DCSUG Newsletter

Fourth Quarter Meeting

When: Tuesday, December 7, 1999
Time: 8:30a.m. to noon
Place: Bureau of Labor Statistics
      Postal Square Building
      Room G440
      First Street North East
      Washington DC

Agenda:

Time	Event
8:30 - 9:00	Registration and refreshments
9:00 - 9:15	Announcements
9:15 - 10:15	Gail Kramer, SAS Institute
	Enterprise Guide, An Intelligent Client interface that provides access to all of the power of the SAS System
10:15 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 11:30	Dana Rafiee, Destiny Corporation
	Web Publication Using SAS Software
11:30 - Noon	User-to User Questions and Answers
	Moderators - DCSUG officers

*Presentation times subject to change**

Visitors must use the visitor's entrance on First Street NE. Directions for those taking Metro: Take the Red Line to Union Station. Exit the station via the Amtrak exit, but do not go up to the train level. Instead, after going up to and out through the farecard gates, turn to the left where there is an exit to the street (First Street NE). Directly across from the exit are the employee and visitor's entrances to the building. After checking in with security, take the main elevators down to the G level. **BRING PICTURE ID!**

> If you have special needs and are planning to attend this meeting, please contact any DCSUG officer no later than 11/23/99

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☎☎☎☎☎☎☎ **If you are not currently a paid member of the DCSUG and are planning to attend the meeting, please Email Larry Altymayer at laltmaye@census.gov or call 301-457-2581 by Dec 1st and leave your name. Security at the Bureau of Labor Statistics is very tight and having your name on a list of possible attendees will make your entrance to the building easier.** ☎☎☎☎☎☎☎

President's Message

Peter Knapp

I trust that those of you who went to NESUG in October had a good time. I always enjoy going to a SAS conference; it's like going to an expanded three or four day DCSUG meeting. I hope that those of you who have never attended a conference get a chance to in the new year.

I also hope that you make it to the quarterly DCSUG meetings. Being smaller and more intimate than the conferences, I find it easier to talk with fellow SAS users. At our December meeting, Gail Kramer and Dana Rafiee will present papers which will pique your interest and curiosity. I hope to see you there.

Speaker Abstracts

Enterprise Guide, An Intelligent Client interface that provides access to all of the power of the SAS System.

Gail Kramer, SAS Institute

SAS Enterprise Guide is a true thin-client interface to the SAS System, designed specifically to run on Microsoft. Windows platforms (including Windows 95 and 98, Windows NT 4.0, and Windows 2000). This state-of-the-art, Windows interface provides transparent access to local and remote data (either SAS or non-SAS) and to the computation engines surfaced by the SAS System, which may reside on any Windows, UNIX, or MVS server. Traditionally complex operations are reduced to a few simple point-and-click and drag-and-drop actions. For example, you can move your Excel data to an MVS server simply by dragging the file icon to the server icon. In addition, you can create complex queries with the visual query builder tool. Dozens of standard reporting and analysis "dialogs" are provided, each designed to lead you through the steps of creating meaningful results from your analysis. Because these tasks generate the SAS program code needed to reproduce your results, it is easy to modify the SAS programs to fit your own special requirements.

Enterprise Guide takes advantage of the SAS System's output delivery system (ODS) to create appealing formatted results. The Enterprise Clients family of software includes an administrator component that allows you to define how users can access data and run computations on the various SAS servers that you might have installed. System administrators will feel at home with the level of control afforded at the user, group, and server level.

Gail Kramer is Director, Enterprise Clients Division of the SAS Institute.

Web Publication Using SAS Software
Dana Rafiee, Destiny Corporation

Dana will demonstrate how to publish reports and graphs and process requests over the Web using SAS Software. Several techniques and issues will be discussed, along with a live demonstration. Destiny Corporation has extensive experience creating applications like these for their customers.

Mr. Rafiee has worked as a trainer and consultant for several hundred firms over the past 13 years. He is also an active member of all the Regional SAS User Groups and speaks regularly at these conferences and at SUGI. Mr. Rafiee conducts more than 40 different training seminars and workshops in various topics in SAS and in TSO/ISPF, CMS, MVS JCL and Utilities. He earned his BS degree in 1984 at the University of Hartford and his MBA degree with a concentration in MIS from the same school in 1986.

Questions and Answers

Moderated by DCSUG Officers

Bring your SAS programming or procedure questions to DCSUG and its members. During this open session, you can ask questions of and get answers from experienced SAS users. All are welcomed to participate

Desktop Special Interest Group

The next meeting TBA

Check the DCSUG home page for the next meeting announcement:
http://www.ita.doc.gov/industry/otea/dcsug

Please contact Yesvy Gustasp or Joe Mirabal (see Steering Committee column) with questions, requests, suggestions, and offers.

