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Phil Male
Editor, Marketing
SAS UK

IN THE KNOW:

The newsletter for smart users of SAS®

Welcome to 'In the Know'

Dear Readers

Welcome to Issue 27 of In the Know (ITK). ITK brings you news, tips, special offers and information from the world of SAS®.

You can discover more about SAS® Visual BI in our News section. If you can't find that manual you're after, or you'd like to explore our range of books, now you can use Google book search.

Ever popular, our friends in Customer Support give you some hints and tips in the 'Top Tips' section.

You can also find out about forthcoming events and courses. I'll be at the 'Technical Event for SAS Practitioners' on 29th June in London. This event will include papers on SAS technology from technical experts in the field. You can find out more on www.technical-event.co.uk.

New to ITK comes 'News from the Blogosphere' – access the SAS wiki, download a podcast using iTunes, you can even find out how to solve that Sudoku puzzle using SAS® Enterprise Guide®.

Finally, I'd like to hear your thoughts about ITK. What would you like to read more or less about? Have you got any interesting stories or tips you'd like to share? Drop me a line at Philip.Male@suk.sas.com.

Phil Male, Editor, Marketing

'In the Know' is one of a range of SAS newsletters and publications that you can subscribe to.

Take a look at
www.sas.com/uk/pubs
to find out more.

SAS Launches Visual BI

SAS® Visual BI, powered by JMP® software, marries rich, interactive visualisation capabilities with SAS' powerful analytics and integrated business intelligence platform. Available as an add-on for SAS® Enterprise BI Server, SAS Visual BI provides yet another way for you to interact with information, visually and dynamically.

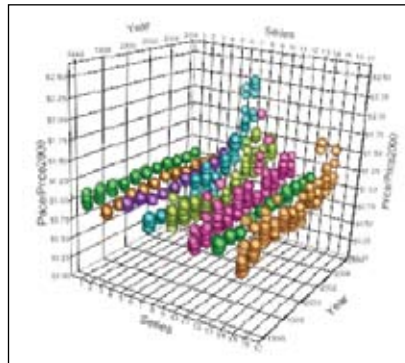
Overview

What does SAS Visual BI do?

SAS Visual BI provides dynamic business visualisation enabling you to interactively explore ideas and information, investigate patterns and discover previously hidden facts through visual queries. This product, part of the most comprehensive BI platform in the industry, enriches the already diverse SAS visualisation landscape and overcomes niche tool limitations.

Why is SAS Visual BI important?

With SAS Visual BI, you can gain instantaneous insight into relationships and patterns in data by viewing and interacting with information in ways that static charts and Excel spreadsheets cannot match. Users can drill deep into content and explore a virtually unlimited number of columns and records – transcending information silos, diverse computing platforms and niche tools to discover new insights that drive business value for your organisation.



For whom is SAS Visual BI designed?

SAS Visual BI is designed for business users who have a compelling need for dynamic, visual insights in a self-provisioned interactive environment but are restricted by the inherent limitations in spreadsheets and static graphs and charts.

Key Features

Highly interactive business graphics

- *Animated bubble plots show data with sized bubbles that move over time.*
- *3D scatter plots with categorical and continuous data.*
- *Scatter plot matrix with categorical and continuous data.*
- *Trellis plots.*
- *Summary charts.*
- *Line plots.*
- *Needle charts.*

Visual querying and data filtering

- *Handle unlimited data.*
- *Rearrange data at will.*
- *Interactive tabulation.*

Visual analytics

- *Interactive simulations and optimisation.*
- *State-of-the-art time series modeling.*
- *Exploratory and predictive data analysis.*

Leverage core SAS capabilities

- *Analytics.*
- *Stored services.*
- *Metadata.*
- *SAS code.*
- *SAS reports and output.*

Can't find that manual? Google it!

Take a look at this brand new service – the Google Book Search. The Google Book Search allows you to search the complete text of SAS Publishing books directly from within our online catalogue. You can see search results and view book excerpts through a customised Google-hosted service that maintains the look and feel of our web site.

Overview

How it works

Book Search works just like a Web search. When you search on a particular term or phrase, Google finds a book with content containing a match for your search terms and links to it in your search results. Clicking a book result, you'll be able to see a limited amount of the book. You will not be able to print, cut, copy, or save pages displaying book content.

You will also be prompted with links to buy the book from popular online book sellers.

What can you search?

