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SAS Social Media or, How I learned to love the Blog
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ABSTRACT

Being a newcomer to SAS®, I was struggling with finding infomration specifically related to Canadian health-care data analysis. I spent a few days roaming through Google and stumbled across the Toronto Area SAS Society, which to me to the SAS Canada Community, which is a site dedicated to SAS users in the northern half of North America. It was here that I met some great people, learned a lot, and realised that social media is not the evil, privacy-breaching monster I thought it was. This presentation is an attempt to get others to see the benefits of sites like the SAS Canada Community.
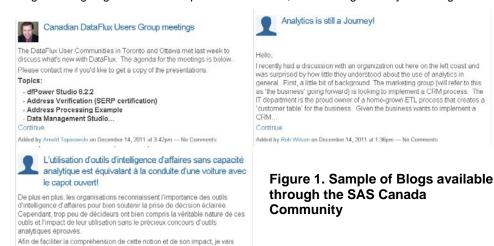
INTRODUCTION

As a user of SAS for about two years, I have spent a lot of time online looking for information about how to do different types of analyses, various data management techniques, etc. I have always found that the SAS sites to be very good; however, there were a couple of instances where I needed some Canadian-specific help (for example, generating maps in SAS where the maps do not come part of the SASMaps). I stumbled across the SAS Canada Community (sascanada.ning.com) purely by accident, and realised what a great group of people I found. I found I really enjoyed sharing the information I gathered on SAS through the Blogs. I have become an avid blogger (as time permits) and look forward to sharing more with the community of over 500 users, with more joining every day.

This paper will go through the various sections of the SAS Canada Community, highlighting specific features and functionality.

BLOGS

There were over 150 blog posts in 2011, ranging from "Geographical Maps in Enterprise Guide" to "Going Mobile – Starting to think about Mobile". Matt Malczewski, Communities Manager for SAS Canada, consistently posts great blogs about going to Users' Groups across Canada, which is a great way of seeing what's happening coast-to-coast.

Figure 1. Sample of Blogs available through the SAS Canada Community

MY PERSONAL BLOG

Although relatively new to the whole blogging phenomenon, I have quickly realized its strength at communicating with other people in the community. I was fortunate enough to attend NESUG last year, and made a point to post at the end of each day about the people I'd met, the sessions I had attended and the food I ate; being one of 4 Canadians that were able to attend, I wanted to make sure all the other

users in the Community were able to get some benefit. I was able to post with relative ease, and got some good feedback from the Community.

Figure 2. My Blog in the Community, and the most recent posting.

DISCUSSION FORUM / GROUPS

At the time of writing, there are 45 Groups, which are a great way for people with similar interests, in the same city, or in the same industry to connect and discuss SAS-related topics. I personally am on the Health Users Group, User Group Executive, Data Mining, What Has your SAS done for you lately? and SAS Regional / Global Conferences groups. There is an average of 6 members per group, and each has on average a couple of posts a month.

In the Discussion Forum, members can post questions, comments, or replies back to others' posts. This is where "Quality" overtakes "Quantity" – although not a huge amount of posts / replies, I find the caliber of the posts to be higher than elsewhere on the internet. The Forum has topics on Scheduling, Annotate, format of the User Group meetings, and a lot of other SAS and non-SAS topics.

CONCLUSION

The SAS Canada Community website is still relatively small, especially compared to other SAS sites. However, it is that small size that allows for improved conversation, higher quality of information, and an increased likelihood of getting a response (even if it is to post the question to SAS-L or other forum). Getting to know a majority of the people both online and face-to-face allows for enhanced information sharing, and stronger networking in areas outside what members may be normally exposed to. The SAS Canada Community is at 500+ members and the hope is to get more people from Canada that use SAS to join.

REFERENCES

http://sascanada.ning.com

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CONTACT INFORMATION (HEADER 1)

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