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Top Ten SAS[®] Sites for Programmers: A Review

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Abstract

We review the top ten SAS[®] sites for coders, beginning with sas.com and jmp.com. We then expand to sasCommunity.org, support.sas.com, and six other popular sites that assist you in training and programming. If you use Google to search for SAS Web sites, you will get over a million hits. We narrow the list down to ten.

Introduction

In this paper, we present the results from an unscientific, but interesting, survey and analysis we conducted about the SAS sites visited by those who answered our survey. From over 300 invited to respond, more than 60 SAS users responded along with comments for 65 SAS-related websites. On average, respondents visit five websites, with 65% mentioning support.SAS.com and 50% using LexJansen.com to help meet their needs.

We present our brief comments and review of the top sites for those who are new to SAS programming. We follow with illustrative bar charts to describe what we have discovered. The study shows the promise of online dissemination of information, new technologies emerging, and increasing communication for users.

Background

In our travels to the many SAS conferences, meetings, and other user venues over the years, we found two things: many users access, create, and even support powerful websites, including popular user sites like sasCommunity.org and SAS-L; and secondly, still too many users are unfamiliar with the leading websites and resources, like SAS-L, LinkedIn, sasCommunity, and other top sites. The intent of this paper is to do what we can to make these, and other, sites more widely known. This will benefit users who want to learn, both as contributors and good code producers.

Executive Summary of Results

Based on the tally of survey results, we present our list of the top ten websites and resources below.

1. Support.SAS.com
2. LexJansen.com
3. Google.com
4. sasCommunity.org
5. SAS-L archive
6. SAS.com
7. NESUG.org
8. blogs.SAS.com
9. SESUG.org
10. SAS Global Forum

Support.SAS.com

There are many subpages and linking sites of www.SAS.com and new SAS programmers should become familiar with them all. They include documentation, new release news, vertical market news, blogs for users, and much, much more. For programmers, support.SAS.com is a goldmine, along with the SAS eMail and phone helplines. Included are major tabs for Knowledge Base; Support for programmers; Training and Bookstore; and Community. Each of these areas has half a dozen categories to aid and instruct you.

LexJansen.com

Lex Jansen has become a legend for collecting all of the white papers from SUGI, SGF, regional conferences, pharmaSUG, and data mining conferences. JMP papers are not included in his repository. Linkage is being studied for future access under sasCommunity.org. Lex now works at SAS Institute, in R&D, Health and Life Sciences.

Google.com

Google is not the only search engine, but it is the one many respondents use to conduct their searches for research purposes. Rather than go to specific sources and search for information needed, many respondents prefer to enter their best search terms and examine the results that match the specified search criteria. Although using Google as a search tool is not surprising, the number of users indicating using it as a tool of choice was very interesting.

sasCommunity.org

This encyclopedic website is designed and supported by users to serve the user community. Content is available to anyone and, if desired, users with a profile can create a page and/or modify another's page (using good judgment) and/or add insightful comments to an existing discussion page (every article by a user has a discussion page). Users are allowed to construct their own bio page and link to LinkedIn or personal blogs and websites. The community website has grown steadily since its inception in 2007 and now enjoys a sizeable audience of loyal SAS enthusiasts. Other popular areas found in sasCommunity.org are the built-in SASopedia feature and Tip-of-the-Day.

SAS-L archive

The 'L' stands for 'List Server', i.e., it is a server-based discussion group. There are two eMail addresses that are pertinent. The first allows any SAS user with eMail capability to talk to the computer/server to be added to the List, then set options and other controls such as 'mail-on' or 'mail-off'. Once on the distribution list, you can then send to the second eMail address with your question, answer or discussion comment. It will reflect to everyone on the list. The concept is that you can ask your priority programming question when you leave your office and someone in Australia will have your answer for you when you return the next morning. You can also "keyword search" the SAS-L archive for prior answers. The URL is in the bibliography, or you can search for details via sasCommunity.org. Be sure to attend the annual meeting of SAS-L'ers during SAS Global Forum to visit legends and see the awards.

