

Collaborate with SAS® Users Around the World with sasCommunity.org

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Abstract

sasCommunity.org is an exciting and new collaborative online community for SAS users worldwide. This presentation explores a few of the exciting features found in this virtual community. Topics include a Wiki-based web site where anyone can add or change content on any page on the web site, the exchange of ideas on the Blogger's Corner, viewing scheduled and unscheduled events, using the built-in search facility to locate all wiki-content, reading and responding to specific forum topics, and much more.

Introduction

SAS users have a new website where they can collaborate with other users anywhere in the world; access content; learn about upcoming events, forums and user group conferences; and discuss anything and everything that is related to SAS software, from SAS users to SAS users.

The Main Page

To get the most from sasCommunity as well as the numerous features within, you'll want to become familiar with the Main Page, shown in Figure 1-1. The Main Page is the primary interface that users see as they access and interact with sasCommunity.org. The first thing you will notice about the main page, besides the beautiful graphics, is that it is organized into a number of parts: 1) on the left side is a grouping of hyperlinked keywords related to the main menu, page activity, getting started, search, and toolbox; 2) at the very top-right are two hyperlinks, Log in and Create account; 3) at the top are a grouping of special tabs related to articles, discussions, view source, and history; 4) in the body portion are the Bloggers' Corner and Forums; and 5) at the bottom of the body portion are a number of icons related to joining sasCommunity, getting involved, Sasopedia, events and user groups.



Figure 1-1. sasCommunity.org Front Page

Joining sasCommunity – Creating an Account

At some point during your online experience, and particularly before you are permitted to contribute to sasCommunity, you will need to create an account. To create an account you will need to click the “**log in / create account**” hyperlink located at the top-right of the Main Page. This will automatically display the Log in / create account special page, see Figure 1-2. Click the “**Create an account**” hyperlink to proceed. The Log in / create account page will automatically display.



Figure 1-2. Log in / create account special page

With the Create account page displayed, you are now ready to enter a unique Username, password, E-mail address, and optional Real name. Once this information is entered, click the **Create account** button, see Figure 1-3. Note: Although an e-mail address is required to be entered, an entry for Real name is optional and can be left blank. A password is your secret sequence of typed characters and is required for accessing your account. Anyone who knows your password can sign on to your account and could potentially cause a world of havoc such as deleting mail messages, sending bogus messages that look like they are coming from you, post messages on public forums that appear to be coming from you, and so on. Also, don't choose a password that is too obvious or too easy to guess. Because a password is so important, you should really select one with the utmost care.

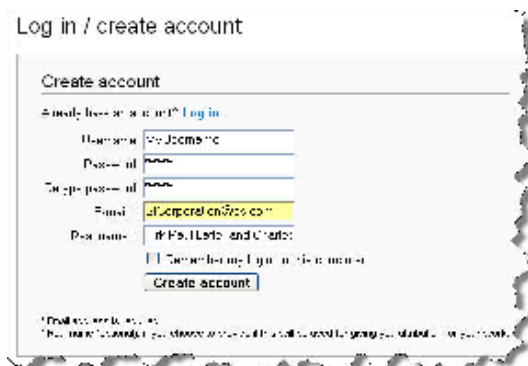


Figure 1-3. Create account page

If your account is successfully created, a special Welcome message will display indicating that your account has been created, see Figure 1-4. You can then click the **Return to Main Page** hyperlink to display the Main Page.

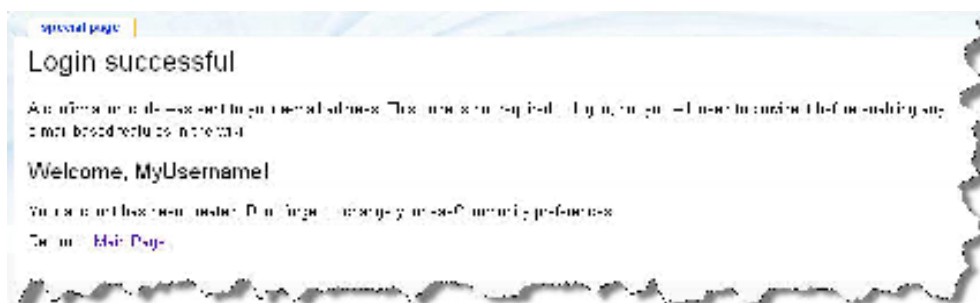


Figure 1-4. Your account has been created page

As part of the verification process, an e-mail containing a confirmation code is automatically sent to the e-mail address you provided during the account creation process. Before you can activate e-mail activities on sasCommunity you will need to open the link displayed in the e-mail by clicking the listed hyperlink, see Figure 1-5.



