

Documenting SAS Software: Technologies Impact an Age-old Process

Kathy Council, Vice-President, Publications Division, SAS Institute Inc.

The publications division has been documenting the SAS System since the beginning. Information about products and services from Publications can be found at our world wide web site (www.sas.com/pubs) or by calling a book sales representative at 1-800-727-3228.

This paper highlights some of the products available through the publications division and presents a glimpse of the future direction of SAS Publications.

Current Products and Services

The **SAS Publications Catalog**, in an online version on the web or in hardcopy, is the best place to see the complete list of up-to-date documentation for all SAS System products and the library of books in the Books by Users program.

Versions of the online catalog are available for the U.S. and Canada as well as countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. With few exceptions, the SAS documentation listed in these catalogs is available from SAS offices around the world.

The online SAS Publications Catalog is available in two versions:

- A secure version through which you can order items using a credit card or purchase order. *Note: This version can only be accessed by secure (SSL-compliant) browsers. All other browsers will receive an error message.*
- A non-secure version through which you can place orders and then provide payment information over the phone. *Note: This version can be accessed by all browsers.*

Solutions@Work is an interactive user-support tool designed to increase your productivity. It delivers fully-functional applications in SAS catalogs with editable SCL code that's ready to download and modify. Each CD-ROM title in the series is available in both single-user and multi-user versions.

The first title in the Solutions@Work series, *Solutions@Work(TM): Rapid Applications Development Examples*, focuses on bringing new and beginning applications developers up-to-speed with development tools in SAS/AF and SAS/EIS software.

With *Solutions@Work: Rapid Applications Development Examples* you can interactively explore:

- examples from *Getting Started with the FRAME Entry: Developing Object-Oriented Applications, Second Edition* and *Getting Started with SAS/EIS Software, Third Edition*
- basic EIS customizations, such as adding widgets to the multi-dimensional report or setting options at run-time
- basic data tables and data forms for data entry and display
- exchanging variables and changing stat formats in a multi-dimensional table
- how to create drill-paths in titles of EIS organizational charts, multi-dimensional tables, and three-dimensional graphs
- using the Table Editor to create multi-dimensional tables
- synchronizing master and detail data sets in a data entry/viewing scenario
- using the Tab Layout object to enhance FRAME interfaces
- using Report Gallery, a new feature in SAS/EIS software, Release 6.12.

SAS Institute's **Books by Users** program has been developed as a way of building a library of books about the SAS System. The books are written by SAS users for SAS users, and the list of books by user available is growing rapidly. Three separate listings of the books by users are available:

- Arranged by SAS Software Product
- Arranged by Author
- Arranged by Title

Books published and distributed through the Books by Users program complement primary documentation offered by the Institute, and SAS users benefit from authors' expert knowledge of SAS software. The applications presented and the ideas discussed by these authors represent some of the best ideas in the SAS user community.

SAS Institute has much to offer its authors: detailed technical reviews to ensure accurate information, complete editorial and publishing support, and the very best access to the market for books about the SAS System.

Also available through the Books by Users program is *Authorline*, a free quarterly newsletter packed with information about the books being published and about authoring.

For more information about the Books by Users program, contact:

Acquisitions Editor, Books by Users Program
SAS Institute Inc.
SAS Campus Drive
Cary, NC 27513
Phone: (919) 677-8000
FAX: (919) 677-4444
EMail: sasbbu@unx.sas.com

Since release 6.11, we have expanded the documentation we provide **online** under the HELP system. The table below shows all of the products with online information available in the most recent release of SAS software. To access it, select **HELP → ONLINE DOCUMENTATION** from the menu bar in the PROGRAM EDITOR window.

WHAT'S NEW FOR RELEASE 6.12	SAS/EIS
Release 6.11 Changes and Enhancements	SAS/GEO
Base SAS software	SAS/GIS
REPORT Procedure	SAS/SHARE
SQL Procedure	SAS/SPECTRAVIEW
SQL Query Window	SAS/TOOLKIT
SAS/ACCESS to SYBASE and SQL Server	Screen Control Language
SAS/AF	Windows Host
SAS/ASSIST	OpenVMS Alpha Host
SAS/CONNECT	OS/2 Host
	Unix Host

Especially helpful in release 6.12 is a complete list of changes and enhancements under **HELP → WHAT'S NEW** on the menu bar within the SAS System. No more searching through update manuals!

