Analyzing Social Media

Handout and exercises

**Caterina Fugazzola (cfugazzola@uchicago.edu)**

These are supplementary materials to my 2024 MAXDAYS spotlight presentation. If you missed the spotlight, don't worry! These handouts cover the features shown live.

## First off: What can we ask of QDA software?

- Many things, but not everything! The focus here should not be on web scraping and importing data—though MAXQDA can help with that too to a certain extent.

- MAXQDA is optimized to help researchers manage, organize, analyze, and visualize social media data

- There is no single recipe for social media analysis, and every platform will have its own particularities

- MAXQDA offers a set of tools that are powerful and flexible enough to keep up with the speed and dynamism of social media

- The software is optimized for multi-media analysis, allowing researchers to work simultaneously on video, audio, images, and text data

- AI Assist features can help researchers as they are faced with large amounts of textual data (e.g. social media comments)

Example 1 - YouTube

MAXQDA is optimized for importing YouTube data. To begin, click on the Import tab and choose YouTube Data:
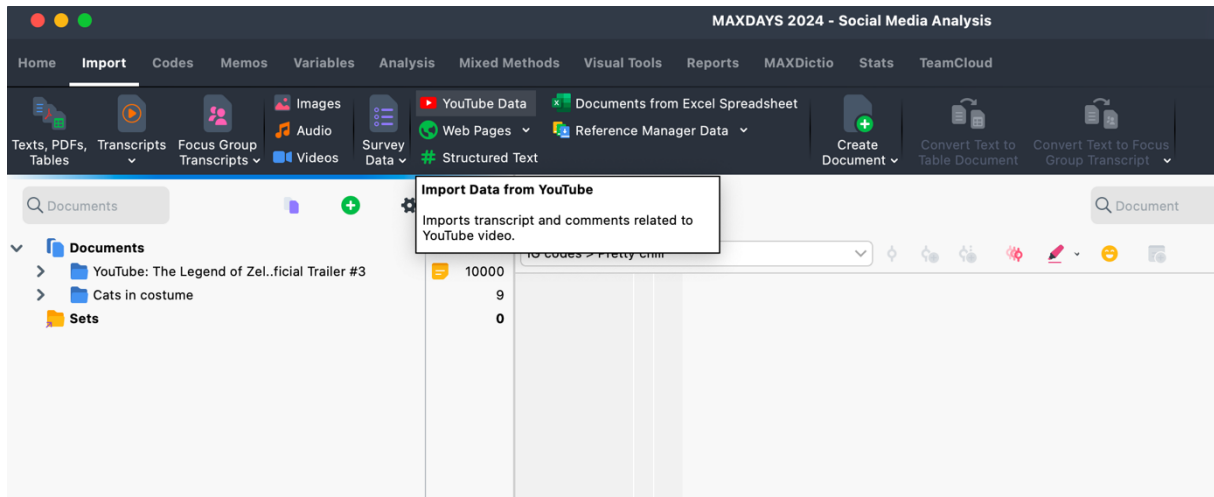

Then, paste the link to the video you want to analyze in the pop up window:
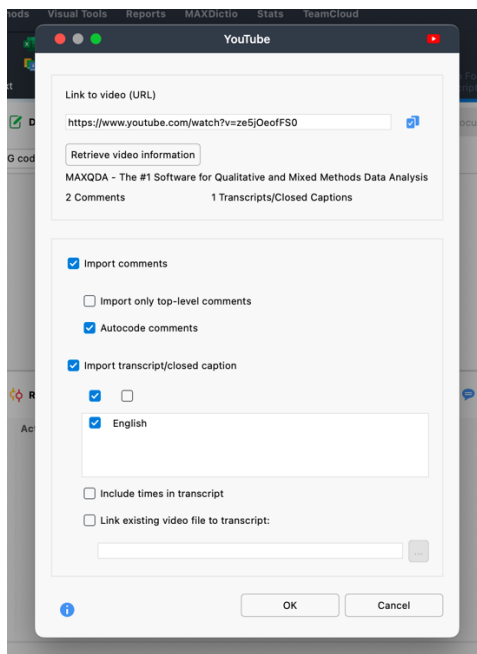
You can ask MAXQDA to autocode comments and to import transcripts, if available.

