

Paper 299-2010

Discovering the Road Less Traveled to SAS® Information: A Guide for Your Journey

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ABSTRACT

SAS users are as diverse as the offerings from SAS. The key to using SAS is to find the content and delivery mechanism that fits the way you work and provides what you need when you need it. We can help you explore options on the Internet, show you tricks for searching and aggregating content, and help you influence content and content delivery. With this new bag of tricks, you will get more out of your investment in SAS.

This paper explains how to use notification tools such as Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds and aggregation sites like Netvibes, My Yahoo, and iGoogle. We will briefly explore collaboration tools such as discussion forums, orkut groups, and sasCommunity.org. The goal of this paper and accompanying presentation is to arm you with the tools necessary to locate information when you need it, regardless of where it resides. We intend to open the window into online resources, but also hope that you bring your own suggestions for the question and answer session.

INTRODUCTION

You attend SAS Global Forum or read the papers because you need more information about how to use SAS software and solutions. You talk to your colleagues to find out what training they have found useful and what programming and problem-solving best practices they can share. This paper will give you tools that enable you to turn the Internet into a 24/7 conference, an instant conversation with colleagues and other SAS customers.

The recent increase in the adoption of social networks in business, improvements in searching, and content optimization have raised the bar on available content. For some, the changes are exciting. For others, these changes add to the stress of getting the job done. We want you to see the changes (current and future) as assets that help you get your job done.

We can give you a head start on the process and guide you toward more successes than failures in your search for online resources. This paper examines three tools that you can use to become more efficient with SAS. We will offer examples and instructions to help you determine the value each tool offers you.

These tools include tips for searching for solutions to your problems, ways to easily monitor SAS content across the Internet, and ideas for expanding your colleague base to include SAS customers and employees around the world.

BENEFITS

There are a lot of demands on your time. You have work to do and a life to enjoy. The tools that we discuss here will require you to invest a little time up front to find what works for you. However, what you learn can:

- help you stay current in your chosen field
- help you solve problems more efficiently
- give you earlier access to information from SAS
- connect you to others for networking and information exchanges.

In a word, it can help you be *indispensable* at work.

SEARCHING

Everybody searches the Web. We search so much that Google has become a verb. Have you ever said “You can google that” when asked a simple question? With searching so common, is there anything left to say? Sure there is. Most of us know exactly what we want when we position our cursors in a search box. But knowing which sites to search, the best words or phrases to use, and search guidelines are the keys to finding good results faster. We cannot touch on everything, but will offer a few well-placed tips to get you started.

SEARCH TIPS THAT APPLY ALMOST EVERYWHERE

Many of you write SQL queries, Boolean statements, and WHERE clauses every day. Why not apply some of that same logic to your search? These simple rules can help you create precise queries on support.sas.com, sasCommunity.org, lexjansen.com, google.com, bing.com, or any other site.

Six global search tips:

- If the phrase is important, say so. **Include words that belong together in quotation marks.**
Example: “Windows 7 support”. Because these words are in quotation marks, you are telling the search engine that you do not want hits on every use of the word window and every occurrence of the word support. You only want results that include these words used together.
- Emphasize the words that must be in the results. **Add a plus sign (+) in front of the really important words.**
Example: “Windows 7 support” +SAS. By including the +SAS, you tell the search engine that it is really important to return documents that include the phrase Windows 7 support AND the word SAS.
- Tell the search engine what you do not want. **Add a minus sign (-) in front of a word to exclude it from the results.** This tells the search engine that if the word appears in the results, the document might not be a good candidate for you.
Example: “Windows 7 support” +SAS -airline. By including -airline, you tell the search engine that you are not looking for information from Scandinavian Airlines (SAS).
- **Select the best site for searching.** Sometimes the best thing to do is start with a major Internet search engine such as Google. Look at the results. If there are a lot of good results from the site, consider visiting that site and conduct your search there. If you already know the best site, then start there. Also, if you can limit your search to a subset of a site, you can reduce the number of results that match your criteria.
Example: If you are looking for travel information for SAS Global Forum, visit www.sasglobalforum.com. If you are looking for flights to Seattle, try something like www.travelzoo.com or www.orbitz.com .
- **Be prepared to refine your search.** Refining your search can mean adding or removing words or choosing a different word or phrase to represent your idea. Watch the results set to get hints about which words to keep or add.
- **Use search assistance tools when available.** Assistance tools can include word suggestions as you type, spelling suggestions as part of your results, and advanced search pages that complete the quotation marks, plus signs, and minus signs for you.

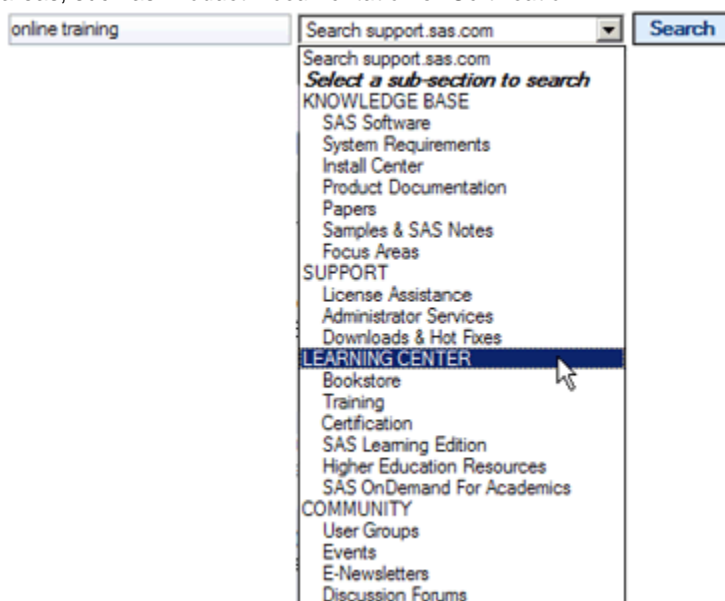
SEARCHING SUPPORT.SAS.COM

support.sas.com is the online customer support Web site managed by SAS for our customers. The site includes documentation and sample code for the three most recent releases of our software. It also includes technical papers, such as those presented at SAS Global Forum, release information, and usage information that is derived from conversations with SAS users and our own software usage. This site is an excellent location for problem solving. Each of the tips mentioned in “Six global search tips” apply when searching support.sas.com. Below are a few more tips that can help you.

