

## **Book Review:**

**Title:** *Web Development with SAS by Example*

**Author:** Frederick E. Pratter

**Reviewer:** **Bill Fehlner**, principal technical training specialist, SAS Canada

Bill is principal technical training specialist for SAS Canada. He designs and teaches courses in a number of areas, including data warehousing, programming for ETL and application development. Bill also regularly presents papers at national and local users group meetings. In addition to authoring instructor-based courses, he provides assistance on numerous consulting projects. Bill received his doctorate in theoretical physics from the University of Illinois in 1971; he joined SAS in 1989 after 20 years of research, teaching, administration and consulting at four universities.

## **Review:**

This book is a standalone source book for experienced SAS programmers who want to get started in Web development and for newcomers who need an introduction to both Web development and the pertinent SAS tools. Published in 2003, this text is very up to date, using SAS 8.2 for all examples. The SAS data sets used in the examples are easily accessible in the SASHELP library. To quote from Frederick Platter, “The goal of this book is to introduce the entire SAS Web development toolkit, to explain what each component does, and to suggest when to use specific features and functions.” He has succeeded.

Platter skillfully guides the reader through the acronyms and jargon used in Web programming. For example, Chapter 1 introduces Web client/server configurations and, in the process, explains TCP/IP, SGML, Apache, IIS and other necessary terms. Chapter 2 is an introduction to HTML that starts with a table of commonly used HTML tags and explains their use through well-documented examples. For those already familiar with the basic terminology, Platter points out the sections that can be safely skipped.

The book is divided into four parts, with two to four chapters per section. After the first two introductory chapters, Part 1 covers the use of the SAS Output Delivery System (ODS) to produce static HTML pages and remote access to SAS using SAS/SHARE or SAS/CONNECT. Part 2 contrasts client-side and server-side Web programming and then applies SAS/IntrNet software to develop server-side applications. Chapter 6 goes from basic install information for the SAS Application Broker to working examples of how to route parameter values to SAS programs on the server and route the output back to the user’s browser. Chapter 7 extends this functionality by providing easy examples of the data-access utility, htmSQL.

Part 3 focuses on client-side, dynamic Web programming by creating Java applets with the WebAF component of SAS AppDev Studio. Platter effectively compares SAS/IntrNet with WebAF by showing how WebAF is used to implement an example from Chapter 6. As he does in the previous sections, Platter carefully defines and

illustrates terms as he builds up from JavaScript to Java Applets to Swing components to JavaBeans in Chapter 8. This provides the basis for a guided tutorial in using the visual application builder in WebAF to generate Java Applets.

Part 4 returns to server-side Web programming by first developing Java server-side applications with WebAF. Platter then completes his tour of SAS AppDev Studio with chapters on WebEIS and on Design-Time Controls.

This 300-page book has an effective index, as well as useful references at the end of each chapter. Platter does not attempt to provide an exhaustive study of each topic, but rather a careful choice of the key elements required to get started with each component. There are a few components of AppDev Studio that are not covered: JDBC drivers, the Application Load Manager, the MiddleWare Server, SAS Integration Technologies and some special purpose programs in SAS/IntrNet. These are either too complex to cover in an introductory work, or so specialized to be of interest only to a narrowly defined group of users. Overall, Platter's choice of topics provides a fast learning curve for those wanting to get started using SAS to develop Web applications.