

With a Trace: Making Procedural Output and ODS Output Objects Work For You

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ABSTRACT

The Output Delivery System (ODS) delivers what used to be printed output in many convenient forms. What most of us don't realize is that "printed output" from procedures (whether the destination is PDF, RTF, or HTML) is the result of SAS® packaging a collection of items that come out of a procedure that most people want to see in a predefined order (aka template.) With tools such as ODS TRACE, PROC CONTENTS and PROC PRINT, this paper explores the many buried treasures of procedural output and ODS output objects and demonstrates how to use these objects to get exactly the information that is needed, in exactly the format wanted.



INFORMATION OVERLOAD



SAS procedures can convey an enormous amount of information – sometimes more information than is needed. By manipulating procedural output and ODS output objects, we can pick and choose just the information we want to see. We can then harness the power of SAS reporting procedures to present the information accurately and attractively.

Two full sample programs, one designed to be run interactively, and one designed to be run in batch mode, are provided in a zip file in the proceedings. These programs use the SASHELP.CLASS data set provided with SAS software. Code snippets are provided in the text of the paper.

DISCOVERING ODS OUTPUT OBJECTS

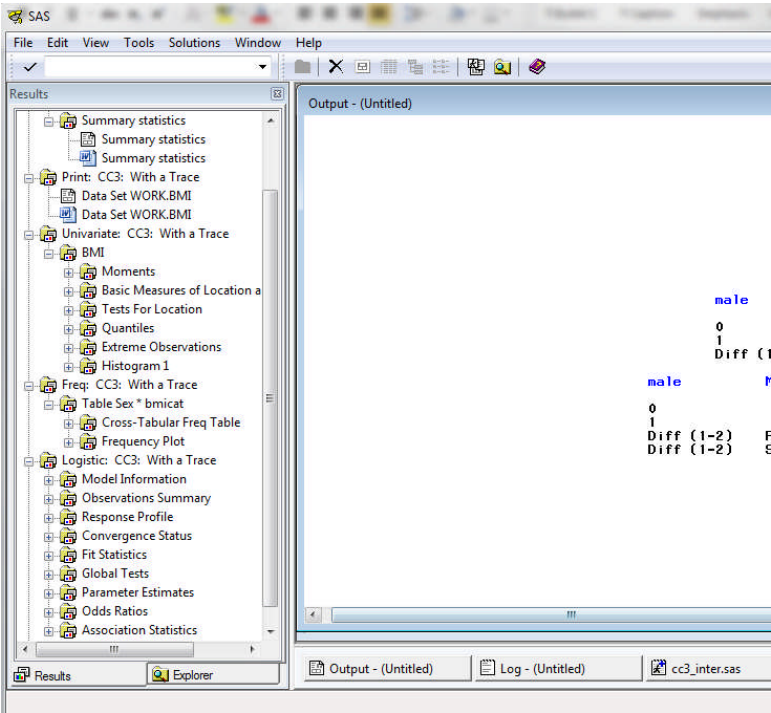


Most SAS procedures generate ODS objects behind the scenes. SAS uses these objects in conjunction with style templates that have custom "buckets" for certain types of output to produce the output we see in all destinations (including the SAS listing).

Use the ODS TRACE command to identify ODS output objects. Choose the procedure that you are using, and "surround" the procedure (including any ODS GRAPHICS calls, etc. you may be using) with ODS TRACE and ODS TRACE OFF commands.

```
ods trace on / label;
ods rtf file=yourfilename.rtf' path=odsout style=styles.journal2;
ods graphics on;
. . . your procedures here . . .
ods rtf close;
ods graphics off;
ods trace off;
```

