

Keeping you up to date on what's happening at SAS

What's up at SAS

April has come to an end and saw SAS successfully host the Nedbank Analyst forum and the DI/DQ events in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Looking forward to May, there will also be plenty of informative local and international events. The SAS Premier Business Leadership Series conference is being held in London from 5 – 7 May and will have a strong focus on discovering new strategies around forward-looking questions and getting valuable answers from analytics tools. Back home, SAS will be hosting the Customer Intelligence Roadshow in Cape Town and Johannesburg on the 12th and 13th May respectively.

In international news SAS Global announced that SAS received the 2009 CRM Excellence award for the eighth consecutive year from Customer Interaction Solutions magazine in the USA, SAS also launched a new product in the form of SAS for Physician Targeting to help organisations apply predictive analytics to sales, CRM and other customer data.

Remember to take care and keep warm as we enter the second quarter and the beginning of Winter. Well that's all the news for now, till next month...



Nedbank head of data governance in retail says it's quality that keeps you in business

Speaking at the recent SAS Data Quality breakfast seminar at the Grace hotel in Rosebank, Nedbank's head of data governance Bobby Thoolsi, highlighted the need for data quality to keep businesses alive through tough economic times.

"If we look at the true definition of quality, we realise it is quality that keeps you in business, the quality of your product or service against a competitor, the quality of your business skills and ultimately the quality of your data. It is about being able to give your customers what they want, and most importantly gaining an accurate view of where your business stands on the global playing field," says Thoolsi.

Thoolsi was also quick to highlight that data quality is no longer just the outdated idea of data cleansing, but instead has become a dynamic concept involving usability. In addition it is also now concerned with the readability, accessibility, consistency and relevancy of all data within the business.

"Data quality boils down to the ability to do accurate analytics, developing scorecards and understanding how your business is doing, however, in the current climate many organisations are cutting costs to the detriment of quality, and ultimately joining the downward spiral of many like minded businesses," says Antonette van Zyl, Practice Lead: data integration and data quality.

Thought Leadership

An information revolution lives in your enterprise architecture

- By Goran Dragosavac, at SAS Institute South Africa

As the need for corporate governance has grown, so has the need for data governance. But data governance itself cannot be achieved unless a strong methodology around your enterprise architecture, business processes and ultimately your information architecture have been formulated.

When looking to define what an enterprise architecture is, one can say that it is in theory the “organising logic” used by business processes in a technology framework. From this we can deduct that an information architecture is then the logic and processes surrounding the management of an organisation’s information.

A true information architecture is built on a solid enterprise architecture, and is more than just the data and the software that manages it. It is a set of principles, disciplines, and process that a company adheres to, and is influenced by factors such as data storage, retrieval and analysis within the enterprise architecture.

An Information Strategy

An enterprise architecture could be a series of enterprise software systems cobbled together to provide an organisation with the means to provide operational efficiencies and complete operational tasks. A true enterprise architecture is one where these very systems seamlessly integrate with each other for cross-functionality and/or feed into a centralised data store. It is developed in a layered approach and takes the business, user and organisational needs into consideration and meets each of these.

An information strategy consists of a technology infrastructure and an organisational infrastructure. The organisational infrastructure is made up of leaders who supply the strategy, stewards who maintain information accuracy and operation experts who know the systems requirements and needs. The technology infrastructure is made up of three main components, namely; processes that support the business processes, information services which are specifically designed business specific processes and data storage services that are part of the larger enterprise architecture picture.

The enterprise information goldmine

With an effective enterprise architecture in place, that allows cohesion between business processes and data, one can start extracting real value from the information at hand.

By using analytics and data analysis tools as a pervasive mechanism within your enterprise architecture, organisations are able to turn otherwise menial data into information. They can then start predicting patterns in an organisation, perform cluster analysis, monitor operational efficiencies, map trends and then start making quantifiable assumptions of the future of the business based on this data. By adding in an analytics layer modelled to your specific business needs, you can be assured of being able to tap into this data with ease. This layer should always be open systems based, and be able to integrate with a myriad of applications – a proprietary system will leave you back where you started – with silo’s of information and no accurate view of your business.

