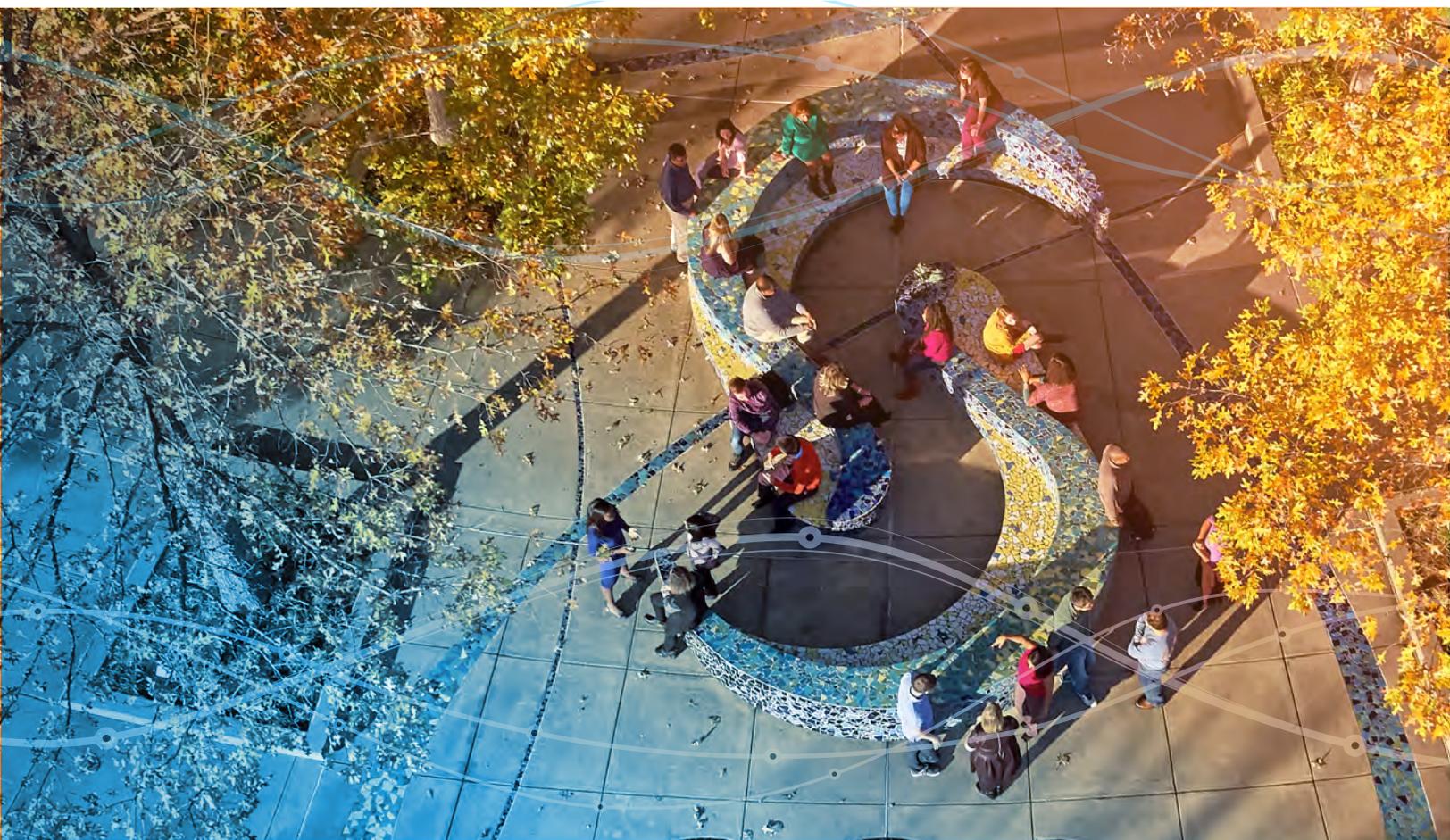


The Quality Imperative: SAS Institute's Commitment to Quality

A corporate statement of SAS' commitment to product quality,
service quality, and customer satisfaction



Appendix 6: Quality in SAS® Documentation

Researching New Features

Project managers and writers in the SAS Documentation Division are in constant contact with product developers to keep abreast of new features as they are being developed. Writers attend development meetings and subscribe to and participate in newsgroups and blogs that are related to the products that they are documenting. They work with new product features as the features are being developed and work with the appropriate developers to ensure that the documentation is clear, complete, and accurate.

Planning the Documentation Library

If a product is new, the writer analyzes the audience and its task workflow to determine what types of documentation are needed (for example, a user's guide, an administrator's guide, product Help, or a video or slideshow).

If an existing product is being updated, the writer reviews the documentation set and determines whether new types of documentation are needed, or existing documentation is obsolete. Writers consult with SAS Technical Support for input on how to improve the documentation. SAS regularly surveys customers regarding their satisfaction with the documentation and provides a feedback link from the documentation on the web.

