Carpenter's Guide to Innovative SAS® Techniques

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From Carpenter's Guide to Innovative SAS® Techniques. Full book available for purchase here.

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Chapter 1

Moving, Copying, Importing, and Exporting Data

A great deal of the process of the preparation of the data is focused on the movement of data from one table to another. This transfer of data may be entirely within the control of SAS or it may be between disparate data storage systems. Although most of the emphasis in this book is on the use of SAS, not all data are either originally stored in SAS or even ultimately presented in SAS. This chapter discusses some of the aspects associated with moving data between tables as well as into and out of SAS.

When moving data into and out of SAS, Base SAS allows you only limited access to other database storage forms. The ability to directly access additional databases can be obtained by licensing one or more of the various SAS/ACCESS products. These products give you the ability to utilize the SAS/ACCESS engines described in Section 1.1 as well as an expanded list of databases that can be used with the IMPORT and EXPORT procedures (Section 1.2).

SEE ALSO

Andrews (2006) and Frey (2004) both present details of a variety of techniques that can be used to move data to and from EXCEL.

1.1 LIBNAME Statement Engines

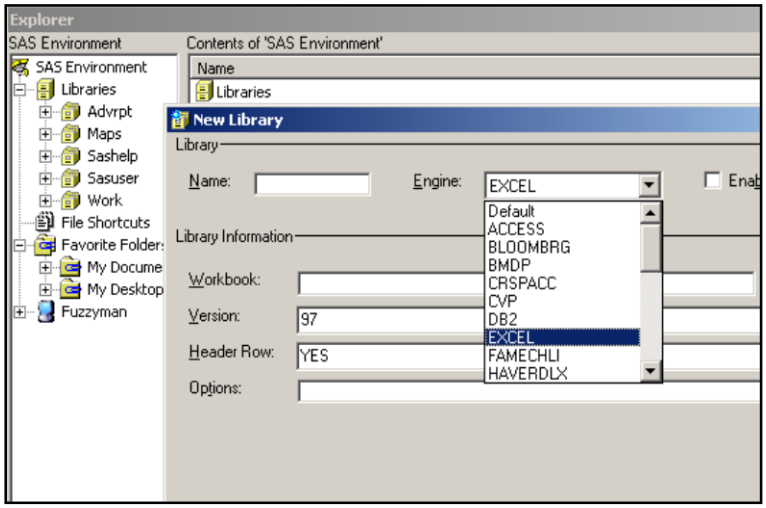
In SAS® 9 a number of engines are available for the LIBNAME statement. These engines allow you to read and write data to and from sources other than SAS. These engines can reduce the need to use the IMPORT and EXPORT procedures.

The number of available engines depends on which products your company has licensed from SAS. One of the most popular is SAS/ACCESS® Interface to PC Files.

You can quickly determine which engines are available to you. An easy way to build this list is through the NEW LIBRARY window.

From the SAS Explorer right click on LIBRARIES and select NEW. Available engines appear in the ENGINE pull-down list.

Pulling down the engine list box on the 'New Library' dialog box shown to the right, indicates the engines,



including the EXCEL engine, among others, which are available to this user.

PROC SETINIT can also be used to determine which products have been licensed.

The examples in this section show various aspects of the EXCEL engine; however, most of what is demonstrated can be applied to other engines as well.

SEE ALSO
Choate and Martell (2006) discuss the EXCEL engine on the LIBNAME statement in more detail. Levin (2004) used engines to write to ORACLE tables.

1.1.1 Using Data Access Engines to Read and Write Data

In the following example, the EXCEL engine is used to create an EXCEL workbook, store a SAS data set as a sheet in that workbook, and then read the data back from the workbook into SAS.

```
libname toxls excel "&path\data\newwb.xls"; ❶

proc sort data=advrpt.demog
          out=toxls.demog; ❷
   by clinnum;
   run;

data getdemog;
   set toxls.demog; ❸
   run;

libname toxls clear; ❹
```

❶ The use of the EXCEL engine establishes the TOXLS *libref* so that it can be used to convert to and from the Microsoft Excel workbook NEWWB.XLS. If it does not already exist, the workbook will be created upon execution of the LIBNAME statement. For many of the examples in this book, the macro variable &PATH is assumed to have been defined. It contains the upper portion of the path appropriate for the installation of the examples on your system. See the book's introduction and the AUTOEXEC.SAS in the root directory of the example code, which you may download from support.sas.com/authors.

❷ Data sets that are written to the TOXLS *libref* will be added to the workbook as named sheets. This OUT= option adds a sheet with the name of DEMOG to the NEWWB.XLS workbook.

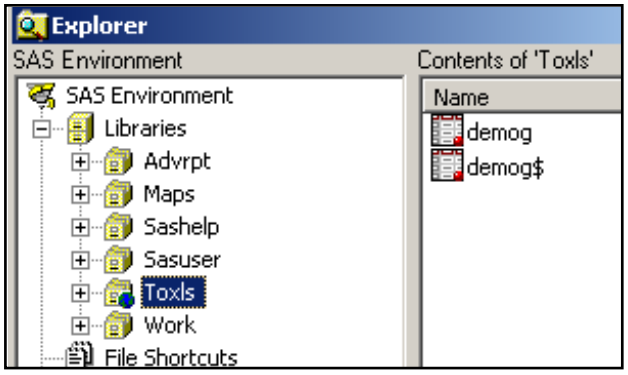
❸ A sheet can be read from the workbook, and brought into the SAS world, simply by naming the sheet.

❹ As should be the case with any *libref*, when you no longer need the association, the *libref* should be cleared. This can be especially important when using data engines, since as long as the *libref* exists, access to the data by applications other than SAS is blocked. Until the *libref* is cleared, we are not able to view or work with any sheets in the workbook using Excel.

MORE INFORMATION
LIBNAME statement engines are also discussed in Sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.6. The XML engine is discussed in Section 1.6.2.

1.1.2 Using the Engine to View the Data

Once an access engine has been established by a *libref,* we are able to do almost all of the things that we typically do with SAS data sets that are held in a SAS library.



The SAS Explorer shows the contents of the workbook with each sheet appearing as a data table.

When viewing an EXCEL workbook through a SAS/ACCESS engine, each sheet appears as a data set. Indeed you can use the VIEWTABLE or View Columns tools against what are actually sheets. Notice in this image of the SAS Explorer, that the DEMOG sheet shows up twice. Sheet names followed by a $ are actually named ranges, which under EXCEL can actually be a portion of the entire sheet. Any given sheet can have more than one named range, so this becomes another way to filter or subset what information from a given sheet will be brought into SAS through the SAS/ACCESS engine.

1.1.3 Options Associated with the Engine

The SAS/ACCESS engine is acting like a translator between two methods of storing information, and sometimes we need to be able to control the interface. This can often be accomplished through the use of options that modify the translation process. Many of these same options appear in the PROC IMPORT/EXPORT steps as statements or options.

It is important to remember that not all databases store information in the same relationship as does SAS. SAS, for instance, is column based - an entire column (variable) will be either numeric or character. EXCEL, on the other hand, is cell based – a given cell can be considered numeric, while the cell above it in the same column stores text. When translating from EXCEL to SAS we can use options to establish guidelines for the resolution of ambiguous situations such as this.

Connection Options

For database systems that require user identification and passwords these can be supplied as options on the LIBNAME statement.

- USER — User identification
- PASSWORD — User password
- *others* — Other connection options vary according to the database to which you are connecting

LIBNAME Statement Options

These options control how information that is passed through the interface is to be processed. Most of these options are database specific and are documented in the sections dealing with your database.

When working with EXCEL typical LIBNAME options might include:

- HEADER Determines if a header row exists or should be added to the table.
- MIXED Some columns contain both numeric and character information.
- VER Controls which type (version) of EXCEL is to be written.

Data Source Options

Some of the same options associated with PROC IMPORT (see Section 1.2.3) can also be used on the LIBNAME statement. These include:

- GETNAMES Incoming variable names are available in the *first row* of the incoming data.
- SCANTEXT A length is assigned to a character variable by scanning the incoming column and determining the maximum length.

1.1.4 Replacing EXCEL Sheets

While the EXCEL engine allows you to establish, view, and use a sheet in an Excel workbook as a SAS data set, you cannot update, delete or replace the sheet from within SAS. It is possible to replace the contents of a sheet, however, with the help of PROC DATASETS and the SCAN_TEXT=NO option on the LIBNAME statement. The following example shows how to replace the contents of an EXCEL sheet.