To get to Westat, take I-270 8 miles from the Capital Beltway to exit #6B - Route 28 (toward Darnestown). Once on 28, go past the traffic light at the Shell station and turn right at the next traffic light, which is research Blvd. The 1650 building is less than 1/4 mile on the left, just over the crest of the. You can park in any non-reserved space. Signs will be posted to direct you to the meeting room.

If using Metro, take the Red line towards Shady Grove and get off at the Rockville station. Take Ride-On bus #54 in the direction of Lakeforest Mall. The bus goes out on 28 past I-270 and the Shell station and then turns onto Research Blvd. It takes 8-10 minutes from the Metro station to Westat. The #54 bus runs every half hour.

Note: Don't be confused by a large Westat sign that is in front of another Westat building on Research Blvd (1500 & 1550).

DCSUG 1999 Steering Committee
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DESKTOP SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

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Free books for membership renewal

SAS Institute's Publications Division has graciously donated a number of manuals and other books to the user group. One each will be given to each person who renews their membership for the year 2000 at our September meeting.

NESUG Conference Proceedings for Sale

DCSUG will have copies of the Proceedings of the NorthEast SAS Users Group Conference available for sale at the December meeting. These contain a wealth of information on a wide variety of topics. The CD version, which will sell for $15, has papers from the 1997, 1998, and 1999 meetings. The hardcopy of the 1999 Proceedings will sell for $10, and while supplies last, a copy of the 1998 Proceedings will be given free with each purchase.

Door Prizes

NESUG 99 Goodies (t-shirts, bags, etc), and book drawing from SAS Book Sales.

SAS Talk

By Ian Whitlock

What is wrong with the IF statement? It is a very powerful tool in the hands of a good program-mer, but it is often asked to do lowly tasks like handling conditional assignment statements and consequently obscuring important coding issues. Consider assigning a color to each unit square in a 3 by 3 square. The diagram below specifies how to assign COLOR based on two variables X, designating the row, and Y designating the column. X and Y may have values 1, 2, or 3.

RED	RED	YELLOW
RED	BLUE	YELLOW
GREEN	BLUE	BLUE

For example the square indicated by X=3 and Y=1 is to be green, and the square indicated by X=2 and Y=3 is to be yellow.

To solve the assignment problem, an IF oriented programmer would write code like:

```
if x = 1 and y <= 2 then color = "RED" ;
else
if x = 1 and y = 3 then color = "YELLOW ;
else
....
```

or

```
if x = 1 then do ;

 if y <= 2 then color = "RED" ;
 else color = "YELLOW ;
end ;
else
....
```

Note how it is hard from the code to see what looks so simple in the diagram. This is an indication that IF statements are the wrong tool for the task. Consider trying to change the code when the color specification changes for some square, or verifying that the code accurately relflects the specifications. Again, these thoughts, should lead you to conclude that there ought to be a better way.

Arrays can act like complex switches, i.e. as sequence of IF - THEN - ELSE statements. An array oriented programmer might approach the above problem using code like

```
array c ( 3 , 3 ) $ _temporary_
        ( "RED"    "RED"  "YELLOW"
          "RED"    "BLUE" "YELLOW"
          "GREEN" "BLUE" "YELLOW" ) ;
if (1 <= x <= 3) and (1 <= y <= 3) then color = c ( x , y ) ;
```

Why is this better? It takes less code, and it is easier for a human to understand and to insure the correctness of the code. It is also easier to remove the color specification from the code. For example, (Code should be responsible for the work, not the messy detailed specifications.)

```
array c ( 3 , 3 ) $ _temporary_ ;
if _n_ = 1 then do ;
 infile specs missover ;
 input i j color $ ;
 c ( i , j ) = color ;
end ;
if (1 <= x <= 3) and (1 <= y <= 3) then color = c ( x , y ) ;
```

Now the specifications for COLOR reside in a data file where they can be easily modified without touching the code. Even a non-programmer can look at a print of the specification file and verify that it accurately meets the requirements or fails to do so.

So where do formats come into this picture? The variables X and Y often don't have convenient values like 1, 2, 3. Suppose instead they took on character values, say "FIRST", "SECOND" and "THIRD" (any 3 words or character values would do). Do we have to give up the convenience of arrays that we have just learned? No, INVALUE informats can be used to convert character values to numbers.

```
proc format ;
  invalue trans
          "FIRST" = 1
          "SECOND" = 2
          "THIRD" = 3 ;
run ;
```

The assignment of color then is

```
i = invalue ( x , trans. ) ;
j = invalue ( y , trans. ) ;
if (1 <= i <= 3) and (1 <= j <= 3) then color = c ( i , j ) ;
```

Or perhaps it is time to do away with the array. We could make the specification file look like:

```
FIRST FIRST RED
FIRST SECOND RED
FIRST THIRD YELLOW
...
```

Now one could code

```
data specs ;
 retain fmtname "$trans" ;
 infile specs ;
 input x $ y $ label $ ;
 start = trim(x) || "," ||y ;
run ;
proc format cntlin = specs ; run ;
```

Now there is no array and the assignment code is simply:

```
color = put ( trim ( x ) || ", " || y , $trans. ) ;
```

So what is wrong with IF statements? They can easily block one from developing good easily maintained data driven programs. They are the lazy programmer's answer how to postpone thinking. But, in fact, they seduce him into working harder to debug and maintain his program.