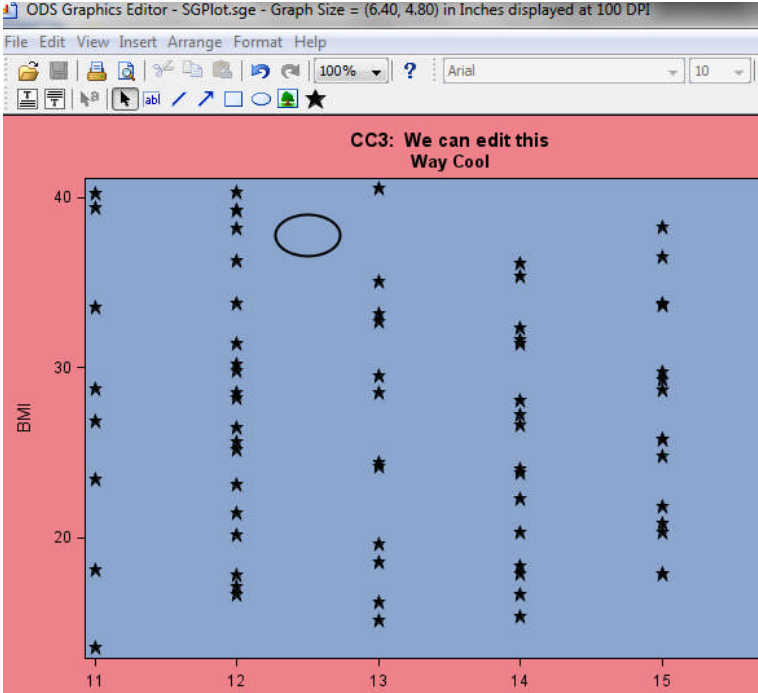
If you are running interactively, you will see the ODS objects generated in the results window on the left, and can select, view and save these objects. In some cases, you can manipulate the objects. ODS trace information will be located in your SAS log. Although the ODS objects can be viewed in the results window, you will not get enough information about the objects to truly customize your output, so the log is essential for both interactive and batch users.



If you are running any SG procedures, use the following command before running the procedures.

```
ods listing sge=on;
```

This creates an editable (using the ODS graphics editor) file which allows you to change titles, background colors, etc. in your graphs which you can then save.

