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Who We Are

We, the Vancouver SAS Users Group, are an informal group of SAS users in the Vancouver area who wish to periodically meet and share their knowledge. There are no fees to join – we simply meet twice annually (spring and fall) to have a half day of presentations, networking, and fun! Keep informed of our activities at www.sas.com/vancouver.

Newsletter Inputs

This newsletter gives information for/by the local Vancouver SAS community. If you would like to provide input (e.g., submissions, requests or comments) to this newsletter, please email Nate Derby at nderby@sprodata.com. We would love to hear from you!

Executive Team

President:

Colleen McGahan
(BC Cancer Agency)

Vice President:

Mei Chong
(BC Centre for Disease Control)

Other Members:

Nathaniel Derby (Statis Pro)
Peter Hruby (HSBC)
Karim Rajwani (ICBC)
Cathy Rupp (BC Hydro)
Saida Zardi (Stat Consultant)

Executive Update

Colleen McGahan: cmcgahan@bccancer.bc.ca

It has been a good couple of years for the Vancouver SAS Users Group. There has been the introduction of the Executive Team, which now enables us, as users, to determine meeting agendas and how we move forward to help improve networking opportunities, further knowledge transfer and increase our own SAS skills. We have seen the user group grow from 30-40 to 60-70 attendees and we now have 7 members on the Executive Team. With this expansion we are excited to have enough participation to be able to produce the first Vancouver SAS User's Group Newsletter. All contributions for this first issue have come from members of the Executive Team. We are hoping that all of you find it interesting and helpful and will be willing to contribute a longer article or a short "Tips & Tricks" in the future.

At each Users Group meeting users are asked to complete the evaluation survey. We currently receive completed surveys from approximately 50% of attendees. The information gathered from these surveys is extremely important and helpful to the Executive Team in determining how to move forward with the meetings. Thus, to ensure that we have an accurate representation of what you, as Vancouver SAS users, want, we encourage all of you to complete and hand in the surveys at the end of the meetings.

We have seen from the evaluation forms that there is a good dispersion of skill levels among users, including some new users. The Executive Team therefore endeavors to gear the meetings to all skill levels and we will adjust accordingly should the distribution of the skill level change.

In the last couple of years the location of the meeting has moved from downtown to the BC Cancer Agency (BCCA). This was done mainly for the convenience of you, the users; on feedback from nearly 60 users, 50% of you said your preference was the BCCA compared to 25% preferring the downtown location, 20% having no preference and 5% suggesting a different venue. It has therefore been decided that for the foreseeable future, the meeting location will remain at the BCCA.

Whilst just over 60% of you attend for educational purposes, 50% also attend for networking opportunities. The Executive Team feels that the theatre style of the BCCA lecture room does not easily lend itself to networking. Therefore, for the first time, at this fall meeting, a networking exercise that is incorporated into an extended break period has been introduced to help and encourage networking. We hope you find it useful and enjoyable and we look forward to your feedback on this and on the Newsletter.

TIPS & TRICKS: The IN Operator with Integer Ranges

Colleen McGahan: cmcgahan@bccancer.bc.ca

Did you know that the IN operator accepts integer ranges? For example,

```
DATA sample;  
  SET cohort;  
  IF age in (10, 15:20, 25:30);  
RUN;
```

This works well for IF and (for SAS 9.2 only) WHERE statements.

Meet the Executive Team

The first of a multi-part series

Mei Chong comes from the health sector. She is a biostatistician in epidemiology with the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). Throughout her university years and past work experience, she had very few opportunities to use SAS. After joining BCCDC, however, she started tasting the power of SAS, especially when dealing with large data sets. This is the start of her third year on the Executive Team. As the vice president on the team this year, she is hoping Vancouver SAS Users Group will be the place for SAS and non-SAS users to network and further develop their SAS skills.

Colleen McGahan, born and bred in the UK, is a biostatistician at the BC Cancer Agency. She's been a SAS user since 1996 and is currently profiled in *SAS insights*, which can be found by Googling "Colleen McGahan SAS".

Give Us a Name!

We have an identity crisis here at the Vancouver SAS Users Group. We desperately need a name for each of two things:

- **Our user group.** *The Vancouver SAS Users Group*, which can be abbreviated as *VansUG*, is OK, but we are being massively outdone by the following cities:
 - Halifax (*SAS Halifax Regional User Group (SHRUG)* – a fun acronym).
 - Ottawa (*Ottawa Area SAS Users Society (OASUS)* – complete with a palm tree logo).
 - Toronto (*The Toronto Area SAS Society (TASS)* – very classy).
 - Victoria (*SAS Users Association of Victoria, eh? (SUAVE)* – cool!).
- **Our newsletter.** Our idea was *The Vancouver SAS Bulletin*, but again, that seems really boring.

Do you have a good idea for either of the above? If so, please send your suggestion to Nate Derby at nderby@sprodata.com. The winning entry for each category will be chosen by the Executive Team, and **the author of each winning entry will receive a prize at the next conference!**

TIPS & TRICKS: Removing Header Text from Output Pages

Colleen McGahan: cmcgahan@bccancer.bc.ca

Do you get fed up seeing `The SAS System`, the date, the page number and what procedure was used on top of each output page, as shown below?

```
The SAS System          10:16 Thursday, September 25, 2008          3
The Mixed Procedure
```

You can eliminate `The SAS System` by specifying `TITLE;` or actually give it a new title by specifying text in quotes (`TITLE "New Title";`). The page number and date can be removed by specifying `NONUMBER` and `NODATE` in the `OPTIONS` statement. The procedure title can only be removed from the ODS output, by specifying `ODS NOPROCTITLE;`

TIPS & TRICKS: Automatically Clearing the Log/Output Windows

Nate Derby: nderby@sprodata.com

When running a SAS program on Enterprise Guide, the associated log file always applies to the last time that program was run. That is, if you run the program, then change something and run it again, the log file applies to that second run. This is very convenient – you can always be sure that the log file is updated.

However, this is not true when running a program on PC SAS. The log and output window shows details from each time you have run that program. This can be alleviated by adding the following code to the beginning of each program:

```
dm 'log' clear;
dm 'odsresults' clear;
```

`dm` stands for *display manager* and is used for commands (such as above) which involve windows in the PC SAS interface.

While this coding technique can be very useful within PC SAS, note that it creates errors when used in batch mode. This problem is so annoying to some that Paul Hamilton included it as item 3 of his 2007 paper *10 Things I Hate in SAS Coding* (from the proceedings of the 2007 Pacific Northwest SAS Users Group Conference: www.pnwsug.org/conf.html).

Our next meeting will be around **April, 2009**. Check out sas.com/vancouver later for more information!

SAS is holding its **11th Annual Data Mining Conference** on October 27-28 in Las Vegas. Information can be found at sas.com/events/dmconf.

The **2009 SAS Global Forum** will be held on March 22-25 in Washington, DC. Information is at sas.com/globalforum.