

BOOK REVIEW

Title:

Programming Techniques for Object-Based Statistical Analysis with SAS Software

AUTHOR: Tanya Kolosova and Samuel Berestizhevsky

COST: US\$25.95

Reviewed by: Kamran Jafry, senior technical systems analyst,
RBC Financial Group.

Kamran Jafry is part of the technical group at RBC that provides central support for the bank's SAS platform.

Reviewer's Opinion: Several key areas really appealed to me when looking at this book:

1. Being able to reuse code.
2. Taking advantage of the Data Dictionary programmatically.
3. Utilizing reusable macros.
4. Data analysis using generic code that can be modified easily to fit the user's needs.

Each chapter ends with a summary, and I believe that it is important to read these at the beginning – before tackling the chapter at hand. The summary provides a good way to focus in on critical points as you read the chapter.

My favourite chapter would have to be Chapter 4, because it first explains the Data Dictionary, an under-utilized resource individuals rarely take advantage of when writing code. The chapter then takes all the material compiled to this point and gives example from the perspectives of a statistician, a programmer and a data analyst, tying in the previous chapters' teaching.

The code can be found on the SAS Web site at www.sas.com/pubs by doing a search for this book title. Online, you will also find a copy of the first chapter, which introduces you to object-oriented programming – a requirement for understanding the remainder of the book. Even though the code is on the SAS Web site, it is not documented very well, so you will need this book to explain the code in detail and the approach the code takes.

In my opinion, the wealth of information that the two authors have learned from field experience is evident by the depth of knowledge and thought they have provided, and I would highly recommend this book for anyone wanting to learn more about automation. The book is especially helpful in learning a methodology for solving real-world problems utilizing the SAS Data Dictionary and macros.

If you are a programmer looking to advance your skills, this book will help you in that task, as well as teach you about data analysis and statistics usage. It's a very well-thought-out 136 pages. It makes you wish these two authors could share more with you. In fact, that leads me to the next book I plan to read: *Table-Driven Strategies for Rapid SAS Applications Development* by the same authors.

On another note, I would like to share with the readers the Web site www.sas.com/pubs. There is a wealth of books and information there, and anyone using SAS on a daily basis is well advised to surf this site for the wealth of information it contains. One can learn a lot from just reading and going through what is there, and if it pleases the reader, to expand their learning by purchasing the book on the topic at hand.