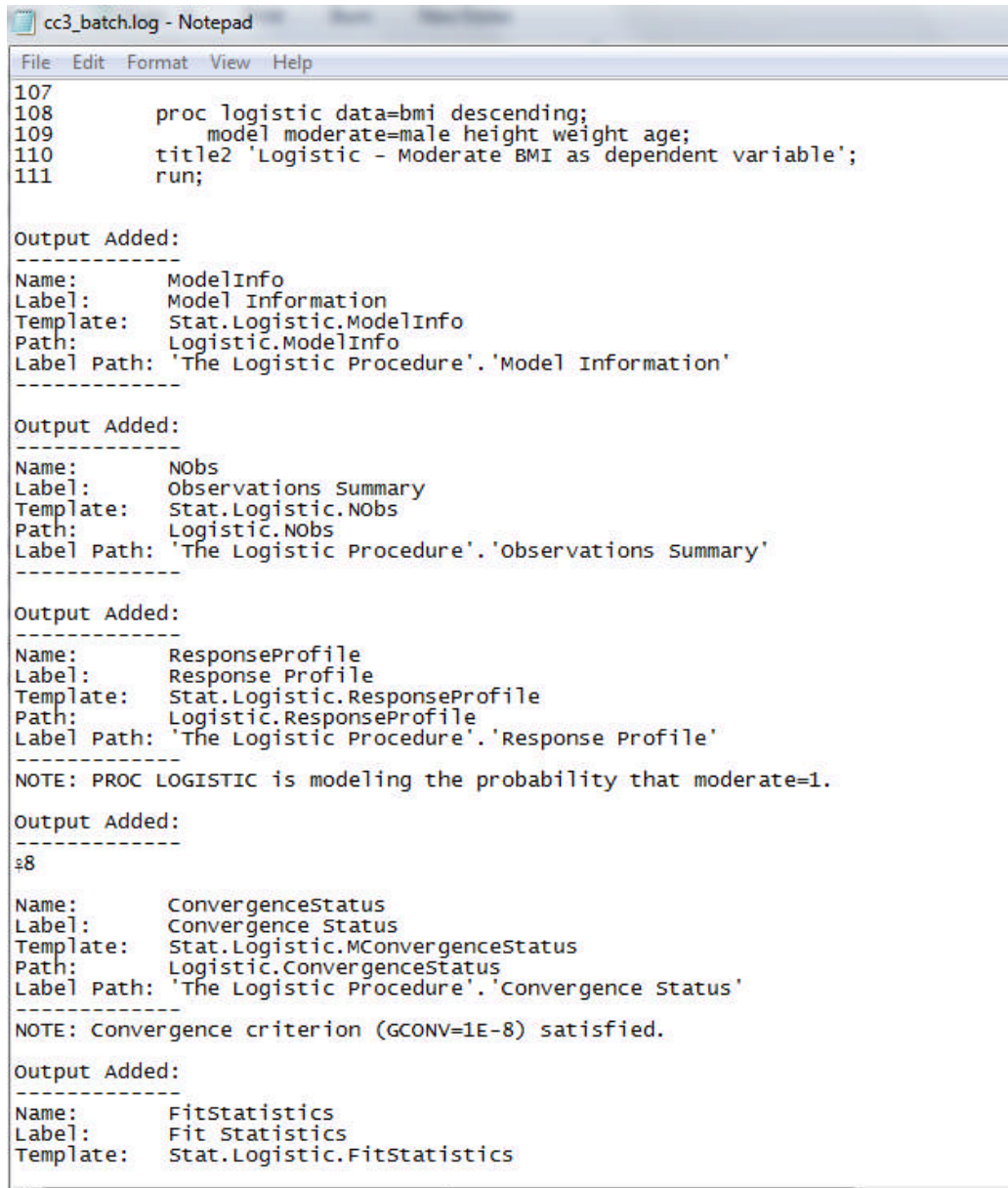


If you run in batch mode, output from the ODS TRACE command will also be included in your log file.

All examples shown are using a sample data set SAS provides, `SASHELP.CLASS`, with the addition of a BMI variable. Programs are available in a zip file in the proceedings.

EXPLORING ODS OUTPUT OBJECTS

After running one of the provided sample programs (`cc3_batch.sas`) we can review our log and identify all the output objects generated by a specific procedure and learn its system name.



```

cc3_batch.log - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
107
108     proc logistic data=bmi descending;
109         model moderate=male height weight age;
110     title2 'Logistic - Moderate BMI as dependent variable';
111     run;

Output Added:
-----
Name:      ModelInfo
Label:     Model Information
Template:  Stat.Logistic.ModelInfo
Path:      Logistic.ModelInfo
Label Path: 'The Logistic Procedure'. 'Model Information'
-----

Output Added:
-----
Name:      NObs
Label:     Observations Summary
Template:  Stat.Logistic.NObs
Path:      Logistic.NObs
Label Path: 'The Logistic Procedure'. 'Observations Summary'
-----

Output Added:
-----
Name:      ResponseProfile
Label:     Response Profile
Template:  Stat.Logistic.ResponseProfile
Path:      Logistic.ResponseProfile
Label Path: 'The Logistic Procedure'. 'Response Profile'
-----

NOTE: PROC LOGISTIC is modeling the probability that moderate=1.

Output Added:
-----
      8

Name:      ConvergenceStatus
Label:     Convergence Status
Template:  Stat.Logistic.MConvergenceStatus
Path:      Logistic.ConvergenceStatus
Label Path: 'The Logistic Procedure'. 'Convergence Status'
-----

NOTE: Convergence criterion (GCONV=1E-8) satisfied.

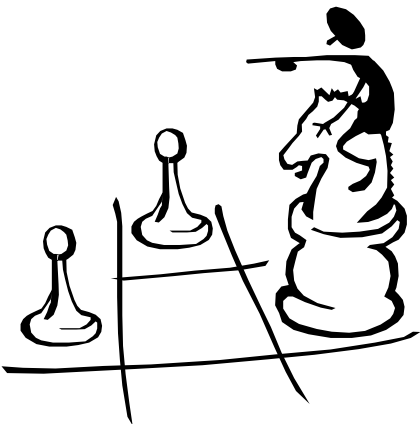
Output Added:
-----
Name:      FitStatistics
Label:     Fit Statistics
Template:  Stat.Logistic.FitStatistics