In the first DATA step the programmer has 'accidently' used a WHERE clause ❶ that writes the incorrect data, in this case 0 observations, to the EXCEL sheet. Simply correcting and rerunning the DATA step ❷ will not work because the sheet already exists.

```
libname toxls excel "&path\data\newwb.xls";

data toxls.ClinicNames;
   set advrpt.clinicnames;
   where clinname>'X';❶
   run;

* Running the DATA step a second time
* results in an error;
data toxls.ClinicNames; ❷
   set advrpt.clinicnames;
   run;
```

We could step out of SAS and use EXCEL to manually remove the bad sheet; however, we would rather do it from within SAS. First we must reestablish the *libref* using the SCAN_TEXT=NO option ❸. PROC DATASETS can then be used to *delete* the sheet. In actuality the sheet has not truly been deleted, but merely cleared of all contents. Since the sheet is now truly empty and the SCAN_TEXT option is set to NO, we can now replace the empty sheet with the desired contents.

```
libname toxls excel
              "&path\data\newwb.xls"
              scan_text=no ❸;
proc datasets library=toxls nolist;
   delete ClinicNames;
   quit;
```

```
data toxls.ClinicNames; ❹
   set advrpt.clinicnames;
   run;

libname toxls clear; ❺
```

The DATA step can now be rerun ❹, and the sheet contents will now be correct. When SAS has completed its work with the workbook, and before you can use the workbook using EXCEL you will need to clear the *libref*. This can be done using the CLEAR option on the LIBNAME statement ❺.

MORE INFORMATION

See Section 1.2 for more information on options and statements in PROC IMPORT and PROC EXPORT. In addition to PROC DATASETS, Section 5.4 discusses other techniques that can be used to delete tables. Section 14.4.5 also has an example of deleting data sets using PROC DATASETS.

SEE ALSO

Choate and Martell (2006) discuss this and numerous other techniques that can be used with EXCEL.

1.1.5 Recovering the Names of EXCEL Sheets

Especially when writing automated systems you may need to determine the names of workbook sheets. There are a couple of ways to do this.

If you know the *libref*(s) of interest, the automatic view SASHELP.VTABLE can be used in a DATA step to see the sheet names. This view contains one observation for every SAS data set in every SAS library in current use, and for the TOXLS *libref* the sheet names will be shown as data set names.

```
data sheetnames;
set sashelp.vtable;
where libname = 'TOXLS';
run;
```

```
proc sql;
create table sheetnames as
   select * from dictionary.members
      where engine= 'EXCEL' ;
   quit ;
```

When there are a number of active libraries, the process of building this table can be lengthy. As a general rule using the DICTIONARY.MEMBERS table in a PROC SQL step has a couple of advantages. It is usually quicker than the SASHELP.VTABLE view, and it also has an ENGINE column which allows you to search without knowing the specific *libref*.

The KEEP statement or the preferred KEEP= data set option could have been used in these examples to reduce the number of variables (see Section 2.1.3).

MORE INFORMATION

SASHELP views and DICTIONARY tables are discussed further in Section 13.8.1.

SEE ALSO

A thread in the SAS Forums includes similar examples.
http://communities.sas.com/thread/10348?tstart=0

1.2 PROC IMPORT and EXPORT

Like the SAS/ACCESS engines discussed in Section 1.1, the IMPORT and EXPORT procedures are used to translate data into and out of SAS from a variety of data sources. The SAS/ACCESS product, which is usually licensed separately through SAS (but may be bundled with Base SAS), controls which databases you will be able to move data to and from. Even without SAS/ACCESS you can still use these two procedures to read and write text files such as comma separated variables (CSV), as well as files using the TAB and other delimiters to separate the variables.

1.2.1 Using the Wizard to Build Sample Code

The import/export wizard gives you a step-by-step guide to the process of importing or exporting data. The wizard is easy enough to use, but like all wizards does not lend itself to automated or batch processing. Fortunately the wizard is actually building a PROC IMPORT/EXPORT step in the background, and you can capture the completed code. For both the import and export process the last screen prompts you to 'Create SAS Statements.'

```
PROC EXPORT DATA= WORK.A ❶
            OUTFILE= "C:\temp\junk.xls"❷
            DBMS=EXCEL❸
            REPLACE❹;
     SHEET="junk";❺
RUN;
```

The following PROC EXPORT step was built using the EXPORT wizard. A simple inspection of the code indicates what needs to be changed for a future application of the EXPORT procedure. Usually this means that the wizard itself needs to be run infrequently.

❶ The DATA= option identifies the data set that is to be converted.

❷ In this case, since we are writing to EXCEL ❸ the OUTFILE= identifies the workbook.

❹ If the sheet already exists, it will be replaced.

❺ The sheet name can also be provided.

Converting the previous generic step to one that creates a CSV file is very straightforward.

```
PROC EXPORT DATA= sashelp.class
            OUTFILE= "&path\data\class.csv"
            DBMS=csv
            REPLACE;
   RUN;
```

SEE ALSO

Raithel (2009) discusses the use of the EXPORT wizard to generate code in a sasCommunity.org tip.

1.2.2 Control through the Use of Options

There are only a few options that need to be specified. Of these most of the interesting ones are used when the data are being imported (clearly SAS already knows all about the data when it is being exported).

- DBMS= Identifies the incoming database structure (including .CSV and .TXT). Since database structures change with versions of the software, you should know the database version. Specific engines exist at the version level for some databases (especially Microsoft's EXCEL and ACCESS). The documentation discusses which engine is optimized for each software version.
- REPLACE Determines whether or not the destination target (data set, sheet, table) is replaced if it already exists.

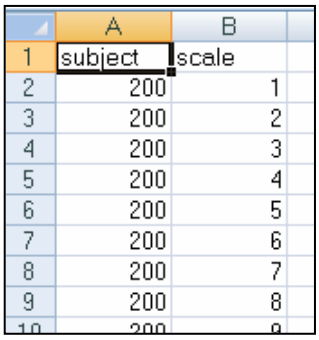
1.2.3 PROC IMPORT Data Source Statements

These statements give you additional control over how the incoming data are to be read and interpreted. Availability of any given source statement depends on the type (DBMS=) of the incoming data.

- DATAROW — First incoming row that contains data.
- GETNAMES — The names of the incoming columns are available in the *first row* of the incoming data. Default column names when none are available on the incoming table are VAR1, VAR2, etc.
- GUESSINGROWS — Number of rows SAS will scan before determining if an incoming column is numeric or character. This is especially important for mixed columns and early rows are all numeric. In earlier versions of SAS modifications to the SAS Registry were needed to change the number of rows used to determine the variable's type, which is fortunately no longer necessary.
- RANGE and SHEET — For spreadsheets a specific sheet name, named range, or range within a sheet can be specified.
- SCANTEXT and TEXTSIZE — PROC IMPORT assigns a length to a character variable by scanning the incoming column and determining the maximum.

When using GETNAMES to read column names from the source data, keep in mind that most databases use different naming conventions than SAS and may have column names that will cause problems when imported. By default illegal characters are replaced with an underscore (_) by PROC IMPORT. When you need the original column name, the system option VALIDVARNAME=ANY (see Section 14.1.2) allows a broader range of acceptable column names.

In the contrived data for the following example we have an EXCEL file containing a subject number and a response variable (SCALE). The import wizard can be used to generate a PROC IMPORT step that will read the XLS file (MAKESCALE.XLS) and create the data set WORK.SCALEDATA. This PROC IMPORT step creates two numeric variables.



	A	B
1	subject	scale
2	200	1
3	200	2
4	200	3
5	200	4
6	200	5
7	200	6
8	200	7
9	200	8
10	200	9

```
PROC IMPORT OUT= WORK.scaledata
            DATAFILE= "C:\Temp\makescale.xls"
                      DBMS=EXCEL REPLACE;
     RANGE="MAKESCALE";
     GETNAMES=YES; ❶
     MIXED=NO; ❷
     SCANTEXT=YES;
     USEDATE=YES;
     SCANTIME=YES;
   RUN;
```

Notice that the form of the supporting statements is different than form most procedures. They look more like options (option=value;) than like statements. The GETNAMES= statement ❶ is used to determine the variable names from the first column.

When importing data SAS must determine if a given column is to be numeric or character. A number of clues are utilized to make this determination. SAS will scan a number of rows for each column to try to determine if all the values are numeric. If a non-numeric value is found, the column will be read as a character variable; however, only some of the rows are scanned and consequently an incorrect determination is possible. ❷ The MIXED= statement is used to specify that the values in a given column are always of a single type (numeric or character). When set to YES, the IMPORT procedure will tend to create character variables in order to accommodate mixed types.

In this contrived example it turns out that starting with subject 271 the variable SCALE starts taking on non-numeric values. Using the previous PROC IMPORT step does not detect this change, and creates SCALE as a numeric variable. This, of course, means that data will be lost as SCALE will be missing for the observations starting from row 712.

