

Paper 147-2013

# Taking Full Advantage of [sasCommunity.org](http://sasCommunity.org): *Your SAS® Site*

sasCommunity Advisory Board  
Presented by Art Carpenter and Don Henderson

## ABSTRACT

sasCommunity.org is becoming a hub or clearinghouse for technical information related to the use of SAS software. The site is managed and run by SAS users for SAS users. It is free and open to all SAS users to browse. Any SAS user can contribute to the site - just create an ID in order to contribute new content or to expand upon existing content.

sasCommunity.org is built on top of the same software as Wikipedia. So if you know how to use Wikipedia, you have a head start on using sasCommunity.org.

This workshop will enable attendees to:

- Learn how to make use of this site
- Learn how to navigate the information contained on the site.
- Learn how to discover the wealth of its hidden treasures.
- Find out that there are a number of ways you can contribute, and discover how you too can quickly make a difference in this world-wide community of SAS users.
- Learn how even small contributions can enhance the site for everyone.

Join the thousands of other SAS users who are a part of the creation of a resource that is greater than the sum of its parts.

## INTRODUCTION

Sponsored by the [SAS Global User Group Executive Board](#) and governed by [a Community Advisory Board](#), [sasCommunity.org](http://sasCommunity.org) is a SAS user site which has been implemented in a wiki environment. It is the wiki environment that makes this sasCommunity special. A direct result of this environment and how it has been implemented is the opening up of the site to all SAS users. Anyone can add content to the site, individuals and groups can work together to write, add, and enhance information on the site.

When someone posts to the site, you can contribute by adding additional information, correcting a spelling mistake or adding a link to the reference - all without asking permission and without knowing a special password. We all get to work together to improve the information on the site. Large or small the entire community benefits from each contribution.

## SITE ORGANIZATION

Unlike most traditional sites the organization of the wiki is fairly flat. Rather than a hierarchy of folders, *articles* are written to convey information and *categories* are used to gather articles of similar content.

Links are used extensively to allow the reader to find related or supportive information. Any number of articles can be cross linked to each other. Both articles and categories can be linked to categories. In the following image of the category that collects information on the %SYSFUNC macro function we can see that there are both subcategories (categories that link to this category) and articles.

### Category:%SYSFUNC Function

To add your contribution to this page, cut and paste the following tag to the end of your article, page or category: `[[Category:Functions and Call Routines]]`. *DO NOT* edit this page to add your article. Just add the category tag to your article.

[%SYSFUNC macro function in the SAS 9.1.3 On-Line Doc.](#)

#### Subcategories

This category has the following 2 subcategories, out of 2 total.

**M**

- [\[+\] Macro function sysfunc \(1\)](#)

**~**

- [\[+\] %SYSFUNC \(0\)](#)

#### Pages in category "%SYSFUNC Function"

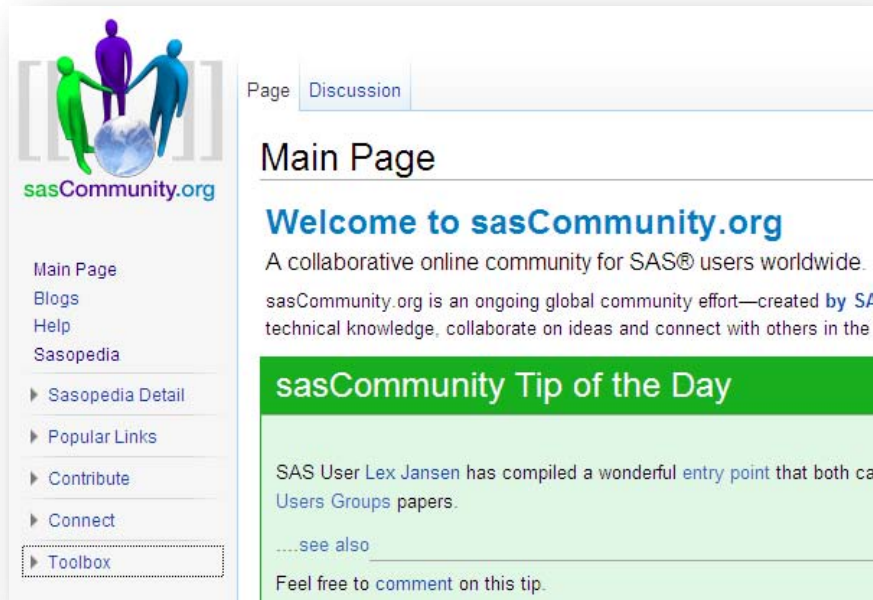
The following 12 pages are in this category, out of 12 total.