```

We can see that PROC LOGISTIC generated many ODS output objects (datasets) that go into the “print” output: ModelInfo, NObs, ResponseProfile, ConvergenceStatus, FitStatistics, GlobalTests, ParameterEstimates, OddsRatio, and Association. These datasets are not on the same level and in order to create a single data set from the various

pieces, more exploration is needed. To save these temporary files to either work or permanent data sets, use the ODS OUTPUT statement.

```
ods output
modelinfo=modelinfo
nobs=nobs
responseprofile=responseprofile
convergencestatus=convergencestatus
fitstatistics=fitstatistics
globaltests=globaltests
parameterestimates=parameterestimates
oddsratios=oddsratios
association=association;
proc logistic . . .
ods output close;
proc contents data=modelinfo varnum;
run;
proc print data=modelinfo (obs=10) noobs;
run; . . .
```



It is recommended that you do a test print of 10 observations even if you are working with a small data set, otherwise your output could be very large. 10 observations is generally enough to get a good picture. The contents is also very important as fields which might appear to be numeric may be character – SAS creates “print” variables for its output – and formatting give you valuable information for further manipulations.

Test print of parameter estimates:

Variable	DF	Estimate	StdErr	WaldChiSq	ProbChiSq
Intercept	1	-0.5111	3.5321	0.0209	0.8849
male	1	0.8934	0.6131	2.1238	0.1450
Height	1	-0.0168	0.1049	0.0257	0.8728
Weight	1	0.0154	0.00721	4.5349	0.0332
Age	1	-0.1560	0.3291	0.2246	0.6355

PROC CONTENTS of parameter estimates:

Variables in Creation Order					
#	Variable	Type	Len	Format	Label
1	Variable	Char	9		
2	DF	Num	8	2.	
3	Estimate	Num	8	D8.	
4	StdErr	Num	8	D8.	Standard Error
5	WaldChiSq	Num	8	10.4	Wald Chi-Square
6	ProbChiSq	Num	8	PVALUE6.4	Pr > Chi-Square

MANIPULATING ODS OUTPUT OBJECTS

Reviewing all the output above allows us to pick and choose statistics from various data sets, and merge it with a descriptive data set for printing. The possibilities are endless. In this case, I used parameter estimates and odds ratio output to construct a single data set with all the statistics the analyst wanted. Note that in order to merge the two data sets, I needed to remove the intercept line from the parameter estimates. The reasoning behind the test prints and PROC CONTENTS outputs becomes clear. The descriptive data set may include longer variable descriptions you may not want to carry in a large data set and variables used for formatting (for example, shading, italicizing, or bolding.) You can also create macro variables for printing from some ODS output objects using data steps and call symput.

```
data lhs;
  length rowdesc $ 32;
  rowcat=1; rownum=1; rowdesc='Binary: Male'; output;
  rowcat=1; rownum=2; rowdesc='Height in Inches'; output;
  rowcat=1; rownum=3; rowdesc='Weight in Pounds'; output;
  rowcat=1; rownum=4; rowdesc='Age in Years'; output;
run;

data a (drop=variable);
  length description $ 32;
  set parameterestimates (where=(variable ne 'Intercept'));
  counter=_n_+4;
  description=variable;
run;

proc print data=a;
run;

data b (drop=effect);
  length description $ 50;
  set oddsratios ;
  counter=_n_+4;
  description=effect;
run;

proc print data=b;
run;

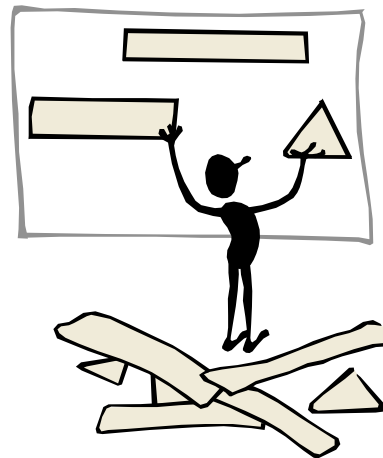
data d;
  length description $ 50;
  merge a b;
  by counter;
run;

proc print data=d;
run;

data c (drop=label);
  length description $ 50;
  set nobs (keep=label n);
  description=label;
  counter=_n_;
run;

proc print data=c;
run;

data editoutput;
```



```

        set d;
    if description= 'male' then do; rowcat=1; rownum=1; end;
    if description= 'Height' then do; rowcat=1; rownum=2; end;
    if description= 'Weight' then do; rowcat=1; rownum=3; end;
    if description= 'Age' then do; rowcat=1; rownum=4; end;
run;

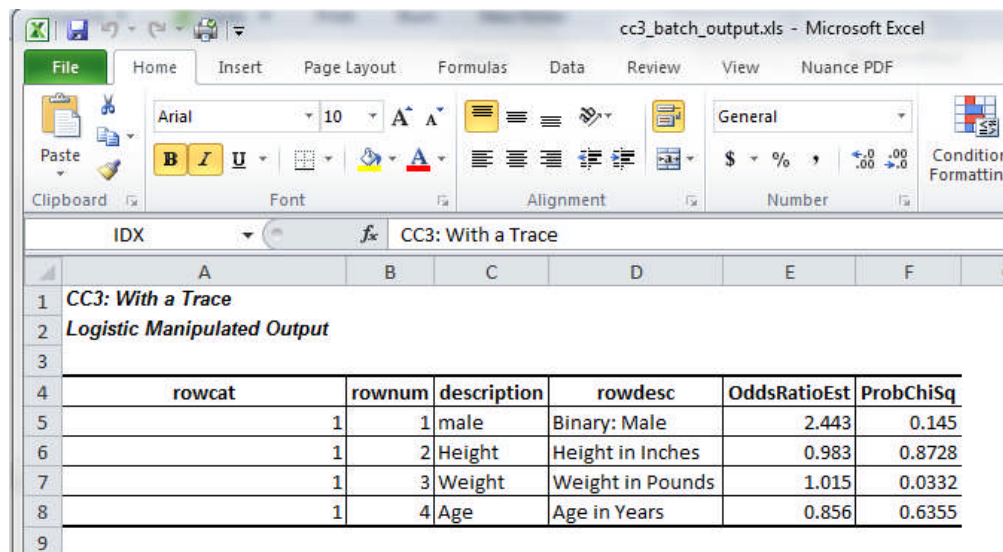
proc sort data=editoutput;
    by rowcat rownum;
run;

proc sort data=lhs;
    by rowcat rownum;
run;

data printoutput;
    merge editoutput lhs;
    by rowcat rownum;
run;