If you choose to autocode comments, MAXQDA will automatically generate codes indicating how many replies each comment generated. You will see two types of subcodes being created: one called "Comment at top level with [n] replies" and one called "Reply to comment."

When you import YouTube data, MAXQDA creates a new folder with an attached memo including video title, author, URL, posting date, description, and numerical data such as number of views, likes, and dislikes.
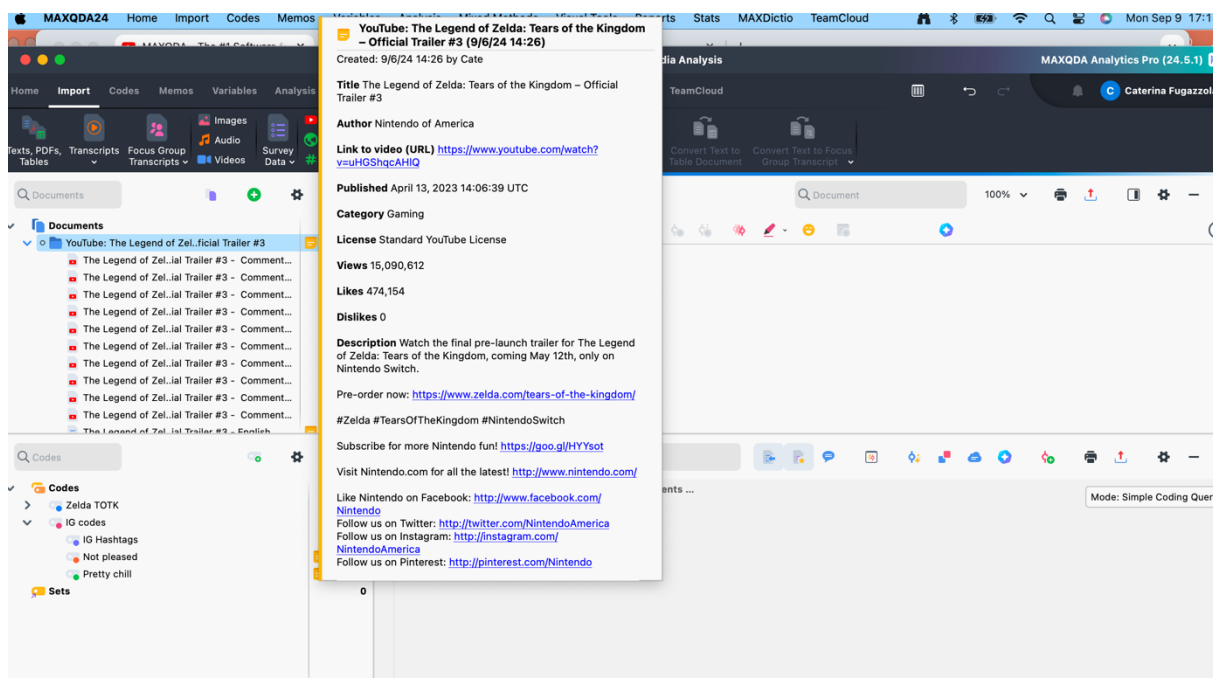
Comments are saved in separate documents in the folder, arranged in multiple tables containing up to 1000 rows per table. The tables include relevant comment data such as author's username and URL, posting date, and number of likes and replies received.