706	270	5
707	270	6
708	270	7
709	270	8
710	270	9
711	270	10
712	271	a
713	271	b
714	271	c
715	271	d

For PROC IMPORT to correctly read the information in SCALE it needs to be a character variable. We can encourage IMPORT to create a character variable by using the MIXED and GUESSINGROWS statements.

```
PROC IMPORT OUT= WORK.scaledata
            DATAFILE= "C:\Temp\makescale.xls"
            DBMS=excel REPLACE;
     GETNAMES=YES;
     MIXED=YES; ❸
   RUN;
```

Changing the MIXED= value to YES ❸ is not necessarily sufficient to cause SCALE to be a character value; however, if the value of the DBMS option is changed from EXCEL to XLS ❹, the MIXED=YES statement ❺ is honored and SCALE is written as a character variable in the data set SCALEDATA.

```
PROC IMPORT OUT= WORK.scaledata
            DATAFILE= "C:\Temp\makescale.xls"
            DBMS=xls REPLACE; ❹
     GETNAMES=YES; ❺
     GUESSINGROWS=800; ❻
   RUN;
```

When MIXED=YES is not practical the GUESSINGROWS= statement can sometimes be used to successfully determine the type for a variable. GUESSINGROWS cannot be used when DBMS=EXCEL, however it can be used when DBMS=XLS. Since GUESSINGROWS ❻ changes the number of rows that are scanned prior to determining if the column should be numeric or character, its use can increase the time and resources required to read the data.

SEE ALSO

The SAS Forum thread http://communities.sas.com/thread/12743?tstart=0 has a PROC IMPORT using NAMEROW= and STARTROW= data source statements. The thread http://communities.sas.com/thread/30405?tstart=0 discusses named ranges, and it and the thread http://communities.sas.com/thread/12293?tstart=0 show the use of several data source statements.

1.2.4 Importing and Exporting CSV Files

Comma Separated Variable, CSV, files have been a standard file type for moving data between systems for many years. Fortunately we now have a number of superior tools available to us so that we do not need to resort to CSV files as often. Still they are commonly used and we need to understand how to work with them.

Both the IMPORT and EXPORT procedures can work with CSV files (this capability is a part of the Base SAS product and a SAS/ACCESS product is not required). Both do the conversion by first building a DATA step, which is then executed.

Building a DATA Step

When you use the import/export wizard to save the PROC step (see Section 1.2.1), the resulting DATA step is not saved. Fortunately you can still get to the generated DATA step by recalling the last submitted code.

1. Execute the IMPORT/EXPORT procedure.
2. While in the Display Manager, go to RUN⟶Recall Last Submit.

Once the code generated by the procedure is loaded into the editor, you can modify it for other purposes or simply learn from it. For the simple PROC EXPORT step in Section 1.2.1, the following code is generated:

```
/*************************************************************************
 *   PRODUCT:   SAS
 *   VERSION:   9.1
 *   CREATOR:   External File Interface
 *   DATE:      11APR09
 *   DESC:      Generated SAS Datastep Code
 *   TEMPLATE SOURCE:  (None Specified.)
 *************************************************************************/
    data _null_;
    set  SASHELP.CLASS                                  end=EFIEOD;
    %let _EFIERR_ = 0; /* set the ERROR detection macro variable */
    %let _EFIREC_ = 0;     /* clear export record count macro variable */
    file 'C:\InnovativeTechniques\data\class.csv' delimiter=','
          DSD DROPOVER lrecl=32767;
       format Name $8. ;
       format Sex $1. ;
       format Age best12. ;
       format Height best12. ;
       format Weight best12. ;
    if _n_ = 1 then        /* write column names */
     do;
       put
       'Name'
       ','
       'Sex'
       ','
       'Age'
       ','
       'Height'
       ','
       'Weight'
       ;
     end;
     do;
       EFIOUT + 1;
       put Name $ @;
       put Sex $ @;
       put Age @;
       put Height @;
       put Weight ;
       ;
     end;
    if _ERROR_ then call symputx('_EFIERR_',1);  /*set ERROR detection
                                                   macro variable*/
    if EFIEOD then call symputx('_EFIREC_',EFIOUT);
    run;
```

Headers are Not on Row 1

The ability to create column names based on information contained in the data is very beneficial. This is especially important when building a large SAS table from a CSV file with lots of columns. Unfortunately we do not always have a CSV file with the column headers in row 1. Since GETNAMES=YES assumes that the headers are in row 1 we cannot use GETNAMES=YES. Fortunately this is SAS, so there are alternatives.

The CSV file created in the PROC EXPORT step in Section 1.2.1 has been modified so that the column names are on row 3. The first few lines of the file are:

```
Class Data from SASHELP,,,,
Comma Separated rows; starting in row 3,,,,
Name,Sex,Age,Height,Weight
Alfred,M,14,69,112.5
Alice,F,13,56.5,84
Barbara,F,13,65.3,98
Carol,F,14,62.8,102.5
                    . . . . data not shown . . . .
```

The DATA step generated by PROC IMPORT (E1_2_3c_ImportWO.SAS), simplified somewhat for this example, looks something like:

```
data WORK.CLASSWO                                          ;
infile "&path\Data\classwo.csv" delimiter = ','
       MISSOVER DSD lrecl=32767 firstobs=4 ;
   informat VAR1 $8. ;
   informat VAR2 $1. ;
   informat VAR3 best32. ;
   informat VAR4 best32. ;
   informat VAR5 best32. ;
   format VAR1 $8. ;
   format VAR2 $1. ;
   format VAR3 best12. ;
   format VAR4 best12. ;
   format VAR5 best12. ;
input
            VAR1 $
            VAR2 $
            VAR3
            VAR4
            VAR5
;
run;
```

Clearly SAS has substituted VAR1, VAR2, and so on for the unknown variable names. If we knew the variable names, all we would have to do to fix the problem would be to rename the variables. The following macro reads the header row from the appropriate row in the CSV file, and uses that information to rename the columns in WORK.CLASSWO.

```
%macro rename(headrow=3, rawcsv=, dsn=);
%local lib ds i;
data _null_       ;
    infile "&path\Data\&rawcsv"
           scanover lrecl=32767 firstobs=&headrow;
    length temp $ 32767;
    input temp $;
    i=1;
    do while(scan(temp,i,',') ne ' ');
      call symputx('var'||left(put(i,4.)),scan(temp,i,','),'l');
      i+1;
    end;
    call symputx('varcnt',i-1,'l');
    stop;
    run;

    %* Determine the library and dataset name;
    %if %scan(&dsn,2,.) = %then %do;
      %let lib=work;
      %let ds = %scan(&dsn,1,.);
    %end;
    %else %do;
      %let lib= %scan(&dsn,1,.);
      %let ds = %scan(&dsn,2,.);
    %end;

    proc datasets lib=&lib nolist;
      modify &ds;
      rename
      %do i = 1 %to &varcnt;
         var&i = &&var&i
      %end;
      ;
      quit;
%mend rename;

%rename(headrow=3, rawcsv=classwo.csv, dsn=work.classwo)
```

SEE ALSO

McGuown (2005) also discusses the code generated by PROC IMPORT when reading a CSV file. King (2011) uses arrays and hash tables to read CSV files with unknown or varying variable lists. These flexible and efficient techniques could be adapted to the type of problem described in this section.

1.2.5 Preventing the Export of Blank Sheets

PROC EXPORT does not protect us from writing a blank sheet when our exclusion criteria excludes all possible rows from a given sheet ❶. In the following example we have inadvertently asked to list all students with SEX='q'. There are none of course, and the resulting sheet is blank, except for the column headers.

```
proc export data=sashelp.class(where=(sex='q'❶))
            outfile='c:\temp\classmates.xls'
            dbms=excel2000
            replace;
   SHEET='sex: Q';
   run;
```

We can prevent this from occurring by first identifying those levels of SEX that have one or more rows. There are a number of ways to generate a list of values of a variable; however, an SQL step is ideally suited to place those values into a macro variable for further processing.

The name of the data set that is to be exported, as well as the classification variable, are passed to the macro %MAKEXLS as named parameters.

```
%macro makexls(dsn=,class=);
%local valuelist listnum i value;
proc sql noprint;
select distinct &class ❷
   into :valuelist separated by ' ' ❸
      from &dsn;
%let listnum = &sqlobs;
quit;

%* One export for each sheet;
%do i = 1 %to &listnum; ❹
   %let value = %scan(&valuelist,&i,%str( )); ❺
   proc export data=&dsn(where=(&class="&value")) ❻
               outfile="c:\temp\&dsn..xls"
               dbms=excel2000
               replace;
      SHEET="&class:&value";
      run;
%end;
%mend makexls;
%makexls(dsn=sashelp.class,class=sex)
```

❷ An SQL step is used to build a list of distinct values of the classification variable.

❸ These values are saved in the macro variable &VALUELIST.

❹ A %DO loop is used to process across the individual values, which are extracted ❺ from the list using the %SCAN function.

