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Tips, Downloads, Samples, and Training – Discover the Service and Support Web Site
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ABSTRACT
You have your stack of trusted SAS® manuals and you've loaded the new documentation CD, but you still have questions, still need answers. Where do you look next? Try the SAS Web site. In the last few years, SAS has stepped up its award-winning customer support with the creation of the Service & Support Web site, where an abundance of information awaits you, from updated usage information to technical papers to online registration for training. The Web site is always available to provide the latest information and services that will broaden your SAS knowledge and complement traditional information sources.

INTRODUCTION
The SAS Web site provides information for all types of visitors. In order to make each visit more effective, we divided our site into two primary sections – each addressing a target audience. Our Web site audiences naturally divide into two groups of visitors:
- Those who are interested in learning more about SAS and its products
- Those who have SAS software on their desks and need to solve a problem or accomplish a task.

Most of you are members of the second group and it is for you that SAS designed and maintains the Service & Support Web site.

This paper focuses on the information that is provided for you, the SAS user, and guides you through the Service & Support site so that you can easily locate technical tips, sample programs, quick answers to common problems, and gain online access to SAS Technical Support services. You'll also learn how to navigate the SAS Download site, the FTP site, and the newsletter subscription process.

Because you may find yourself in the position of the "prospective customer" needing information about a SAS product or solution that you don't currently use, this paper will also give you a very brief introduction to parts of the SAS Web site that are not included with Service & Support.

WHERE DO I START?
The SAS Web site is enormous, containing over 50,000 pages of information. A successful visit to the site begins by knowing what you want and starting in the right place. As described in the Introduction, the SAS Web site has two major sections. You will have a need for both, but when? Ask yourself questions like the following:
- Does SAS have a solution that addresses this business problem?
- Have others used SAS to solve this problem?
- Do I need information to back up my statements to executive management?
- Am I having a problem with my existing software?
- Am I trying to complete a task and can't quite figure out the best way to utilize my SAS software?
- Have I lost track of my SAS documentation and just need to look up one bit of information?
- Do I need training?

If you answer "yes" to the first three questions in the list, you will be using the site like a prospect or analyst and will find the information that you seek without entering the Service and Support site.

If you answer "yes" to any of the remaining questions, you should start your Web visit at the Service & Support site.

Let's explore where these answers direct you, then we'll take our tour of the Service & Support site.

ADDRESSING A BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY NEED
When you are trying to determine how SAS software addresses a business or industry need, start your research at www.sas.com/software. This location offers you quick access to information that is grouped by solution, by industry, and by product. With the click of a link, you can be reading about SAS' solution for retail or pharmaceuticals, or how SAS can help you turn your business data into intelligence.

LEVERAGING THE SUCCESS OF OTHERS
SAS is used by some of the largest businesses and organizations in the world, each using SAS software to make them more profitable and more successful than their competition. Why not learn from their successes and jumpstart your own project? Stories that demonstrate real-world SAS usage appear on the SAS site every week. You can check the SAS Home page (www.sas.com) for the most recent articles. If you are looking for a success story that matches your need or your business, begin your search at www.sas.com/news/success. You will find stories grouped by company, by industry, by solution, and by technology. From these categories, you can quickly find supporting information for a proposal or project.

SOLVING THAT ELUSIVE PROBLEM
As a SAS software user, you often find yourself in need of one piece of information that answers the question "Why isn't this working?" In many cases, you can find the answer to this question on the Service & Support Web site. When you can quickly find the answer for yourself, you become more efficient at your job. The remainder of this paper is going to help you do just that – help yourself. We'll start with a quick introduction to the Service & Support site, investigate some departments in detail, look at ways to improve your searches, and end with a note about the e-newsletters.

TOURING SERVICE & SUPPORT
Our tour starts at the Service & Support Home page (www.sas.com/service), which is divided into three sections:
- What's new *bubbles* at the top
- News, tips, and events in the right column
- Information departments in the center.

Understanding the purpose of each section improves your visiting experiences. Let's get started.

STOP 1: THE BUBBLES
The *bubbles* are the three large, round images that appear at the top of the page. They make it easy for you to locate new content within the site. Because we can't highlight every change and addition, we use the bubbles to announce big changes that interest a wide audience. We vary the sections and type of content that is highlighted and change the references weekly. The size and location of the bubbles allow you to review the highlighted information quickly and decide if the content is of interest to you. One click on a bubble displays the information!

The bubbles are only one of several ways to locate updated and new information. Many sections of the site include a What's New or a Hot Topics list that announce section changes. I'll point these out as we tour those departments and sections.

STOP 2: THE ARTICLES

The *articles* are a reference to the entire right-hand column of the page. This column includes four major sections:

News & Resources

Contains news stories that describe an event, a new software release, technical details for using a particular feature or component. These articles are short and easy to read, but more importantly, they include a reference list where you can find more information about the topic.