Subset Your Search by Section of the Site

Use the steps below to narrow the focus of your search to a smaller page collection that is better suited for the task you are addressing with your current search.

1. Type your search term or phrase in the entry field at the top of any support.sas.com page.
2. Select the down arrow next to **Search support.sas.com**.
3. Select any section from the list. Notice that you can select large sections of the site or smaller, more defined areas, such as *Product Documentation* or *Certification*.



Knowledge of the site organization is helpful, but not required. The following short primer will help you determine which sections to search. The sections described map to the site navigation that is available at the top of every page on support.sas.com.



Knowledge Base: contains the product documentation from SAS Publications, sample code and usage notes from Technical Support and other SAS employees, installation and platform support information, papers (including proceedings) and focused content that only SAS R&D can provide. This area is a great place to start for problem solving.

Support: contains information about services from SAS Technical Support, hot fixes, and license administration.

Learning Center: contains the tools necessary for in-depth learning. This section includes the course offerings from SAS Training, sample tests from SAS Certification, and the books for purchase from SAS Press. This area is a great place to look once you decide that you want to invest in your SAS education and career development.

Community: contains event listings, discussion forums, and information about getting involved with the greater SAS community.

Use Section-Specific Search Features

All content is not created equal. For this reason, some sections of support.sas.com offer specialized searches that help you leverage special features or uses of the content. Special searches are available for SAS 9.2 documentation, samples and SAS notes, course offerings, and discussion forums.

9.2 Documentation

Using the search drop-list mentioned above, you can limit your search to all documentation from SAS Publishing. However, many people want to limit their search to the release of SAS that they currently use. The SAS 9.2 documentation offers you that option. To search only the 9.2 documentation, navigate to **Knowledge Base** → **Documentation** → **SAS 9.2**. Type your search term or phrase in the box located on this page. You can also search each book or document. Once you have found a book that contains the type of information for which you are searching, you will notice a search box at the top of the page. This box contains the words “Search this document” and will limit your searches to just the content of the book you are viewing. For more search tips, see *Use the browse features later*.

Samples and SAS Notes

All samples, usage note, problem notes, installation notes, FAQs, and technical tips are in the Samples & SAS Notes area of the site. You can search this entire content collection selecting the Samples & SAS Notes entry of the search drop-list or by navigating to **Knowledge Base** → **Samples & SAS Notes** and using the search box provided on this landing page. With 30,000 pieces of content in this section, you are still searching through a lot of documents. To help you narrow your search even more, we have created sub-section searches for samples, for usage notes, and for problem notes. You can access these sub-sections from the left navigation of the Samples & SAS Notes section. For more search tips, see *Use the browse features later*.

Course Offerings

You can access the Training pages by navigating to **Learning Center** → **Training**. We offer a specialized search and browse feature to help you locate educational opportunities from SAS Training. To locate this feature, look for this at the top of each Training page:



The **Search Courses** feature enables you to enter a keyword and search the entire course catalog for relevant training. Use the **View courses by** drop-down list to browse the complete course list or browse courses by location, delivery type, or software product:

- **Complete Course List** – view all offerings in the SAS Training catalog
- **Location** – navigate to courses being taught in your area
- **Live Web or e-Learning** – select courses that you can attend or complete right from your office
- **Software Product** – sorted list of courses offered by software product

Discussion Forums

Discussion forum content is included with the overall support.sas.com search. You can easily recognize a forum post in the search results because the element title is preceded by **SAS Discussion Forums**. You can also access the Discussion Forum pages by navigating to **Community** → **Discussion Forums**.

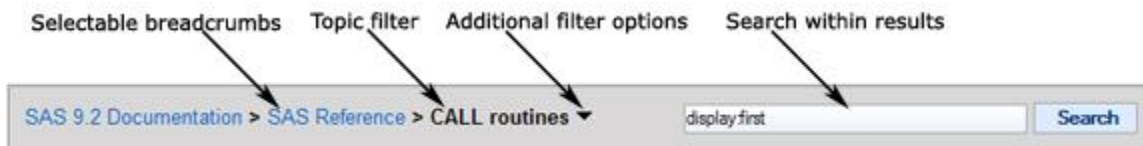
The software that provides our forum functionality also provides a specialized search feature. You can search all forums at once or limit your search to the forum you are currently viewing. The most powerful way to search the forums is to use the extended search. You can access the extended search by selecting the **Search** link next to the search box on any page in the forums. The extended search page displays as shown below. Just use the entry fields and selection lists to search all or some of the forums, look for posts from your favorite poster, or search posts within a certain date range.

Search Forum Content	
Search Terms:	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Search"/> Search Tips
Category or Forum:	All Categories ▾
Date Range:	All ▾
Username or User ID:	<input type="text"/> (Leave field blank to search all users)
Results Per Page:	15 ▾
Search Results » Messages: 0	

Use the Browse Features

Three areas of the site offer a Browse by Topic option: SAS 9.2 Install Center, SAS 9.2 Documentation, and Samples & SAS Notes. The browse feature enables you to subset the content collection based on metadata that has been associated with a document or page. To use the browse feature, navigate to any of the areas that offer browsing. You will notice columns of words and phrases, each topped by a bold header. You can select the header or each topic item in the column. When you select a topic, a search results page is displayed. The results page includes a filter line that enables you to continue to refine your search collection without ever typing a search word.

