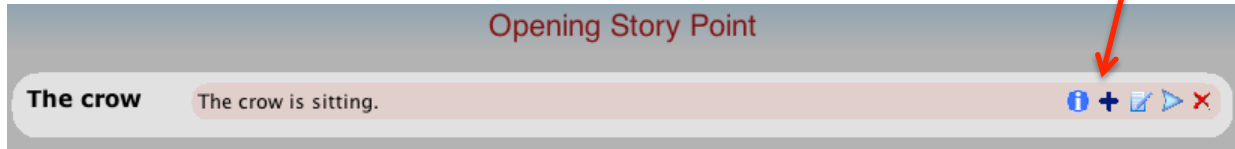
10.3. In search box type “sits” and select “something sits (sit, sit down)”. This populates the left column with the type: something sits.

10.4. Click on the red box “Click to select: Who or what is sitting?” and then select “the crow”. This makes the definition of the new action as: The crow sits. See figure below.

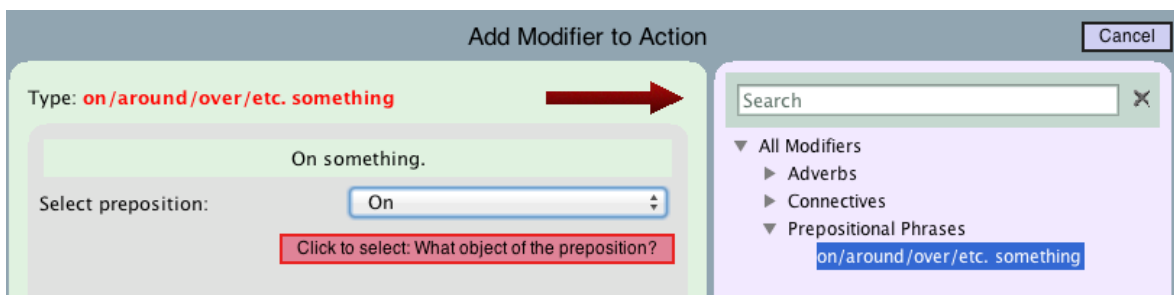


10.5. Click to accept this new action. This brings you back to the Timeline window, with the first action “The crow is sitting”.

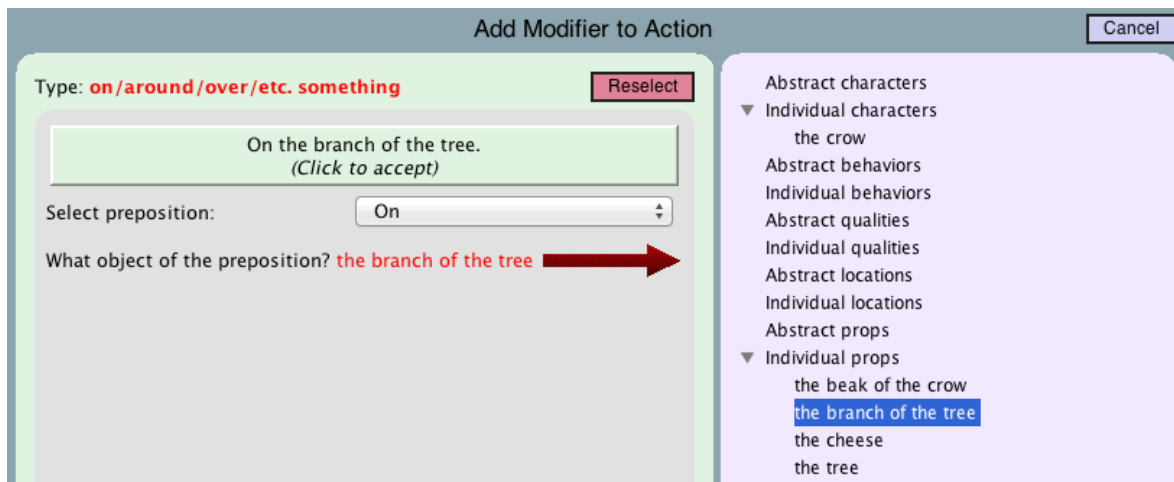
10.6. Now we want to encode the modifier “on a branch of a tree” to the action we just defined. Highlight the original text “on a branch of a tree”. Click on the “+” sign to the right of the action box:



10.7. Under “Prepositional Phrases”, select “**on/around/over/etc. something**”. Select preposition “On” from the drop-down box. See figure below.