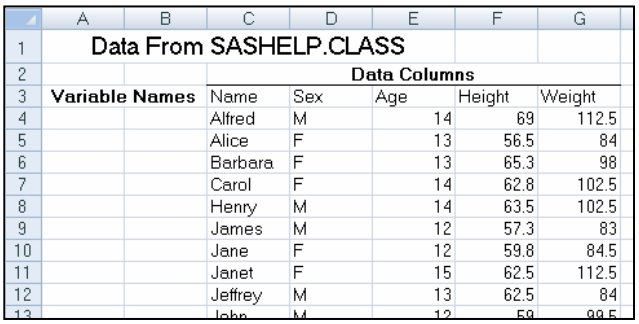
❻ The PROC EXPORT step then creates a sheet for the selected value. ❼

SEE ALSO

A similar example which breaks a data set into separate sheets can be found in the article "Automatically_Separating_Data_into_Excel_Sheets" on sasCommunity.org.
http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Automatically_Separating_Data_into_Excel_Sheets

1.2.6 Working with Named Ranges

By default PROC IMPORT and the LIBNAME statement's EXCEL engine expect EXCEL data to be arranged in a certain way (column headers, if present, on row one column A; and data starting on row two). It is not unusual, however, for the data to be delivered as part of a report or as a subset of a larger table. One solution is to manually cut and paste the data onto a blank sheet so that it conforms to the default layout. It can often be much easier to create a named range.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Data From SASHELP.CLASS						
2			Data Columns				
3	Variable Names		Name	Sex	Age	Height	Weight
4			Alfred	M	14	69	112.5
5			Alice	F	13	56.5	84
6			Barbara	F	13	65.3	98
7			Carol	F	14	62.8	102.5
8			Henry	M	14	63.5	102.5
9			James	M	12	57.3	83
10			Jane	F	12	59.8	84.5
11			Janet	F	15	62.5	112.5
12			Jeffrey	M	13	62.5	84
13			John	M	12	59	99.5

The EXCEL spreadsheet shown here contains the SASHELP.CLASS data set (only part of which is shown here); however, titles and columns have been added. Using the defaults PROC IMPORT will not be able to successfully read this sheet.

To facilitate the use of this spreadsheet, a named range was created for the rectangle defined by C3-G22 . This range was given the name 'CLASSDATA'. This named range can now be used when reading the data from this sheet.

When reading a named range using the EXCEL engine on the LIBNAME statement, the named range (CLASSDATA) is used just as you would the sheet name ❶.

```
libname seexls excel "&path\data\E1_2_6classmates.xls";

data class;
   set seexls.classdata; ❶
   run;
libname seexls clear; ❷
```

❷ When using an engine on the LIBNAME statement be sure to clear the *libref* so that you can use the spreadsheet outside of SAS.

When using PROC IMPORT to read a named range, the RANGE= statement ❸ is used to designate the named range of interest. Since the name of the named range is unique to the workbook, a sheet name is not required.

```
proc import out=work.classdata
            datafile= "&path\data\E1_2_6classmates.xls"
            dbms=xls replace;
   getnames=yes;
   range='classdata'; ❸
   run;
```

MORE INFORMATION

The EXCEL LIBNAME engine is introduced in Section 1.1.

1.3 DATA Step INPUT Statement

The INPUT statement is loaded with options that make it extremely flexible. Since there has been a great deal written about the basic INPUT statement, only a few of the options that seem to be under used have been collected here.

SEE ALSO

An overview about reading raw data with the INPUT statement can be found in the SAS documentation at http://support.sas.com/publishing/pubcat/chaps/58369.pdf. Schreier (2001) gives a short overview of the automatic _INFILE_ variable along with other information regarding the reading of raw data.

1.3.1 Format Modifiers for Errors

Inappropriate data within an input field can cause input errors that prevent the completion of the data set. As the data are read, a great many messages can also be generated and written to the LOG. The (?) and (??) format modifiers control error handling. Both the ? and the ?? suppress error messages in the LOG; however, the ?? also resets the automatic error variable (_ERROR_) to 0. This means that while both of these operators control what is written to the LOG only the ?? will necessarily prevent the step from terminating when the maximum error count is reached.

In the following step, the third data row contains an invalid value for AGE. AGE is assigned a missing value, and because of the ?? operator no 'invalid data' message is written to the LOG.

```
data base;
input age ?? name $;
datalines;
15   Fred
14   Sally
x    John
run;
```

MORE INFORMATION

The ?? modifier is used with the INPUT function in Sections 2.3.1 and 3.6.1.

SEE ALSO

The SAS Forum thread found at http://communities.sas.com/message/48729 has an example that uses the ?? format modifier.

1.3.2 Format Modifiers for the INPUT Statement

Some of the most difficult input coding occurs when combining the use of informats with LIST style input. This style is generally required when columns are not equally spaced so informats can't be easily used, and the fields are delimited with blanks. LIST is also the least flexible input style. Informat modifiers include:

- & allows embedded blanks in character variables
- : allows the use of informats for non-aligned columns
- ~ allows the use of quotation marks within data fields

Because of the inherent disadvantages of LIST input (space delimited fields), when it is possible, consider requesting a specific unique delimiter. Most recently generated files of this type utilize a non-blank delimiter, which allows you to take advantage of some of the options discussed in Section 1.3.3. Unfortunately many legacy files are space delimited, and we generally do not have the luxury of either requesting a specific delimiter or editing the existing file to replace the spaces with delimiters.

There are two problems in the data being read in the following code. The three potential INPUT statements (two of the three are commented) highlight how the ampersand and colon can be used to help read the data. Notice that DOB does not start in a consistent column and the second last name has an embedded blank.

```
title '1.3.2a List Input Modifiers';
data base;
length lname $15;
input fname $ dob mmddyy10. lname $ ; ❶
*input fname $ dob :mmddyy10. lname $ ; ❷
*input fname $ dob :mmddyy10. lname $ &; ❸
datalines;
Sam 12/15/1945 Johnson
Susan   10/10/1983 Mc Callister
run;
```

Using the first INPUT statement without informat modifiers ❶ shows, that for the second data line, both the date and the last name have been read incorrectly.

```
1.3.2a List Input Modifiers

Obs    lname      fname           dob

 1     Johnson    Sam      12/15/1945
 2     83         Susan    10/10/2019
```

Assuming the second INPUT statement ❷ was commented and used, the colon modifier is placed in front of the date informat. The colon allows the format to essentially float to the appropriate starting point by using LIST input and then applying the informat once the value is found.

```
1.3.2a List Input Modifiers

Obs    lname      fname           dob

 1     Johnson    Sam      12/15/1945
 2     Mc         Susan    10/10/1983
```

The birthdays are now being read correctly; however, Susan's last name is being split because the embedded blank is being interpreted as a field delimiter. The ampersand ❸ can be used to allow embedded spaces within a field.

By placing an ampersand after the variable name (LNAME) ❸, the blank space becomes part of the variable rather than a delimiter. We are now reading both the date of birth and the last name correctly.

```
input fname $ dob :mmddyy10. lname $ &; ❸
```

```
1.3.2a List Input Modifiers

Obs    lname           fname           dob

 1     Johnson         Sam      12/15/1945
 2     Mc Callister    Susan    10/10/1983
```

While the ampersand is also used as a macro language trigger, this will not be a problem when it is used as an INPUT statement modifier as long as it is not immediately followed by text that could be interpreted as a macro variable name (letter or underscore). In this example the ampersand is followed by the semicolon so there will be no confusion with the macro language.

While the trailing ampersand can be helpful it can also introduce problems as well. If the data had been slightly more complex, even this solution might not have worked. The following data also contains a city name. Even though the city is not being read, the trailing & used with the last name (LNAME) causes the city name to be confused with the last name.

```
title '1.3.2b List Input Modifiers';
data base;
length lname $15;
input fname $ dob :mmddyy10. lname $ &;
format dob mmddyy10.; ❹
datalines;
Sam 12/15/1945 Johnson   Seattle
Susan   10/10/1983 Mc Callister New York
; ❺
run;
```

Because of the trailing & and the length of LNAME ($15) a portion of the city (New York) has been read into the LNAME for the second observation. On the first observation the last name is correct because more than one space separates Johnson and Seattle. Even with the trailing &, more than one space is still successfully seen as a field delimiter.

```
1.3.2b List Input Modifiers

Obs    lname              fname           dob

 1     Johnson            Sam       12/15/1945
 2     Mc Callister Ne    Susan     10/10/1983
```

On the second observation the city would not have been confused with the last name had there been two or more spaces between the two fields.

❹ Placing the FORMAT statement within the DATA step causes the format to be associated with the variable DOB in subsequent steps. The INFORMAT statement is only used when reading the data.

❺ The DATALINES statement causes subsequent records to be read as data up to, but not including, the first line that contains a semicolon. In the previous examples the RUN statement doubles as the end of data marker. Many programmers use a separate semicolon to perform this task. Both styles are generally considered acceptable (as long as you are using the RUN statement to end your step).

With only a single space between the last name and the city, the trailing & alone is not sufficient to help the INPUT statement distinguish between these two fields. Additional variations of this example can be found in Section 1.3.3.

MORE INFORMATION

LIST input is a form of delimited input and as such these options also apply to the examples discussed in Section 1.3.3. When the date form is not consistent one of the *any date* informats may be helpful. See Section 12.6 for more information on the use of these specialized informats.

