

# An Introduction to *Twine* and Interactive Text Games

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## **What is Twine?**

Twine ([www.twinery.org](http://www.twinery.org)) is a free program for the creation of interactive digital text games. It is available in two versions – Twine 1.4 (for Mac and PC) and Twine 2 (online and browser-based, as well as downloadable for Mac and PC).

## **How are the two versions different?**

Twine 2 is not a more advanced version; they have different capabilities and slightly different interfaces. Twine 1.4 requires a download and installation, and is not being actively developed currently. This workshop will focus on Twine 2 .

## **What kinds of games can be created with Twine?**

Twine creates interactive texts. Essentially, this involves passages of text, which can be connected via links that the reader clicks on. The reader's choices determine which passage appears next.

Reader choices can also be used to set and alter values of variables, and the state of variables can be used to determine what happens within the game.

The most straightforward use of Twine and similar programs involves creating branching, choice-based narratives similar to a “choose-your-own-adventure” story. However, the program can be used for creating other types of games or interactive activities that involve text and choices.

Games made with Twine are html files that can be opened and played in any browser, and can be hosted or transferred in the same manner as any other web page.

## **How do I get started with Twine?**

The easiest way is to go to [www.twinery.org](http://www.twinery.org), click the “use it online” link, and follow the instructions to create a new story.

## **How do I save a file?**

In Twine 2, you can either click on the “Archive” link to save an archive of all of your current stories, or click on the “publish to file” link. **Note that when using Twine online, stories are only saved in your browser history, so you MUST use the publish or archive option to prevent the stories from being lost if the browser history is cleared.**

## **What are Story Formats?**

Story Formats affect the appearance and features of the games created with Twine; the syntax of code used to create texts also differs from one story format to another. The workshop and document will refer to the default

story format of Twine 2, called Harlowe.

## How do I create a new passage link?

To create a passage link, enclose text in double brackets. Writing `[[next]]` will create a passage called “next”, and a link to it. If you want the text of the link to be different from the name of the passage in the interface, use the following format `[[Go to the next passage->next]]`

## How do I set variables?

To create a variable (called \$score) and set its value to 3, use the following command: `(set: $score to 3)`. The \$ sign tells Twine that the text is a variable. When the passage containing this command is reached by the reader, the variable will be set. You can then change the variable by using the “set” command. For example, `(set: $score +=1)` increases the \$score variable by 1. You can also set variables to “true” or “false,” or to a text value – e.g. `(set: $mood to 'happy')`

Finally, you can set variables randomly. To set the \$score variable to a random number between 1 and 6, use:

```
(set: $score to (random:1,6))
```

## How do I have the game react to different variable values?

This involves using the “if” command with a condition, followed by material within brackets – the text in the brackets will appear or take effect only if the condition is met. For example:

```
(if: $temperature < 30) [You feel cold [[Wear hat->hat]] ]
```

This will cause the text “You feel cold,” as well a link that says “Wear hat,” to appear only if the temperature variable is less than 30.

The “if” condition can also be used to set other variables, as in the following:

```
(if: $temperature < 30) [(set:$mood to “grumpy”)].
```

## How do I change the appearance of the game?

Changes from the default visual style and color scheme can be clicking on “edit story stylesheet” in the options menu (next to the story title in the lower left corner). CSS code entered here will change the appearance of the game. Many CSS tutorials are available online; a guide specifically for Twine 2 and the Harlowe story format can be found at:

[http://furtleindustries.com/fictions/twine/twine2\\_CSS\\_tutorial/](http://furtleindustries.com/fictions/twine/twine2_CSS_tutorial/)

## Is there a Twine manual online?

The documentation for Twine 2 is a little uneven, but a pretty good guide can be found through the “Wiki” link on the [twinery.org](http://twinery.org) website. A full guide to the Harlowe format can be found at [twine2.neocities.org](http://twine2.neocities.org).