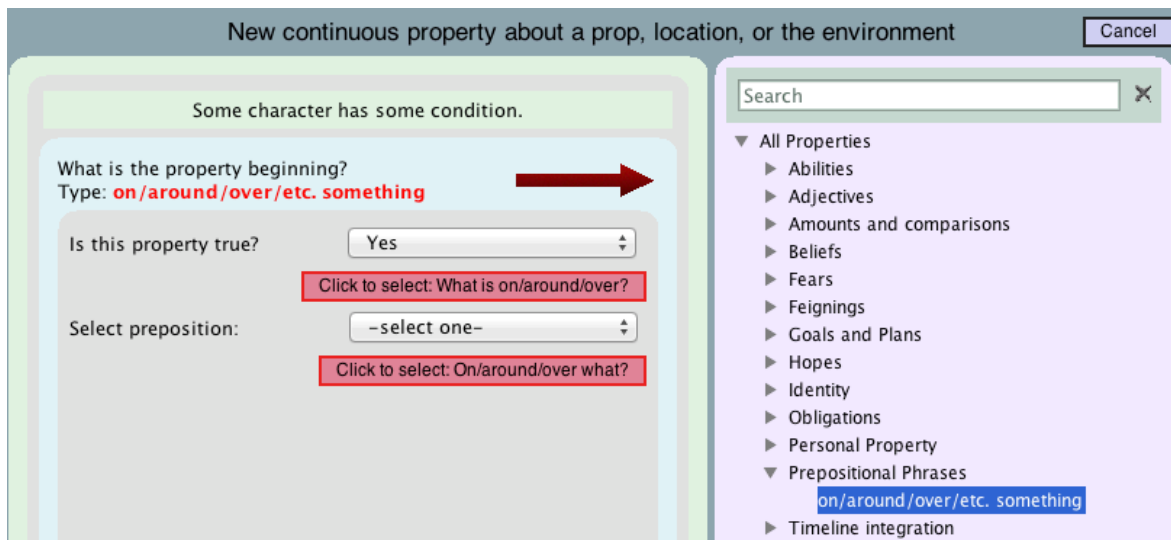


10.8. Select object of the preposition (click on the red button) as “the branch of the tree”. The modifier should now be: On the branch of the tree. Click to accept. See figure below.

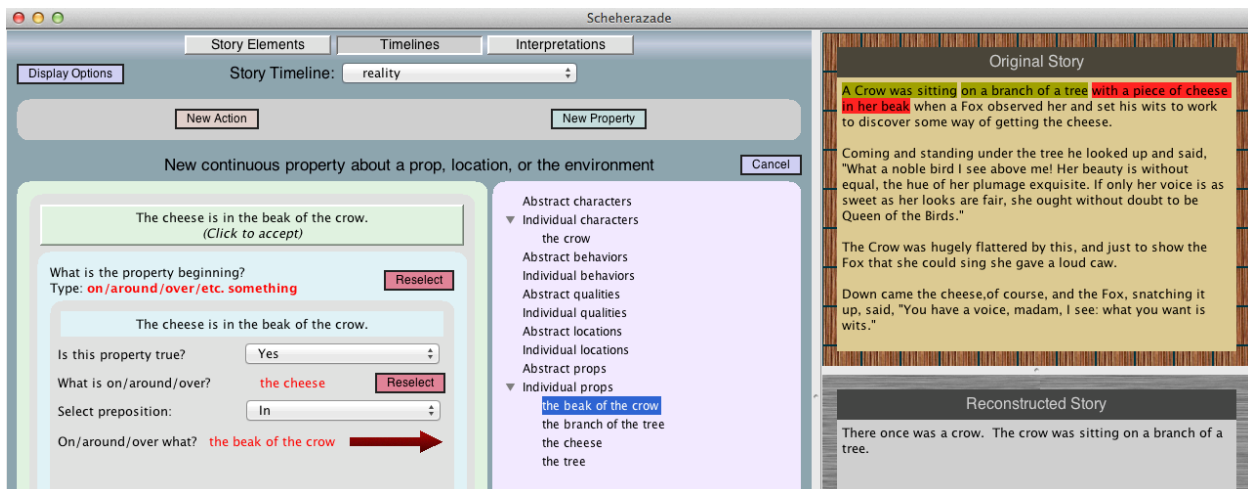


10.9. Note the window “Reconstructed Story” (bottom-right) as we encode the story. It should now say something like “There once was a crow. The crow was sitting on a branch of a tree.”