SEE ALSO

The SAS Forum thread http://communities.sas.com/message/42690 discusses the use of list input modifiers.

1.3.3 Controlling Delimited Input

Technically LIST input is a form of delimited input, with the default delimiter being a space. This means that the modifiers shown in Section 1.3.2 apply to other forms of delimited input, including comma separated variable, CSV, files.

INFILE Statement Options

Options on the INFILE statement are used to control how the delimiters are to be interpreted.

- DELIMITER Specifies the character that delimits fields (other than the default - a space). This option is often abbreviated as DLM=.
- DLMSTR Specifies a single multiple character string as a delimiter.
- DLMOPT Specifies parsing options for the DLMSTR option.
- DSD Allows character fields that are surrounded by quotes (by setting the comma as the delimiter). Two successive delimiters are interpreted as individual delimiters, which allow missing values to be assigned appropriately. DSD also removes quotation marks from character values surrounded by quotes. If the comma is not the delimiter you will need to use the DLM= option along with the DSD option.

Some applications, such as Excel, build delimiter separated variable files with quotes surrounding the fields. This can be critical if a field's value can contain the field separator. For default list input, where a space is a delimiter, it can be very difficult to successfully read a field with an embedded blank (see Section 1.3.2 which discusses the use of trailing & to read embedded spaces). The DSD option alerts SAS to the *potential* of quoted character fields. The following example demonstrates simple comma-separated data.

```
data base;
length lname $15;
infile datalines ❶ dlm=','; ❷
*infile datalines dlm=',' dsd; ❸
input fname $ lname $ dob :mmddyy10.;
datalines;
'Sam','Johnson',12/15/1945
'Susan','Mc Callister',10/10/1983
run;
```

❶ Although the INFILE statement is often not needed when using the DATALINES, CARDS, or CARDS4 statements, it can be very useful when the options associated with the INFILE statement are needed. The *fileref* can be DATALINES or CARDS.

The DLM= option is used to specify the delimiter. In this example the field delimiter is specified as a comma ❷.

```
1.3.3a Delimited List Input Modifiers

Obs    lname              fname            dob

 1     'Johnson'         'Sam'      12/15/1945
 2     'Mc Callister'    'Susan'    10/10/1983
```

The fields containing character data have been quoted. Since we do not actually want the quote marks to be a part of the data fields, the DSD option ❸ alerts the parser to this possibility and the quotes themselves become a part of the field delimiting process.

```
infile datalines dlm=',' dsd; ❸
```

Using the DSD option results in data fields without the quotes.

```
1.3.3a Delimited List Input Modifiers

Obs    lname           fname           dob

 1     Johnson         Sam      12/15/1945
 2     Mc Callister    Susan    10/10/1983
```

On the INPUT Statement

The tilde (~) ❹can be used to modify a format, much the same way as a colon (:); however, the two modifiers are not exactly the same.

```
title '1.3.3b Delimited List Input Modifiers';
title2 'Using the ~ Format Modifier';
data base;
length lname $15;
infile datalines dlm=',' dsd;
input fname $ lname $ birthloc $~❹15. dob :mmddyy10. ;
datalines;
'Sam','Johnson', 'Fresno, CA','12/15/1945'
'Susan','Mc Callister','Seattle, WA',10/10/1983
run;
```

The tilde format modifier correctly reads the BIRTHLOC field; however, it preserves the quote marks that surround the field. Like the colon, the tilde can either precede or follow the $ for character variables. As an aside notice that for this example quote marks surround the numeric date value for the first row. The field is still processed correctly as a numeric SAS date value.

```
1.3.3b Delimited List Input Modifiers
Using the ~ Format Modifier

Obs    lname           fname      birthloc              dob

 1     Johnson         Sam      'Fresno, CA'     12/15/1945
 2     Mc Callister    Susan    'Seattle, WA'    10/10/1983
```

Replacing the tilde ❹ with a colon (:) would cause the BIRTHLOC value to be saved without the quote marks. If instead we supply a length for BIRTHLOC ❺, neither a format nor the tilde will be needed.

```
title '1.3.3c Delimited List Input Modifiers';
title2 'BIRTHLOC without a Format Modifier';
title3 'BIRTHLOC Length Specified';
data base;
length lname birthloc $15; ❺
infile datalines dlm=',' dsd;
input fname $ lname $ birthloc $ dob :mmddyy10. ;
datalines;
'Sam','Johnson', 'Fresno, CA',12/15/1945
'Susan','Mc Callister','Seattle, WA',10/10/1983
run;
```

```
1.3.3c Delimited List Input Modifiers
BIRTHLOC without a Format Modifier
BIRTHLOC Length Specified

Obs    lname           birthloc      fname           dob

 1     Johnson         Fresno, CA    Sam      12/15/1945
 2     Mc Callister    Seattle, WA   Susan    10/10/1983
```

Multiple Delimiters

It is possible to read delimited input streams that contain more than one delimiter. In the following small example two delimiters, a comma and a slash are both used to delimit the data values.

```
data imports;
infile cards dlm='/,';
input id importcode $ value;
cards;
14,1,13
25/Q9,15
6,D/20
run;
```

Obs	id	importcode	value
1	14	1	13
2	25	Q9	15
3	6	D	20

```
data imports;
retain dlmvar '/,'; ❻
infile cards dlm=dlmvar;
input id importcode $ value;
cards;
14,1,13
25/Q9,15
6,D/20
run;
```

Notice that the DLM option causes either the comma or the slash to be used as field delimiters, but not the slash comma together as a single delimiter (see the DLMSTR option below to create a single multiple character delimiter).

❻ Because the INFILE statement is executed for each observation, the value assigned to the DLM option does not necessarily need to be a constant. It can also be a variable or can be changed using IF-THEN/ELSE logic. In the simplest form this variable could be assigned in a retain statement.

```
data imports;
infile cards;
input dlmvar $1. @;
infile cards dlm=dlmvar; ❼
input @2 id importcode $ value;
cards;
,14,1,13
/25/Q9/15
~6~D~20
run;
```

❼ This simple example demonstrates a delimiter that varies by observation. Here the first character of each line is the delimiter that is to be used in that line. The delimiter is read, stored, and then used on the INFILE statement. Here we are taking advantage of the executable nature of the INFILE statement.

Using DLMSTR

Unlike the DLM option, which designates one or more delimiters, the DLMSTR option declares a specific list of characters to use as a delimiter. Here the delimiter is the sequence of characters comma-comma-slash (,,/). Notice in the LISTING of the IMPORT data set, that extra commas and slashes are read as data.

```
data imports;
infile cards dlmstr=',,/';
input  id importcode $ value;
cards;
14,,/1/,,/13
25,,/Q9,,,/15
6,,/,D,,/20
run;
```

1.3.3g Use a delimiter string

Obs	id	importcode	value
1	14	1/	13
2	25	Q9,	15
3	6	,D	20

SEE ALSO

The following SAS Forum thread discussed the use of the DLM and DLMSTR options http://communities.sas.com/message/46192. The use of the tilde when writing data was discussed on the following forum thread: http://communities.sas.com/message/57848. The INFILE and FILE statements are discussed in more detail by First (2008).

1.3.4 Reading Variable-Length Records

For most raw data files, including the small ones shown in most of the preceding examples, the number of characters on each row has not been consistent. Inconsistent record length can cause problems with lost data and incomplete fields. This is especially true when using the formatted style of input. Fortunately there are several approaches to reading this kind of data successfully.

The Problem Is

Consider the following data file containing a list of patients. Unless it has been built and defined as a fixed-length file, which is very unlikely on most operating systems including Windows, each record has a different length. The individual records physically stop after the last non-blank character. When we try to read the last name on the third row (Rachel's last name is unknown), we will be attempting to read past the end of the physical record and there will almost certainly be an error.

```
F     Linda     Maxwell
M     Ronald    Mercy
F     Rachel
M     Mat       Most
M     David     Nabers
F     Terrie    Nolan
F     June      Olsen
M     Merv      Panda
M     Mathew    Perez
M     Robert    Pope
M     Arthur    Reilly
M     Adam      Robertson
```

The following code attempts to read the above data. However, we have a couple of problems.

```
filename patlist "&path\data\patientlist.txt";
data patients;
   infile patlist;
   input @2  sex $1.
         @8  fname $10.
         @18 lname $15.;
   run;
title '1.3.4a Varying Length Records';
proc print data=patients;
   run;
```

The LOG shows two notes; there is a LOST CARD and the INPUT statement reached past the end of the line.

```
NOTE: LOST CARD.
sex=M fname=Adam lname=  _ERROR_=1 _N_=6
NOTE: 12 records were read from the infile PATLIST.
      The minimum record length was 13.
      The maximum record length was 26.
NOTE: SAS went to a new line when INPUT statement reached past the end of a line.
```

The resulting data set has a number of data problems. Even a quick inspection of the data shows that the data fields have become confused.