For example, navigate to **Knowledge Base** → **Documentation** → **SAS 9.2** → **Browse by Topic**. Select **Call Routines** from the SAS Reference category. The results page includes breadcrumbs and filter options in the same line as the search box. The following image points out each of these elements.



The **CALL routines** topic has additional topic filters that you can access by selecting the small triangle that appears at the end of the line of filters. Select the triangle for more options. You can continue drilling, or browsing, until you find a set of documents that offer the information for which you are looking. Or you can stop browsing and search the current results by typing a word or phrase into the available search box.

Another benefit of the browse feature is that you can use the lists to familiarize yourself with the words and phrases that SAS uses to document its software. These keywords can help you form more effective searches.

Use the Advanced Search Feature

support.sas.com includes an advanced search feature designed to make it easier for you to apply the six global tips discussed earlier. There are other features that are unique to support.sas.com that are also included in Advanced Search.

To access the advanced search feature, select the **Search** button next to any empty search field, bookmark <http://support.sas.com/search>, or select the **Advanced Search** link anywhere you see it on the site.

The Advanced Search window offers the only place on support.sas.com that you can issue an OR search. OR searches are tricky because they add more words to your list of search terms. However, there are a few times when this type of search can be really useful. For example, if you are searching for information about a procedure and you want to search for either the syntax or the usage information, you might include the syntax spelling in the first field of the **One or more of these words** field, and then include the actual word in the second field. (For example, you might search for VARCLUS *or* CLUSTER.) Using the OR field is different from putting both words on the search field because when you put both words in a search field and submit it, the search engine looks for pages first that include both *word a* AND *word b*. When you submit the two words using the Advanced Search OR fields, the search engine looks for pages that include either *word a*, *word b*, or both words.

More Search Information

We are always striving to update the search features and functionality and to offer more searching tips. The following resources will help you keep up with these changes and improvements. Following the blog will also give you the opportunity to participate in the changes.

- The **search** category of the *Key Happenings* blog at <http://blogs.sas.com/supportnews/index.php?/categories/6-Search>.
- Search help and video examples at <http://support.sas.com/search/quicktips.html>.

SEARCHING SASCOMMUNITY.ORG

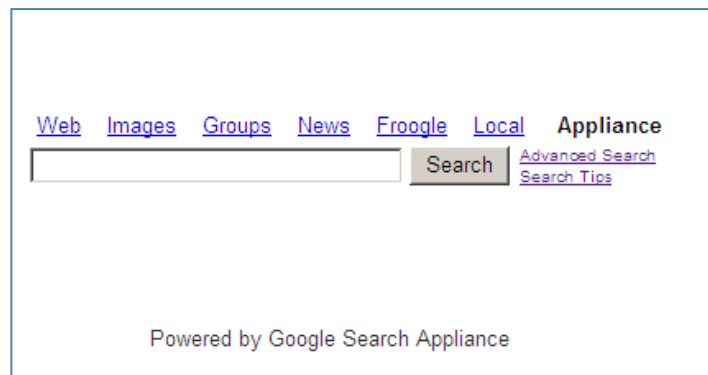
sasCommunity.org is a collaborative online community for SAS users worldwide that was created by SAS users for SAS users. To enable collaboration, the site was designed as a “wiki” (just like Wikipedia) using MediaWiki software. It’s a great place to find answers, share technical knowledge, collaborate on ideas, and connect with others in the worldwide SAS community. You can increase your ability to locate the SAS information you are looking for by taking advantage of the multiple search capabilities on the site. sasCommunity.org offers two ways to search the site: Google Search and Wiki Search.

Google Search on sasCommunity.org

sasCommunity.org supplements the standard MediaWiki search with a search feature that is powered by a Google Search appliance. This advanced searching capability indexes uploaded documents (PDF, PPT, DOC, and so on) in addition to wiki-article text. Type keywords or phrases in the search field located in the top left navigation bar on the Web site. To refine your search, utilize advanced search: Click the Search button on the left nav to open the simple search form, and then click the *Advanced Search* link at the top of that page.

Try out Google Search on sasCommunity.org:

<http://search.sascommunity.org/search>



Another feature of the Google Search appliance includes helpful searching tips documentation http://search.sascommunity.org/user_help.html, reachable via the Search Tips link at the top of the search form page.

For more information about the default site search engine on sasCommunity.org, read this article: http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Site_Search_Feature

Standard Wiki Search on sasCommunity.org

Although the default search engine for sasCommunity.org is run by the Google appliance, you can also use the native MediaWiki search engine. You might want to use this search engine to limit your search to just wiki text. The wiki search feature is also useful to restrict your search to certain namespaces (or sections) on the site. For example, SAS users have submitted over 100 user tips since the sasCommunity.org Tip of the Day project started. The wiki search feature allows you the flexibility to search just the Tip of the Day section. Access the standard wiki search feature by clicking the *Special pages link* under "toolbox" in the left navigation bar. Find the link to *Search* under the "Redirecting special pages" section or access the link directly at <http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Special:Search>.

