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At Your Service: Your Roadmap to Support from SAS®

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Abstract

At YOUR service. How do you make the most of the products and services from SAS® Publishing, SAS Education, SAS Technical Support, and support.sas.com?

You have world-class support from SAS at your fingertips. But where do you start? How do you navigate the sea of information available to you from SAS? How do you find the resources you need to do your job? This paper will provide you with practical tips, tricks, and techniques to find exactly what you need to use SAS. You'll save time, learn about upcoming content and, best of all, become a more proficient and expert user of SAS.

This paper will benefit the new user and the seasoned SAS user alike. The intended audience is anyone interested in learning more about how to effectively use the services available from SAS.

Introduction

I've had the good fortune to do a fair bit of travel; from small seaside resort towns, to large metropolitan cities, to mid-size communities in the mountains. At most local hotels, there was a concierge on staff to assist guests in making the most of their stay. I've often thought how much easier it is for the concierge in the small town to assist their customers. The fewer attractions, stores, and restaurants certainly have to make the concierge's job a bit easier. Conversely, I've marveled at the concierge in the major metropolitan city who is adept at meeting the needs of a variety of international guests, while addressing their questions (often in their native language)!

The concierge can influence your trip. Concierges can greatly improve your stay by directly answering your query or pleasantly surprising you with a tip or a suggestion that enhances your stay.

That's how it is with the service organizations at SAS. We are here to assist **you** in making the most of your investment with SAS.

This paper is primarily targeted at the SAS programmer, end user, and manager responsible for using SAS to solve business problems. However, the curious Director and inquisitive Executive might find this overview information useful to better understand the breadth and depth of services available from SAS. The remainder of this paper is organized into three parts. The overview section includes the mission statements, contact information, and high-level overview for Education, Technical Support, and Publications. The second section dives deeper into each organization and provides tips, tricks, and detailed information that will help you be more proficient with SAS. Finally, I'll focus on support.sas.com (the concierge desk!) where all this information comes together.

Overview of SAS Support

SAS has three major service organizations, each with a different focus area but with a common goal: Present the company's values to the user community that we serve. At SAS, we strive to be…

- **approachable.** We are accessible to our customers and business contacts, and make it easy for them to do business with us.

- **customer-driven.** We work closely with our customers to understand and solve their business issues, exceed their expectations, and deliver exceptional value.
- **swift and agile**. By being responsive, flexible, and action-oriented, we seek to reduce complexity in a constantly changing world.
- **innovative**. We champion excellence by creatively and constructively challenging the status quo.
- **trusted**. Because we act with transparency and openness and always keep our promises, we inspire confidence and respect.

With these values forming our base, SAS provides our user community with the following world-class services:

Technical Support

This organization provides live phone (and email) contact to assist you in making the best use of our software products and solutions through effective and responsive support, active advocacy, and a broad and flexible range of self-help resources.

Education

SAS Education provides training and services that empower users to realize the full potential of SAS software. We offer a broad spectrum of customer training services as well as the SAS Certified Professional Program. Training is available in multiple delivery methods:

- Classroom training. Courses taught by SAS instructors in real-time at SAS training centers or your location.
- Live Web classroom training. Courses taught by SAS instructors in real-time over the Web to your desktop.
- e-Learning. Innovative and engaging self-study available online, when you need it and where you need it.

Education also offers the following specialized training and services:

- Business Knowledge Series (BKS): a training initiative between SAS and industry professionals
- Six Sigma and Performance Excellence by SAS: a complete solution for deploying Six Sigma throughout your organization

Publications

The Publications division provides documentation and books in a variety of formats. SAS Publications develops, publishes, and markets an integrated suite of SAS software support products for a global market. These products include documentation, user-written books, and online Help:

Product	Audience	Delivery Method
Documentation	Programmers	HTML (free)
	Analysts	PDF (free)
	Consultants and systems integrators	Hard-copy book

Product	Audience	Delivery Method
SAS Press	Programmers Business Users Analysts Consultants and systems integrators	Hard-copy book
SAS and Wiley Business Series	Business Users Analysts Managers C-level	Hard-copy book

Contact Us

Technical Support

Telephone	1-919-677-8008 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern time (North America) Follow-the-sun support for business-critical problems
E-mail	support@sas.com Be sure to include site and contact information, problem description, and any relevant information (logs, etc.) to help with our investigation.
Online	http://support.sas.com/techsup This links to the online problem submission form.

Education

Telephone	1-800-333-7660
E-mail	training@sas.com
Online	http://support.sas.com/training

Publications

Telephone	1-800-727-3228
E-mail	sasbook@sas.com
Online	http://support.sas.com/bookstore • Facebook: www.facebook.com/saspublishing • Twitter: www.twitter.com/saspublishing

Support Services from SAS

SAS Education

QUICK OVERVIEW

The majority of this section was taken from Amy Peters' "What's New in SAS® Training for SAS®˙9.2,*"* presented at the 2009 SAS Global Forum.