SAS Institute's **SelectText** service was introduced in 1995 to make it possible for instructors at U.S. colleges and universities to create custom textbooks for courses that teach students to use SAS software. (Note: This service is now available to Canadian universities, too.) To date, we have developed more than 215 different custom textbooks at over 100 colleges and universities.

As an instructor, you can choose from any of the books written at SAS listed in our Publications Catalog and

- pick the books you want
- select the chapters and pages you want
- arrange your selections in the order you want

We can assist you in choosing material and then assemble, copy, bind, barcode,

shrinkwrap, and ship the number of books you need directly to your college store.

How does the process work?

The process takes about 7 weeks from the time the instructor calls the SelecText coordinator at SAS Institute until the completed books arrive at the college store.

Sample tables of contents from SelecText books are available on the web.

Observations: The Technical Journal for SAS Software Users is now available on the web. Approximately every two and a half months a new feature article written by a fellow SAS user and a SAS Institute expert appears. Past articles stay available for you to access.

You can automatically receive information about all new SAS publications via e-mail when you subscribe to the **newdocnews-l listserv**.

To subscribe to the newdocnews-l listserv:

1. Send an e-mail message to `listserv@vm.sas.com`
2. Leave the Subject line blank.
3. The text of the message should be

subscribe newdocnews-l (space)

then type your first name followed by your last name. For example

subscribe newdocnews-l John Doe

4. Send the message.

You will receive a message confirming that you have been added to the newdocnews-l listserv. The message will also contain instructions on how to unsubscribe from the listserv in the future, if you choose.

We are happy to provide complimentary copies of our manuals to professors and instructors who are considering adopting one of our books for their class. Requests must be in writing, on university letterhead, and include a course title and anticipated enrollment.

You can download the sample programs found in most SAS books using anonymous FTP, by subscribing to SASDOC-L listserv, or by accessing the support and services

portion of the Institute's world wide web server.

And, if you want to have the book information from the publications catalog available at your site, you can request the information in a SAS dataset on diskette, or you can download it from the web.

Future Directions

In the future, expect to see continued enhancements to all of SAS Institute's documentation and its delivery.

In our Institute-produced books, we will be producing more how-to, getting started, and examples titles. And we will be taking full advantage of technologies such as the world wide web and CD-ROM to deliver information to our customers.

Also look for continued growth of the **Books by Users** program. Plans for expanded partnership between authors and SAS Institute to produce new titles using the new delivery technologies are already underway. We are also collaborating with other publishers to get even more books about SAS software published.

Our **SelecText** program is expanding, too, but in the geographical sense - we just finished our first Canadian book and are exploring expansion into Europe. We may even open the program to corporations who want to produce custom SAS documentation for a large number of employees.

We will be delivering several products on CD-ROM. New titles under development for the **Solutions@Work** series include: *Web Tools Examples*, *SAS/PH-Clinical Template Developers Kit*, and *Rapid Applications Development Examples* in Spanish and German.

The next generation of SAS's computer based training will be available for the next major release of SAS software. **SAS OnlineTutor** is an interactive, web-based training which offers convenient, efficient, and cost-effective training for all employees.

Also delivered on CD-ROM, and free with the next release of the SAS System, **SAS OnlineDoc** provides reference information for the entire suite of SAS products. Coupled with expanded online HELP, users will be just a few clicks away from valuable information in future releases of the SAS System.

There are a variety of possibilities for exploiting web technology in the publishing industry. SAS Institute's plans for expansion of services provided through the world wide web are in the works. For example, *Solutions@Work: Web Tools Examples* will be available to download from the web.

Look for sample chapters from books, other downloadable information, online transaction processing, and chats with authors. Also coming: a shopping cart feature for placing book

orders, more SAS Publications Catalogs to reflect local currency, author biographies, and book reviews.

Comments/Questions

If you have comments about our documentation or questions about the direction we are heading, do send us a note at:

pubs@unx.sas.com

We look forward to hearing from you.