<p><b>C</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Tips:Check if a directory exists</a></li> <li><a href="#">Tips:Check if a variable exists in a dataset</a></li> <li><a href="#">Conditionally Executing Global Statements</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>L</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Tips:LIBREF function return value</a></li> </ul> <p><b>M</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Macro Code Extreme Makeover</a></li> </ul> <p><b>P</b></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Tips:Using the RENAME Function to Rename SAS Data Sets, Catalogs, OS Files, and Directories</a></li> </ul> <p><b>U</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Use of Macro to generate data values instead of code</a></li> </ul>
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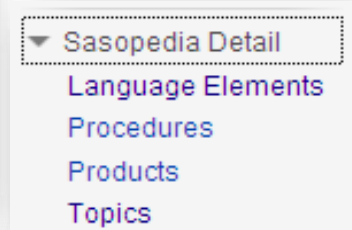
When an article is written or when it is subsequently edited, it can be assigned to one or more categories. An article on one aspect of the macro language may contain references to a number of different macro functions or elements. Someone interested in the %DO loop may discover how it is used with a %SYSFUNC by adding appropriate category tags.

## SITE NAVIGATION

When you first start to use the site navigation can be confusing. Take advantage of the navigation panel on the left hand side of each page. Here you will find quick links to HELP, the Blog Planet, SASOPEDIA, and other popular links.

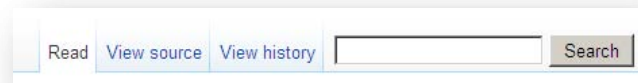


Some of these tabs, such as “Sasopedia Detail” are preceded with arrowheads and each of these topics can be expanded to reveal additional subtopics.

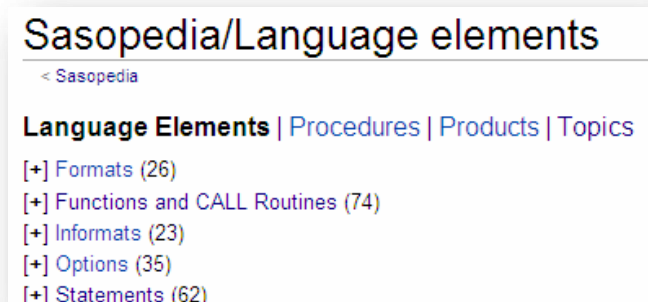


Since the wiki environment is a bit ‘different’, there is a great deal of help available. Selecting HELP links you to a series of articles including YouTube videos that will give you the details that you need to get started as well as to solve advanced problems.

When you want to search sasCommunity for a topic, take advantage of the Google search appliance that has been installed for our use. Type in the search criteria much as you would for any Google search.



For quicker navigation a series of popular links have also been gathered for our use. Select POPULAR LINKS on the left navigation bar to be directed to a number of commonly requested sites and sources of information.



SASOPEDIA provides a user written information resource concerning all things related to SAS. Because of the unique structure of the wiki environment, you can drill down through this information base in multiple ways. Are you primarily searching for information on a specific procedure or product? Or are you more interested in a language element.

## LOGGING IN / OBTAINING A USER ID

Anyone may browse sasCommunity.org anonymously, however if you want to contribute to the site you must obtain an ID and you must log on. When you first go to the site you will see that you are browsing using an IP address. Logging in is not necessary if you only wish to browse the site.