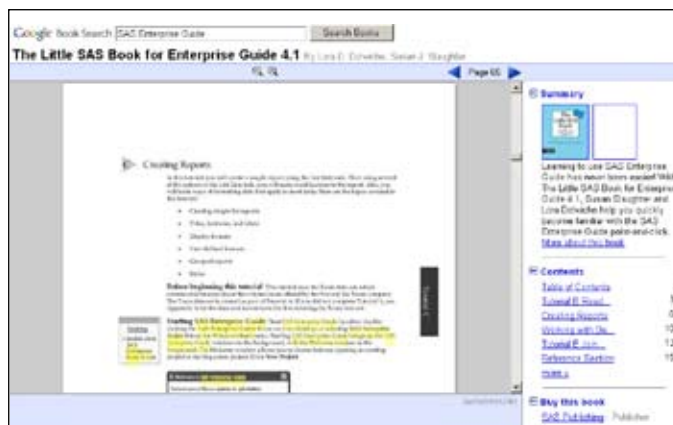
Most SAS Publishing titles are included in the programme. You can search for a specific title from the book details page or search across our entire catalogue from our Home page or from the Detailed Search. Course Notes are not included in the search nor are books from older SAS software releases.



Getting started

Set up your Google Book Search user ID and password (or if you already have a Google Book Search ID set up, use it.) and you can access your search results. Remember your ID and password! If you forget them, please work with Google to regain your access.

For more information on Google Book Search go to:
<http://books.google.com/intl/en/googlebooks/about.html>



Top Tips

In each edition of ITK our SAS support experts share some of their top hints and tips. We also feature great tips from you, the users.

How to create DATA step operators that aren't in the Macro Language.

You'll find that operators in macro expressions are a subset of those in the DATA step. The macro facility does not recognise some of the operators you may have used when coding in the DATA step. This includes the following operators:

Colon (:) modifier

Special WHERE expression operators
IN operator

You can write your own macros to simulate the functionality of these operators, producing a Boolean result.

Here is an example of creating the macro version of the DATA step IN operator:

```
/*%macro in(var,list);  
%local word i found;  
%let found=0;  
%let i=1;  
%let word=  
%scan(&list,1);  
%do %while(&word ne and  
not&found);  
%if &var eq &word %then %let  
found=1;  
%else %let found=0;  
%let i=%eval(&i+1);  
%let word=%scan(&list,&i);  
%end;  
&found
```

```
%mend in;
```

Here is how you would then call the Macro IN operator:

```
%macro check(parm);  
%local validlist;  
%let validlist=DALLAS SEATTLE  
BOSTON;  
%if %in(%upcase(&parm),&valid  
list) %then %put &parm is a valid  
parameter value.;  
%else %put Sorry, &parm is not a  
valid value.;  
%mend check;  
%check(Dallas)%check(LA)
```

Here is a partial SAS Log:

```
Dallas is a valid parameter value.  
Sorry, LA is not a valid value.
```

Dynamically determine the creation date and last modified date for an external file.

This example uses the DIR command and FILENAME PIPE statement to dynamically determine the creation and last modified dates of an external file. If you are running on UNIX then use the LS command with the FILENAME PIPE statement.

Sample 1 and Sample 2 use the DIR command to obtain information about an external file on Windows. You can modify this code to use other attributes as documented in the Windows HELP under the DIR command.

Sample 3 uses the LS command to get the last modified date of an external file on the UNIX operating system.

Sample 1: returns a file's creation date

```
/* /t:c - indicates you want a  
time field 'T', of type creation  
'C' */  
/* /a:-d - return information  
for files only, not directories  
*/  
%let file=c:\tracks\dennis\x1.txt;  
filename foo pipe "dir &file /t:c  
/a:-d "  
data _null_;  
infile foo firstobs=6;  
/* The ?? format modifier for  
error reporting suppresses print-  
ing the messages */  
/* and the input lines when SAS  
encounters invalid data values.  
The automatic */  
/* variable _ERROR_ is not set  
to 1 for the invalid observation.  
*/  
/* The & format modifier enables  
you to read character values that  
contain */  
/* embedded blanks with list  
input and to specify a character  
informat. SAS */  
/* reads until it encounters mul-  
tiple blanks. */  
input cr_date ?? :mmddy8.  
cr_time ?? & time8.;  
if cr_date eq . then stop;  
put cr_date= worddate. / cr_  
time= timeampm.;  
run;
```