Advanced search

Search in namespaces:

<input type="checkbox"/> (Main)	<input type="checkbox"/> Talk	<input type="checkbox"/> File	<input type="checkbox"/> File talk
<input type="checkbox"/> User	<input type="checkbox"/> User talk	<input type="checkbox"/> MediaWiki	<input type="checkbox"/> MediaWiki talk
<input type="checkbox"/> sasCommunity	<input type="checkbox"/> sasCommunity talk	<input type="checkbox"/> Template	<input type="checkbox"/> Template talk
<input type="checkbox"/> Help	<input type="checkbox"/> Help talk	<input type="checkbox"/> Tips	<input type="checkbox"/> Tips Talk
<input type="checkbox"/> Category	<input type="checkbox"/> Category talk	<input type="checkbox"/> Widget	<input type="checkbox"/> Widget talk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tip of the Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Tip of the Day Talk		

List redirects

Search for

SEARCHING THE INTERNET

So far, we have addressed general search tips, followed by searching tips and hints for the SAS support site (support.sas.com) and the SAS user site (sasCommunity.org). We chose these sites because they provide an abundance of content. You often know what type of information you need, but what do you do when you don't know which site is the best to search or when you have searched these sites and have not found the content you need? You turn to the Internet.

Based on Web analytics, the three search engines that deliver the most visitors to these sites are Google, Bing, and Yahoo. Because we cannot address all of the engines represented, this paper offers some insight into these three popular tools. For information about other search engines, visit their home pages and read the help.

It is difficult to say what makes one search tool more popular than the other. Whatever the reason, we suggest that you stick with what works for you, but that you consider the following and try to improve the results that you get from your favorite searching tool.

First, review the information provided in "Six global search tips," and then locate the advanced search feature provided by your favorite search tool. Most advanced search features offer a form-type interface that guides you through complex query creation. You can learn how to construct queries as well as learn which features the search developers feel are most valuable.

For example, look at the advanced search feature provided by Google (http://www.google.com/advanced_search). It offers additional tools for selecting the format of the content, the language in which the content is presented, and the option to specify any site that is addressable with a URL.

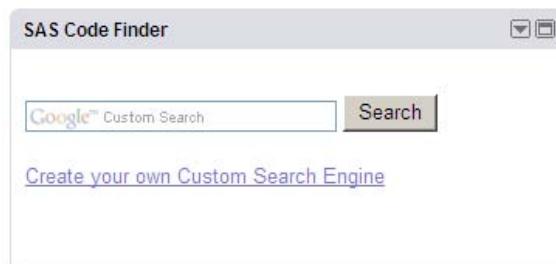
If you really like the results provided by Google or Yahoo or Bing, you can use that search engine to search support.sas.com or sasCommunity.org. Type your search words or phrase into the search box. Follow it with **site:support.sas.com** or **site:sascommunity.org**. The addition of site:<URL> at the beginning or the end of your search string tells the search engine that you only want to see results for content that resides at the URL you specified. When you search this way, you get all the benefits of an Internet search, a results page with which you are familiar, and results that are limited to the one site you wanted to explore.

Use Gadgets and Specialized Searches

Did you know that someone has *already created* customized Google search engines that narrow your search to Web sites dedicated to SAS information or SAS code? You can choose to go directly to the search links or embed the gadgets into your own Google home page or blog. You can even create your own customized search engines, but we recommend trying these two tools first:

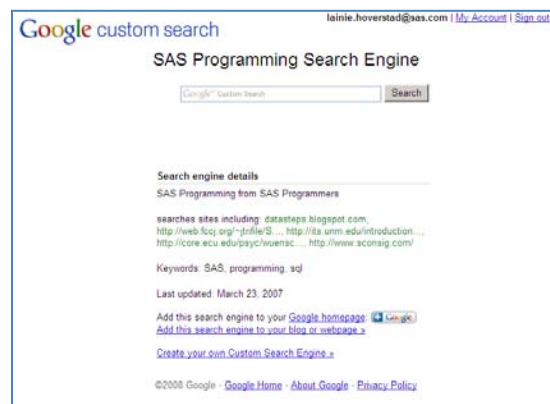
[SAS Code Finder](#)

- "Find sample SAS code to help jump start your project."
- Searches: sasCommunity.org, SAS-L archives, support.sas.com, lexjansen.com, and more.
- Access this gadget at <http://www.google.com/cse/home?cx=007793750397377442821%3Abfb2mscvfze>



[SAS Programming Search Engine](#)

- "SAS Programming from SAS Programmers."
- Searches: SAS user blogs, university sites, and more.
- Access this gadget at <http://www.google.com/cse/home?cx=017814879163713193945%3Aztm2bo9hiky>



WATCHING THE INTERNET FOR CONTENT

The information presented in the Searching section focuses on search tips that enable you to solve your problems as fast as possible. However we all know that we find the best information when we are not looking for it. The next two sections detail how to keep an eye on the prize even if you are not sure what prize you seek. In the first section, we focus on using Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and Web site watches to keep up with news and information that is important to you.

Use RSS Feeds

Content owners and Web site managers create RSS feeds to provide easy access to their content. Without the RSS feed, you would have to visit the Web site daily and scan the content to determine if anything has been updated since your last visit. Because you do not have the time to spend scanning dozens of Web sites, you can leverage the RSS feeds to do the scanning for you.

In order to use RSS feeds, you need a feed reader. Readers are now provided as part of most current browsers, are available from google.com and yahoo.com, and are integrated into Outlook and other e-mail systems. To get a list of readers, visit one of these sites or search for a list of readers:

- [Yahoo! Directory for RSS Readers and Aggregators](#)
- [dmoz.org Feed Readers](#)

To locate feeds on any site, look for one of these two images:  and . If you do not see one of these images, look for **RSS** or **RSS Feeds** in the links at the bottom of the page. Once you locate a feed in which you are interested, select the RSS image or link. The subscription process varies by site, but instructions should be included. Many sites are now using subscription services to offer you a selection of readers. The following image shows the subscription options provided by FeedBurner for www.time.com.