## Using AI Assist to make sense of large amounts of data

When faced with thousands of comments and replies, it can be hard to make sense of what is going on in the comments. AI Assist can help. One approach is to pick comments that have generated a good number of replies (3 or 4, for example) and to ask AI Assist to suggest some subcodes. To do so, right-click on the code and select AI Assist → Suggest Subcodes.
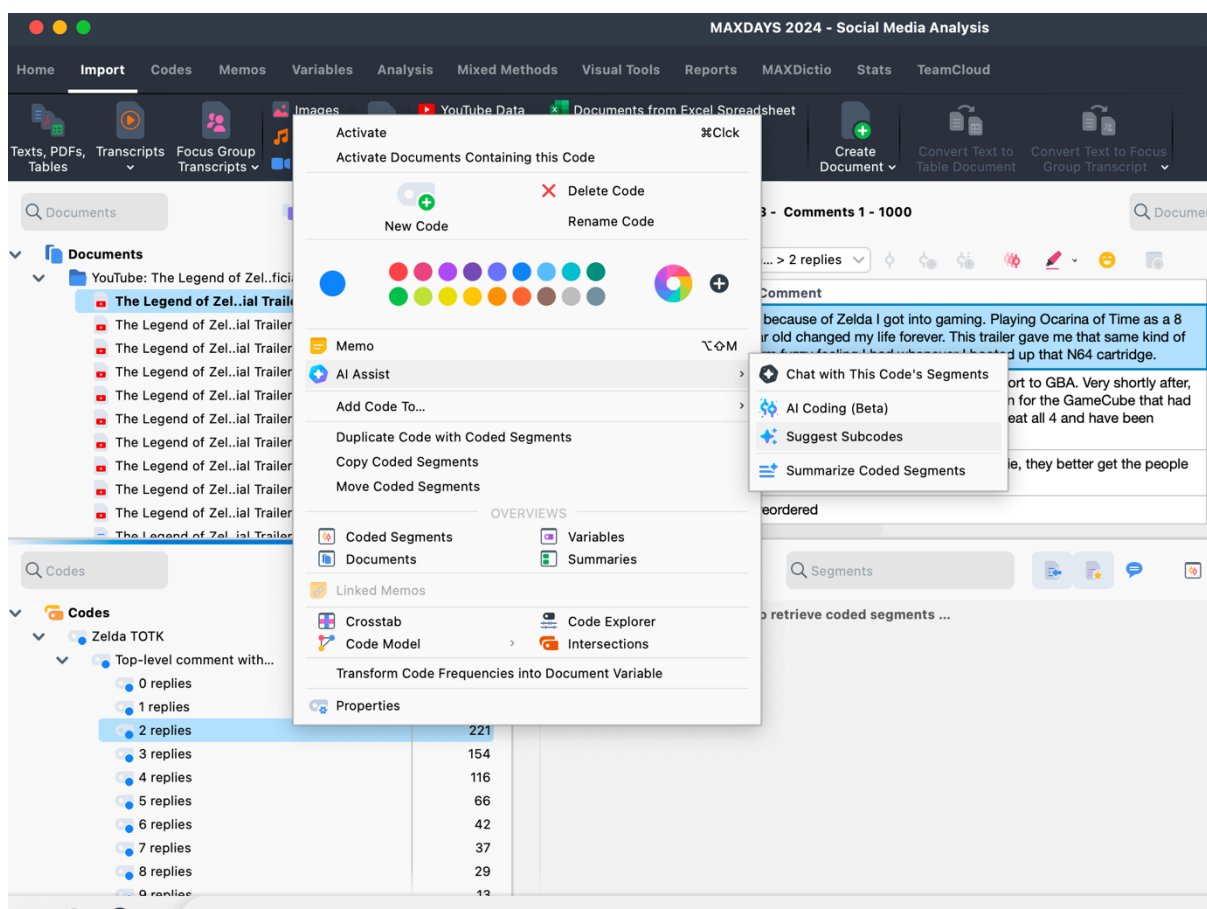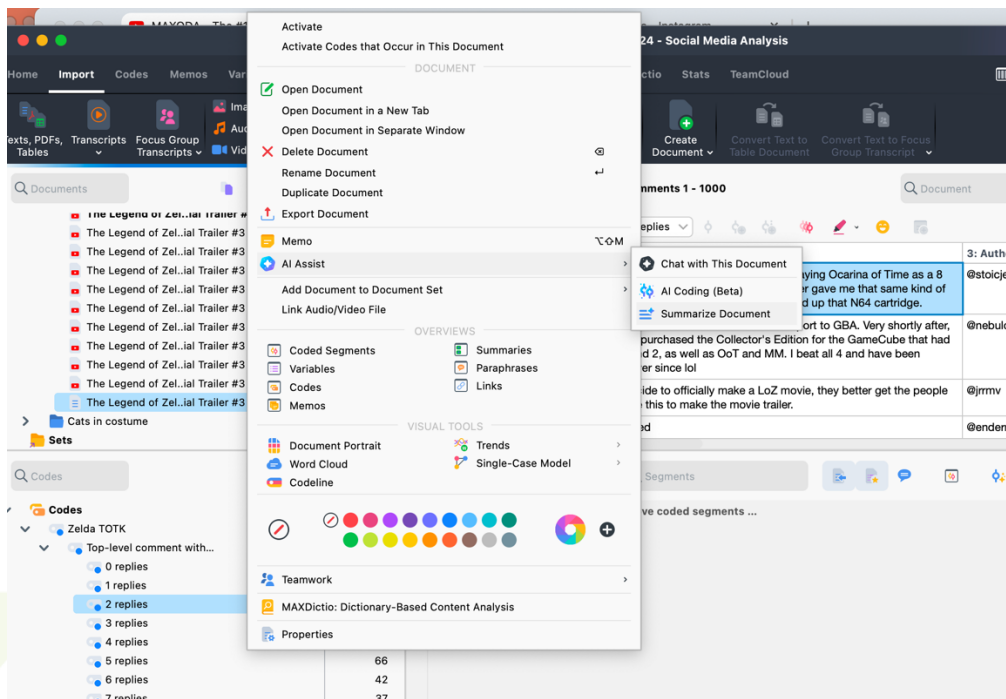