```

It then becomes a simple exercise to print out the designer logistic data set.



	rowcat	rownum	description	rowdesc	OddsRatioEst	ProbChiSq
1	1	1	male	Binary: Male	2.443	0.145
2	1	2	Height	Height in Inches	0.983	0.8728
3	1	3	Weight	Weight in Pounds	1.015	0.0332
4	1	4	Age	Age in Years	0.856	0.6355

PROCEDURAL OUTPUT

There are a number of procedures that can generate output data sets outside of ODS, and at least one that ONLY generates an output data set (PROC SUMMARY). By exploring the structure and content of these data sets, we can manipulate them to present specific statistics, etc. If the output data sets are made permanent, the possibilities for different presentation styles and output types are endless.

An example of using PROC SUMMARY output follows. PROC SUMMARY was chosen to demonstrate using procedural output because it does not produce any "listing" output. The flexibility offered by ODS output objects is a much better technique for selective presentation for most procedures, as we saw above in the example of PROC UNIVARIATE, which can output procedural output as well as (more) ODS output objects.

As in the ODS OUTPUT examples, the tools we'll use to explore our output file are a PROC PRINT (limit to obs=10 if the output file is large) and a PROC CONTENTS. The task is easier in a way in that we already know the name and location of our output file.



PROC SUMMARY example 1

```
proc summary data=bmi nway;
  class sex age;
  var bmi;
  output out=bmisum1 mean=mean_bmi ;
run;

proc print data=bmisum1 noobs;
title2 'Test PROC SUMMARY 1';
run;

proc contents data=bmisum1 varnum;
run;
```

TEST PRINT of BMI Summary File 1

Sex	Age	_TYPE_	_FREQ_	mean_bmi
F	11	3	4	28.5160
F	12	3	8	28.6114
F	13	3	8	28.1582
F	14	3	8	26.5825
F	15	3	8	28.5581
M	11	3	4	27.3758
M	12	3	12	28.2744
M	13	3	4	22.9909
M	14	3	8	24.2847
M	15	3	8	26.2197
M	16	3	4	26.2744