Select the image that represents your reader and continue the process to add the feed. If you do not see your reader in the images displayed, look in the drop list. If you still do not see your reader, select **View Feed XML**, then select **Subscribe to this feed** from the page that is displayed.

Notification of feed content depends on the type of reader that you are using. Whatever the reader, you can quickly glance at your list of subscriptions to determine which of your sites have updated their content. You can access the updated feed and quickly scan for content. New and updated content is just a click away.

The example to the right shows a feeds list in Internet Explorer. The items in bold represent sites that have new content. Once you view the feed, the list item is no longer bolded.

-  **Problem Notes for SAS®9 -**
-  **sas - Twitter Search**
-  **SAS Discussion Forums : Popular Thre...**
-  SAS Global Forum - Twitter Search
-  SAS Notes for SAS®9 -
-  **SAS Samples**
-  sasmemories
-  **SEOmz Daily SEO Blog**
-  Support Center News Blog
-  **Support Forums: Message List - root**
-  **support.sas.com Recent Highlights**
-  The sascom magazine blog
-  **Updates in SAS Online Support**

support.sas.com currently offers eight feeds for content updates as well as feeds for each of the discussion forums. The [Content Highlights and Updates](#) feed mirrors the content added to the support.sas.com home page, but other timely updates are also included. In addition, support.sas.com offers feeds that focus on new samples, on SAS®9 notes, and on new releases from SAS Publishing. To subscribe to a feed on support.sas.com,

1. Go to <http://support.sas.com/rss> and review the list of available feeds.
2. Select the feed to which you want to subscribe.
3. Select the appropriate option for your choice of reader from the **Subscribe Now!** box.
4. Repeat for each feed of interest to you.

RSS feeds are just one way to be notified about content updates on a site. Other options include alerts and watches. The next section describes how to use these tools.

ALERTS AND WATCHES

In addition to using RSS feeds, you can use the alert and watch functionality that is available on many Web sites. Alerts and watches work similar to an RSS feed, but you are not required to install a reader. Here are a few examples that you can start using today.

Google Alerts

Google alerts are e-mail updates of relevant Google news and Web updates based on your choice of topic. These alerts can be used to keep current on a SAS topic, product, or industry. The e-mails deliver search results from blogs, news, video, and even discussion groups, and can be sent once a day, as-it-happens, or once a week. To create an alert, fill out the form at <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Tip: Before you set up a Google alert, enter your alert words or phrases into a Google search box. If the results of the search are not satisfactory, the results of the alert will not be satisfactory. For example, SAS is used to mean all types of things from Scandinavian Airlines to SAS Shoes to the British Army Special Air Service. If you create an alert for just SAS, you will get a lot of unwanted content. Make sure that your alert includes something specific.

Google Alerts can be product-specific (for example, "SAS Enterprise Guide"), version specific (for example, "SAS 9.2") or a detailed search for a SAS procedure (for example, "PROC FREQ").

sasCommunity.org Watch Feature

As a member of sasCommunity.org, you can leverage the Watch feature on the site. Watching pages allows you to keep track of recent changes made to pages you have created or are interested in. Watching the page eliminates the need for you to check the page for updates because you are notified by e-mail automatically.

How to watch pages on sasCommunity.org:

- You must be logged-in.
- If a page interests you, click the **Watch** tab for that page.
- Each time that page is changed you will be notified by e-mail.
- An e-mail is sent to the address provided and listed on your **my preferences** link.
- You can also visit your **watchlist** to view recent changes and your list of watched pages.



Reference this article on sasCommunity.org for more detailed instructions:
http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Leveraging_the_Watch/Unwatch_feature .

support.sas.com Discussion Forum Watch Feature

The SAS discussion forums are active every day of the week. You can visit your favorite forum and scan the content; you can search for topics of interest to you, you can subscribe to the RSS feeds for content notification--or you can set up watches. If you chose to use the watch functionality, you must log in and set your preferences. The software will send you an e-mail each time a change is made that matches your watch settings. Use the preference settings to

- determine the frequency of the e-mail notification
- watch all content
- watch select forums
- watch all threads to which you post
- watch only designated threads

Instructions for setting up a watch are provided in the forum help at support.sas.com/misc/forumhelp.html and in the blog post [Watching a forum](#).

AGGREGATING CONTENT INTO PERSONAL PORTALS

[Wikipedia](#) defines aggregators this way:

Aggregators reduce the time and effort needed to regularly check websites for updates, creating a unique information space or "personal newspaper".

The technology that makes aggregation possible has been incorporated into many Web sites to offer you a consolidated look at related content (think sports or news) or to enable you to build your own portal. The remainder of this section introduces you to the content that is aggregated for you on sascommunity.org and provides instructions on how you can build your own portal using popular dashboard or portal sites.

BUILT FOR YOU

Aggregators that are built for you are intended to give you a location where you can read content from around the Internet. The organization that builds the aggregator page influences the content that you see by what it chooses to present.

sasCommunity.org Planet Blog Aggregator

sasCommunity.org Planet, <http://www.sasCommunity.org/planet/>, is an aggregation of weblog entries by members of the SAS community and is also a recent addition to sasCommunity.org. You can nominate blog additions by e-mailing the feed address to webmaster@sasCommunity.org. These blogs are created by SAS experts and SAS users. The value in having them aggregated is that, as a SAS user, you can go to one place to view blogs that are rich with technical content, commentary on SAS programming, and SAS code. Daily entries are displayed with a link back to the full blog:

sasCommunity.org Home

sasCommunity.org Planet

February 19, 2010

NOTE: The blog of RTSL.eu — Project Plans in Excel (simple, quick and effective)
February 19, 2010 01:36 PM

