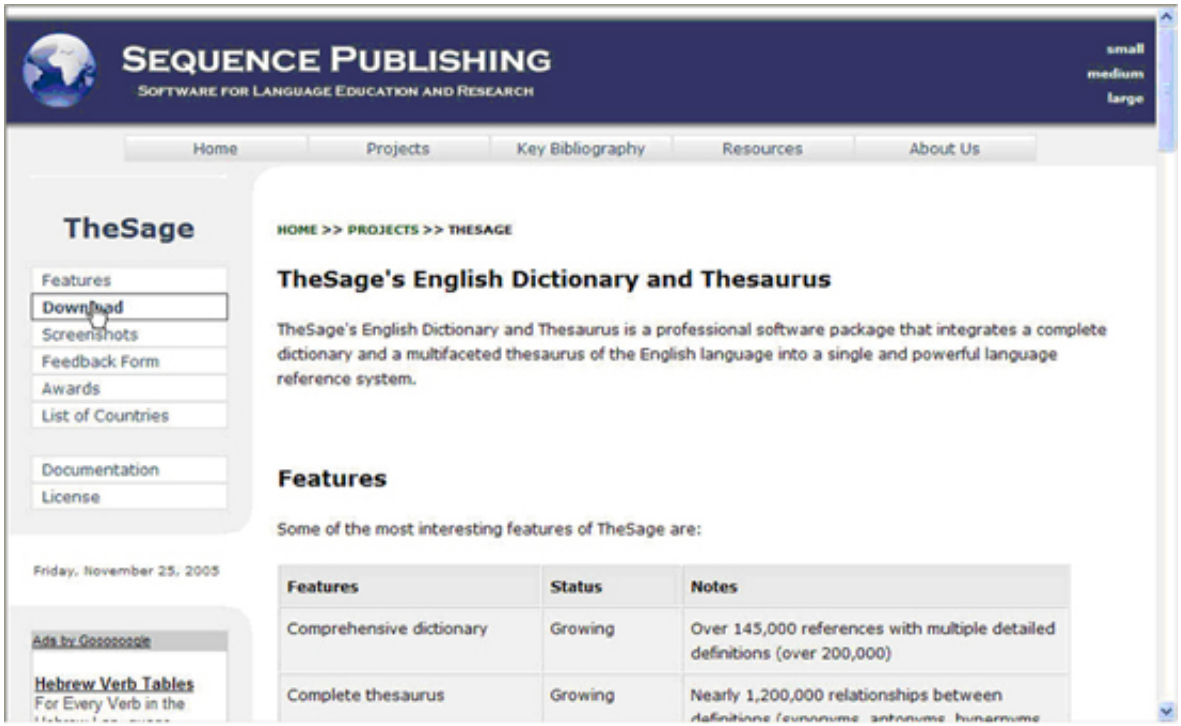
THE SAGE

The Sage is a comprehensive dictionary/encyclopedia with a completely integrated dictionary and thesaurus that defines words, terms, concepts, historical events and even has an anagram decrypter - with nearly everything cross-referenced, allowing you to jump from word to concept with just one click.



What's in a word? Well, according to The Sage, a word is far more than the definition listed in the dictionary; it's a lemma, which means that it really is a "topic" or a chapter heading; for example, a word can be defined as a part of speech (noun, verb), a hypernym (part of a larger category), synonym, holonym, antonym (look them up), or other type.