SAS.com

Professionally speaking, www.SAS.com is the best of the best. What will they do next? Part of marketing and social media emphasis is to have the best possible website. The look and feel of SAS.com is result-oriented for business and all types of users. New users will want to acquaint themselves with the many aspects of the SAS Institute main website.

NESUG.org

The NorthEast SAS Regional Users Group has been serving SAS users since 1988. Their website mentions that, "NESUG is an independently operated regional SAS user group serving the Northeast from Canada to the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area and west through New York and Pennsylvania. NESUG promotes the sharing of SAS-related information among members of the SAS community through this annual conference, a speaker sharing program and advocacy on behalf of SAS users to both SAS Institute and SAS Global Forum."

blogs.SAS.com

What are these blogs about? They are about people and what they want to share concerning professional SAS activity and success. SAS employees in the following categories provide the energy: Business blogs; Customer Support blogs; International blogs; SAS Executive blogs; and SAS Technology blogs including a JMP blog. There are three to thirteen blogs under each category; plus there are seven highlighted blogs for your benefit. You can subscribe to SAS RSS feeds. Take the time for social media. It is the future and participating is to your professional advantage.

SESUG.org

From their website, the SouthEast Regional User Group tells us, "The primary purpose of our group is to host an annual conference in late summer or early fall in a southeastern city of the United States. The SESUG conference benefits both SAS users and managers interested in the use of SAS Software, and is a great opportunity for significant SAS training and networking with other SAS professionals." Their proceedings go back to 1999.

SAS Global Forum

The SGF site is a subpage of support.SAS.com and is relatively new. It gets better every year. Thank Debbie Buck and others for making it great. It becomes part of continuing the annual conference throughout the year. You can find the page at <http://support.sas.com/events/sasglobalforum/2011/> and then substitute prior years going back to 2008. It is interesting to see the SGF website page evolve over the years. Also click on 'prior conferences' on the 2008 page and take a walk back in history with SUGI starting with 206 attendees in 1976. What will you do to make the annual conference better?

Conclusion

SAS professionals benefit from a number of website and resource choices where emerging technologies and exciting methodologies abound. The intent of this paper is to provide many insights including the websites and resource choices of SAS users; as well as the top ten vote getters as indicated by survey respondents.

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About the Authors

Charles Edwin Shipp is a programmer, consultant and author, and has been using the SAS and JMP software since 1980. He is credited in the original JMP manual for his roles in the early days. He has written more than one hundred papers and has been an invited speaker at more than one hundred International, regional, local, and special-interest SAS and JMP conferences and meetings, and is the recipient of 10 "Best" contributed paper awards. Charlie is the co-author of three books including the ever-popular Books by Users (BBU) book, Quick Results with SAS/GRAPH Software. Currently, Charlie is involved as an eBook author, sasCommunity.org Advisory Board member, app developer, consultant for Trivani Foundation International with his lovely and brilliant wife, Lynnette, and consultant in JMP Genomics.

Kirk Paul Lafler is consultant and founder of Software Intelligence Corporation and has been using SAS since 1979. He is a SAS Certified Professional, provider of IT consulting services, trainer to SAS users around the world, and sasCommunity.org Advisory Board member. As the author of four books including PROC SQL: Beyond the Basics Using SAS, Kirk has written more than four hundred peer-reviewed papers, been an Invited speaker and trainer at more than three hundred SAS International, regional, local, and special-interest user group conferences and meetings, and is the recipient of 17 "Best" contributed paper awards. His popular SAS Tips column, "Kirk's Korner of Quick and Simple Tips", appears regularly in several SAS User Group newsletters and websites, and his fun-filled SASword Puzzles is featured in SAScommunity.org.

