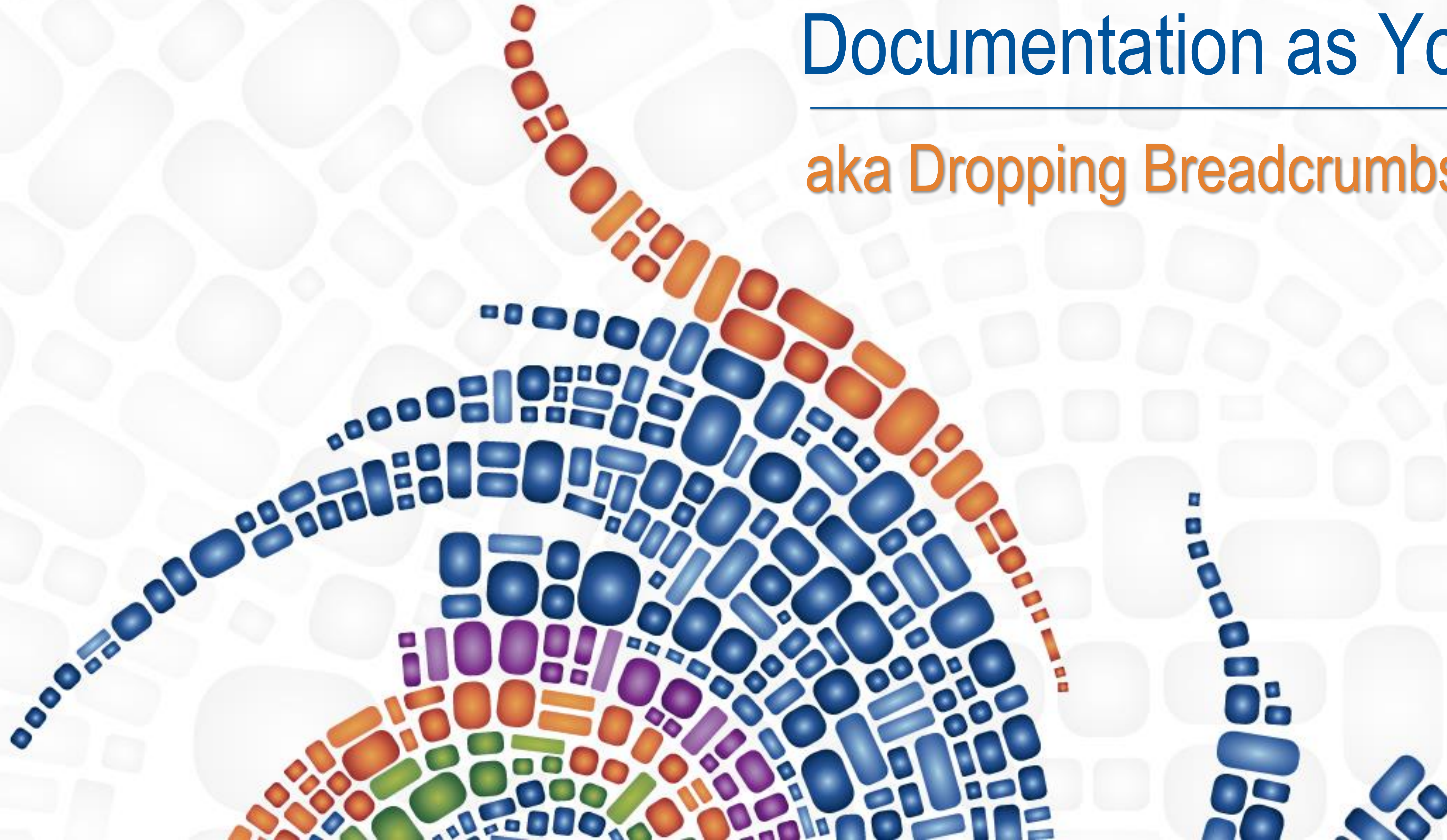


SAS® GLOBALFORUM 2015

The Journey Is Yours

Documentation as You Go

aka Dropping Breadcrumbs!



Document key information for each program in a ‘DocBox’

Here is a form that’s easy to fill out – just one row to record the key information about each program in your data process. This ‘DocBox’ supplements your data process flowchart with everything you’ll need to retrace your steps.

PROJECT: <i>ACME project</i>			TASK: <i>Process the Wave I ACME Survey</i>		
LOCATION OF DATA:			* = h:/ACME/data/survey/		
LOCATION OF PROGRAMS:			# = h:/ACME/pgmdir/survey/		
RUN DATE	INPUT FILENAME	PROGRAM NAME	OUTPUT FILENAME	# OBS	COMMENTS
2/1/15	*ACME_Survey.txt	#surv001	*ACME_surv001	12,346	SASify the ACME wave1 survey data. Look for duplicates.
2/1/15	*ACME_surv001	#surv002	Printout	n/a	Examine the duplicates.
2/4/15	*ACME_surv001	#surv003	*ACME_surv002	12,340	Remove duplicates. (6 duplicates removed)
2/5/15	*ACME_surv002	#surv004	Printout	n/a	Run preliminary freqs and means. Check skip patterns.
2/6/15	*ACME_surv002	#surv005	*ACME_surv003	12,340	Apply recodes: Set legitimate skips to special missing values.