Sample 2: Returns a file's last modified date on Windows

```
/*/t:w indicates you want a time field 'T', of type Last Modified 'W' */  
/* /a:-d return information for files only, not directories  
*/ filename foo pipe "dir &file /t:w /a:-d";  
data _null_;  
  infile foo firstobs=6;  
  input mod_date ?? : mmddy8.  
  mod_time ?? & time8.;  
  if mod_date eq . then stop;  
  put mod_date= worddate. / mod_time= timeampm.;  
run;
```

Sample 3: Returns a file's last modified date on UNIX

```
/* ls is the UNIX equivalent of DIR */  
/* -g specifies not to print the file's owner */  
/* -o specifies not to print the file's group */  
/* Note that if the time of last modification is greater than */  
/* six months, the year is substituted for the hour and minute */  
/* of the modification. */  
filename foo pipe "ls -g -o ~/test.txt";  
data _null_;  
  infile foo firstobs=2;  
  input @24 mod_date $12. ;  
  if mod_date=" " then stop;  
  put mod_date= ;  
run;
```

SAS Enterprise Guide opens data using table-level locking

Suggested by Sridevi Thoguluva Chandrasekaran at Cognizant Technology Solutions.

TSN-005370: SAS Enterprise Guide opens data using table-level locking.

An error similar to the following might occur in SAS Enterprise Guide when attempting to update a table using code that is opened in SAS Enterprise Guide in read only or update mode:

Error: You cannot open lib_name.table_name.DATA for output access with member-level control.

lib_name.table_name.DATA is in use by you in resource environment some_step.

An error similar to the following might occur in SAS when attempting to update a table using code that is opened in SAS Enterprise Guide in read only or update mode:

Error: A lock is not available for lib_name.table_name.DATA, lock held by another process.

Error: File lib_name.table_name.DATA is not open.

If a table is opened in update mode (any table including SAS/SHARE), the table is opened with table-level locking. No other user or process can update or read the table while the table is opened in update mode.

If the table is opened in read/protected mode, then no other user or process can open the table in update mode. The table can only be shared by other users or processes in read mode. To try to circumvent the problem in SAS Enterprise Guide, use the Menu selection Window => Close All, then run the section of the project that did not complete.

Also try Tools => Options => SAS Programs => select 'Close all open data before running code'.

To search for usage notes such as above please use the SASNOTES website below:

<http://support.sas.com/techsup/search/sasnotes.html>

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SAS Events



Smart business WITH SAS®

SAS® Forum UK 2007 is aimed at smart users of SAS and provides the perfect opportunity to hear the current news from the world of SAS, learn from the experiences and achievements of leading UK companies and address specific questions about SAS software directly to our experts.

Highlights over the 2 days include:

- Keynote from Allan Russell, Senior Vice President Strategy and SAS Fellow: 'BI' of the Future
- Solutions showcase: Learn about the latest SAS solutions and how to deploy them in your organisation
- Industry sessions on Financial Services, Public Sector, Telco, Retail/CPG, PME
- Network and exchange best practices with other smart users.

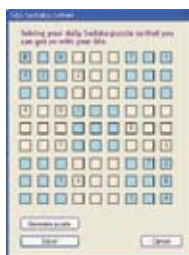
News from the Blogosphere

In each edition of ITK, I'll take you through some of the interesting websites, blogs and podcasts in the extended SAS world.

Solve your Sudoku puzzle with SAS® Enterprise Guide®

A few years on from its introduction to the UK, Suduko is still going strong as an alternative to crosswords to while those hours away on the train.

But, if you're like me, and the attraction of filling in all numbers one to nine in every row, column and three by three box is starting to fade; why not get SAS Enterprise Guide to do the work for you? Well, that's exactly what Chris Hemedinger from SAS in Cary has done.



You can find out more about Chris' ingenious application on <http://blogs.sas.com/sascom/index.php?archives/27-Puzzling-presentations.html#extended>

In addition to the blog entry, here is the link to the source code and finished product:

<http://support.sas.com/documentation/onlinedoc/guide/customtasks/index.htm>

Together with a direct link to the files:

<http://support.sas.com/documentation/onlinedoc/guide/customtasks/SudokuSolver.zip>

A Wiki for SAS Users

Take a look at sasCommunity.org on http://sascommunity.org/wiki/Main_Page. It's a great location for blogs, articles, news and reviews.



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