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Project	Maximus											
2	Task	Start	Effort	End	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
3	activity #1	1	6	6									
4	activity #2	2	2	3									
5	activity #3	1	3	3									
6	activity #4	4	4	7									

sasCommunity.org Popular Links

sasCommunity.org also has a popular links landing page that lists the most common links on the site. This page also contains a link to an "Other Knowledge Sites" page that aggregates other sites that provide technical information about SAS: http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Popular_Links

BUILD YOUR OWN

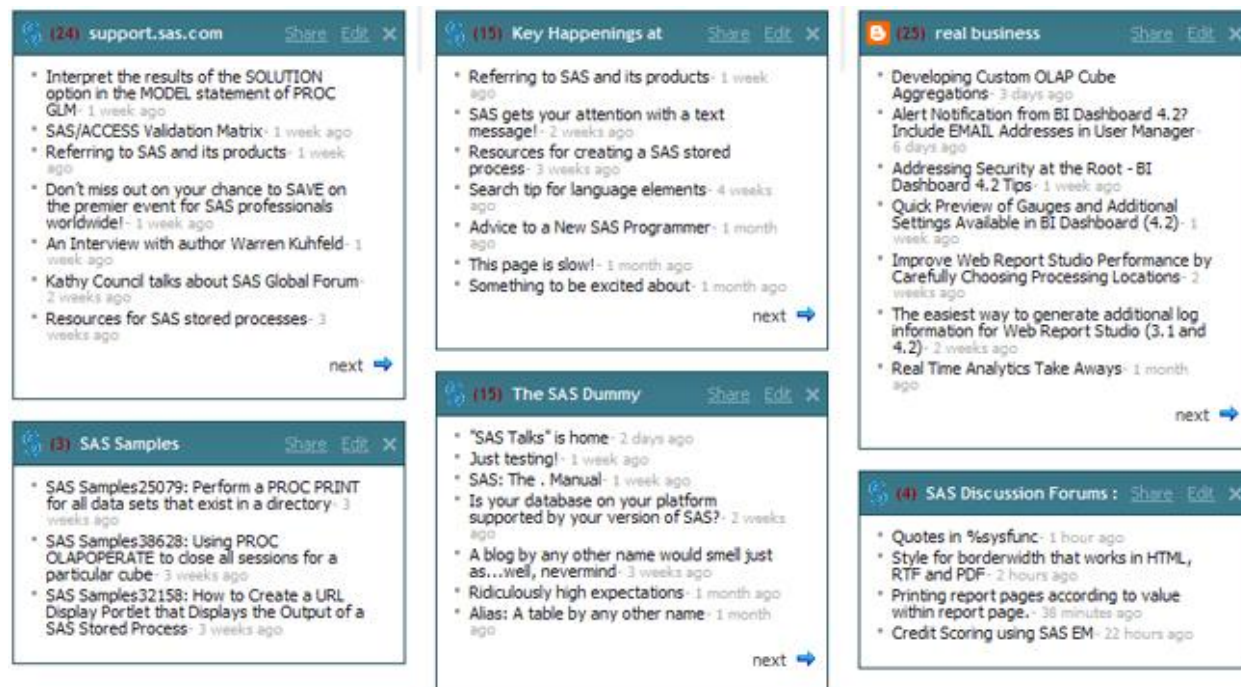
Many tools and sites exist to enable you to build your own aggregator or portal. You can build them inside your company firewall and share them with others using tools such as SharePoint. You can build public or personal portals using tools such as Facebook fan pages, LinkedIn groups, My Yahoo, Netvibes, iGoogle, and others. To give you an idea of the types of things that you can do, we built two portals: one is built in Netvibes and the other in iGoogle. Each of these portals enables us to create a customizable start page or personal Web portal. Creating this type of personal Web portal is one way to aggregate SAS information into one location for your personal use each day.

NetVibes

The following shows a sample Netvibes tab structure that was built to include SAS content and some personal interests. You can see that it includes various forms of SAS information mixed with more general business news, world news, and entertainment items.



The Technical SAS Info tab includes several SAS blogs that focus on technical information from SAS, the Samples RSS feed, and the popular threads Forum feed. The following image gives you an idea what the **Technical SAS Info** page looks like.

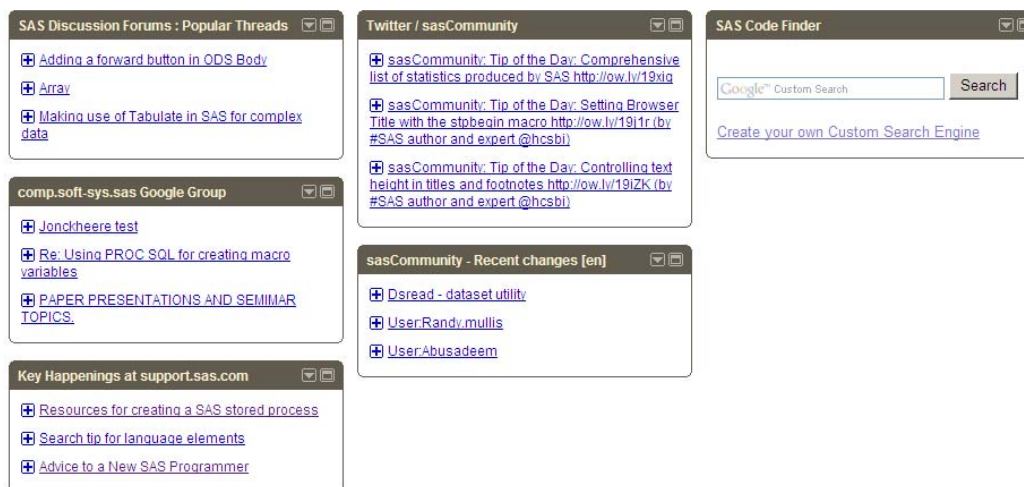


NetVibes provides an interface that includes drag-and-drop widgets, preset searches, feeds from popular sites, and guided help to enable me to include my own feeds and searches. Using these tools, I created an interface that visually appeals to me and includes a variety of information in which I am interested. The tabbed interface makes it easy for me to review the content of my choice.