Featured Book

Highlights a book that is available from SAS Publishing. Select the link for more information or to purchase the book from our Web site.

Technical Tips

Highlights two or three tips that are written by SAS employees or partners. These tips are usually short and include snippets of code that you can use in your SAS programs. The tips listed here are not the only tips that are available from the Service & Support site, but are provided here for easy access for the busy visitor. Note that these tips are also archived by date and stored in the Technical Tips Archives.

Events

Lists the dates and locations of upcoming events that are of interest to SAS users. A complete list of events is available from the News and Events page (www.sas.com/news).

STOP 3: THE DEPARTMENTS

The Service & Support site is divided into departments that offer a related set of resources. From the Service & Support Home page, you can link to a department home page or directly to a section that interests you. The names of these departments are designed to help you easily determine which link to select.

Before we leave the tour, let's take a quick look at the contents and purpose of each department. (The following are presented in the order in which they appear on the page.)

Technical Support

Provides access to the information and services that are made available by our Technical Support Consultants. You can search SAS Notes, locate Hot Fixes, submit problems, and review FAQs and samples. Details about how to use some of the features of the Technical Support site are available later in this document. If you are not familiar with the Technical Support Web site, take a few minutes and review the top ten ways to use the site. This information is available at www.sas.com/service/techsup/news/thingstodo.html.

Administrator Resources

Contains information that is of interest to system administrators and installers. If you are responsible for installing or maintaining a copy of SAS software, whether on a mainframe or a PC, this section is for you. Not only can you find installation instructions and system requirements; you can find tips and hints that are written for each operating system on which SAS runs.

Contracts Support

Offers a resource center for Site Representatives. If you are a site representative, use this site to change your contact information, request emergency SETINITs for your products, and find contact information for the SAS Contracts department.

Demos and Downloads

Gives you access to new and updated features and components. All of the software that is available from the Downloads site requires that you have a SAS license either on your personal machine or on a SAS server. Note that you cannot download the complete SAS system, but you can use this site to request that SAS updates be delivered to you on media.

User Groups

Houses information about SAS user groups worldwide. From this site, you can find the Web site for the local user group in your area and learn about user group events.

Training

Provides a search tool that enables you to locate and register for just the training that you need. With online course descriptions, schedules, and registration, you need not ever miss another class.

Certification

Outlines the SAS Certification program, helps you prepare for the examinations, and enables you to register for exams right from your office.

SAS Publishing

Sells and produces the documentation that you need. You can order any SAS book or Books By User (BBU) title that is available from SAS. The Publishing site also includes information about how to become a BBU author. Those of you who teach SAS classes may be interested in the custom text information.

Library

Provides access to all of the documentation that is available to you on the Web site. Documentation comes in all forms, so the Library groups content by types: papers, news and magazine articles, and product documentation. The Library also provides a link to the SAS OnlineDoc® that is provided with SAS software. (Note that access to the SAS OnlineDoc requires a userid and password.) The Library also provides a list of all of the newsletters that are available from SAS.

SAS Consulting

Outlines the consulting services that are available from SAS. Consulting services vary by country, so you can select the country where your business is operating and review the services that are available to you. Contact information is also provided.

Communities

Provide collections of information that center around a common task, job responsibility, or software usage. The communities create a location where people with similar needs and interests can find and share information with SAS technical staff. While the content of the communities can vary to address the needs of the group, all provide samples, documentation, papers, and where available, access to early releases of features and functions.

We currently have six communities that address your needs. Use the "Explore the Communities" page to locate new information in all communities. If you find a favorite community, new and updated information is listed for you in the right-hand column of each community home page.

LOCATING USAGE INFORMATION

Usage information is available from the Library and is defined as user documentation, API and syntax references, as well as samples and examples. You are looking for usage information if you need product documentation, a reminder about an option or parameter, or you want an example that shows the steps necessary for completing a task. When you want this type of content, start with the Online Product Documentation page in the Library (www.sas.com/service/library/onlinedoc/). This page provides links to:

- SAS OnlineDoc for Version 8
- installation instructions
- a list of frequently asked questions
- Technical Support documents
- access to documentation by product.

These and other links on the page provide "one stop shopping" for usage information.

RESEARCHING A PROBLEM

You've hit a roadblock. Your program doesn't work and the deadline is rapidly approaching. What do you do? In the past, the first course of action was to call SAS Technical Support; still a good option, but maybe this problem exists for other users and a few minutes on the Web site delivers the answer. The following steps provide a systematic process for searching the Web site for an answer to your problem.