 66.58.210.132 [Talk for this IP address](#) [Log in / create account](#)

In order to make edits or contributions to the site you are required to log in, and to do this you need to establish an account. Click on the LOG IN / CREATE ACCOUNT link. If you already have an account on sasCommunity, enter your USERNAME and PASSWORD and you will be able to edit any page on the site.

To establish an account click on the CREATE AN ACCOUNT link.

### Log in / create account

#### Log in

Don't have an account? [Create an account.](#)

You must have cookies enabled to log in to sasCommunity.

Username:

Password:

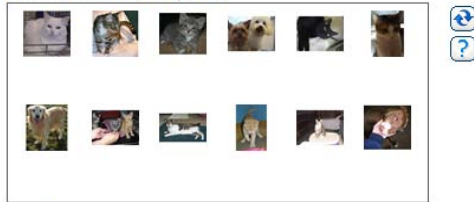
☐ Remember my login on this browser (for a maximum of 30 days)

### Create account

Already have an account? [Log in.](#)

To help protect against automated account creation, please select just the cat photos in the box below:

Please select all the cat photos:



Username:

Password:

Retype password:

E-mail \*:

E-mail address is required.

You will be asked to supply a username (it does not need to be your real name), a password, and your real e-mail address. To prevent internet 'bots' from spamming the site a real e-mail address is required (the e-mail addresses are NEVER released and only e-mail notifications that you request – opt in – will ever be sent to you). Also to help identify real persons from 'bots' you will be asked to distinguish between a series of cute cats and dogs. Hover over a picture to expand it and then click on the pictures of cats.

The user name you pick is case sensitive and it is suggested that you avoid spaces

in your user name. Also note that the first character will automatically be converted to upper case.

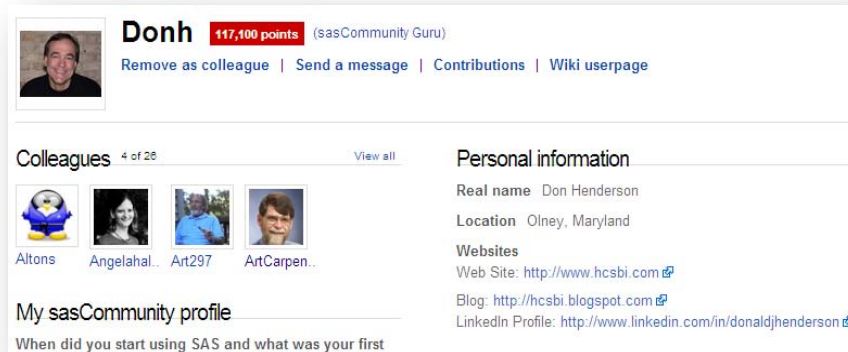
Once you have submitted this information an e-mail will be sent to you (to verify the e-mail address). In this e-mail there will be a link – click on the link and your registration on the site is complete. Now you can be a site contributor!!

## USER PAGES AND PREFERENCES

Site users may create a user page. If desired the user can point to their contributions or provide information about themselves. This is effectively a free webpage. Once you have logged onto the site, the upper right corner of the browser will display links to your user page.

 ArtCarpenter My talk My preferences My watchlist My contributions Log out

Clicking on the user name brings up the user page. This page can be seen by anyone using the site. A



portion of the user page for user ID Donh is shown here. Through this page you may e-mail this user (if they allow this), see their contributions, and so on. This page is very customizable.

For examples of profile pages that utilize a number of different

techniques look at:

Art Carpenter	<a href="http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:ArtCarpenter">http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:ArtCarpenter</a>
Don Henderson	<a href="http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:Donh">http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:Donh</a>
Phil Miller	<a href="http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:Statprof">http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:Statprof</a>
Nancy Wilson	<a href="http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:NancyWilson">http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:NancyWilson</a>

Not all of the sasCommunity users choose to even create a profile page. That is OK - you get to decide how much or how little you want to share.

It is through the MY PREFERENCES that you get to select your level of interaction with the site. Do you want to allow others to send you e-mail through the site? This is also where you determine how or if you are to be notified when pages that you are watching are modified (more on watching pages a bit later).