Figure 1-5. Confirmation E-mail message

After clicking the hyperlink displayed in the e-mail, a confirmation page will automatically display indicating that the account belongs to you. As soon as this confirmation page displays sasCommunity e-mail features will be enabled, see Figure 1-6.



Figure 1-6. Confirm E-mail address page

Blogger's Corner

Blogger's Corner displays a list of Blogs or articles defined by SAS users. You can access Blogger's Corner from the Main Page by clicking the **Blogger's Corner** keyword hyperlink under the Main Menu category. Or, click the hyperlink, Visit **Bloggers' Corner** to see what your sasCommunity.org colleagues are blogging about..., located in the Blogger's Corner section of the Main Page. Once clicked, the Blogger's Corner page appears, see Figure 1-7.



Figure 1-7. Blogger's Corner page

Accessing a blog is as easy as point-and-click. For example, click Consultant's Corner from the list to display the blog for Consultant's Corner, see Figure 1-8. Once the blog is accessed (and you are logged in), you will be able to participate in the discussion associated with that blog by clicking the 'discussion' tab located at the top of the page.



Figure 1-8. Consultant's Corner Blog page

To access the blog's discussion area, click the 'discussion' tab (and log into your account) located at the top of the blog page. With the discussion page displayed, you will be able to view and participate in the discussion associated with the blog, see Figure 1-9.

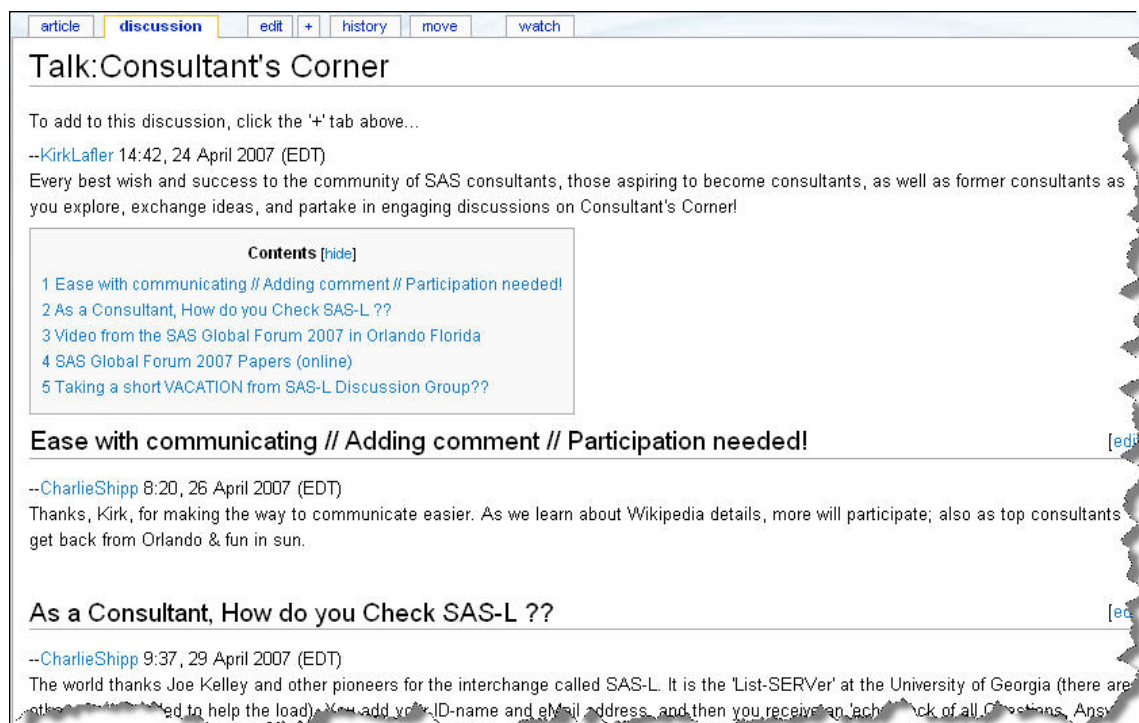


Figure 1-9. Consultant's Corner discussion page

Exploring Upcoming Events

SAS users have a convenient way to find out about upcoming events including user group meetings, conferences, training classes, webcasts, and other interesting events relevant to the user community. Click the **Events** keyword hyperlink under the Main Menu category to display the Events page, see Figure 1-10.

[category](#)
[discussion](#)
[view source](#)
[history](#)

Category:Events

To add your contribution to this page, cut and paste the following tag to the end of your article/page/category: **[[Category:Events]]**. *DO NOT* edit this page to add your article. Just add the category tag to your article.