To learn more about NetVibes and begin building your portal today, visit <http://tour.netvibes.com/overview.php>.

iGoogle

The following display shows how you might customize a SAS iGoogle portal page with feeds from SAS discussion forums, SAS-L, and sasCommunity.org.



Visit <http://www.google.com/ig> to start your portal today.

Items for Your Portal

Consider adding these SAS feeds, gadgets, and searches to your personal portal page:

- RSS feeds for one (or all) of your favorite Discussions Forums
- RSS for popular threads for all forums:
<http://support.sas.com/forums/rss.jspa?feed=rss/rsspopularthreads.jspa>
- RSS of latest posts from all forums:
<http://support.sas.com/forums/rss/rssmessages.jspa?categoryID=1>
- For individual forums, click on the Forum/Category name on this list page
<http://support.sas.com/forums/index.jspa>, then find the RSS feed near the end of the page.
- RSS feeds of sasCommunity.org recent changes
<http://www.sascommunity.org/mwiki/index.php?title=Special:RecentChanges&feed=rss>
- RSS feed of sasCommunity.org Tip of the Day (via Twitter)
<http://www.twitter.com/sasCommunity>
- RSS feeds from the Key Happenings Blog:
<http://feeds.feedburner.com/UpdatesInSasOnlineSupport>
- Other blog feeds are available from <http://support.sas.com/rss>
- RSS feed for SAS Samples:
<http://feeds.feedburner.com/SasSamples>
- Other technical feeds are available from <http://support.sas.com/rss>
- SAS Code Finder Gadget for Google:
<http://www.google.com/cse/home?cx=007793750397377442821%3Abfb2mscvfze>

PARTICIPATING IN CONTENT CREATION

When you think about solving problems using information that is available on the Internet, you probably do not think about participating in the creation of the content. Social media and social networking sites have made participation by the general public a huge part of the content creation process. When you choose to participate, you give other users

- the benefit of your knowledge
- clues about the type of content they should create to help others
- insight into other viewpoints on a common topic

Your participation can help ensure that the information you need is available the next time you start a search. Participation influences content in two ways:

- **You write content.** The content you write in blog posts, in forum discussions, as conference papers, and in Wiki articles becomes available to other SAS users when they search the Internet for answers to their problems.
- **You comment on the content written by others.** Your comments can add additional information or clarity, but sometimes the most important contribution that comments provide is to ask more questions. These questions give content providers more ideas for topics to discuss in their blogs and papers and articles.

The next section demonstrates how your participation in some of the most vibrant SAS user sites can influence content.

POPULAR PARTICIPATION SITES FOR SAS USERS: THE “BIG THREE”

This paper focuses on three popular areas where your contributions make a difference: Discussion Forums on support.sas.com, sasCommunity.org and SAS-L. What makes each of these user participation sites “big”? For support.sas.com, company involvement makes it “big”; sasCommunity.org, connection to the SAS Global Users Group; SAS-L, longevity (since 1986)—all tied with a common thread of active user involvement. You should not limit your participation to just these sites. Instead, let them inspire you to contribute wherever you feel comfortable.

Discussion Forums on support.sas.com

SAS has created 17 forums. Each forum has a focused topic to help you limit the content you have to watch or search. The forums are mostly peer-to-peer communication, which means that SAS users ask and answer questions to each other. However, SAS employees do watch the forums and participate when they feel that they can enhance the questions or comments.

When you post a question and others respond with answers and best practices, that information becomes part of the resources available to people who search the Internet for information about SAS. When you have a question, you can search the forums to see if others have had the same question. The answer might be waiting for you.

When you participate in the forums and other participation sites, SAS employees learn how you use the software, the problems that you encounter, and the business needs that you fill by using SAS software. What SAS learns from your comments can influence the documentation and blog posts that we write, the papers we present, and way we answer questions.

For information about participating in the SAS discussion forums, visit the forum help at <http://support.sas.com/misc/forumhelp.html>.

sasCommunity.org

sasCommunity.org was created by the [sasCommunity Advisory Board](#), a sub-committee of individuals from the SAS Global Users Group and SAS user community. It is not a SAS controlled Web site; rather, it is a collaborative online community for SAS users worldwide. At [sasCommunity.org](#), you can find answers, share technical knowledge or SAS code, collaborate on ideas, and connect with others in the worldwide SAS Community. All SAS users are welcome to participate in sasCommunity.org.

You can start creating or editing articles on sasCommunity.org once you register for a free user account, though you do not need an account simply to browse. Here are just a few of the many ways to get started:

- Visit the [Where to Start](#) page to get ideas.
- [Read Blogs](#) and add your own Blog to sasCommunity.org Planet.
- Create an article for your [SAS Global Forum Presentation](#).

- Share your code or knowledge in the [Sasopedia](#).
- [Publish articles](#) immediately online.
- [Follow on Twitter](#) for daily SAS Tips, Web updates, and more.
- Connect with local or regional [User Groups](#).
- [Post or find jobs](#) in the Opportunity Registry.
- [Write a book review](#) about relevant books.
- Provide feedback to [help improve sasCommunity.org](#).

A very popular feature is the [Tip of the Day Project](#). You can participate by submitting brief tidbits of information such as short technical tips, SAS code snippets, or pointers to larger articles or Web sites. Each day a new tip is displayed on the sasCommunity.org home page. You can also comment on tips.

sasCommunity Tip of the Day

If you can't remember the name of a SAS system option, but you remember part of the name, you can search the dictionary.options table for a word in options name, setting, or description.

