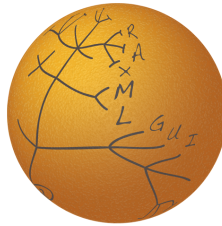


raxmlGUI

version 1.1

manual



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Introduction

RaxmlGUI is a python application, which provides a user friendly front-end for RAxML (STAMATAKIS 2006b) for Maximum Likelihood based phylogenetic analyses. The GUI interacts with RAxML executables, which are incorporated in the package, enabling the user to select input files, set the parameters and run ML analyses, such as phylogenetic reconstructions or ancestral state reconstructions with only a few mouse clicks. A number of options and functions are automated (e.g. checking for identical sequences, or gap-only characters) and simplified (e.g. model and outgroup selection, excluding sites, setting topological constraints and partitioning a matrix). Some features extend the usage of RAxML, e.g. assembling concatenated datasets with automatic partitioning, and providing analyses pipelines e.g. bootstrapping followed by computing a consensus tree, or a fast tree search followed by branch lengths estimation and computing of SH-like support values.

The GUI is meant to simplify the usage of RAxML, nevertheless it is strongly recommended to get familiar with the RAxML manual (STAMATAKIS 2008) and the “hands-on session”¹ on the Exelixis page, to be aware of contents and intent of input and output files.

Requirements

RaxmlGUI runs under Mac, Windows and Linux operating systems. The GUI automatically determines the operating system when started for the first time, and selects the respective RAxML executable.

Python 2.5 or higher is required. But please note, that **Python 3 is not supported**. If you install the additional python library DendroPy² (SUKUMARAN & HOLDER 2010) it is possible to import from and export to Nexus files (MADDISON et al. 1997).

You can launch the application with a double click on the file “raxmlGUI.py” under Windows (during the installation of Python it should be set as the default application for the “.py” extension). Under Unix (Mac OS and Linux) the program is launched by browsing to its directory via shell, and typing “./raxmlGUI.py” or “python raxmlGUI.py”. A Mac OSX application is also provided, that can be run with a double click.

Please avoid special characters (like diacritics) and punctuation other than dots (“.”) and underscore (“_”) in the (path) names of the raxmlGUI folder and all input files!

Preferences

The preferences panel provides the possibilities to change default settings and select a RAxML executable. As default you can choose among a “normal” (Windows) or a SSE3 (Mac OSX; BERGER & STAMATAKIS 2010) and a multithread version (OTT et al. 2007). If you choose the multithread version the number of threads used by RAxML can be set. You can use the “+” button to add additional versions of RAxML (e.g. newer binaries³ or those compiled for special needs). The chosen binary is then automatically copied to the application contents folder “/raxml”. Old or unused versions can be removed with “-”.

¹www.kramer.in.tum.de/exelixis/hands-On.html

²<http://packages.python.org/DendroPy/>

³You can find recently published RAxML versions on the [Exelixis homepage](#). The latest source code can be found on Alexis Stamatakis’ [git repository](#)

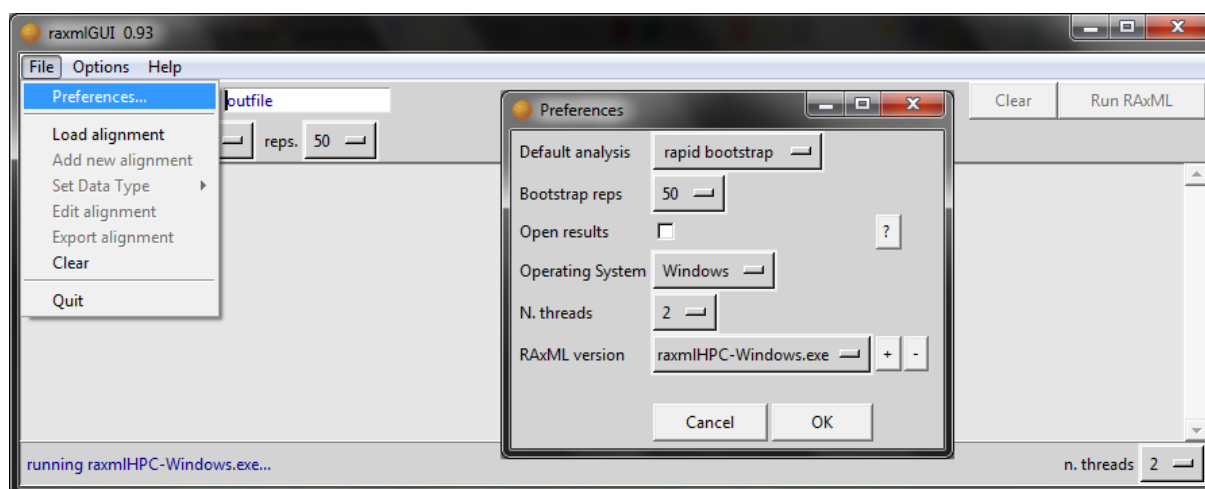


Figure 1: The preferences panel

If the box “Open results” is checked, the resulting tree (e.g. best-scoring ML tree with bootstrap values) will be opened with the default application for tree files⁴ (.tre extension), if you have set one.