PROC CONTENTS of BMI Summary File 1

Variables in Creation Order				
#	Variable	Type	Len	Label
1	Sex	Char	1	Gender
2	Age	Num	8	Age
3	_TYPE_	Num	8	
4	_FREQ_	Num	8	
5	mean_bmi	Num	8	BMI

Following a review of the output, you may want to relabel your output and perhaps get rid of and/or rename the _type_ and _freq_ variables.

```
/* format a little for printing */
data printsum1;
  set bmisum1 (drop=_type_ rename=(_freq_=n_obs));
  label n_obs='# of Obs'
        mean_bmi='Mean BMI';
run;

ods rtf file='bmisummary1.rtf' path=odsout style=styles.journal2;

proc print data=printsum1 label uniform noobs;
run;

ods rtf close;
```

Final Print of BMI Summary File 1

Gender	Age	# of		Mean
		Obs		
F	11	4		28.5160
F	12	8		28.6114
F	13	8		28.1582
F	14	8		26.5825
F	15	8		28.5581
M	11	4		27.3758
M	12	12		28.2744
M	13	4		22.9909
M	14	8		24.2847
M	15	8		26.2197
M	16	4		26.2744

PROC SUMMARY example 2

```
proc summary data=bmi nway;
  class sex age;
  var bmi;
  output out=bmisum2 (drop=_)
    idgroup (min(bmi) out(bmi bmicat)=minbmi minbmicat)
    idgroup (max(bmi) out(bmi bmicat)=maxbmi maxbmicat)
    n=n median=median mean=mean std=std;
run;

proc print data=bmisum2 noobs;
title2 'Test PROC SUMMARY 2';
run;

proc contents data=bmisum2 varnum;
run;
```

TEST PRINT of BMI Summary File 2

Sex	Age	minbmi	minbmicat	maxbmi	maxbmicat	n	median	mean	std
F	11	13.4900	1	40.2029	3	4	30.1855	28.5160	11.4052
F	12	16.6115	1	39.2565	3	8	29.7613	28.6114	8.3448
F	13	16.1568	1	40.5206	3	8	29.0156	28.1582	8.2236
F	14	15.3030	1	36.0962	2	8	27.6195	26.5825	7.1255
F	15	17.8045	1	38.2432	2	8	29.4860	28.5581	6.9855
M	11	18.0733	1	39.3361	3	4	26.0469	27.3758	9.0783
M	12	17.7715	1	40.2897	3	12	27.0462	28.2744	7.5969
M	13	15.1173	1	33.1141	3	4	21.8661	22.9909	7.6838
M	14	16.6115	1	35.3047	3	8	23.1117	24.2847	6.5163
M	15	17.8045	1	36.4890	3	8	25.2483	26.2197	6.4296
M	16	20.3414	1	33.9024	3	4	25.4268	26.2744	5.7899

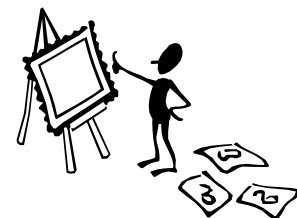
PROC CONTENTS of BMI Summary File 2

Variables in Creation Order				
#	Variable	Type	Len	Label
1	Sex	Char	1	Gender
2	Age	Num	8	Age
3	minbmi	Num	8	BMI
4	minbmicat	Num	8	BMI Category (1-3)
5	maxbmi	Num	8	BMI
6	maxbmicat	Num	8	BMI Category (1-3)
7	n	Num	8	BMI
8	median	Num	8	BMI
9	mean	Num	8	BMI
10	std	Num	8	BMI

Notice that multiple variables have the label BMI and that the BMICAT variables also have the originating variable label. You definitely want to relabel the variables in this case. Note also that we dropped the automatic variables `_TYPE_` and `_FREQ_` in the output statement.

```
/* format, reorder and relabel for printing */
```

```
data printsum2;
  retain sex age n minbmi minbmicat mean median maxbmi maxbmicat std;
  set bmisum2;
  label minbmi='Minimum BMI for Sex and Age'
        minbmicat='Minimum BMI Category for Sex and Age'
        maxbmi='Maximum BMI for Sex and Age'
        maxbmicat='Maximum BMI Category for Sex and Age'
```



```
n='# of Obs for Sex and Age'
mean='Average BMI for Sex and Age'
median='Median BMI for Sex and Age'
std='Standard Deviation of BMI for Sex and Age';

run;

ods rtf file='bmisummary2.rtf' path=odsout style=styles.journal2;

proc print data=printsum2 label uniform noobs;
run;

ods rtf close;
```