1. Check the SAS Notes. Go to www.sas.com/service/techsup/search/sasnotes.html and enter your search criteria using either the simple or advanced search. Hint: If you are receiving an error message, type as much of the exact text into the search field as possible.
2. Scan the frequently asked questions for the product area with which you are having problems. An FAQ index is available at www.sas.com/service/techsup/faq/.
3. Search the Technical Support Web site using the search page available at www.sas.com/service/techsup/search/.
4. Broaden your search to include other content within the Service & Support site. See "Searching the Site" for hints on how to use the search tools that are provided.

Note: Any one of the above steps can direct you to a Hot Fix or a patch. Information on obtaining and applying these fixes is available in a later section entitled "Downloading Software."

If you could not find a solution to your problem, you can still call Technical Support, or you can use the Web site to submit your problem. See the next section for more.

SUBMITTING A PROBLEM

SAS offers three ways to submit a problem to Technical Support:

- Calling your local office
- Sending e-mail
- Using the submission form on the Web

You can access guidelines for each method at www.sas.com/service/techsup/contact/. Be sure that you follow these guidelines to ensure that you provide the information that a Technical Support consultant needs. To help you provide the correct information, Technical Support has included a submission form (www.sas.com/service/techsup/contact/submit_emits2.html) that prompts you for the information that a consult needs. This form provides two large text fields for you to include descriptive information about your problem.

However, some problems aren't easy to express in text and are much better understood once you see or experience the problem for yourself. You can use the FTP site to provide Technical Support with a copy of your program, your log, or other relevant information that wasn't possible in an e-mail message or text field.

Many users think that the FTP site is available only for retrieving information. However, retrieval is only part of its value. You can upload files as part of your problem submission or at the request of your Technical Support Consultant. (In most cases, you want to wait until you have established contact with a consultant.) Note that Technical Support Consultants do not monitor the FTP site for uploaded files. Your files will only be utilized if you have an active tract with Technical Support and your consultant is aware that the file has been uploaded.

Complete instructions for uploading files are available at www.sas.com/service/techsup/ftp/upload.html.

DOWNLOADING SOFTWARE

We do not offer all SAS software for download from our Web site. We do offer feature and component updates, experimental features, and fixes and patches. The software packages are provided either on the Demos and Downloads site or on the Technical Support Hot Fix site. The primary difference in the two sites is that the Demos and Downloads site offers software that you may or may not ever need. Some SAS users at your location may install them while others will not. However, the Hot Fix site offers software that may be required for your SAS software to behave as expected. The following information guides you through the usage of each site.

USING THE DEMOS AND DOWNLOADS SITE

The packages on the Demos and Downloads site provide new features and corrective code to existing SAS products. This site also offers some small, stand-alone client components such as the Table Viewer. These software packages require that you have a valid license or SETINIT for the parent product. To download software from the Demos and Downloads site:

1. Go to the Service & Support Home page and select **Demos and Downloads**.
2. Create a profile or login.
   Downloading software from this site requires that you login to the Web site using the membership userid and password that you created when you registered.
   If you have not registered with the site, select **Complete our profile form** and follow the directions on the page that is displayed.
3. Select the link that represents the software package in which you are interested. If the selected a product that has more than one downloadable package, you may need to make another selection before the download table is displayed.
4. When the download table is displayed, be sure to review all available requirements and installation documentation. When you are sure that this package will work with your SAS installation, select the **Request Download** button.
5. If you are not already logged in, you will be prompted to do so. If you are already logged in, you must review and accept a license agreement before the download continues.

When the download is complete, you can return to the main download site and download additional packages as necessary.

USING THE HOT FIX SITE

Hot Fixes address specific alert issues that are found after a product or release has been shipped. Each hot fix is developed to address a particular problem and is tested and fully supported. However, if you are not experiencing the problem that a hot fix addresses, we recommend that you do not install the fix, but continue to use the latest, full release of SAS software without applying the fix.

You can be notified about hot fixes by subscribing to tsnews-l. You may also find out about a hot fix when you are searching for a problem or being helped by a Technical Support Consultant. When a SAS Note is created about a problem, that note will reference all appropriate hot fixes that you will need to correct the problem. When a hot fix is referenced in a SAS note, the text of the note provides a link directly to the fix. You can download the fix by selecting the link and following the instructions.

You may also want to review the list of hot fixes and apply those that fix problems with your software. (Again, note that we recommend that you install only those fixes that address a problem you are currently experiencing.) If you choose to search the Hot Fix site for patches, follow these steps:

1. Go to the Service & Support Home page and select **Technical Support**.
2. From the bottom of the Technical Support Home page, select **Hot Fixes**.
3. Review the questions and answers that are available from the top of the page before continuing.
4. Select the link that best represents your SAS installation. For example, you might select **Release 8.2 (TS2M0)**.
5. Review the available hot fixes and download those that are appropriate for you. Read the associated SAS Note to determine if the fix is one that you need.