As products are updated, the changes are compiled into a single What's New topic that is delivered with the product documentation. A What's New summary document (called What's New in SAS) provides a high-level overview of all the changes and new products in a SAS release. For example, the most recent version for SAS 9.4 contains information from the initial release in July 2013 and any subsequent SAS 9.4 releases, such as SAS 9.4M6. This summary document is available (as HTML, PDF, and EPUB) from the web. Also, documentation that is available on the web is updated as needed and is labeled with the date of the update.

Developing Content

Writers and software developers work closely together to produce new documentation. The writer studies the software specifications and works with the software that is in development. The writer also develops and tests examples.

Most documentation is authored in an Extensible Markup Language (XML) authoring environment, although some documentation is authored in LaTeX, in Adobe FrameMaker, in Microsoft Word, or directly in HTML. When a first draft of the documentation is ready, project managers and writers send it out for technical review.

Employees in the SAS R&D, Technical Support, Worldwide Marketing, and Education Divisions are asked to review the documentation. These reviewers check the documentation for technical accuracy, completeness, and clarity, and send comments back to the writers.

Editing

All documentation is edited. There are three types of edits:

- Substantive edits occur early in the development of the documentation. These edits address the overall structure, organization, and writing style of the document.
- Copy edits concentrate on spelling, grammar, punctuation, consistency, and style.
- Policy edits check for trademark issues and glaring errors in text such as misspellings.

Most of our documentation receives a copy edit. All our documentation receives at least a policy edit. As project schedules permit, a substantive edit occurs at the same time as the technical review.

Searching

For online documents, we provide search functionality. Search functionality is tested for accuracy.

Testing and Publishing Documentation

After documentation is written and edited, it is transformed to several output types (HTML, PDF, and EPUB) and published to an internal documentation delivery site where it can be accessed for testing.

For all output types, editors and testers use both manual processes and automated tools to test the integrity of links within each document, and to test links to other documents. If the testers find errors, these errors are sent to the writers for resolution. If the conversion tools have generated the error, a problem report is submitted to the DevOps Documentation Engineering Department. After all errors have been fixed, the testers verify that errors have been resolved correctly. This process is repeated as needed. When documentation is complete and accurate, it is published to our external documentation delivery site on the date that coincides with the release of the software.

For documentation that is part of the SAS Help, various R&D product groups also test the documentation for their specific products. If R&D testers find an error, the tester records the problem in the problem reporting system, and the problem is routed to the writer. The writer fixes the error, and the transformation, testing, and publishing cycle is repeated as needed.

Controlling Changes to the Documentation

Our source files are under a revision control system that is like the source management system used for SAS source code. The revision control system maintains a revision history for all files, and previous versions can be restored if needed.

Distributing Documentation to Customers

When we ship new or updated software, our documentation is updated to reflect the enhancements to the software. New and revised documentation is posted to the web in HTML, PDF, and EPUB formats. Selected titles are available for purchase in print and e-book formats from bookstores and online booksellers.

Tracking Problems after Software Updates

All substantive changes to documentation are tracked in a problem reporting system, including changes to existing information and information about new features. When we republish a document, technical errors are corrected, and revisions are reviewed and tested as appropriate. The SAS Documentation Division encourages feedback from users by email or through the SAS website.

Developing Software Used to Author and Deliver Documentation

The DevOps Documentation Engineering Department develops and supports both the SAS documentation delivery system and the software that is used by the SAS Documentation Division to create Help content for online delivery and printed books. The R&D developers and testers use the same tools, processes, and protocols for software development that are described in the main body of this document so that our documentation delivery system software meets the same quality standards for a worldwide audience.

Managing Terminology

Quality documentation depends on “quality at the source.” This means that we establish and follow guidelines for correct, consistent, culturally sensitive, and clear words and phrases as we describe and explain how to use SAS software. The SAS Documentation Division leads a corporate-wide initiative in terminology management to help us provide quality communication and documentation for our customers. This initiative includes managing a central repository for SAS terminology, as well as managing processes to establish terminology quality checks throughout product development and delivery.

Terminologists in the SAS Documentation Division have the primary responsibility for researching, creating, and updating entries to the terminology database, which serves as a resource for the entire company. Technical writers and technical editors use a customized application that checks documents for clarity and correct terminology. SAS Documentation also works closely with R&D to develop quality terminology in software error messages and in user interface text.

In addition, SAS Documentation collaborates with our European and Asia-Pacific localization offices. By focusing on quality at the source, SAS software and documentation can be translated more accurately and efficiently.

Terminology management is recognized as critical to quality offerings in a global market. SAS Documentation is committed to continuing its leadership role in establishing quality terminology across SAS products.

Release Information

The version of this paper is January 2022.

Unless otherwise indicated, this document relates only to SAS 9.4, SAS Viya, and the products that are available with SAS 9.4 and SAS Viya. It also relates to services from the date of this paper forward. Quality processes are continually evolving. Therefore, SAS reserves the right to modify the processes described in this document at any time. If you are using SAS 9.4 and SAS Viya and have questions about processes in those releases, send email to qualitypaper@sas.com.

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