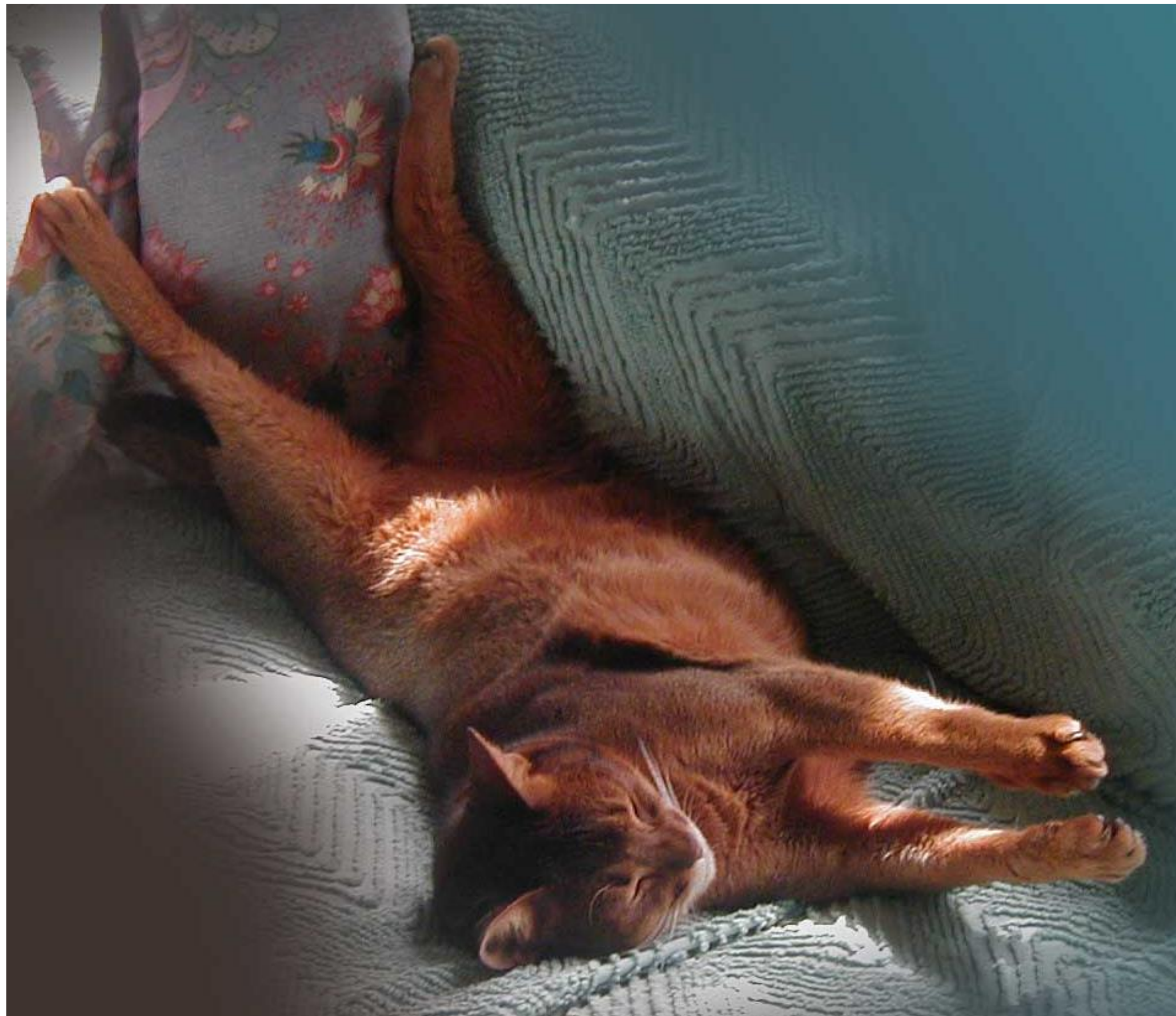
Document as-you-go!

If you wait until the end of the data process to do your documentation, it will likely be a painful chore, and you will probably just not do it at all. But if you document as you go, it's not so bad, and, in fact, has some collateral benefits. By taking a step back from coding and running your jobs, and really looking at your SAS logs, you might see an error or inconsistency you would not otherwise have caught. Or if you have to re-run the last few programs, you don't have to try to remember which programs to run, or the order to run them in -- it's all in your Docbox, and you can follow it like a recipe.

Problem solved!

Follow the simple techniques outlined here and you will leave a trail of crumbs behind so that you – and your team – will know how you got here from there, and can find your way back again.

Now you can relax...



References & Contact Info

Axelrod, Elizabeth. “Boot Camp for Programmers: Stuff you need to know that’s not in the manual”, NESUG 2009.

Your comments and questions are welcome. Contact the author at: elizabeth_axelrod@abtassoc.com



April 26-29
Dallas, TX