6.   Once you determine that you need the fix, select the link from the Download column and follow the instructions on the page that is displayed.

You may notice that the hot fix packages are available from the FTP site. You should not try to find fixes by looking in the FTP directories. You should always access these fixes from the Hot Fix page at ftp.sas.com/techsup/download/hotfix/hotfix.html.

SEARCHING THE SITE
Searching is an excellent way to narrow your link choices and to locate the specific information nugget that you need. As we have mentioned in previous sections, many Service & Support departments offer search tools that are restricted to the content within that department. In many cases you will want to start your search by getting close to the content before using a search tool.

Many Web users find a search field, type in a word or phrase and hit the Search button. This method works – sometimes. Improve your search results by following these simple guidelines.

LIMITING THE PAGES THAT YOU SEARCH
You can search the entire SAS Web site, or restrict the search to the area most likely to contain the information that you desire. We offer you two ways to limit the scope of your search.

Search & Browse: You can use the checkboxes on the Search & Browse page (www.sas.com/search) to select one or more areas that might contain the information that you want. For example, if you are interested in finding a sample program that shows how to generate output for one of the graphics applets but aren't sure where to look, you could select the checkboxes for the three sections that include sample programs (Library, Communities, and Technical Support).

Section Search Pages: Many sections of the Web provide a search page that searches only the content of that section. If you are looking for information that is unique to a section of the Web site, you can navigate to that section then use the search facility that is provided there. For example, if you are looking for a class about statistical procedures and SAS, start your search by going to the Training department of the Service & Support site and entering your search using the search facility that you find on the Training Home page. If you want the same information but don't have time for a formal class, you can still limit your search to just user-oriented information. Start by typing your search term or phrase into the search field on the Service & Support page.

REFINING YOUR SEARCH TERMS
Your search results are only as good as the information that you provide to the search engine. If you can select a few words that identify the information in which you are interested, you can reduce the number of search results that are returned. For example, let's return to the scenario described in the previous section. If you are looking for training about statistical procedures, you could require that both words *training* and *statistics* be found on the page. To add this requirement to your search, precede each word with a plus sign: `+training +statistics`. You can also enter a phrase instead of a word or collection of words. To search on a phrase, enclose the phrase in double quotes: `"SAS/STAT training"`. Note that the phrase must appear exactly as you typed it.

Most search pages on our Web site include a Help or Quick Tips link. Use these links for more information on how to enter unique search phrases.

REFINING YOUR SEARCH RESULTS
The two previous sections explained how to limit the results that you get back from an initial search. Each of these methods assumes that you have knowledge of the site and are familiar with how information is presented. You do not always have this level of understanding, so start with a general search that returns a large number of matches. If the number of results is too large to review, you can submit another search that searches only the results that are displayed on the Search Results page. You can continue to refine a set of results until you have a manageable number of matches to review.

FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED STARTING POINTS
The group that manages the SAS Web site watches the search logs and reviews mail from users to try to help improve your searching experience. One of the ways that we accomplish this is to offer recommended started points for some of the more popular search terms. If you search on a term, such as CRM, the search engine will rank and return links to pages that contain the word CRM. However, the number of pages returned may be overwhelming but refining your search terms can eliminate the pages that you really need. For this reason, your Search Results page includes a list of some of the pages that offer an overview of the topic for which you searched. This list contains the *recommended starting points*. Many of the overview pages also include a list of related reading. For this reason, the recommended starting points are an excellent way to introduce yourself to a particular topic.

KEEPING UP WITH HOT NEW CONTENT
As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the SAS Web site contains a vast amount of information that is provided by many different SAS employees. Keeping up with new content can be a daunting task, so we do it for you. We have two e-newsletters**, Your Technology Report** and **Your Business Report**, that are delivered to your inbox once every other week. Each e-newsletter contains less than 10 entries. Each entry includes a short description and a link to the appropriate location on the SAS Web site. You can quickly scan the e-mail, follow only those links that seem interesting, then get back to your day.

If you are not receiving the e-newsletters, go to www.sas.com/subscriptions/enewsletter.html, review the archives then subscribe today!

CONCLUSION
This paper has introduced you to the resources that are available for you on the SAS Web site at www.sas.com/service. These resources include technical tips, news stories that keep you up-to-date on SAS progress and events, samples and demos, training opportunities, documentation, access to SAS Notes, and Hot Fixes as well as software updates.

Now that you have been introduced the vast resources on the Web, I hope you will use the site to help you solve problems quickly as well as to explore new ideas for leveraging SAS software to be more efficient and effective at your job.

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Our Web site improves only when we hear from you. Please send your comments and questions about our Web site to Renee as indicated above or to webmaster@sas.com.