Calendar of Meetings and Events

This feature is meant to give users an idea of some of the activities of area users groups and special interest groups, as well as regional and international groups. If your group would like to be regularly included in this feature, please call Mike Rhoads or one of the DCSUG officers. There is a DCSUG directory with phone, fax, and E-mail contact information elsewhere in this newsletter.

December

7 **DCSUG** DC SAS Users Group, General Meeting
Time: 8:30 am - 12:00 noon
Site: Bureau of Labor Statistics
            2 Massachusetts Ave. N.E.
Program: See front page announcement
Contacts:
       Linda Atkinson at (202) 694-5046
         atkinson@econ.ag.gov
       Peter Knapp at (202) 482-1359
         peter_knapp@ita.doc.gov

March 2000

7 **DCSUG** DC SAS Users Group, General Meeting
Time: 8:30 am - 12:00 noon
Site: Bureau of Labor Statistics
            2 Massachusetts Ave. N.E.
Program: TBA
[NOTE -- DATE IS TENTATIVE]

April 2000

9-12   **SUGI** SAS Users Group International Conference
Site: Westin Hotel
            Indianapolis IN
Contacts:
       Nancy Patton at (703) 892-4472
         Nancy.Patton@GECapital.com

Other Groups

CENSUG   Census SAS Users Group
  Contact: Rick Denby at (301) 763-8174

MDSUG   Maryland SAS Users Group
  Contact: Mr. R.H. Miller, (410) 740-4229
    refa09a@prodigy.com

NCHSSUG   National Center for Health Statistics SAS Users Group
  Contacts: Arlene Siller at (301) 436-8522
                abs2@cdc.gov
              Linda Tompkins at (301) 436-7022

NIHSUG   National Institutes of Health SAS Users Group
  Contact: Ray Danner at (301) 496-6037

NOVASUG   Northern Virginia SAS Users Group
  Contact: Joe Mirabal at (703) 265-4620
    jmmirabal@aol.com

VASUG   Virginia SAS Users Group (Richmond area)
  Contact: Beth Wilson at (804) 967-1000
    beth.wilson@capitalone.com

SAS - USER SUPPORT COMPUTER APPLICATIONS PROGRAMMER/ANALYST

The Information Technology Division of the Federal Reserve Board seeks an experienced SAS professional to provide SAS help desk support, work with clients to test and put into production new releases of SAS software, and test and gain expertise in new SAS software products. A limited amount of programming and maintenance. Salary range for this position $36,700 to $64,950.

Qualifications:

*Minimum of one year SAS experience on the UNIX or PC platform.
*Demonstrated ability to assist users with different levels of SAS knowledge.
*Excellent customer service orientation.
*Bachelor's degree preferred.
*US Citizen or Permanent Residence is required.

Interested candidates should mail, FAX or E-Mail their resume and salary requirements to: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, ATTN: Elizabeth Clark, 20th and C Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. 20551. FAX: 202-452-3863. E-Mail: clarkb@frb.gov.
The Board of Governors is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

SAS Professionals

WESTAT is looking for creative, motivated professionals who enjoy developing SAS-based solutions in areas such as data collection and management, statistical analysis, and reporting. As one of the nation's leading employee-owned research corporations, we employ more than 300 computer professionals to support a variety of projects in health, education, and other areas. SAS software has been a significant element of our information management strategy for the past 20 years. We maintain an active in-house SAS users' group and offer a variety of SAS-related training courses. Westat staff are often on the leading edge of new SAS technologies, and they participate actively in the SAS user community.

We have multiple openings at various levels for staff who can design and develop sophisticated SAS programs, using DATA step, SQL, and other tools. Previous background in a research environment is a plus, as is experience with DBMS, Microsoft Access, or other programming languages.

Westat offers a competitive benefits package that includes participation in the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), a 401k Plan, and life and health insurance plans. For immediate consideration, please send your resume and cover letter with department code, by _one_ of the following methods to:

WESTAT
Dept. 99-428
1650 Research Blvd.
Rockville, MD 20850
E-mail: HR@westat.com * Fax: (301) 294-2040
For a listing of other Westat opportunities, visit our website at www.westat.com
EOE

Membership Application/Renewal

Date:

Name:

Company Name:

Mailing Address:

City,   State,

Zip

Phone #   Fax #

E-Mail:

Preferred mode of contact (check one):

□ Fax   □ e-mail

SAS Version(s)

SAS Product(s):

Operating System(s)

Check one:

□ Individual membership   □ Corporate sponsorship
   for 1 year is $10.00   for 1 year is $50.00

Please indicate a contact person for Corporate Sponsorships!