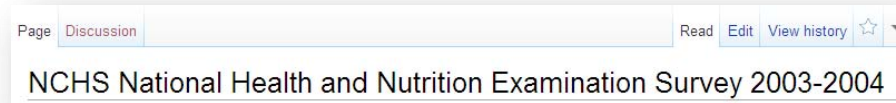
E-mail confirmation: Your e-mail address was authenticated on March 25, 2007

- ☒ Enable e-mail from other users
- ☐ Send me copies of e-mails I send to other users
- ☒ E-mail me when a page on my watchlist is changed
- ☒ E-mail me when my user talk page is changed
- ☐ E-mail me also for minor edits of pages

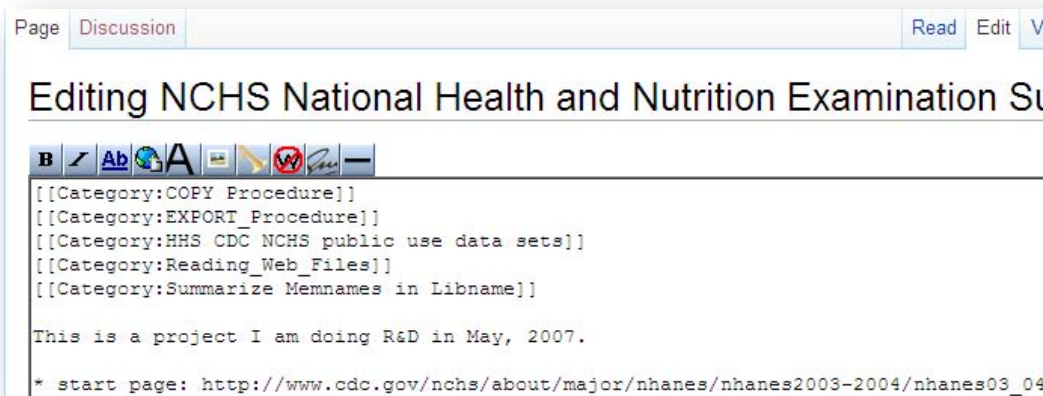
## EDITING CONTENT – GARDENING

A user who is logged into the site may edit virtually any page, article, or category on the site. While I may create an article, there are no restrictions on you fixing my mistakes. The sense of page ownership is very different in the wiki environment. The thought is that everyone will be helping the community as a whole. That means if you see a way to improve one of my pages, you should feel free to do so. Gardening on the wiki is the process of making incremental changes and fixes to a page. Gardeners may correct a spelling mistake or add a link. Perhaps an article on the %SYSFUNC macro function includes a link to the %SYSFUNC FUNCTION category, but not to the MACRO LANGUAGE category. Simple fixes like this improve the site for everyone.

A page is edited by clicking on the EDIT tab. This tab is only visible if you are logged in. Here we see an article that we would like to consider editing. Remember it is not important that we are not the original author of the page.



A text editor window is opened (this is not currently a WYSIWYG editor - the site advisory team is working on obtaining an improved editor). You can make changes to the text as you would in any



editor. The changes themselves are not saved until you submit them. Once the edits are complete you save the changes by scrolling to the bottom of the editor page.

```
</pre>
```

Please note that all contributions to sasCommunity may be edited, altered, or removed by other contributors. Do not submit it here.

You are also promising us that you wrote this yourself, or copied it from a public domain or similar copyrighted work without permission!

Summary:

☐ This is a minor edit ☐ Watch this page

[Editing help \(opens in new window\)](#)



Add a summary of what change you made and click on SAVE PAGE (here the summary is 'spelling correction'). The summary text you enter is included in the e-mail sent to other users who are watching the page. Including this summary allows those users to quickly assess the nature of the change you made. Minor edits (you get to decide what is minor) provide a different level of notification to those watching the page. If you want to see how your changes will look, click on SHOW PREVIEW before saving. Do you want notifications of further changes to this page? If so select the WATCH THIS PAGE box. The next time the page is modified you will receive an e-mail from sasCommunity with a link to the modified page, including the summary that the user who changed the page entered.