Please note that changes made in the preferences panel become effective only after re-starting the program.

Loading a file

With the button “Load alignment” you can load a data set as input for the RAxML analysis, which must be in Phylip format⁵, a Nexus file (MADDISON et al. 1997) can be loaded with the menu option “Import NEXUS file”. It is then converted to Phylip format and you are asked to specify a path and file name. For converting Nexus to Phylip the additional python library DendroPy (SUKUMARAN & HOLDER 2010) is needed. In case it is not yet installed, you will be guided through the installation process⁶. Please note, that blanks and special characters in taxon names of the Nexus file will cause errors, as they are not allowed in Phylip format, please rename your taxa according to Phylip limitations⁷.

The data type of the loaded file is determined automatically. If the file contains only one data type (i.e. nucleotides, amino acid, binary, or multistate), the alignment will be checked for readability (through the RAxML option “-f c”. A warning appears in case identical sequences and/or gap-only characters are detected: you can choose to run the analyses on either the original or the reduced data set. Note that if you want to exclude sites and/or partition the matrix, position numbers specified might refer to wrong sites in a reduced data set. In such cases you might want to retain the original file.

⁴Widely used tree visualizers are [Dendroscope](#) (HUSON et al. 2007), [FigTree](#) (RAMBAUT 2006), and [Treeview](#) (PAGE 1996). For a comprehensive list of tree visualizing and editing software see http://bioinfo.unice.fr/biodiv/Tree_editors.html.

⁵For an example see Appendix A

⁶If you agree to install the library, the latest source code from Jeet Sukumaran’s [git repository](#) is downloaded as a zip folder. You will need to unzip this package and pass the path to raxmlGUI, when it asks for it. You can follow the installation process in the terminal/console window. You will need to restart raxmlGUI to make use of DendroPy.

⁷Not allowed characters in Phylip are: : ,) (;] [’

Analysis

Analysis settings

Six different main analyses can be carried out through raxmlGUI:

1. “**Fast tree search**” – very fast, superficial tree search (RAxML option “-f E”) followed by optional computations of branch lengths (“-f e”) and SH-like support values (“-f J”; SHIMODAIRA & HASEGAWA 1999)⁸. The analysis result is comparable to FastTree (PRICE et al. 2010) outputs, but is expected to yield better likelihood scores (A. Stamatakis, pers. comm.).
2. “**ML search**” – Maximum likelihood reconstruction using the rapid hill-climbing algorithm (“-f d”; STAMATAKIS et al. 2007), optionally followed by the computation of SH-like support values (see 1.), which will be plotted on the single best-scoring tree⁸. To combine the resulting trees of independent ML searches in one file, check the box “combined output”.
3. “**ML + rapid bootstrap**” (default) – Rapid bootstrap analysis and search for a best-scoring Maximum Likelihood tree (equivalent to 2.) (“-f a”; STAMATAKIS et al. 2008). The bootstrap values are reported on the ML tree.
4. “**ML + thorough bootstrap**” – Thorough bootstrap analysis (“-b”), followed by a ML search (2.). The bootstrap support values are drawn on the most likely tree (“-f b”).
5. “**Bootstrap + consensus**” – Rapid bootstrap analysis (“-x”) and a subsequent majority rule consensus tree calculation from all bootstrap trees⁸ (“-J MR”).
6. “**Ancestral states**” – Compute marginal ancestral states based on a user provided rooted tree and a character matrix (“-f A”).

Depending on the kind of alignment loaded you can choose the substitution model (GTR, BIN, MULTI, or PROT) with GAMMA[I] (YANG 1994), or CAT[I] (STAMATAKIS 2006a) rate heterogeneity. For large data sets it is possible to select the RAxML option “-F” from the menu to reduce the used memory (works best in combination with CAT[I]).

If the file contains **amino acid** data, you can specify the substitution model⁹ you want to apply, and whether base frequencies should be determined empirically (“F”, not available for the GTR substitution model). If the data type in the file is **multistate** you can choose between GTR, Ordered, and MK substitution model.