Final Print of BMI Summary File 2

Gender	Age	# of Obs for Sex and Age	Minimum BMI for Sex and Age	Minimum BMI Category for Sex and Age	Average BMI for Sex and Age	Median BMI for Sex and Age	Maximum BMI for Sex and Age	Maximum BMI Category for Sex and Age	Standard Deviation of BMI for Sex and Age
F	11	4	13.4900	1	28.5160	30.1855	40.2029	3	11.4052
F	12	8	16.6115	1	28.6114	29.7613	39.2565	3	8.3448
F	13	8	16.1568	1	28.1582	29.0156	40.5206	3	8.2236
F	14	8	15.3030	1	26.5825	27.6195	36.0962	2	7.1255
F	15	8	17.8045	1	28.5581	29.4860	38.2432	2	6.9855
M	11	4	18.0733	1	27.3758	26.0469	39.3361	3	9.0783
M	12	12	17.7715	1	28.2744	27.0462	40.2897	3	7.5969
M	13	4	15.1173	1	22.9909	21.8661	33.1141	3	7.6838
M	14	8	16.6115	1	24.2847	23.1117	35.3047	3	6.5163
M	15	8	17.8045	1	26.2197	25.2483	36.4890	3	6.4296
M	16	4	20.3414	1	26.2744	25.4268	33.9024	3	5.7899

CONCLUSION

The examples shown above are fairly simplistic but the basic concepts remain the same whether you are doing a complex weighted multivariate analysis or a simple PROC FREQ.

- 1. Identify / locate your ODS output object(s) using ODS TRACE or output data set(s) .
- 2. Analyze your ODS output object(s) or output data set(s) using basic SAS procedures and review.
- 3. Manipulate your ODS output object(s) or output data set(s) using SAS data steps and/or procedures.
- 4. Report on your final data set.

Using ODS output objects and output data sets can be an enormous time saver. The following screenshot was created by manipulating a number of different ODS output objects including Chi Squared statistics as well as frequency output from the PROC SURVEYFREQ procedure run on a large complex data set. No post-processing was required. With ODS output objects / output data sets and SAS, the sky is the limit!

Table 1. Selected Characteristics by BMI Category

Characteristic	Total 2005	Total 2005	Chi Squared P-Value	Underweight (BMI<18.5)	Normal Weight (BMI 18.5-24.9)	Overweight (BMI 25-29.9)	Obese (BMI 30+)
Total Sample	15,195 (946,008)	100.0±0.00	NA	1.2±0.14	38.3±0.82	47.6±0.68	12.9±0.55
Sex							
Men	11,395 (804,888)	85.1±0.71	<.0001	0.9±0.16	35.2±0.94	50.2±0.79	13.7±0.61
Women	3,800 (141,120)	14.9±0.71	<.0001	2.8±0.30	56.1±1.24	32.9±1.01	8.2±0.63
Age							
17-20	1,187 (130,680)	13.8±0.99	<.0001	1.6±0.40	53.8±1.95	37.9±1.78	6.7±1.35
21-30	6,180 (481,590)	50.9±1.21	<.0001	1.5±0.21	42.4±0.98	44.7±0.96	11.4±0.58
31-39	4,610 (230,112)	24.3±1.05	<.0001	0.6±0.17	26.9±1.22	54.8±0.91	17.7±0.85
40+	3,218 (103,627)	11.0±0.75	<.0001	0.7±0.20	25.2±1.15	57.2±1.22	16.9±0.98
Educational Attainment							
High School or Less	4,409 (352,500)	37.3±1.56	<.0001	1.1±0.26	43.9±1.26	41.8±0.95	13.3±0.93
Some College	6,146 (380,144)	40.2±1.26	<.0001	1.6±0.20	34.5±0.80	49.7±0.79	14.2±0.67

REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express her appreciation for the inspiration, creativity and help provided by Mike Zdeb, Cynthia Zender and colleagues Christianna Williams, Lauren Olsho, and Alan White.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Code samples (including for the table snippet shown above) are available upon request.

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