Once the suggestions have been generated, you can also further ask AI Assist to provide a summary by clicking on the AI Assist button next to Code Summary:
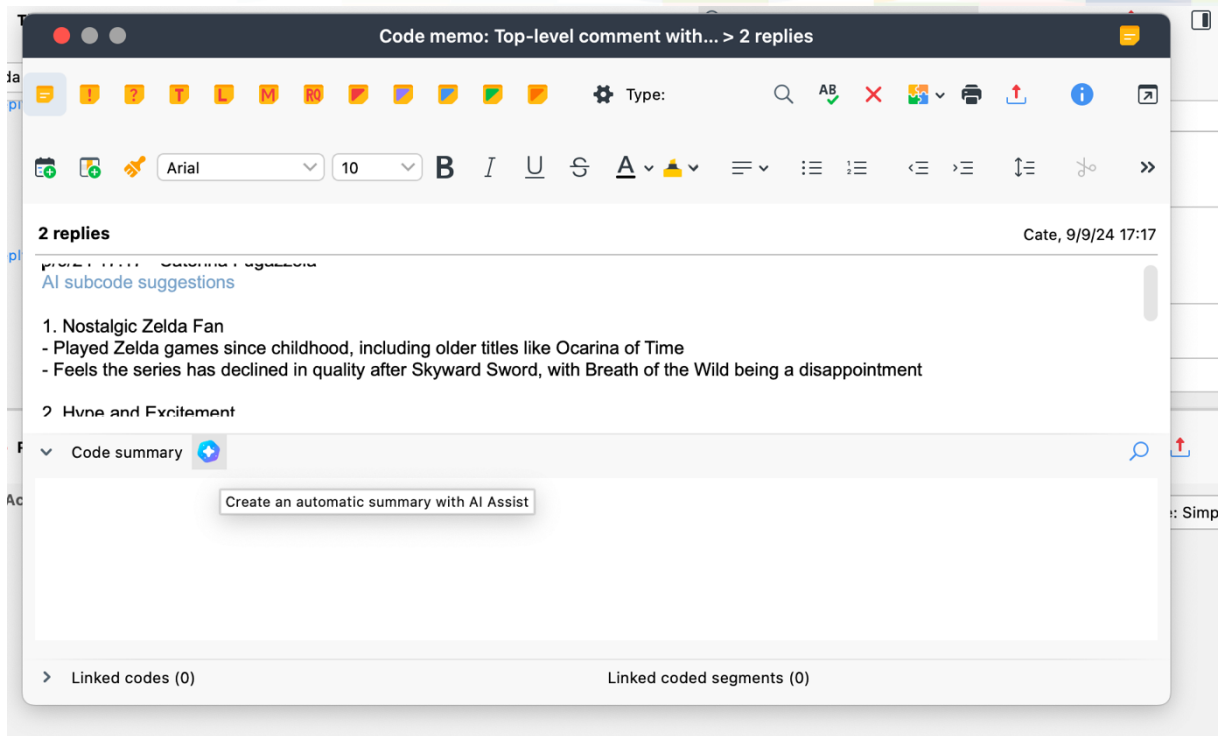
AI Assist can also help make sense of the video transcript by providing a summary. To generate a summary, right-click on the transcript document and select AI Assist → Summarize Document.