You can set the **number of bootstrap replicates** with the option button “reps”. You can choose a predefined number, set a user defined value, or select options of automatic “bootstopping” (PATTENGAL et al. 2010) according to different methods such as majority rule tree based criteria (RAxML options “-N autoMR” [recommended], “-N autoMRE”, and “-N autoMRE_IGN”) and the frequency-based criterion (option “-N autoFC”). If you check the box “**BS brL**” (option “-k”), branch lengths will be saved in the bootstrap trees (which increases computation time). Additionally you can select the **number of independent ML searches** in the second and the fourth option.

⁸Such trees can be converted to a FigTree compatible format using the menu option “Convert to FigTree”.

⁹Available substitution models for amino acids are: DAYHOFF, DCMUT, JTT, MTREV, WAG, RTREV, CPREV, VT, BLOSUM62, MTMAM, LG, MTART, MTZOA, PMB, HIVB, HIVW, JTTDCMUT, FLU, and GTR. For the references of these see Appendix D.

You can load a Newick file to provide a **starting tree** for the ML-search through the analysis menu (RAxML option “-t”).

With a nucleotide alignment you can load a file in which brackets ((), [], {}, <>) define stems and pseudo-knot regions of the sequence’s **secondary structure**. The absolute number of characters of this file must be identical to the number of sites of the alignment. Nucleotide positions within the specified regions are represented by dots (“.”).

Additional Analyses

With a file containing a set of trees (e. g. the “RAxML_bootstrap” output file from a bootstrap analysis) you can generate majority rule or strict **consensus trees**, and find a **set of rogue taxa** (dropset) that decreases support values (RAxML option “-J”, for the rogue taxon identification see PATTENGAL et al. 2011).

In addition you can compute **Robinson-Foulds pairwise distances** (ROBINSON & FOULDS 1981) between trees (option “-f r”).

With an alignment loaded and a file containing one or more trees you can also compute **per site log Likelihoods** (option “-f g”). The output that can be read by CONSEL (SHIMODAIRA 2001) to calculate p-values. In addition you can compute **SH-like support values** (SHIMODAIRA & HASEGAWA 1999) on a given (best) tree (option “-f J”).

Excluding sites

In order to exclude sites you can use the interactive panel, or load a file which has to be in the RAxML standard format:

```
1-200 333-333 500-667
```

Loading a file with this content, or specifying these ranges in the panel, will produce a new alignment file (using the RAxML flag “-E”), reduced by the first 200 columns, the single site 333 and the sites 500–667. The new alignment file is automatically set as input and is again checked for identical sequences and/or gap-only characters.

Partitioning the matrix

There are three different ways of defining partitions (RAxML option “-q”):

Maybe the easiest way is to load individual partitions one after the other as separate files with the “Add Alignment” -button. RaxmlGUI will automatically set the partitions according to the determined data type. **CAUTION! RaxmlGUI will ONLY check for identical taxon counts! Double-check the taxon order!**

The second way is to load the combined data set as one and to set partitions in an interactive way with the option “Set/Edit partitions...”.

The third way is to load a file with the format specified in STAMATAKIS (2008)¹⁰; note that in a partitioned analysis every site has to be assigned to one partition, i. e. sites must not be assigned to two different partitions, and no site is allowed to be not assigned to any partition.

In any case you can edit, delete, and export the partitions set.

If you successfully set a partitioning scheme on your data set, you will be asked before the run starts if you want to calculate the branch lengths independently for each partition (RAxML option “-M”). This will produce best-scoring likelihood trees with branch length optimized for each partition (identical topology).