1.3.4a Varying Length Records

Obs	sex	fname		lname
1	F	Linda	M	Ronald
2	F	M Mat	M	David
3	F	Terrie	F	June
4	M	Merv	M	Mathew
5	M	Robert	M	Arthur

Our INPUT statement requests SAS to read 15 spaces starting in column 18; however, there are never 15 columns available (the longest record is the last – Robertson – with a last name of 9 characters. To fill our request, it skips to column 1 of the next physical record to read the last name. When this happens the notes mentioned in the LOG are generated.

INFILE Statement Options (TRUNCOVER, MISSOVER)

Two INFILE statement options can be especially useful in controlling how SAS handles *short* records.

- MISSOVER — Assigns missing values to variables beyond the end of the physical record. Partial variables are set to missing.
- TRUNCOVER — Assigns missing values to variables beyond the end of the physical record. Partial variables are truncated, but not necessarily set to missing.
- FLOWOVER — SAS finishes the logical record using the next physical record. This is the default.

```
title '1.3.4b Varying Length Records';
title2 'Using TRUNCOVER';
data patients(keep=sex fname lname);
   infile patlist truncover;
   input @2  sex $1.
         @8  fname $10.
         @18 lname $15.;
   run;
```

The TRUNCOVER option is specified and as much information as possible is gathered from each record; however, SAS does not go to the next physical record to complete the observation.

```
1.3.4b Varying Length Records
Using TRUNCOVER

Obs  sex    fname     lname

  1   F     Linda     Maxwell
  2   M     Ronald    Mercy
  3   F     Rachel
  4   M     Mat       Most
  5   M     David     Nabers
  6   F     Terrie    Nolan
  7   F     June      Olsen
  8   M     Merv      Panda
  9   M     Mathew    Perez
 10   M     Robert    Pope
 11   M     Arthur    Reilly
 12   M     Adam      Robertson
```

Generally the TRUNCOVER option is easier to apply than the $VARYING informat, and there is no penalty for including a TRUNCOVER option on the INFILE statement even when you think that you will not need it.

By including the TRUNCOVER option on the INFILE statement, we have now correctly read the data without skipping a record, while correctly assigning a missing value to Rachel's last name.

Using the $VARYING Informat

The $VARYING informat was created to be used with variable-length records. This informat allows us to determine the record length and then use that length for calculating how many columns to read. As a general rule, you should first attempt to use the more flexible and easier to apply TRUNCOVER option on the INFILE statement, before attempting to use the $VARYING informat.

Unlike other informats $VARYING utilizes a secondary value to determine how many bytes to read. Very often this value depends on the overall length of the record. The record length can be retrieved with the LENGTH= option ❶ and a portion of the overall record length is used to read the field with a varying width.

The classic use of the $VARYING informat is shown in the following example, where the last field on the record has an inconsistent width from record to record. This is also the type of data read for which the TRUNCOVER option was designed.

```
title2 'Using the $VARYING Informat';
data patients(keep=sex fname lname);
   infile patlist length=len ❶;
   input @; ❷
   namewidth = len-17; ❸
   input @2  sex $1.
         @8  fname $10.
         @18 lname $varying15. namewidth ❹;
   run;
```

❶ The LENGTH= option on the INFILE statement specifies a temporary variable (LEN) which holds the length of the current record.

```
1.3.4c Varying Length Records
Using the $VARYING Informat

Obs    sex    fname        lname

  1     F     Linda        Maxwell
  2     M     Ronald       Mercy
  3     F     M     Mat ❺
  4     M     David        Nabers
  5     F     Terrie       Nolan
  6     F     June         Olsen
  7     M     Merv         Panda
  8     M     Mathew       Perez
  9     M     Robert       Pope
 10     M     Arthur       Reilly
 11     M     Adam         Robertson
```

❷ An INPUT statement with just a trailing @ is used to load the record into the input buffer. Here the length is determined and loaded into the variable LEN. The trailing @ holds the record so that it can be read again.

❸ The width of the last name is calculated (total length less the number of characters to the left of the name). The variable NAMEWIDTH holds this value for use by the $VARYING informat.

❹ The width of the last name field for this particular record follows the $VARYING15. informat. Here the width used with the $VARYING informat is the widest possible value for LNAME and also establishes the variable's length.

Inspection of the resulting data shows that we are now reading the correct last name; however, we still have a data issue ❺ for the third and fourth input lines. Since the third data line has *no* last name, the $VARYING informat jumps to the next data record. The TRUNCOVER option on the INFILE statement discussed above addresses this issue successfully.

In fact for the third record the variable FNAME, which uses a $10 informat, reaches beyond the end of the record and causes the data to be misread.

```
data patients(keep=sex fname lname namewidth ❿);
   length sex $1 fname $10 lname $15; ❻
   infile patlist length=len;
   input @;
   if len lt 8 then do; ❼
      input @2  sex $;
   end;
   else if len le 17 then do; ❽
      namewidth = len-7;
      input @2  sex $
            @8  fname $varying. namewidth;
   end;
   else do; ❾
      namewidth = len-17;
      input @2  sex $
            @8  fname $
            @18 lname $varying. namewidth; ❿
   end;
   run;
```

❻ Using a LENGTH statement to declare the variable lengths avoids the need to add a width to the informats.

❼ Neither a first or last name is included. This code assumes that a gender (SEX) is always present.

❽ The record is too short to have a last name, but must contain a first name of at least one letter.

❾ The last name must have at least one letter.

❿ The variable NAMEWIDTH will contain the width of the rightmost variable. The value of this variable is generally of no interest, but it is kept here so that you can see its values change for each observation.

It is easy to see that the $VARYING informat is more difficult to use than either the TRUNCOVER or the MISSOVER options. However, the $VARYING informat can still be helpful. In the following simplified example suggested by John King there is no delimiter and yet the columns are not of constant width. To make things more interesting the variable with the inconsistent width is not on the end of the input string.

```
data datacodes;
   length dataname $15;
   input @1 width 2.
         dataname $varying. width
         datacode :2.;
   datalines;
5 Demog43
2 AE65
13lab_chemistry32
   run;
```

The first field (WIDTH) contains the number of characters in the second field (DATANAME). This value is used with the $VARYING informat to correctly read the data set name while not reading past the name and into the next field (DATACODE).

SEE ALSO

Cates (2001) discusses the differences between MISSOVER and TRUNCOVER. A good comparison of these options can also be found in the SAS documentation http://support.sas.com/documentation/cdl/en/basess/58133/HTML/default/viewer.htm#a002645812.htm .

SAS Technical Support example #37763 uses the $VARYING. informat to write a zero-length string in a REPORT example http://support.sas.com/kb/37/763.html.

1.4 Writing Delimited Files

Most modern database systems utilize metadata to make the data itself more useful. When transferring data to and from Excel, for instance, SAS can take advantage of this metadata. Flat files do not have the advantage of metadata and consequently more information must be transferred through the program itself. For this reason delimited data files should not be our first choice for transferring information from one database system to another. That said we do not always have that choice. We saw in Section 1.3 a number of techniques for reading delimited data.

Since SAS already knows all about a given SAS data set (it has access to the metadata), it is much more straightforward to write delimited files.

MORE INFORMATION

Much of the discussion on reading delimited data also applies when writing delimited data (see Section 1.3).

1.4.1 Using the DATA Step with the DLM= Option

When reading delimited data using the DATA step, the INFILE statement is used to specify a number of controlling options. Writing the delimited file is similar; however, the FILE statement is used. Many of the same options that appear on the INFILE statement can also be used on the FILE statement. These include:

- DLM=
- DLMSTR=
- DSD

While the DSD option by default implies a comma as the delimiter, there are differences between the uses of these two options. The DSD option will cause values which contain an embedded delimiter character to be double quoted. The DSD option also causes missing values to appear as two consecutive delimiters, while the DLM= alone writes the missing as either a period or a blank.

In the following example three columns from the ADVRPT.DEMOG data set are to be written to the comma separated variable (CSV) file. The FILE statement is used to specify the delimiter using the DLM= ❶ option. Just in case one of the fields contains the delimiter (a comma in this example), the Delimiter Sensitive Data option, DSD ❷, is also included. Using the DSD option is a good general practice.

```
filename outspot "&path\data\E1_4_1demog.csv";

data _null_;
   set advrpt.demog(keep=fname lname dob);
   file outspot dlm=',' ❶
                dsd;  ❷
   if _n_=1 then put 'FName,LName,DOB'; ❸
   put fname lname dob mmddyy10.; ❹
   run;
```

When you also want the first row to contain the column names, a conditional PUT ❸ statement can be used to write them. The data itself is also written using a PUT statement ❹.

MORE INFORMATION

The example in Section 1.4.4 shows how to insert the header row without explicitly naming the variables.

All the variables on the PDV can be written by using the statement `PUT (_ALL_)(:);` (see Section 1.4.5).