Education curriculum consultants and sales professionals are available to assist you in making the most of your investment in training. Whether you are a programmer or a project manager, we have a curriculum suited to you. Our redesigned [Web site](#) provides curriculum paths for a wide variety of job types. This is the perfect place to begin developing your training path. Please visit support.sas.com/training to discover the curriculum path and begin your journey. And remember, SAS Education representatives and curriculum consultants are available to assist you every step of the way.

We've made a number of enhancements and changes to our overall approach to training. SAS Education has spent the past year updating the entire SAS® 9.2 curriculum and aligning offerings around the world. Sweeping changes driven by customer requests—including more interactivity, leveled exercises, and an overhaul of the data used in courses—have been implemented. New media were also introduced, including multimedia e-Courses and short-topic e-Lectures.

CURRICULUM UPDATES AND NEW MEDIA

Customers also told us that they needed content in multiple media to meet the variety of learning styles. Our response is the "like-to-like" design of our core courses where the same content is presented in the classroom, via Live Web, and in our new e-Courses, which are self-paced e-Learning.

These courses are already available in all of these media:

- **SAS Programming Introduction: Basic Concepts**. This course helps students who have no programming experience get ready for Programming 1.
- **SAS Programming 1: Essentials**. This course teaches students to read, manipulate, and analyze data. It is the foundation how-to-use SAS course.
- **SAS Programming 2: Data Manipulation Techniques**. This course expands upon the basics taught in Programming 1, digging into the power of the DATA step and understanding the robust data processing you can do.

We plan to round out the like-to-like offerings with the Macro, SQL, and Programming 3 courses by the end of the year.

The new e-Courses represent a complete change in the self-paced media. They are audio-based and use Flash animations to illustrate key concepts. The interactivity and depth of these courses have already won industry awards.

Customers were also looking for **quick help**, such as short training segments on specific topics that can be accessed as they are needed. E-Lectures were created to meet this need. An e-Lecture is a short, 15- to 45-minute recording of a SAS instructor lecturing on a specific topic. Unlike our other offerings, there is no interactivity in this medium. Instead, it is as if you ask an expert a question and the expert tells you what he or she knows.

We plan to continually add new topics to the e-Lecture library. Of interest to experienced SAS users are the following e-Lectures that cover some of the new SAS 9.2 features:

- **SAS 9.2 Changes and Enhancements for Base SAS®, Session 1: New and Enhanced Procedures and Statements**. This course is available free of charge on the Web. It provides an example of what an e-Lecture is like, and it is a way to learn about the new features in Base SAS.
- **SAS 9.2 Changes and Enhancements for Base SAS, Session 2: The Macro Facility**.
- **SAS 9.2 Changes and Enhancements for Base SAS, Session 3: SAS XML LIBNAME Engine and ODS**.

For global consistency, we reached agreement on what courses are offered in all SAS offices. These courses are now reflected in the learning paths on the Web. Each country office still has the ability to offer courses specific to their local needs, but the core of each curriculum is the same regardless of where a customer takes the training.

THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

Several design elements were incorporated into the core course revisions that enhance the student experience but that a student would not necessarily notice. Multi-level exercises were introduced to help engage the many levels of students often found in each class. Every class contains students who face new concepts and struggle to complete an exercise. These students might be sitting next to students already familiar with a topic and bored at the end of each workshop period. We have added "leveled" exercises so that each student can pick what is appropriate for his or her skill level.

Exercises are offered at three levels:

- Problems that are just like what the instructor demonstrated during the lecture.
- Problems that are a little harder and require the student to do more on their own and to deviate from what the instructor did during the lecture.
- Problems that show the student a result and have them work toward that result by using what they learned during the lecture and by going out to the Help facility. This helps prepare students for being on their own after the class.

The goal is for the student to be *challenged* but also *satisfied* at the end of the workshop that they have mastered the topic to the best of their ability. Students are also given access to a post-class Web site for many classes. This Web site gives students access to the course data and provides links to information that might be helpful to them after class such as white papers, extra exercises, a course case study, and additional documents.

Technical Support

SAS Technical Support consultants are committed to providing you world-class support. Consultants are available to assist site representatives and SAS consultants on a global scale.

A Technical Support "track" is opened for every interaction with SAS. Your track is followed to completion and is available for any support consultant to provide you with continuity in solving your issue. SAS Technical Support is a global organization headquartered in Cary, NC. From the offices in Cary, Technical Support handles customer care in Canada and Latin America. There is a global network of Technical Support consultants in over 40 countries who serve Europe and Asia Pacific.

With more than 200 staff in the United States and another 150 worldwide, the average tenure of SAS Technical Support consultants is greater than 10 years, and there is less than a 4% turnover in the organization. You can expect consistent and experienced assistance with every encounter with SAS Technical Support.