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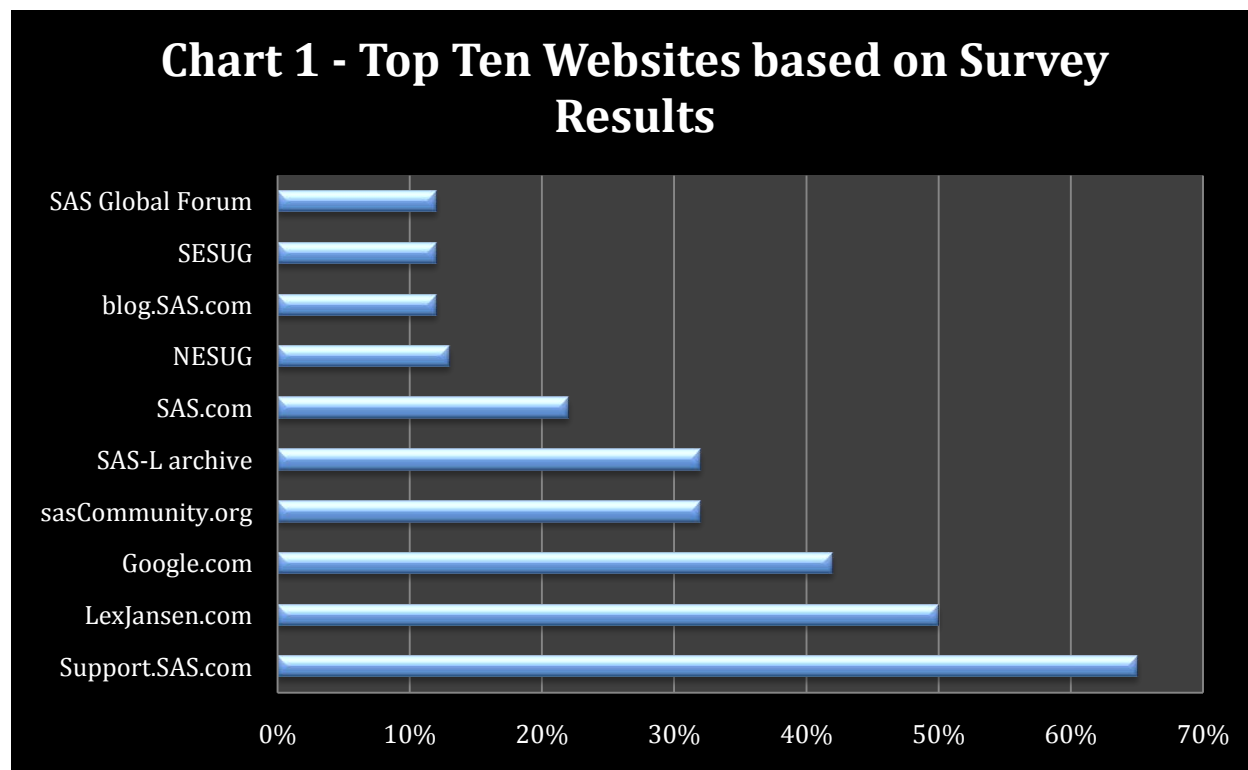


