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Using SAS® Explorer to View File Properties and Catalog Contents

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Abstract

When you need access to your SAS environment, the SAS® Explorer provides users with a delightful user interface. Providing an object-oriented view of SAS libraries, catalogs, and data sets, SAS Explorer acts as the primary interface for browsing your SAS world. Using a multi-pane view of system and user files, this paper shows how SAS Explorer can be used to view a file's properties and the contents of a catalog with a few clicks of your mouse.

Introduction

SAS Explorer is designed to serve as a standard way of viewing system and user catalogs, data sets, libraries, and host files using a hierarchical structure. In addition to this capability, it also permits users to perform common tasks such as:

1. Create new and access existing SAS libraries
2. Create new library members and catalog entries
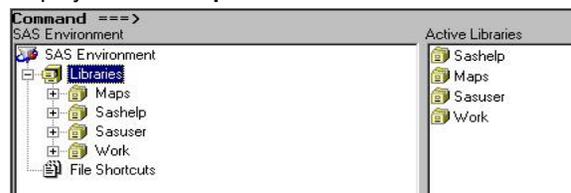3. Open and access standard SAS files.

Accessing SAS Libraries

A few special SAS libraries and their contents (e.g., Maps, Sashelp, Sasuser, and Work) are automatically available at SAS invocation. Other libraries containing user-defined applications, catalogs, and data sets can also be accessed during a session. To access system- and user-defined libraries as well as their contents, users must supply the SAS System with additional information (e.g., physical location on disk, tape, etc.) to help in their location. Typically this is accomplished with a **LIBNAME** statement or by entering the requested information in the **New Library window**. Once the libraries are referenced, the SAS Explorer can then be used to explore their contents.
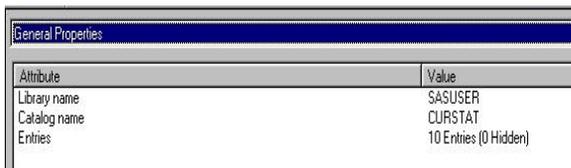
Using SAS Explorer

SAS Explorer is similar to Windows Explorer, in that it allows SAS files of all types (i.e., libraries, datasets, catalogs, and host files) to be viewed and manipulated. It is accessed and displayed by selecting **Explorer** from the **View** menu. With Explorer opened, users simply click their way in and around their SAS environment.

In the illustration below, the automatic SAS system libraries (Maps, Sashelp, Sasuser, and Work) is displayed in the **Explorer** window.
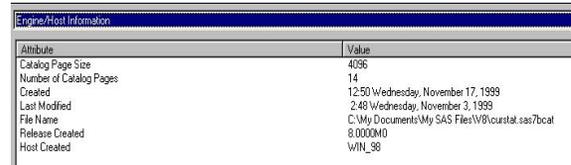

Viewing File Properties

Properties provide pertinent information about a file. A pop-up menu displays when a right-click is issued on a desired data set. The properties for a file can be viewed by selecting the file you want with a right-click of your mouse and choosing **Properties**. With the Properties window opened, specific elements (i.e., General Properties, Host/Engine Information, Columns, and Indexes) can be selected and displayed using a selection list. For example, the General Properties window for catalog CURSTAT in the SASUSER library shows a detailed image beginning with the Library name, Catalog name, and number of entries in the catalog.

By selecting **Engine/Host Information** from the Explorer selection list, system-related information related to the release of the SAS System is displayed.
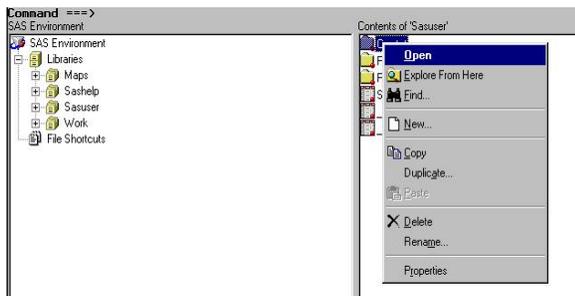

The final piece of information available from Properties can be displayed by selecting **Contents** from the Explorer selection list.
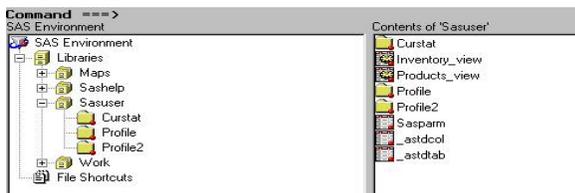
Viewing the Contents of a Catalog

The **contents** of an entire catalog can be viewed by issuing a right-click on the desired catalog name. Once the pop-up menu is displayed, select **Open** from the list.

The opened catalog appears below.

Another way to view the contents of a catalog is to select the **Explore From Here** option from the pop-up menu. The Contents of SASUSER.CURSTAT displays the various catalog entries contained in the library.

Conclusion

SAS Explorer provides an object-oriented way of viewing SAS libraries, catalogs, and data sets. Similar to Windows Explorer, Explorer permits the viewing of SAS files of all types (i.e., libraries, datasets, catalogs, and host files) and manipulated, if desired. As a primary interface, discovering what is in specific libraries, catalogs, and data sets is considerably easier.

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Kirk is a SAS Quality Partner® and SAS Certified Professional® with 25 years of experience working with the SAS System. He has authored over one hundred articles on computing and technology that have appeared in professional journals including Enterprise Systems Journal, SAS Users Group International (SUGI) since 1981, regional User Groups, and local User Groups. His popular SAS Tips column appears regularly in the SANDS and SESUG Newsletters. His expertise includes application design and development, training, and programming using base-SAS, SAS/SQL, ODS, SAS/FSP, SAS/AF, SCL, FRAME, and SAS/EIS software.

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