Using some of the AI recommendations on subcodes and some of the summary, it is possible to identify areas for further analysis. Then, MAXQDA offers many options for further exploration. For example, you can use some of the subcodes recommendations to identify key words to track in the comments. Try using some of the Analysis features to text search and autocode specific key words:
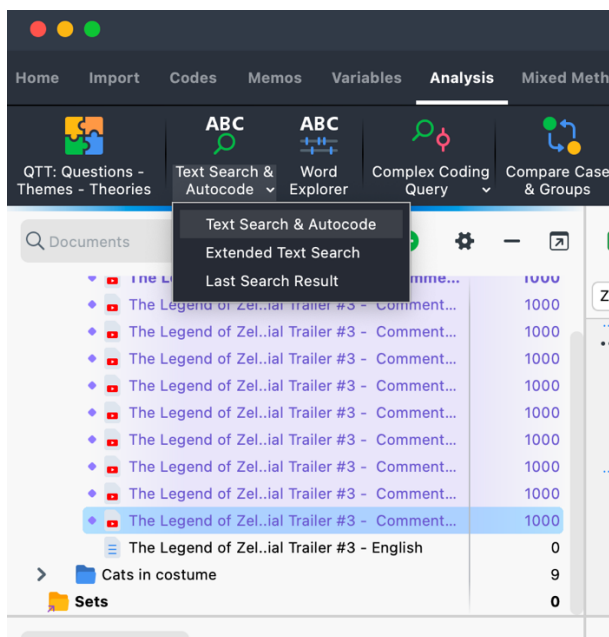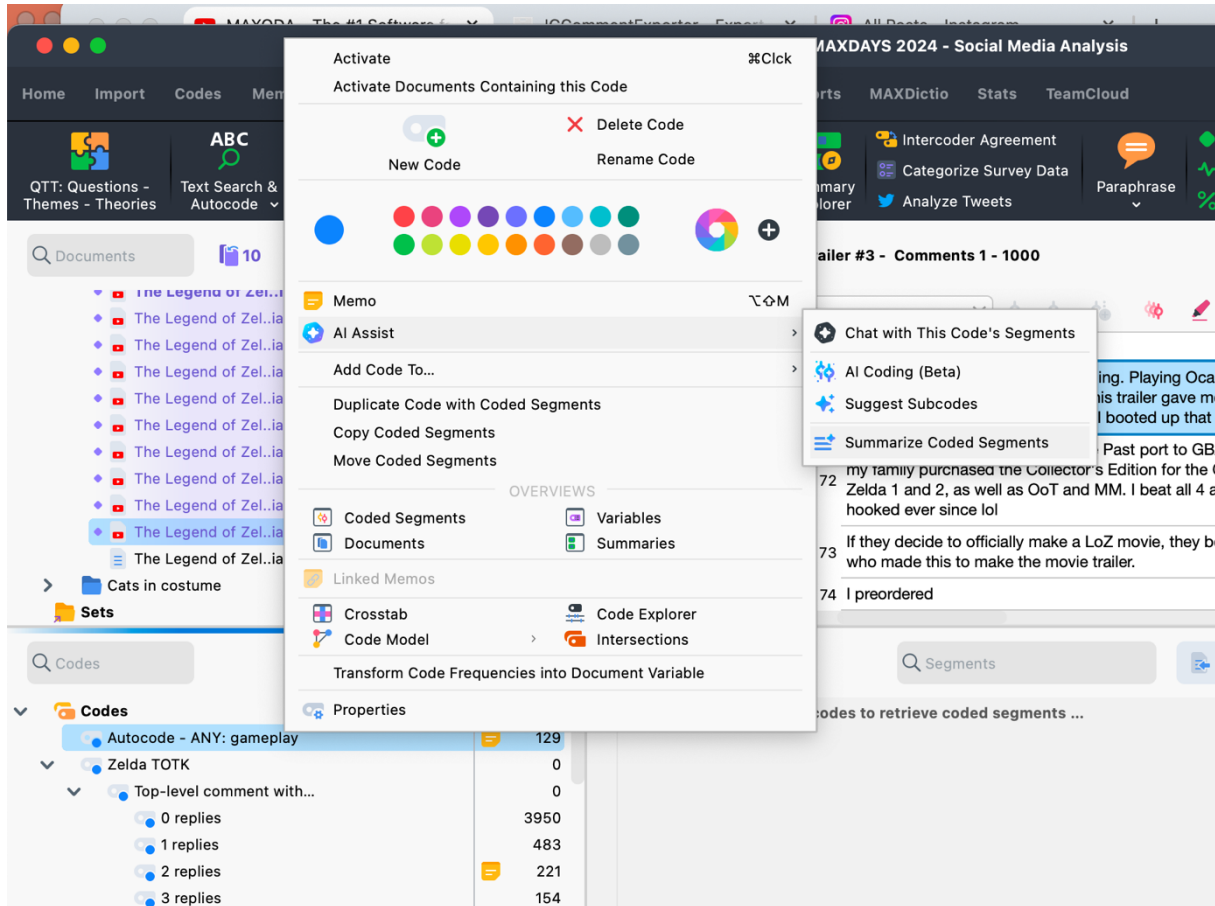