The **Events** category provides a convenient place to all the various kinds of SAS Software related events, including:

- [User Group Meeting](#)
- [Training Classes](#)
- [Webcasts](#)
- and so on.

It is expected that few **Events** will be listed here. Instead, the events will be tagged with the appropriate subcategory based on what kind of event they are (see the list above).

Subcategories

There are 5 subcategories to this category.

A

- [Audio Conferences](#)

C

- [Conferences](#)

T

- [Training Classes](#)

U

- [User Group Meeting](#)

W

- [Webcasts](#)

Articles in category "Events"

There are 17 articles in this category.

C ■ Chicago Area SAS Users Group ■ Clinical Information Strategy: How to Learn More From Legacy Studies to Support Your Current Research F ■ F2007, Business Forecasting Conference; Cary, NC; June 4-5, 2007 H ■ Hartford Area SAS User Group I ■ Illinois SAS User Groups	J ■ JSM 2007 M ■ M2007, Tenth Annual Data Mining Conference; Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas; Oct. 1-2 ■ Meet the SAS Press Authors ■ MidWest SAS Users Group N ■ Northern Illinois SAS User Group P ■ PhUSE 2007 - Lisbon, Portugal	P cont. ■ PharmaSUG 2008- June 1-3 in Atlanta, GA S ■ SAS Global Forum 2008 Conference Chair U ■ UK Technical Event for SAS Practitioners ■ User:CONFERENCECHAIR08/BlogEntry: 2007 July 19 14:49:41 EDT W ■ Windy City SAS Users Group ■ Wisconsin SAS Users Group
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This page was last modified 22:45, 9 April 2007. This page has been accessed 3,797 times.

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Figure 1-10. Events page

Fostering the Virtual Community with Forums

The user community has a way to hold discussions and post user-generated content (similar to the popular SAS-L) on any topic of interest. Click the **Forums** keyword hyperlink under the Main Menu category to display the Forums page. Once the Forums page is accessed, you can view the list of all Forums by clicking the **Forums** hyperlink to display the sasCommunity Forum page, see Figure 1-11. Currently, the following sasCommunity Forum categories

exist: 1) sasCommunity.org – site feedback, 2) SAS Software issues, 3) SAS on the Mainframe, 4) Biomedical Research, and 5) User Groups.