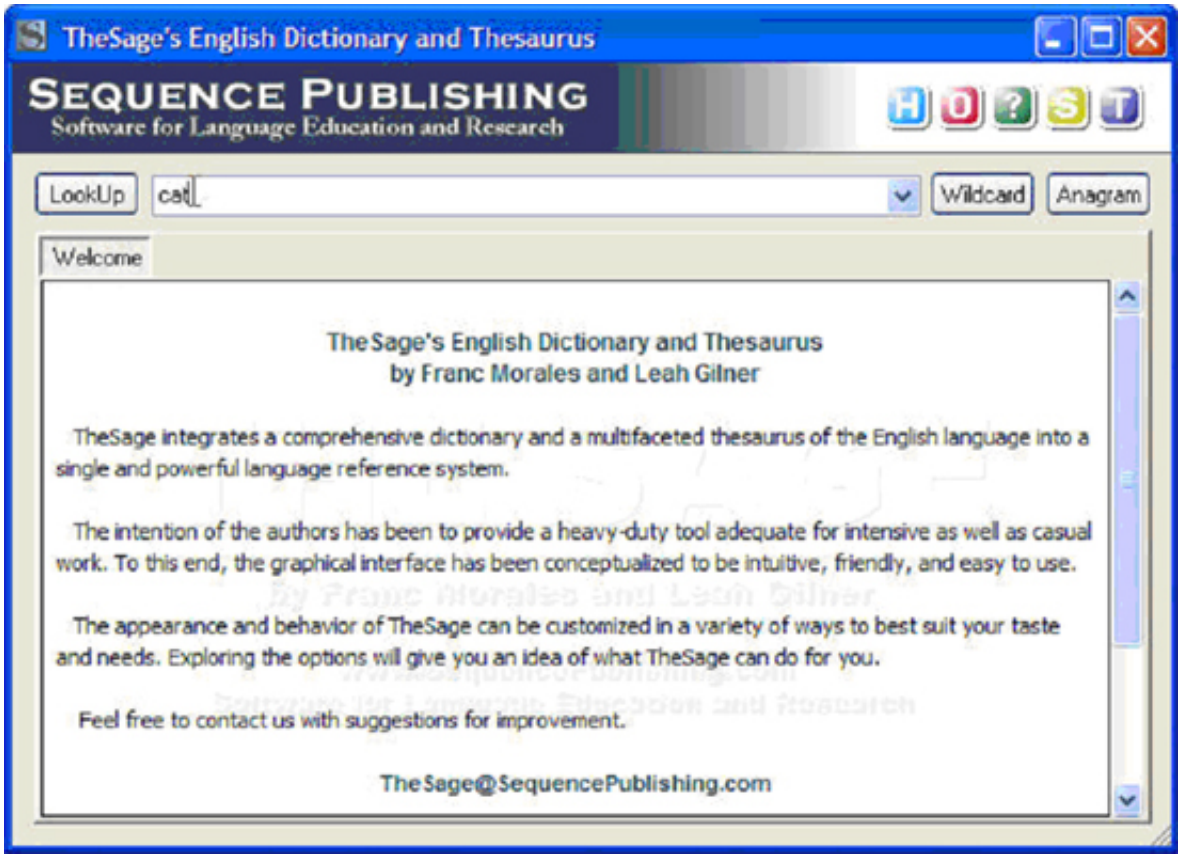
Israel, for example, is a country (hypernym), a part of the Middle East (holonym), the home of Israelis (meronym) and it can be defined in dozens of other ways.

All this information shows up when you type a word into the search box - and there are over a million such relationships portrayed in The Sage's 150,000-some word database. In addition, you get example sentences that show you how to use the word (there are 35,000-plus such sentences in the program).