Here are some of the results for a keyword search:
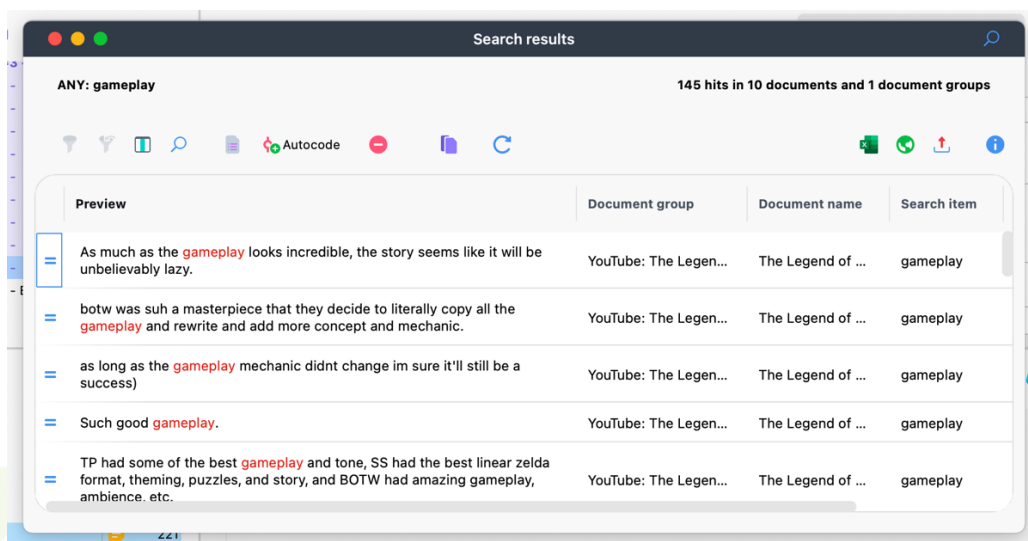
Once you have autocoded your segments, it is also possible to further use AI Assist to summarize the coded segments to get a full overview:

Try it out and play with these features as you analyze YouTube data!

Example 2 - Instagram