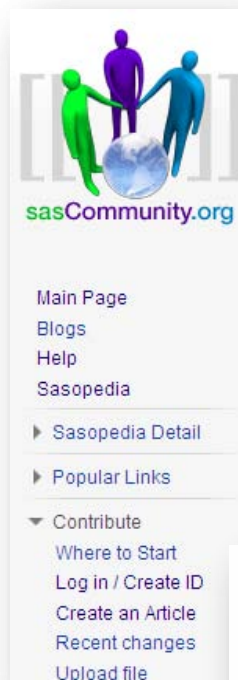
Every time you create a page or make an edit, your user ID will receive points. Ron Fehd (User Rjf2) generated more points on the site in 2011 than any other user.

Occasionally pages become obsolete or spammers place inappropriate material in an article, gardeners can also be helpful by placing pages such as these in the remove category [\[\[Category:Remove\]\]](#) (see examples in the next section to learn how to place an article in a category). Wikis do not allow for users, other than SYSOPS, to delete pages, so you can't delete pages that are obsolete or were created by spammers. Using the Remove category on a page alerts those SYSOPS that you think the page should be deleted.

## CREATING ARTICLES

Once you have become comfortable editing other contributors articles, you may want to write one yourself. Examination of existing articles shows that they are anywhere from a few lines of text to hundreds of lines of code. Articles range from simple tips to complex approaches to specialized analyses. Many presentation authors post their papers and slides on sasCommunity. A number of book authors have posted articles containing information about their books. If you had to figure something out yourself, it is a sure thing that someone else will have to do the same. Help them out; post your findings. You can also create articles (or a Tip of the Day - discussed later) for little nuggets you discover and want to remember. If you want to remember it, it is likely that others will find it useful as well.

There are several ways to create an article. The simplest is to use the template which has been provided for this purpose. On the left hand navigation bar under the CONTRIBUTE menu look for CREATE AN ARTICLE. This option brings up a template that guides you through this process.



### Create an Article

As long as you are logged in, anyone, including you, can write for sasCommunity!

- **Just type a title in the box at right.** The title for your article is like the page name. Please make sure to pick a descriptive and detailed title for the article as it can be inconvenient to change it later.
  - The title for the article is case sensitive so make sure to use appropriate case.
- Click **Create article**
- Start writing



**Tip:** Avoid using punctuation characters, e.g., periods, as the last character of your article name.

Every article and category must have a unique title (and note that the title is case sensitive). Start by typing a title into the dialogue box and then click on the CREATE ARTICLE button. This brings up a blank editor screen. Now type your article or paste it into the editor from another source. Remember it is a text editor and not a WYSIWYG editor. Icons at the top of the editor assist with the editing process. Hover the pointer over each icon to learn what it does.

A very good way to learn how to make your article 'look nice' is to examine how others have created similar articles. The following article shows some common 'look nice' features. Notice that: procedure names are bolded in the first line, the word *think* is italicized in the second line, there is a small table of contents, the words Sample Program are bolded and underlined, and finally the color of the SAS code on the last line mimics the colors seen in the Enhanced Editor.

## Include Debugging Code in Your Programs

Many programmers will add debugging features (e.g., PROC PRINT, PROC FREQ, PROC CONTENTS) to their programs and then remove them or comment them out when they *think* they are done testing. Instead of doing this, consider using macros that can be controlled by a global macro variable to turn debugging on/off.

A sample program is shown below, along with three sample macros for PROC PRINT, PROC FREQ, and PROC CONTENTS that can be added to your SAS autocall library.