In addition to the staff, Technical Support also provides SAS Notes. SAS Notes are additional sources of documentation for commonly asked questions and can be found on the support site at

http://support.sas.com/notes/index.html. SAS Notes also document reports of known problems, and identify circumvention or fix information.

Technical Support also provides Hot Fixes which address software issues for known problems; they also ensure that you have the latest maintenance available.

Publications

Let's look at the two major product areas from Publications, the product documentation and the SAS Press titles.

Most of the SAS documentation library is available to you for free. As noted above, documentation is available for free in HTML and in printable PDF format from the support.sas.com site. Hard-copy books continue to be available through the SAS Publishing bookstore for purchase.

A tip for getting started with the documentation is to be aware that information can be found in a variety of ways. For example:

1. Use the full site search to control the extent of the support.sas.com that you'd like to search. Select a subsection of the support.sas.com site to narrow your results. You will note that the search box is consistent through your use of the online documentation.
2. Use the Product A to Z list to find the documentation by product name.
3. Use the Product Documentation link in the left hand navigation to find documentation by software release. Within the documentation for a specific software release, you have the added option to browse content by topic.

Within your search results, you will note that you have **display options** for your content: HTML, PDF, and hard-copy purchase. The hard-copy purchase option links you to the bookstore, while the HTML and PDF provide you with direct access to the content. Another feature of the product documentation is the integration of SAS Press content within the search results. Although not freely viewable, you do benefit by knowing that content you searched for is available as part of the SAS Press series of books.

SAS Press

SAS Press titles deliver expert advice from SAS users worldwide. Covering an ever-expanding selection of topics and industries, these popular books are invaluable resources whether you are seeking a learning tool, a teaching text, or a long-term reference.

SAS Press titles provide a unique perspective on the use of SAS. Learn from fellow experts on their use of SAS in various industries.

For thought leadership, turn to the Wiley and SAS Business Series. These books bring you insights from industry experts and SAS thought leaders to help you address the right questions to make the best business decisions.

Join the Conversation!

SAS Publishing is now on Twitter and Facebook and LinkedIn. The growth in popularity of social network sites is not lost on the SAS user community. At this year's SAS Global Forum, we asked you about staying connected through social media. You were interested but weren't sure exactly how it would help you in your job. SAS Publishing is leading the way with our user community to help find answers to that question. With our presence on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, we are engaging the SAS user community in conversation, providing information about new books, and providing a platform

for our authors to speak directly to users. So far, the experiment is proving interesting and useful! Please join us online and let us know what you think!

Here's another tip: Use the recently developed "Author Pages" to find your favorite author, get online code samples from their book, read book reviews, link to the authors podcasts, or get in touch with the author through e-mail or the SAS Publishing pages on Twitter and Facebook.

And don't forget to create a profile on sasCommunity.org where you can join other SAS users and talk about anything you are interested in!

support.sas.com: Bringing It All Together

With over 100,000 page views per month and an average time of over 40 seconds on the page, support.sas.com is the hub of activity for all support needs at SAS.

We often hear, "I'm a long-time user. What resources do you have for me to assist new users at my site?" The answer is support.sas.com. Using this site as your starting point, you can find information about **all** of the support services available from SAS. Here's how the site is organized and a few tips for you to highlight and become familiar with:

Knowledge Base	
	• System Requirements
	• Install Center
	• Third-Party Software Reference
	• Product Documentation
	• Papers
	• Samples & SAS Notes
	• Focus Areas
Support	
	• Submit a Problem
	• Check Problem Status
	• License Assistance
	• Administrator Services
	• Downloads & Hot Fixes
Learning Center	
	• Bookstore
	• Training
	• Certification
	• SAS Learning Edition
	• SAS Global Academic Program
	• SAS OnDemand
Community	
	• Users Groups
	• Events
	• E-newsletters
	• User Experience
	• Author with SAS
	• RSS & Blogs
	• Discussion Forums

Some of the most popular sections on support.sas.com are the [discussion forums](). The 15 discussion forums (found under the Community link in the left-hand navigation) are the places to go for peer-to-peer support and discussion. Share your questions and SAS successes with other SAS customers; pitch in and help someone solve a problem; or just read and learn. You'll find lively discussions and a great community of SAS supporters. SAS employees occasionally respond to your posts. However, you should not use the forums in place of SAS Technical Support.

You can also opt to take control over the content you see from support.sas.com by using the RSS feeds for the various pages on the site. These feeds are also accessible from the Community link.

Another way to take control of your content is to complete a profile and select the SAS newsletters that you are interested in receiving. "SAS Publishing News" and "SAS Training Report" are produced monthly and highlight new products, new services, and other news from Publications and Education.

Remember to contact us! Take advantage of the Contact Us button at the bottom of each page to provide input and suggestions for how to make the support site even more useful to you.

I hope you have found your stop at the concierge desk helpful! Remember, we are here for you. Let us know what new products, services, and support you need to make the most of your investment in SAS. Last but not least, thank you for using SAS!

Contact Information

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