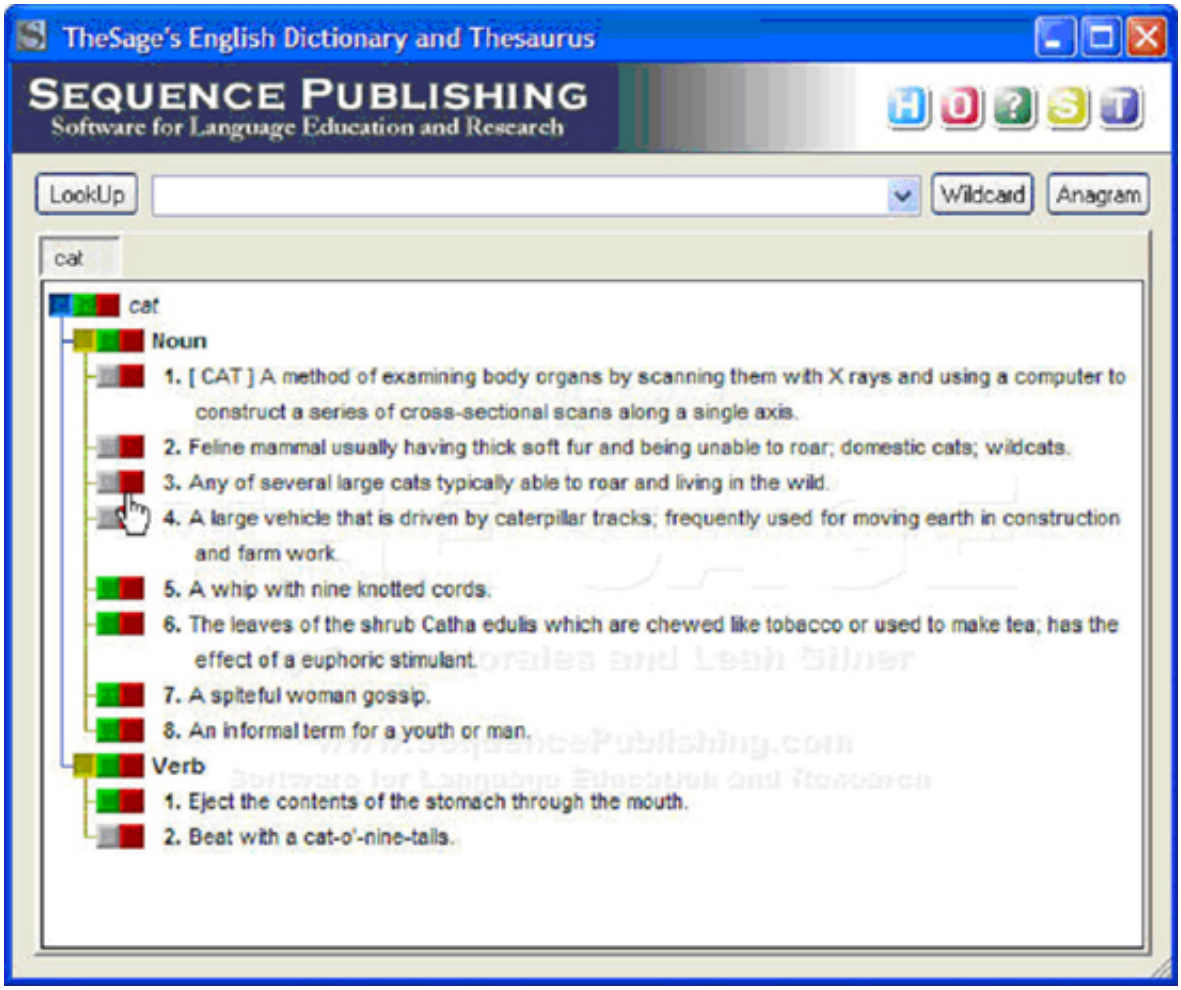
Since The Sage's database is fully integrated, you can get information on any definition that pops up by clicking on that definition - which will open up a new tab in the program and list all the information about that word as well. All tabs remain open until you right click on them, and you can have as many definition tabs as you want open at once.

How do you sort through all this useful information? Well, The Sage has that covered as well. All the information is color-coded, so once you learn to recognize the colors that indicate whether a particular line or sentence is part of The Sage's thesaurus, encyclopedia, sentence examples, parts of speech listing, etc., you'll be able to visually focus in on the specific piece of data you need immediately by just scanning the screen for a second or two (you can set the colors for each heading on the program's option screen).