- 10.10. As part of the opening story point, we'll also encode "with a piece of cheese in her beak" as a property. Click on "New Property" (blue button). Under "Prepositional Phrases", select "on/around/over/etc. something". See figure below.

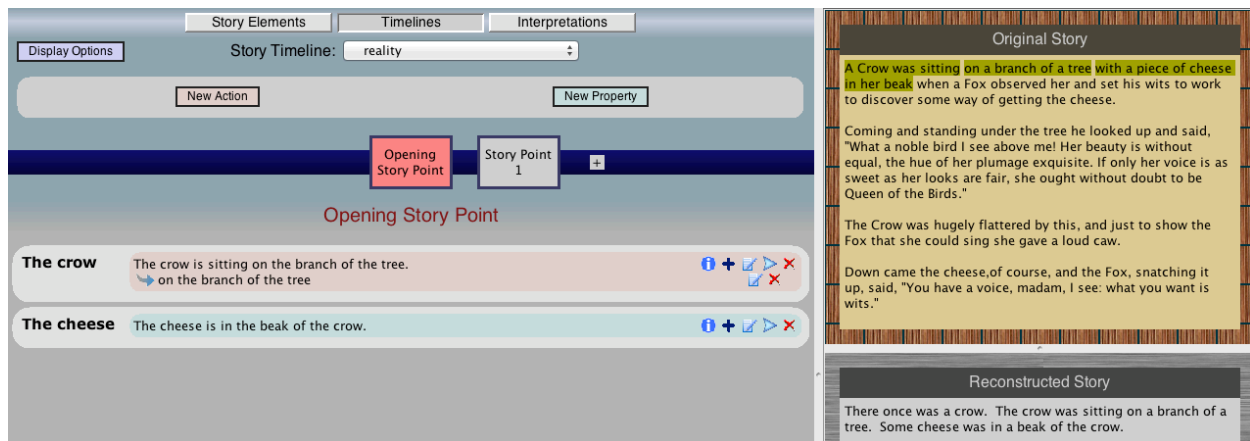


- 10.11. Top red box: **Click to select: What is on/around/over?** Select "the cheese".  
 10.12. Select preposition "In" from drop-down box.  
 10.13. Bottom red box: **click to select: On/around/over what?** Select "the beak of the crow".





- 10.14. Click to accept the property: The cheese is in the beak of the crow. The property is now added to Timeline under Opening Story Point. Note the updated Reconstructed Story. See figure below.



- 10.15. On your own, if you like: Click on Story Point 1 to encode “when a Fox observed her and set his wits to work to discover some way of getting the cheese”. Note that you will need to define new characters/props (under Story Elements) before specifying actions/properties.

- Note that you can encode the same story in many different ways. The reconstructed story is an approximation of the original story. The important thing is to capture the essence of the story.
- An example of the entire encoding for *The Fox and the Crow* can be downloaded from the *Scheherazade* website (or use the direct link here: <http://www.cs.columbia.edu/~delson/story/software/A100-TheFoxandTheCrow.vgl>). Note the file extension: VGL. To load this file, start a new version of *Scheherazade* (or quit and re-start), and click on the button “Load Encoding” to select/load the VGL file.

## Load a Saved Story

An example of the entire encoding for *The Fox and the Crow* can be downloaded from the *Scheherazade* website (or use the direct link here: <http://www.cs.columbia.edu/~delson/story/software/A100-TheFoxandTheCrow.vgl>). Note the file extension: VGL. To load this file, start a new version of *Scheherazade* (or quit and re-start), and click on the button “Load Encoding” to select/load the VGL file.