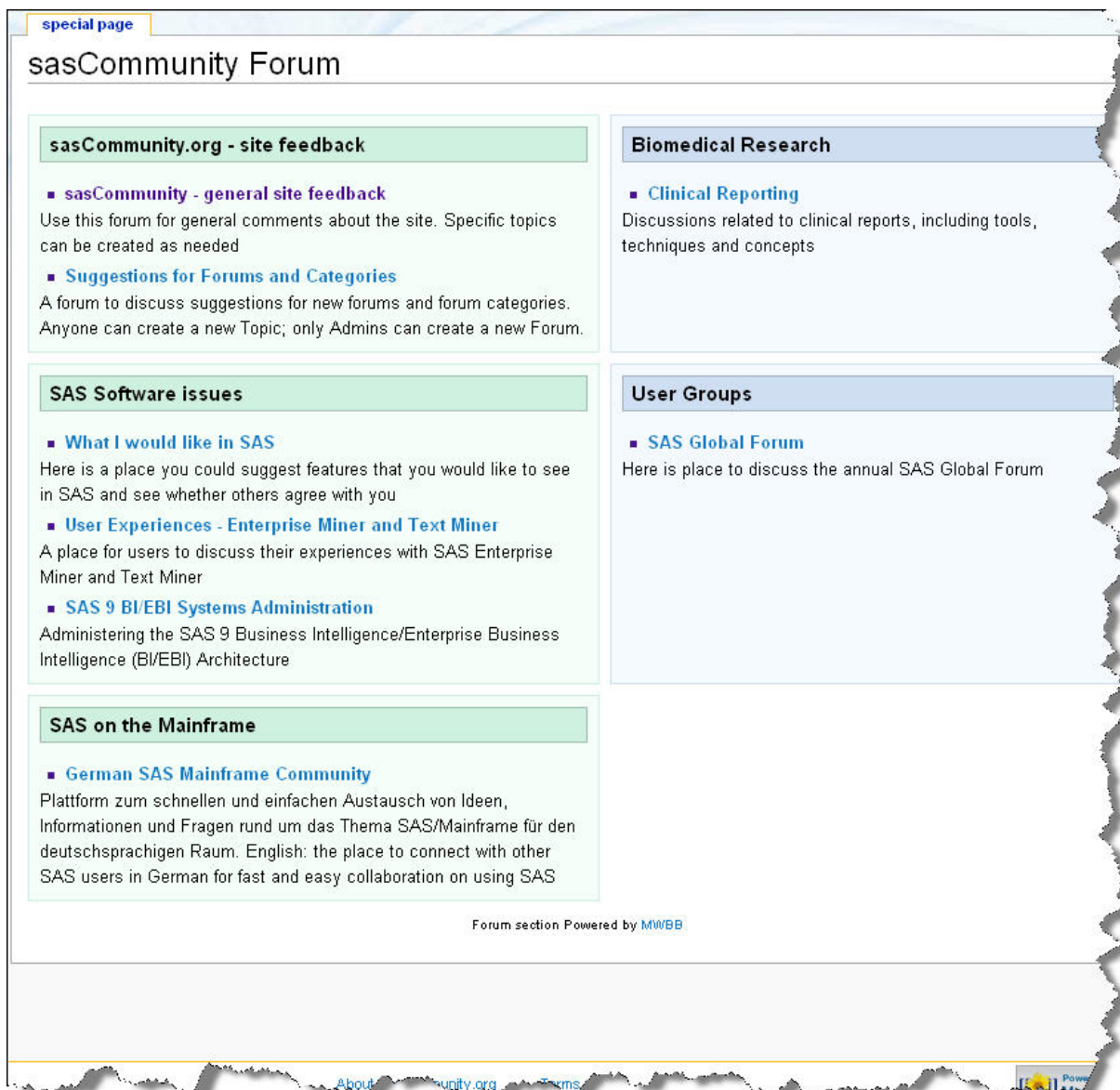


Figure 1-11. sasCommunity Forum page

Using the Sasopedia

The Sasopedia is the place where users can provide factual information and tips on using the SAS software. To access this fact-based resource, click the **Sasopedia** keyword hyperlink under the Main Menu category to display the Sasopedia page, see Figure 1-12. Sasopedia is organized into the following categories: 1) Procedure, 2) by Product/Solution, 3) by Statement, and 4) by Topic for user convenience.