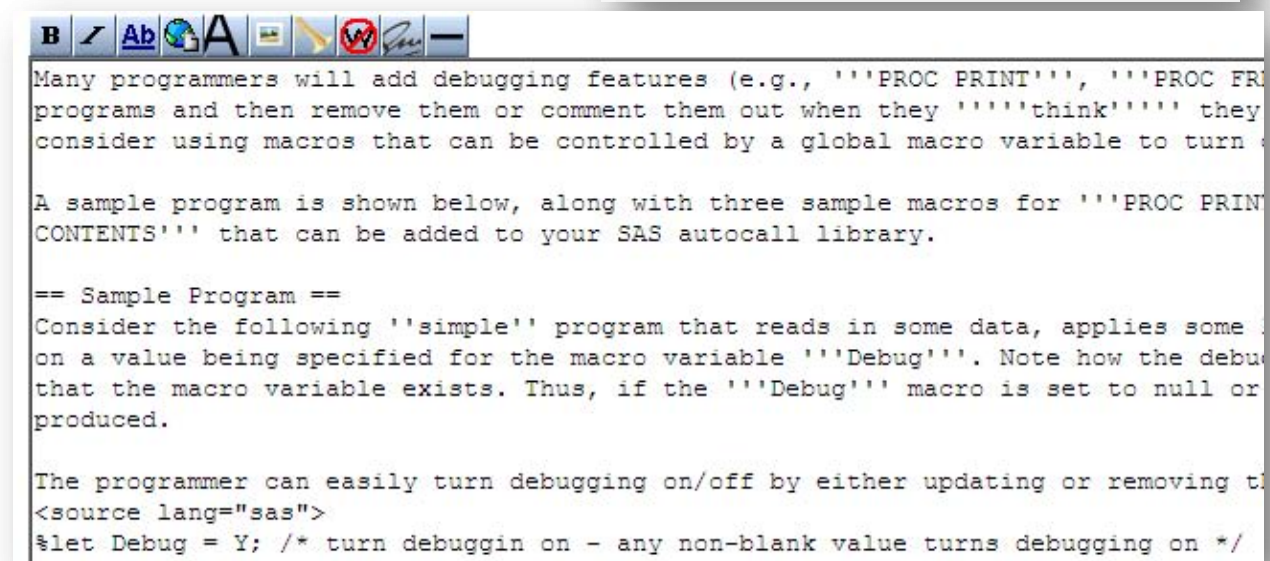
<a href="#">Contents [hide]</a>
<a href="#">1 Sample Program</a>
<a href="#">2 testContents Macro</a>
<a href="#">3 testFreq Macro</a>
<a href="#">4 testPrint Macro</a>

### Sample Program

Consider the following simple program that reads in some data, applies some logic, and produces some output. Note how the debugging macros use %GLOBAL to ensure that the macro variable output is produced.

The programmer can easily turn debugging on/off by either updating or removing the %GLOBAL statement.

```
%let Debug = Y; /* turn debuggin on - any non-blank value turns debugging on */
```



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**Sample Program**

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```
<source lang="sas">
%let Debug = Y; /* turn debuggin on - any non-blank value turns debugging on */
```

Taking a look at the text of the article shows that bolding is accomplished by surrounding text with three single quotes. The section header Sample Program is surrounded by two equal signs, which not only bolds and underlines, but also generates the table of contents (the default is that a page must have three such headings before the table of contents is produced).



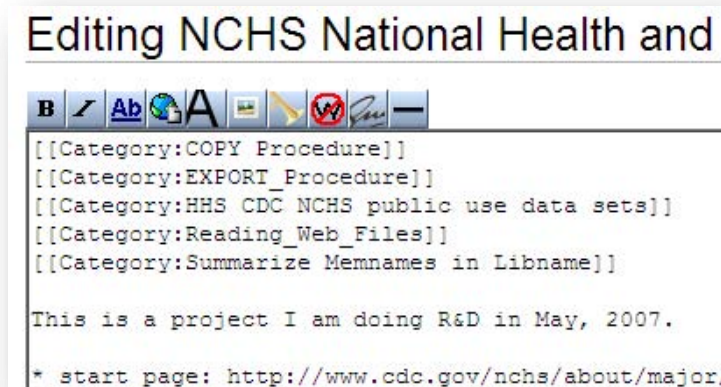
SAS code is surrounded by a source tag:

```
<source lang="sas"> SAS_code_goes_here </source>
```

If you are familiar with html or other markup languages this type of syntax is probably familiar to you. Line breaks, for instance, can be forced using the <br>. The following tag would change the associated text green: <font color=green> your text </font>. Nancy Wilson included a tip on this topic to the Tip of the Day Project, see it at: [http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Tips:Changing\\_FONT\\_color](http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Tips:Changing_FONT_color).

Once you have written an article you want other users to find it. You do this by placing your article within one or more categories.

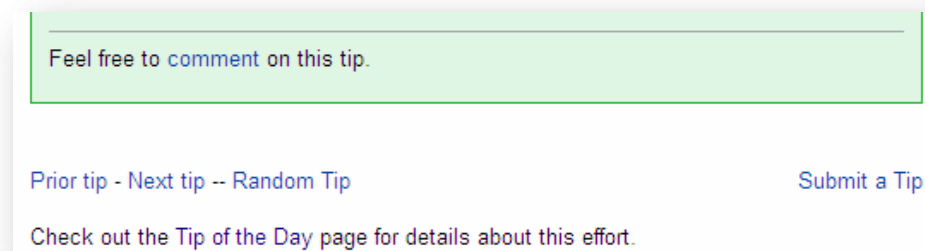
The double square brackets are used to designate internal links within the wiki. Here the article that is being edited will be placed into five different categories. There is no limit as to how many categories can be associated with any given article. Categories can also reference other categories.



### TIP OF THE DAY

Everyday a different tip is published on sasCommunity.org's main page. Tips are submitted by users of the site and range from simple to advanced topics. You can see examples of the tips in use by looking at the [Tip In Use](#) category. Because the tips are short they are easy to create. They need to be short so that they can be shown on the main page of the site.

If you look just below the tip on the main page you will find links to various aspects of the Tip of the Day project. Get more information on creating and finding tips by going to the [Tip of the Day](#) page.



Notice that there is a link to help you submit a new

tip of your own. The [Submit a Tip](#) link takes you to an article that is designed to guide you through the process. Here you will find tip guidelines as well as suggestions on making the tip presentable. An [article which has links](#) to YouTube videos has been written. These videos walk you through the submission process, and they can be found in the site's [help](#) section.

Before a tip can be used on the main page it must go through a review process. Tip reviewers read the tip and make suggestions and other gardening improvements. Three reviewers must approve a tip before it can be scheduled for use on the main page. The Tip of the Day project is in continuous need of tip reviewers. The tip [review process](#) and how you can become involved is described in detail in the documentation of the project. A good way to start to contribute to the community is to be a tip reviewer.

## SUMMARY

sasCommunity.org is a user created site that serves as a distribution point for all information regarding SAS. There is so very much more about the site that cannot be covered in this short introduction. Experiment, explore, become a gardener, submit a tip, be a contributor to this community of SAS users.

## ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Art Carpenter's publications list includes five books, and numerous papers and posters presented at SUGI, SAS Global Forum, and other user group conferences. Art has been using SAS® since 1977 and has served in various leadership positions in local, regional, national, and international user groups. He is a SAS Certified Advanced Professional Programmer and through California Occidental Consultants he teaches SAS courses and provides contract SAS programming support nationwide.

Don Henderson is an independent consultant and has been using SAS since 1975 and concentrates on the design and development of business applications with a focus on Data Warehouse, Business Intelligence and Analytic applications. He has presented papers at numerous user groups and is an author of two SAS Press books (one which is currently under development with a preview copy targeted for availability at SAS Global Forum 2012).

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## REFERENCES

Carpenter, Arthur L., 2010, "sasCommunity.org - *Your SAS® Site: What it is and How to Get Started*", proceedings of the Pharmaceutical SAS User Group Conference, paper TT09.  
<http://www.lexjansen.com/pharmasug/2010/tt/tt09.pdf>

Shipp, Charles Edwin and Kirk Paul Lafler, 2011, "Benefits of sasCommunity.org for JMP® Coders", proceedings of the SAS Global Forum 2011, paper 056-2011.  
<http://support.sas.com/resources/papers/proceedings11/056-2011.pdf>

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