¹⁰See also Appendix B

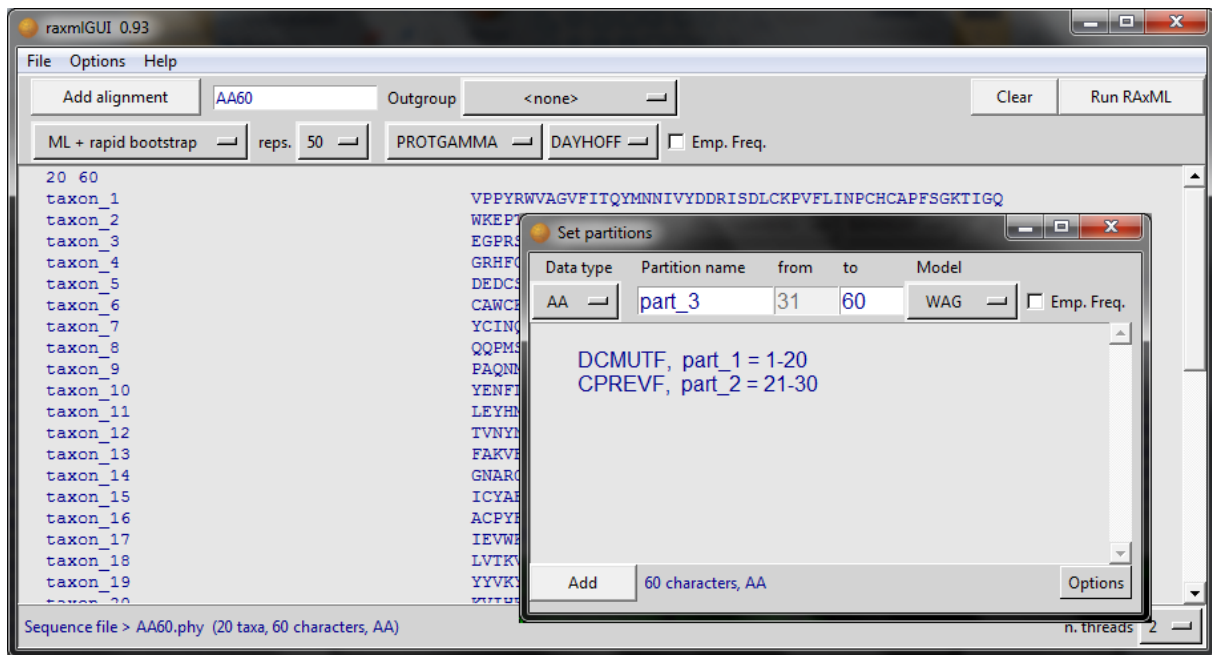



Figure 2: The partitioning panel

Outgroup selection

A list of all taxa in the matrix is created in the program's toolbar for a quick single-taxon outgroup selection (RAxML option "-o"). If you want to specify more than one taxon to be in the outgroup, choose the option "select multiple outgroup" from the analysis menu. A window will open with a list of all taxa. You can mark more than one taxon by holding  (selecting ranges) or **Ctrl** (selecting single entries) for selecting those as outgroup. If RAxML finds the multiple outgroup not to be monophyletic, it will take the first taxon in the list as outgroup. If no outgroup is selected, the tree will be unrooted.

Setting a topological constraint

You can enforce topological constraints to your analysis through the menu option "enforce constraints". You can define taxon groups through a panel ("define topological constraint...") or by uploading a Newick formatted tree file, which can be binary or multifurcating. RAxML options "-r" or "-g" will be used for binary or multifurcating tree constraints, respectively.

Note that RAxML accepts only backbone constraints, which means, that unconstrained taxa can be placed at any position in the resulting tree, including within constrained clades. If you want to constrain monophyletic groups you can check the respective box in the panel, this will automatically append the remaining taxa to the set of constraints, so all constrained clades will result monophyletic.

Output files

You can set the name of the RAxML output files in the text field. By default the output file name is the same as the input file (without extension). The suffix "_red" is appended if identical sequences (or gap-only characters) are excluded from the analyses, and "_exc" is used when the "exclusion site" option is applied. If a RAxML info file with the same ID is found in the directory, you are prompted to change the output name before starting the analysis. For all types of output files, and their contents please refer to STAMATAKIS (2008).