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□ New membership   □ Renewal membership

Mail to:

Washington DC SAS Users Group
 P.O. Box 44670
Washington, DC 20026-4670

Election of 2000 DCSUG Officers

Peter Knapp — Candidate for Chair

Peter Knapp interned at the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) where he learned the joys of SAS on an MVS mainframe environment. After contracting with BLS for three years, he joined the International Trade Administration (ITA) at the Commerce Department. For nine years Mr. Knapp has helped administer international trade law at ITA. During this time he has guided SAS processing from a central mainframe shop to an end user PC based system.

Arlene Siller -- Candidate for Treasurer

Arlene Siller is a Computer Specialist with the National Center for Health Statistics and has used SAS for 21 years. Her responsibilities include programming and analysis using SAS/Base and SAS/Stat for National health surveys. She is the SAS Site Representative for her agency and co-chair of the in-house NCHS Users Group (NCHSSUG). She is very involved in providing support for NCHS SAS users, and

enjoys this personal interaction part of her responsibilities the most. She has programmed using the TSO, Wylbur, VMS, DOS, Windows and UNIX operating systems.

Larry Altmayer -- Candidate for Secretary

Larry Altmayer has been with the U.S. Census Bureau for twenty one years and is a computer specialist. He has more than ten years SAS programming experience, most recently with macros. He has used SAS and SUDAAN for modeling household survey nonresponse based on demographic person and household variables, and SAS for producing tables of employment percents and unemployment rates for the Current PopulationSurvey. His programming experience has been mainly in the VMS operating system. He has a B.A. in Statistics from the Univ.of Buffalo, and Master of Applied Statistics from Ohio State University.

Mike Rhoads -- Candidate for SAS Liaison

Mike Rhoads has served on DCSUG's steering committee for the past several years and recently chaired its "Discover DC" committee for NESUG '99. He has also contributed to various SUGI and NESUG conferences as a paper presenter and session coordinator. 1999 marks the 20th anniversary of his initiation into the wonderful world of SAS software. He is currently a Vice President in the Computer Systems and Applications group at Westat, where he still manages to sneak in an occasional DATA step or two when not overburdened by his other responsibilities.

DCSUG 2000 BALLOT

Place an "X" In the Box beside the candidate of your choice. You may write in the name of someone who has not been nominated if you wish.

DCSUG Officers

Chairperson

Description: Lead DCSUG, delegate assignments, chair group meetings, preside over nomination and election of officers.
    □ Peter Knapp   □ _____

Treasurer

Description: Manage the group finances: collect dues and fees, make disbursements, maintain record of income and disbursements. The Treasurer will also prepare a report of income and disbursements for distribution at the fourth quarter general meeting.
    □ Arlene Siller   □ _____

Secretary

Description: Record minutes of group meetings, maintain membership list, prepare meeting notices.
    □ Larry Altmayer   □ _____

SAS Liaison

Description: Represent and increase the influence of DCSUG to the SAS Institute
    □ Mike Rhoads   □ _____

DCSUG Dues

Dues are set annually by the steering committee and voted on by the member ship at the fourth quarter meeting. Dues will be payable by the first quarter general meetings. Dues will be used to finance mailings, telephone charges, newsletter and other expenses as approved by the group of officers.
    □Keep proposed (current) rate ($10.00 per year individual, $50.00 per year corporate)
    □Increase   □Decrease

Please mail ballot to:

Washington DC SAS Users Group
P.O. Box 44670
Washington, DC 20026-4670

2000 Meetings

Plan ahead and mark your calendars now. The DCSUG will tentatively meet on the following dates in 2000: March 7, June 6, September 12, December 5. Meeting times and locations to be announced. If at any time you have a question about an upcoming meeting or other DCSUG information, call one of the members of the Steering Committee.

You're Invited

To visit the DCSUG home page

The URL for the DCSUG home page on the Web:
http://www.ita.doc.gov/industry/otea/dcsug

Remember to Join DCSUG!!!

Don't forget to renew your DCSUG membership for 2000. Dues are used to defray the costs of producing and mailing the newsletter and provide refreshments at our meetings. You'll make sure that you keep receiving the newsletter and keep DCSUG going. If you have not joined DCSUG, now is a great time to do so. Joining DCSUG is as easy as completing the membership form included in this newsletter. Individual memberships are only $10; corporate memberships are $50.

Washington DC SAS Users Group
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