Figure 1. Top ten websites and percentage of respondents mentioning them

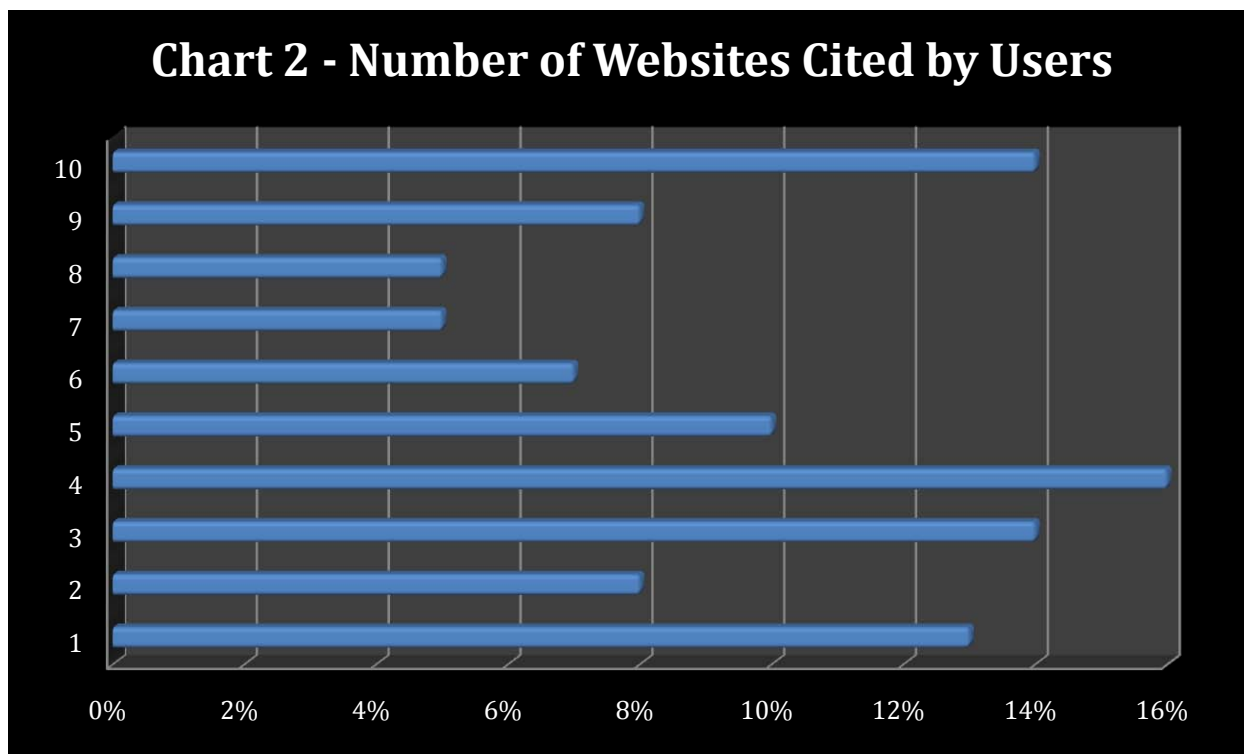


Figure 2. Number of websites used by respondents

- |                              |                          |                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| AnalyticBridge.com           | HollandNumerics.com      | sas.cswenson.com           |
| Angela Hall's Blog           | lcrunchdata.com          | sascoders.com              |
| ATS.UCLA.edu/stats/SAS       | Jiangtanghu.com/blog/    | sasCommunity.org           |
| BASAS.com                    | JMP.com                  | SASjobs.com                |
| BA sug.org (Boston Area)     | KDNuggets.com            | SCSUG.org                  |
| Blog.SASincty.com            | LexJansen.com            | SESUG.org                  |
| blogs.SAS.com                | MWSUG.org                | StatTutorial.com           |
| CDISC.org                    | NESUG.org                | Storytellingwithdata       |
| CodeCraftersInc.com          | Notecolon.info           | support.SAS.com            |
| COsug.net (Central Ohio)     | NoTsug.com (North Texas) | Susan Slaughter's site     |
| Dataflux.com                 | Pauldickman.com          | Sys-seminar.com            |
| DC-SUG.org (Washington DC)   | PharmaSUG.org            | TCA sug (Twin Cities Area) |
| Devenezia.com                | PhilaSUG.org             | TheJuliaGroup.com/blog     |
| Diahome.org                  | PNWSUG.org               | Tiobe.com                  |
| Dice.com                     | ProcHelp.com             | Twitter.com                |
| Facebook.com                 | RobsLink.com/SAS/        | VAsug.org (Virginia)       |
| FDA.gov                      | SAS Global Forum         | Wikipedia.org              |
| GA sug.org (Greater Atlanta) | SAS-BI.blogspot.com      | WUSS.org                   |
| GlobalStatements.com         | SAS-L Archives           | ww2.SAS.com                |
| Google.com                   | SAS-X.com                | YouTube.com                |
| HCBI.blogspot.com            | SAS.com                  |                            |

Figure 3. User Visited Websites from Our Survey Results