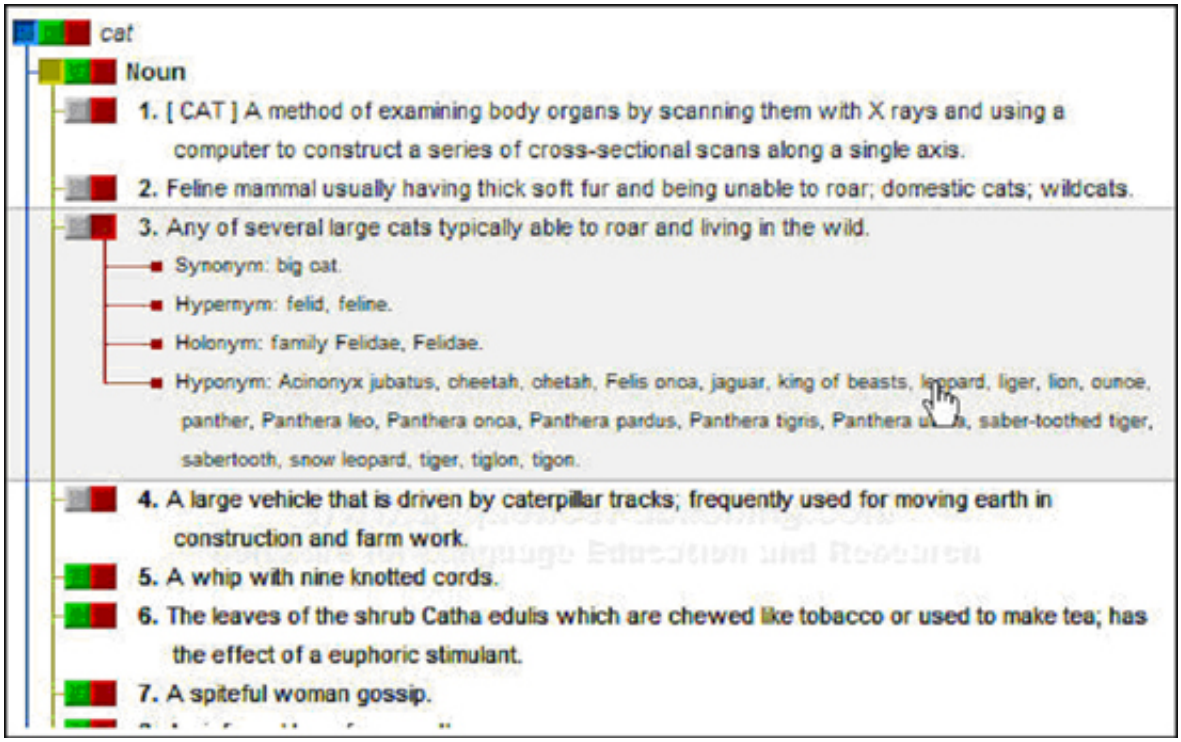
Let's look at an example. In the search box I type cat. You'll be surprised.



Either click LookUp or press ENTER, and get the results –



'cat' not only refers to what you'd expect but to CATscans, vehicles, whips and others I didn't know about. Let's expand a familiar line, but clicking the red box next to definition 3.



Here we have all sorts of choices. The expansion provides me useful information; look at all the species of Panthers. There's also a few species I had forgotten about. We can also click on a higher level, namely the two choices to the right of Holonym.

However, I decided to double-click jaguar.

In other words, The Sage practically "reads" the information you need to you - what a timesaver! You can even search for a series of words simultaneously by using The Sage's wildcard function. And the wildcard rules are extensive: you can submit a search with a "general" wildcard character to return a lot of possible definitions - for example, entering the term "ord" returned 170 listings, from cord to Mary Pickford - or narrow down the search using more specific search terms.

And then there's the anagram generator, which is lots of fun if you enjoy exploring words.

The Sage provides more than mere words - he provides solid knowledge. The Sage will work on any Windows computer and is free.

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Breaking News: In December, Microsoft's Malicous Software's Removal Tool will uninstall rootkits. (We discussed the danger of rootkits last month in Sony Spyware Backlash.) This is all the more reason to select Windows Update automatically. Each week the Malicous Software Removal Tool gets new signatures and is run on systems that have “automatic” turned on. In the near future Microsoft will combine its anti-spyware and Malicious Software Removal Tool and call it Microsoft Defender. Still free.

Dennis Turner