Conclusion

So while an enterprise architecture is an essential tool for organisations today, as it streamlines processes, creates efficiencies, stops wastage and curbs duplication, the true value of adopting it lies in what you do with the information it can yield.

When looking towards taking the leap to an enterprise architecture paradise, be sure you don’t overlook building an information strategy. To create a solid information architecture strategy, it needs to be understood that information architecture is more just data in a database. It needs to be seen as a hierarchy of products and services arranged to ensure the accurate and fast delivery and storage of data and all information across the enterprise.

LOCAL NEWS

SAS and Computek join forces to provide effective service delivery to municipalities

"With the growth Mpumalanga has shown over the past five years, and the opportunities that are continuously presenting themselves in the ICT sector, companies should, despite challenging financial constraints, still focus on strategies to increase their return on investment," said Harry Chakhala, CEO of Computek, at the Computek Mpumalanga regional office launch held in Nelspruit last week.

Chakhala said that since the Mpumalanga Province is growing at rapid rate, it is important to look at the growth of the province and the ambition it holds for ICT.

In line with improved service delivery, Chakhala said Computek, aligning with SAS as its strategic delivery partner, would be able to address and solve the service delivery issues currently experienced in municipalities within the greater Mpumalanga Province and other provinces country wide.

"SAS is committed to providing municipalities, across the country, with monitoring and evaluation capabilities that will not only drive efficiency but will aid in providing effective service delivery", said Kroshlen Moodley, Business Development Manager at SAS Institute.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US Department of Health and Human Services renews SAS contract for three years

SAS technology used throughout HHS for performance management, disease surveillance, fraud detection

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has renewed an enterprise wide contract with SAS, the leader in business analytics, to help protect the health of all Americans and provide important human services. The agreement, covering business and analytics software, services and training over the next three years, extends a 28-year collaboration between SAS and HHS.

SAS receives 2009 CRM Excellence Award from Customer Interaction Solutions magazine

SAS announced today that Technology Marketing Corporation (TMC)'s, Customer Interaction Solutions magazine has named SAS Marketing Automation as a recipient of a 2009 CRM Excellence Award.

Winners of the CRM Excellence Award must demonstrate the improvements that their products have made in a client's business. The CRM Excellence Award winners have been chosen on the basis of their product or service's ability to help extend and expand the customer relationship to become all encompassing, covering the entire enterprise and the entire lifetime of the customer.

"This is the eighth year that SAS has won the CRM Excellence award and I think this demonstrates the value that SAS brings to the customer intelligence market," says Jeff Levitan, general manager of SAS' Global Customer and Retail business. "SAS continues to go from strength to strength providing expertise in areas such as intelligent customer insight, inbound, outbound and trigger-driven campaign execution and optimisation, and marketing performance management that are critical to our customers' continued success in this economy."

Product in the Spotlight

SAS Visual Data Discovery

SAS Visual Data Discovery provides a point-and-click interface to the advanced analytic capabilities of SAS. It enhances advanced analytics and exploratory data analysis with interactive data visualisation, leading to better analyses, faster decisions and more effective presentations of analytic results. It combines three of SAS' most popular software products (Base SAS, SAS/STAT and SAS/GRAPH) with JMP.

How SAS is different:

- SAS Visual Data Discovery overcomes the inherent limitations in spreadsheets, static graphs, charts and tabular reports, providing a nonprogramming environment for exploratory data analysis.
- It enhances advanced analytics and exploratory data analysis with interactive data visualisation, leading to better analysis, better decisions and more effective presentation of analytic results.
- Unmatched advanced analytics and interactive data visualisation deliver the ability to explore ideas, investigate patterns, discover previously hidden facts and reveal opportunities through visual queries.

For more information please visit:
<http://www.sas.com/technologies/analytics/statistics/datadiscovery/>



Upcoming Events

SAS PBLs	London	5 – 7 May 2009
Customer Intelligence Roadshow	Cape Town	12 May 2009
Customer Intelligence Roadshow	Johannesburg	13 May 2009
Telco Revenue event		21 and 22 May 2009

The bit at the end

We hope you enjoyed this edition of SAS Talk, if you have any suggestions for improvement, comments or interesting SAS info, please email marketing@zaf.sas.com.