[.....read more](#) Submitted by Ronald J. Fehd. Contact me at my [Discussion Page](#).

Feel free to [comment](#) on this tip.

SAS-L

SAS-L is a user-run Internet mail list (LISTSERV) sponsored by the University of Georgia and devoted to issues related to SAS software products. SAS customers use the list to exchange information and opinions about SAS software or to post questions about SAS software and get responses from SAS users around the world.

To subscribe to the SAS-L mail list, send a message to listserv@listserv.uga.edu and include SUBSCRIBE SAS-L in the subject line of the e-mail.

Like the content in the discussion forums and on sasCommunity.org, this information is available for people to search and review when they are looking for help with SAS software and solutions. To search the SAS-L archives, visit listserv.uga.edu/archives/sas-l.html.

This article on sasCommunity.org does a great job of giving a detailed overview of SAS-L as well as providing tips for posting questions and answers: <http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/SAS-L>

How These Three Sites Intersect

Although these three sites, SAS Forums, sasCommunity .org, and SAS-L, are completely different participation sites with different agendas, formats and visions, they work together to form a working community conduit of SAS knowledge. This connection is likely because many of the same users frequent all three sites at different times and for different reasons. For example, SAS-L gives you rapid and immediate interchange between SAS experts who are ready, able, and willing to share their SAS knowledge. SAS Forums also give you active peer-to-peer participation opportunities with occasional help from SAS employees with a more topical focus.

In between both is sasCommunity.org: an excellent repository of knowledge, SAS user code, and documentation of the frequently asked questions and SAS programming knowledge so often exchanged in these discussions. Saved as living documents in the wiki, SAS code snippets, or detailed answers, these articles can be referred to and refined as needed when SAS-L or SAS Forum questions arise.

SAS Forums and sasCommunity.org

For example, some members of SAS Forums create articles on sasCommunity.org to document solutions to SAS user questions and issues generated in the forums. Here is one such example:

Re: Suppress BY Variable Names and = Sign in PDF Bookmarks
 Posted: Sep 14, 2009 2:29 PM in response to: Cynthia@sas

Thanks Cynthia. I created an article on sasCommunity about this:

http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Customizing_PDF_By_Variable_Bookmarks

Please feel free to comment/improve/correct as you see fit. We will likely also create a Tip of the Day for it.

SAS Forums and SAS-L

Here is an example of a SAS Forum post that references a SAS-L solution:

Re: R square in proc mixed?
 Posted: Nov 19, 2009 4:08 PM in response to: wong

[nabr] responded to this thread on the SAS-L listserv. Rather than repeating that here, I'll just post a link to my response on SAS-L.

<http://listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0911c&L=sas-l&F=&S=&P=37753>

SAS-L and sasCommunity.org

Some SAS-L members also save code and answers on sasCommunity.org and reference those links in response to frequently asked SAS-L questions:

Subject: Re: Program to search for a particular folder name
In-Reply-To: <5614db66-2e2d-4d5f-9abb-0dee969046d5@p24g2000yqa.google>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

this page has code to get list of files in a folder

http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Making_Lists

this page is an application that has a recursive search for files/folders in folders

http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Listing_Macros_in_SASautos

Ron Fehd the module/routine/subroutine maven CDC Atlanta GA USA RJF2 at cdc dot gov

> -----Original Message-----
 > From: owner-sas-l@listserv.uga.edu [mailto:owner-sas-l@listserv.uga.edu] On Behalf Of Zintie
 > Sent: Monday, January 25, 2010 10:10 AM
 > To: sas-l@uga.edu
 > Subject: Program to search for a particular folder name
 >
 > HI All,
 >
 > I am trying to write a program in SAS, which should search for a particular word in the Mainfolder.. The structure of the folder is like this:
 >
 > Main folder
 > --> drug1
 > ---->protocoll

OTHER PARTICIPATION SITES

We chose the three sites previously discussed to highlight how you can influence content about SAS. Other sites and tools that you might consider are:

- The orkut SAS group <http://www.orkut.com/Main#Community.aspx?cmm=18461>
- SAS Professionals at www.sasprofessionals.net/
- SAS Blogs at blogs.sas.com
- User Blogs at www.sascommunity.org/planet/

- Facebook Fan pages at www.facebook.com
- LinkedIn Groups at www.linkedin.com/groupsDirectory
- Twitter at www.twitter.com/

CONCLUSION

When we talk to SAS customers about new tools, new Internet sites, or participating in the community of content, we hear the same comment over and over, “If I add one more thing to my plate, I have to find something to kick off.” In this paper, we took up the challenge to help you expand your usage of new and existing content. The tips and examples are provided to help you become more efficient at locating information when you need it as well as staying current on the information that is important to you in your career.

We explained how searching, watching, and aggregating content on the Web are important ways to help you stay current in your field, solve problems, and give you earlier access to SAS information. Finally, we introduced ways you can participate in the vibrant online SAS community when you need help finding answers or when you want to share your own SAS expertise.

We hope that at least one of these tips will help you the next time you are trying to fill a business need using SAS software and solutions. We also encourage you to spend a few minutes and explore some of the tools and avenues that you have yet to explore.

RESOURCES

You can find this paper and the associated presentation after SAS Global Forum at support.sas.com/saspresents.

Other resources and tips are provided in the Key Happenings on support.sas.com blog at <http://blogs.sas.com/supportnews/>.

For a complete list of resources that will help you monitor and participate in content related to SAS software, visit http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/A_Guide_for_Your_Journey_to_SAS@_Information

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