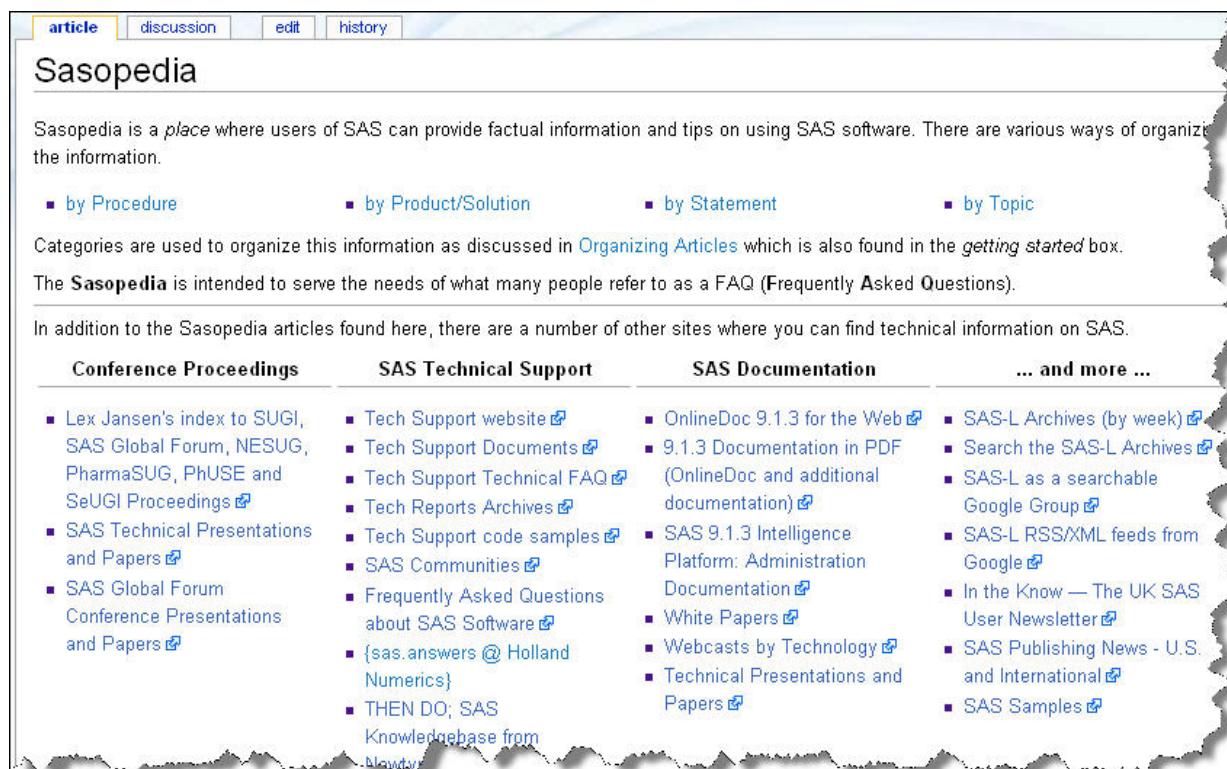


Figure 1-12. Sasopedia page

Using a Wiki

sasCommunity uses Wikimedia software to improve the overall user experience while using the virtual community. Wiki features include: a consistent look and feel with navigation bars and short-cuts, file upload capabilities, mathematical formulas using LaTeX syntax, automatic image resizing, maintain and create a watchlist to track changes to articles, show changes using side-by-side diffs, ability to link to individual sections, support of subpages, comprehensive editing capabilities, support of discussion pages, comprehensive backend database-driven and cookie-based support, permission and security capabilities, and comprehensive full text search and query capabilities. For additional information about a Wiki and its capabilities, you are referred to the following URL http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Help#Feature_list, see Figure 1-13.



Figure 1-13. Wikimedia website

Using the Search Feature

The built-in search feature lets you search topics on anything SAS, and/or SAS-related topics. In the Search dialog box, located on the left side of the Main Page, character-string information can be entered, and either the **Go** or **Search** buttons clicked. For example, say you are searching for anything 'consulting' as illustrated in Figure 1-14.

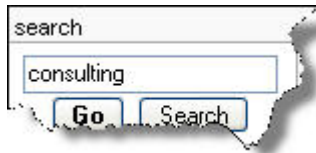


Figure 1-14. Search dialog box

Results matching the user-supplied character-string 'consulting' are automatically displayed and grouped as Article title matches and Page text matches. A partial listing of results for 'consulting' are displayed and illustrated in Figure 1-15.

Page text matches



Figure 1-15. Page text matches for 'consulting'

Logging-out of a Session

Our quick tour of sasCommunity.org would not be complete without showing you how to log out (or sign out) of the virtual community. Although you probably have already guessed how to do this, we thought we would complete our tour and show you how anyway. Logging-out of a session requires you to click the **Log out** hyperlink that is located at the very top of any page in sasCommunity.org. Once clicked, the following Log out page displays as illustrated in Figure 1-16.

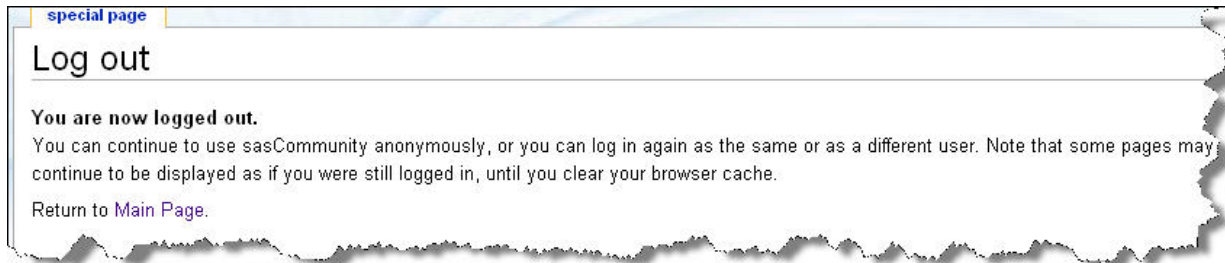


Figure 1-16. Log out page

Conclusion

The new virtual community for SAS users, sasCommunity.org, has an amazing start and such great potential. Those already participating are finding it to be a great resource for collaboration, tips, code examples, user group and webcast events, forums, and much more. The Wiki technology fosters user participation. As described at the annual 2007 SAS Global Forum (SGF), sasCommunity.org is a resource for all users, not just at one event. sasCommunity.org should prosper well into the future as organizations experience declining travel budgets and technological advances occur in the area of Internet access. Here's your chance to make the most of this virtual user community – explore, learn and share.

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Charles Edwin Shipp is a programmer, consultant and author with 30 years of experience working with the SAS and JMP software. He has written more than one hundred articles been and been an invited speaker at more than one hundred International, regional, local, and special-interest SAS user group conferences and events. Charlie is the co-author of the popular Books by Users (BBU) book, *Quick Results with SAS/GRAPH Software*. Currently, Charlie is involved as an eBook author, as a sasCommunity.org Advisory Board member, consultant, and web development.

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