



Academic Program

Ian Watkins, the Data and Integration Architect from Swinburne University, may be the longest continual user of SAS in Australia; he has been using SAS since 1980, which makes 25 years of continual SAS use! Read about his experience below:

"Swinburne University installed SAS in either late 1979 or early 1980 and I have been working using SAS for the entire period. In early 1980 I started using SAS to support the management of students whilst working within the Registrar's Department as the University Statistics Officer.

During that first year, the Deputy Registrar and I developed over 400 SAS programs. [420 if my memory served me correctly as I managed to delete the lot on one bad hair day.] Not only were these programs used for statistic analysis but we used SAS as a report writer as well.

Again during the 1980's I managed, using purely SAS, in one six month period, to surpass the entire computing load of the rest of the university, staff and students combined.

In 1984 I wrote an AF application for our Awards Department to manage the Awards processing. This package, with minor variations, mainly in the file naming conventions, was finally pensioned off in 1998 after having been migrated from Fujitsu mainframe to an IBM 3090 to Intel PC. Somewhere in the region of 98% of the code remained static over the entire period [And this was also stable across all the upgrades of SAS in the meanwhile.]

In the late 80's again using SAS I was able to write a program that successfully managed to bypass the 'Garbage in - Garbage out' using SAS ability to become recursive when using macros and produce a 'garbage in - good oil out' program.

I have used SAS for statistical analysis, aiding and abetting academics undertaking research towards their higher degrees, even creating special data manipulation routines that were [and perhaps still are] used by the World Health Organisation. One such program, written almost entirely in about 250 lines of SAS macro language, produced approximately 1200, 66 lines pages of SAS code and took four and a half CPU hours on an IBM 3090 to run!

In more recent years my main use of SAS has been as an ETL tool for moving data across the University and a calculation in about 2002 showed us moving approximately 1.7 terabytes of data per annum, mostly with SAS.

During the early 90's I was one of the first external consultants engaged by SAS to deliver training. During this period, when Swinburne contracted me back to SAS to do SAS' training and at the students behest, I restarted the Victorian chapter of the SAS user group.

I am currently the University's Data Architect and whilst we use SAS in teaching it is also the recognised corporate tool for ETL, warehousing and Enterprise Information delivery.

So, it has been now a long and very rewarding relationship and after twenty five years I thought that this would be a good time to thank you Jim, and your wonderful staff for your foresight on producing such a lasting product, and, if I may say, a product that has given me great pleasure to use [and the least amount of hassle over the years when moving across the upgrade versions.] I think it is your common sense approach that has made all the difference."