1.4.2 PROC EXPORT

Although a bit less flexible than the DATA step, the EXPORT procedure is probably easier to use for simple cases. However, it has some characteristics that make it 'not so easy' when the data are slightly less straightforward.

The EXPORT step shown here is intended to mimic the output file generated by the DATA step in Section 1.4.1; however, it is not successful and we need to understand why.

```
filename outspot "&path\data\E1_4_2demog.csv";

proc export data=advrpt.demog(keep=fname lname dob) ❶
            outfile=outspot ❷
            dbms=csv ❸ replace;
   delimiter=','; ❹
   run;
```

❶Three variables have been selected from ADVRPT.DEMOG and EXPORT is used to create a CSV file.

❷ The OUTFILE= option points to the *fileref* associated with the file to be created. Notice that the extension of the file's name matches the selected database type ❸.

❸ The DBMS= option is used to declare the type for the generated file. In this case a CSV file. Other choices include TAB and DLM (and others if one of the SAS/ACCESS products has been licensed).

❹ The DELIMITER= option is used to designate the delimiter. It is not necessary in this example as the default delimiter for a CSV file is a comma. This option is most commonly used when DBMS is set to DLM and something other than a space, the default delimiter for DBMS=DLM, is desired as the delimiter.

A quick inspection of the file generated by the PROC EXPORT step shows that **all** the variables from the ADVRPT.DEMOG data set have been included in the file; however, only those variables in the KEEP= data set option have values. Data set options ❶ cannot be used with the incoming data set when EXPORT creates delimited data. Either you will need to write all the variables or the appropriate variables need to be selected in a previous step (see Section 1.4.3). This behavior is an artifact of the way that PROC EXPORT writes the delimited file. PROC EXPORT writes a DATA step and builds the variable list from the metadata, ignoring the data set options. When the data are actually read into the constructed DATA step; however, the KEEP= data set option is applied, thus resulting in the missing values.

```
subject,clinnum,lname,fname,ssn,sex,dob,death,race,edu,wt,ht,symp,death2
,,Adams,Mary,,,12AUG51,,,,,,,
,,Adamson,Joan,,,,,,,,,,
,,Alexander,Mark,,,15JAN30,,,,,,,
,,Antler,Peter,,,15JAN34,,,,,,,
,,Atwood,Teddy,,,14FEB50,,,,,,,
      .... data not shown ....
```

1.4.3 Using the %DS2CSV Macro

The DS2CSV.SAS file is a macro that ships with Base SAS, and is accessed through the SAS autocall facility. Its original authorship predates many of the current capabilities discussed elsewhere in Section 1.4. The macro call is fairly straightforward; however, the macro code itself utilizes SCL functions and lists and is outside the scope of this book.

The macro is controlled through the use of a series of named or keyword parameters. Only a small subset of this list of parameters is shown here.

```
data part;
   set advrpt.demog(keep=fname lname dob); ❶
   run;

%ds2csv(data=part, ❷
        runmode=b, ❸
        labels=n,  ❹
        csvfile=&path\data\E1_4_3demog.csv) ❺
```

❶ As was the case with PROC EXPORT in Section 1.4.2, if you need to eliminate observations or columns a separate step is required.

❷ The data set to be processed is passed to the macro.

❸ The macro can be executed on a server by using RUNMODE=Y.

❹ By default the variable labels are used in the column header. Generally you will want the column names to be passed to the CSV file. This is done using the LABELS= parameter.

❺ The CSVFILE= parameter is used to name the CSV file. This parameter does not accept a *fileref*.

SEE ALSO

A search of SAS documentation for the macro name, DS2CSV, will surface the documentation for this macro.

1.4.4 Using ODS and the CSV Destination

The Output Delivery System, ODS, and the CVS tagset can be used to generate CSV files. When you want to create a CSV file of the data, complete with column headers, the CSV destination can be used in conjunction with PROC PRINT.

```
ods csv file="&path\data\E1_4_4demog.csv)" ❶
        options(doc='Help' ❷
                delimiter=";");❸
proc print data=advrpt.demog
           noobs;❹
   var fname lname dob; ❺
   run;
ods csv close; ❻
```

```
"fname";"lname";"dob"
"Mary";"Adams";"12AUG51"
"Joan";"Adamson";"."
"Mark";"Alexander";"15JAN30"
"Peter";"Antler";"15JAN34"
"Teddy";"Atwood";"14FEB50"
          .... data not shown ....
```

❶ The new delimited file is specified using the FILE= option.

❷ TAGSET options are specified in the OPTIONS list. A list of available options can be seen using the DOC='HELP' option.

❸ The delimiter can be changed from a comma with the DELIMITER= option.

❹ The OBS column is removed using the NOOBS option.

❺ Select variables and variable order using the VAR statement in the PROC PRINT step.

❻ As always be sure to close the destination.

MORE INFORMATION

Chapter 11 discusses a number of aspects of the Output Delivery System.

SEE ALSO

There have been several SAS forum postings on the CSV destination.
http://communities.sas.com/message/29026#29026
http://communities.sas.com/message/19459

1.4.5 Inserting the Separator Manually

When using the DATA step to create the delimited file, the techniques shown in Section 1.4.1 will generally be sufficient. However you may occasionally require more control, or you may want to take control of the delimiter more directly.

One suggestion that has been seen in the literature uses the PUT statement to insert the delimiter.

```
data _null_;
   set advrpt.demog(keep=fname lname dob);
   file csv_a;
   if _n_=1 then put 'FName,LName,DOB';
   put (_all_)(','); ❶
   run;
```

Here the _ALL_ variable list shortcut has been used to specify that all variables are to be written. This shortcut list requires a corresponding text, format, or other modifier for each of the variables. In this case we have specified a comma, e.g., (',') ❶.

This approach will work to some extent, but it is not perfect in that a comma precedes each line of data.

The DSD option on the FILE statement ❷ implies a comma as the delimiter, although the DLM= option can be used to specify a different option (see Section 1.4.1). The _ALL_ list abbreviation can still be used; however, a neutral modifier must also be selected. Either the colon (:) or the question mark (?) ❸, will serve the purpose.

```
data _null_;
   set advrpt.demog(keep=fname lname dob);
   file csv_b dsd;❷
   if _n_=1 then put 'FName,LName,DOB';
   put (_all_)(?) ❸;
   run;
```

Because the DSD option has been used, an approach such as this one will also work when one or more of the variables contain an embedded delimiter.

1.5 SQL Pass-Through

SQL pass through allows the user to literally pass instructions through a SAS SQL step to the server of another database. Passing code or SQL instructions out of the SQL step to the server can have a number of advantages, most notably significant efficiency gains.

1.5.1 Adding a Pass-Through to Your SQL Step

The pass-through requires three elements to be successful:

- A connection must be formed to the server/database. ❶
- Code must be passed to the server/database. ❷
- The connection must be closed. ❸

These three elements will be formulated as statements (❶ CONNECT and ❸ DISCONNECT) or as a clause within the FROM CONNECTION phrase ❷.

```
proc sql noprint;
   connect to odbc (dsn=clindat uid=Susie pwd=pigtails); ❶

   create table stuff as select * from connection to odbc (
      select * from q.org ❷
         for fetch only
      );

   disconnect from odbc; ❸
   quit;
```

The connection that is established using the CONNECT statement ❶ and is then referred to in the `FROM CONNECTION TO` phrase.

Notice that the SQL code that is being passed to the database, not a SAS database, ❷ is within the parentheses. This code must be appropriate for the receiving database. In this case the pass through is to a DB2 table via an ODBC connection.

There are a number of types of connections and while ODBC connections, such as the one established in this example, are almost universally available in the Microsoft/Windows world, they are typically slower than SAS/ACCESS connections.

1.5.2 Pass-Through Efficiencies

When using PROC SQL to create and pass database-specific code to a database other than SAS, such as Oracle or DB2, it is important that you be careful with how you program the particular problem. Depending on how it is coded SQL can be very efficient or very inefficient, and this can be an even more important issue when you use pass-through techniques to create a data subset.

Passing information back from the server is usually slower than processing on the server. Design the pass-through to minimize the amount of returned information. Generally the primary database will be stored at a location with the maximum processing power. Take advantage of that power. At the very least minimizing the amount of information that has to be transferred back to you will help preserve your bandwidth.

In SQL, data sets are processed in memory. This means that large data set joins should be performed where available memory is maximized. When a join becomes memory bound subsetting the data before the join can be helpful. Know and understand your database and OS, some WHERE statements form clauses that are applied to the result of the join rather than to the incoming data set.

Even when you do not intend to write to the primary database that is being accessed using an SQL pass-through, extra process checking may be involved against that data table. These checks, which can be costly, can potentially be eliminated by designating the incoming data table as read-only. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. In DB2 using the clause `for fetch only` in the code that is being passed to the database eliminates write checks against the incoming table. In the DB2 pass-through example in Section 1.5.1 we only want to extract or fetch data. We speed up the process by letting the database know that we will not be writing any data – only fetching it.