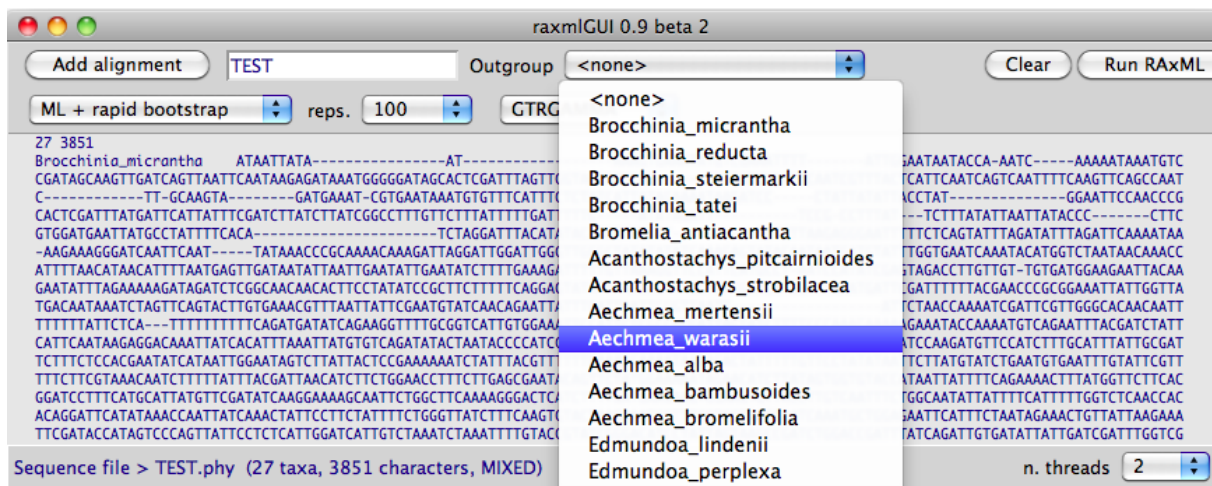


Figure 3: Outgroup selection

Utilities

























































In some trees RAxML associates support values to the branches, rather than to the nodes (e. g. consensus trees, and those with SH-like support values). This format is not supported by FigTree (RAMBAUT 2006). However, if you want to use this program, you can produce a modified version of those tree files using the menu option “**Convert to FigTree format**”.

It is possible to **export your alignment in Nexus format**. If the necessary python library DendroPy (SUKUMARAN & HOLDER 2010) is not yet installed, you will be guided through its installation.⁶

You can **inspect the RAxML command** that will be executed in the terminal before pressing “run RAxML” with the menu option “show RAxML command”. In case of pipelined analyses this can contain many commands. Further it is possible to save the command(s) to a file.

You can **export the citation** for raxmlGUI in the following formats: Text, BiBTeX, EndNote (xml), and Reference manager (RIS).

Keyboard shortcuts

Action	Short cut Win/Linux	Short cut Mac
Open alignment	 	 
Export alignment	 	 
Change analysis type	 	 
Save memory (for large trees)	 	 
Exclude sites	 	 
Set partitions	 	 
Clear	  	  
Quit raxmlGUI	 	 
Preferences	  	 
Close window	 	 
Run analysis	 	 
Open this raxmlGUI help	 	 
Import Nexus file	 	 
Save changes (exclude sites/ define partitions/preferences)		

Contacts

If you find any problems/bugs or want to give us a feedback, please contact us:

raxmlgui.help@gmail.com.

If you want to get the latest news (e. g. new releases and updates), you can subscribe to our mailing list on <http://lists.sourceforge.net/lists/listinfo/raxmlgui-news>.

If you have problems or questions regarding RAxML, please have a look at the [RAxML google group](#).

References

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Appendix

A. A working Phylip example

```
6 40
1_first_row_reads_nroftaxa_blank_nrofcharacters GTGGCGGTCATTCTCATTTG
2_this_is_a_working_example__taxon_names_can_be_very_long ATTCTGGTCATTCTGGTC
3_not_allowed_in_names_are_blanks_and_special_characters CGTGACATTCTGTCTTGGT
4_use_blanks_or_tabs_to_delimit_taxon_names_from_characters TCATTCTGCGATGTCTGTG
5_there_is_no_option_for_comments_like_in_Nexus_format TGTGCGTTGGTCATCTCAG
6_for_interleaved_format_dont_repeat_the_taxon_names TTTCTTGGCGGTCGTTCAA
```

```
TCTCATTGGCGGTCATTGGT
ATGTTGGCGGTCATTCTCTG
ATTGGCCTCCAGGTGTGTT
GGGTCACTCATTCTGTGTT
TGTGATTGGCGGTCATTCTCG
GTTTGGACTCATTTGCGGTC
```

B. The format of the Partition file

General format

Parttype, partname = partrange

e. g.:

```
DNA, partition1 = 1-100
BIN, partition2 = 101-200
```

A slightly more complex example

```
JTT, AAgene1 = 1-500

WAGF, AAgene2withempiricalfrequencies = 501-800

MULTI, multistatepartition3 = 801-900

BIN, binarypartition4 = 901-1000

DNA, DNAgene5codon1and2 = 1001-1500\3, 1002-1500\3
DNA, DNAgene5codon3 = 1003-1500\3

DNA, DNAgene6codon1 = 1501-2000\3
DNA, DNAgene6codon2 = 1502-2000\3
DNA, DNAgene6codon3 = 1503-2000\3

DNA, DNAsplitgene7 = 2001-2200, 2800-3000
DNA, intronofgene7 = 2201-2799
```

C. Papers that cite raxmlGUI

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