MORE INFORMATION

An SQL step using pass-through code can be found in Section 5.4.2.

1.6 Reading and Writing to XML

Extensible Markup Language, XML, has a hierarchical structure while SAS data sets are record or observation based. Because XML is fast becoming a universal data exchange format, it is incumbent for the SAS programmer to have a working knowledge of how to move information from SAS to XML and from XML to SAS.

The XML engine (Section 1.6.2) was first introduced in Version 8 of SAS. Later the ODS XML destination was added; however, currently the functionality of the XML destination has been built into the ODS MARKUP destination (see Section 1.6.1).

Because XML is text based and each row contains its own metadata, the files themselves can be quite large.

SEE ALSO

A very nice overview of XML and its relationship to SAS can be found in (Pratter, 2008). Other introductory discussions on the relationship of XML to SAS include: Chapal (2003), Palmer (2003 and 2004), and in the SAS documentation on “XML Engine with DATA Step or PROC COPY”.

1.6.1 Using ODS

You can create an XML file using the ODS MARKUP destination. The file can contain procedure output in XML form, and this XML file can then be passed to another application that utilizes / reads XML. By default the MARKUP destination creates a XML file.

```
title1 '1.6.1 Using ODS MARKUP';
ods markup file="&path\data\E1_6_1Names.xml"; ❶

* create a xml file of the report; ❷
proc print data=advrpt.demog;
   var lname fname sex dob;
   run;
ods markup close; ❸
```

❶ The FILE= option is used to designate the name of the file to be created. Notice the use of the XML extension.

❷ The procedure must be within the ODS 'sandwich.'

❸ The destination must be closed before the file ❶ can be used outside of SAS.

MORE INFORMATION

If the application that you are planning to use with the XML file is Excel, the EXCELXP tagset is a superior choice (see Section 11.2).

SEE ALSO

The LinkedIn thread
http://www.linkedin.com/groupItem?view=&srchtype=discussedNews&gid=70702&item=74453221&type=member&trk=eml-anet_dig-b_pd-ttl-cn&ut=34c4-P0gjofkY1
follows a discussion of the generation of XML using ODS.

1.6.2 Using the XML Engine

The use of the XML engine is a process similar to the one shown in Section 1.6.1, and can be used to write to the XML format. XML is a markup language and XML code is stored in a text file that can be both read and written by SAS. As in the example above, an engine is used on the LIBNAME statement to establish the link with SAS that performs the conversion. A *fileref* is established and it is used in the LIBNAME statement.

```
filename xmllst "&path\data\E1_6_2list.xml";

libname toxml xml xmlfileref=xmllst; ❶

* create a xml file (E1_6_2list.xml);
data toxml.patlist; ❷
   set advrpt.demog(keep=lname fname sex dob);
   run;

* convert xml to sas;
data fromxml;
   set toxml.patlist; ❷
   run;
```

❶ On the LIBNAME statement that has the XML engine, the XMLFILEREF= option is used to point to the *fileref* either containing the XML file or, as is the case in this example, the file that is to be written.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="windows-1252" ?>
- <TABLE>
- <PATLIST> ❸
  <lname>Adams</lname>
  <fname>Mary</fname>
  <sex>F</sex>
  <dob>1951-08-12</dob>
  </PATLIST>
- <PATLIST>
  <lname>Adamson</lname>
  <fname>Joan</fname>
  <sex>F</sex>
  <dob missing="." />
  </PATLIST>
. . . . the remaining observations are not shown . . . .
```

❷ The *libref* TOXML can be used to both read and write the XML file. The name of the data set (PATLIST) is recorded as a part of the XML file ❸. This means that multiple SAS data sets can be written to the same XML file.

The selected variables are written to the XML file. Notice that the variables are named on each line and that the date has been re-coded into a YYYY-MM-DD form, and that the missing DOB for 'Joan Adamson' has been written using the `missing=` notation.

SEE ALSO

Hemedinger and Slaughter (2011) briefly describe the use of XML and the XML Mapper.

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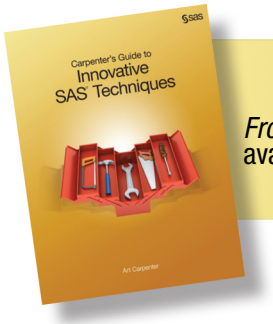

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Symbols and Numbers

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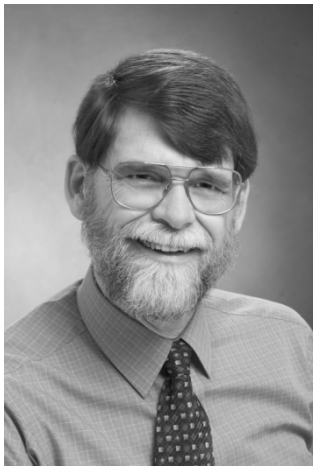
About the Author



This is Art Carpenter's fifth book and his publications list includes numerous papers and posters presented at SAS Global Forum, SUGI, and other user group conferences. Art is a SAS Silver Circle member and has been using SAS® since the mid 1970's, and he has served in various leadership positions in local, regional, national, and international user groups. He is a SAS Certified Base Programmer for SAS 9, SAS Certified Clinical Trials Programmer Using SAS 9 and a SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS 9. Through California Occidental Consultants he teaches SAS courses and provides contract SAS programming support nationwide.

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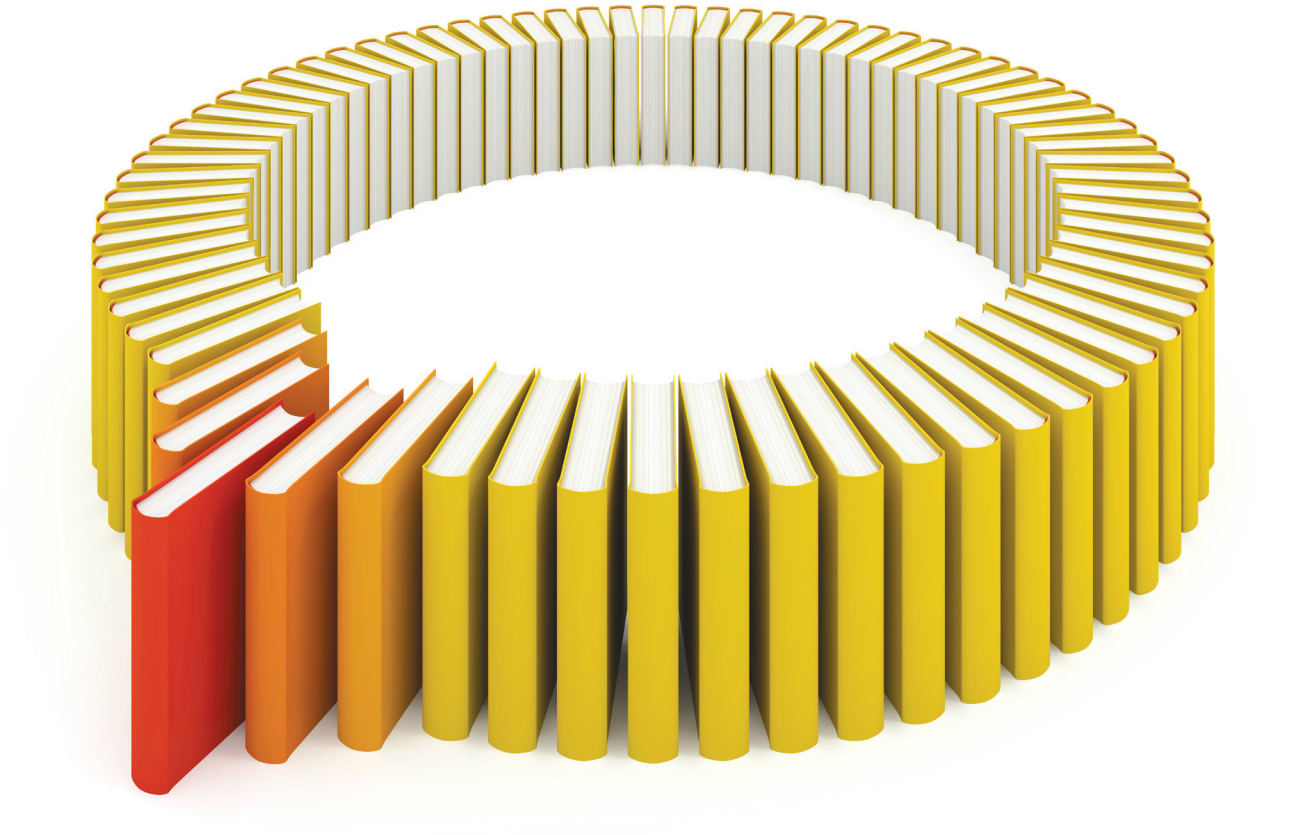

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