Notes From SUGI 24

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First Health

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No News: Good News?

The main news is that there's not much new of general interest and utility.

- Version 8 was announced. It will be out by the end of the year, but it's mostly incremental improvements, not major changes

- A few new GUI development products were announced

- SAS Institute appears to be repositioning itself as a consulting company

SAS Institute Repositioning

SAS Institute is repositioning itself as a "knowledge company".

- The old way was for SAS users to provide the subject knowledge and programming skills, and SAS Institute to provide software.
- The new way is for SAS Institute to provide the expertise, methods, and software. Customers provide the money.
- The change is apparent in some new products, and may be one reason for the new SAS Software Certification program.

New Buzzwords

The Balanced Scorecard

- **A new approach to evaluating a company's progress.**
- **Less emphasis on costs, more emphasis on opportunities**
- **"Just doing things right isn't enough – you have to do the right things."**
- **Seems heavily dependent on subject matter expertise, and will put SAS Institute into competition with big consulting firms**
- **SAS/Intrnet, SAS/EIS, and Enterprise Miner are good tools for the job.**

New Buzzwords

Customer Relationship Management

- "In CRM, the focus is on retaining customers and sell them new (cross-selling) and more profitable (up-selling) products."
- Requires a lot of information and analysis of that information.
- I'm not sure how SAS Institute plans to do it. It was never clearly explained, so it must be marketing.
- Enterprise Miner seems to be one of the major products that will be used for this

New Buzzwords

Collaborative Business Intelligence

- "… combines the number-based information generated by the business intelligence process with the text-based materials that describe that information, resulting in the capture and re-use of corporate knowledge."
- Quite heavily buzzworded ("contextual information environments"?), but the idea is a good one.
- Useful for any organization, not just large corporations
- New "publish and subscribe" features.

Enterprise Miner

SAS Institute's data mining tool

- **Some new algorithms (including one written by the richest man in North Carolina) enable it to handle more data more quickly.**

- **Interesting demonstration of research being done at UNC on genes and Alzheimer's Disease involving huge amounts of data.**

Version 8 for Windows

Internet Explorer no longer required

Enhanced Editor
- **Context-sensitive**
- **Code sections**
- **Simple text autocompletion**
- **Can have several windows open at once**
- **Simple "macro" facility**
- **Doesn't have all the features of the Program Editor**
- **Also in Enterprise Guide**
- **Not supported on other platforms**

Y2K

- **SAS Version 7 is pretty much Y2K compliant**

- **You must make sure that the YEARCUTOFF system option is set correctly if you're processing any non-compliant data**

- **There's a new SYSDATE9 macro variable**

- **Tech Support will have extended hours on December 31**

OpenVMS

- **One high-ranking person at SAS said that OpenVMS is a dying platform, and that we shouldn't expect much development for it**

- **No VTxxx support in version 7 or version 8, and not likely to be in 9 or 10 or ever**

- **No lightweight X**

- **Won't act as a server for Enterprise Guide**

- **Disk caching will be better in version 8**

Distributed Processing

- **Asynchronous RSUBMIT**

- **Cross Environment Data Access now available for MVS with some restrictions**

- **Multiprocessing with MP Connect**

- **Message Services (direct and indirect)**

- **Agent Services**

- **Network Data Encryption**

- **Still not open interfaces, so you can't write a VB program to read/write messaging services, or to invoke remote objects.**

SUMMARY and TABULATE

PROC SUMMARY and PROC TABULATE now use a common engine. Same capabilities will be added (someday) to PROC REPORT

- More control over classes
- Better use of user-written formats
- Easier to get 0's in reports
- Output datasets when possible
- Quantile statististics, even for large datasets
- Outperforms version 6 in most cases

I like these enhancements. I can see a use for most of them, and they're in the base product!

SUMMARY and TABULATE

- **You can specify multiple CLASS statements, allowing different options for each level**
- **`CLASSDATA=datasetname` lets you specify combinations which must appear in the output**
- **`CLASS x / PRELOADFMT=` lets you use a format as a data source**
- **`CLASS x / MISSING` lets you specify the MISSING option at the class level**
- **`CLASS x / ORDER=` lets you order different class levels in different ways**
- **`CLASS x / MLF` turns on multilabel formats**
- **You can group by formatted or internal values.**

SUMMARY and TABULATE

PROC SUMMARY specifics

- **The TYPES statement lets you specify exactly which types you want – you're not restricted to every combination or NWAY. For example**
  ```
  class a b c d;
  types a*b (c d) ();
  ```
- **VAR x / WEIGHT=y lets you weight variables independently**
- **The IDGROUP statement combines and extends ID, MINID, and MAXID, eliminating the arbitrary aspects of version 6 ID processing**

ODS

- **Both simple and powerful if you choose not to explicitly specify all the details**
- **Amazingly complicated and even more powerful if you choose to specify all the possible options with their various levels of inheritance**
- **Major support is for HTML and PostScript**
- **RTF and XML engines are experimental**
- **PDF and plain text not supported**
- **Not all procedures use ODS**
- **Planned enhancements will make complex specifications easier**

Documentation

- **Most Institute-written documentation will be delivered on the installation CD-ROM in HTML and PDF**
- **You are free to install the documentation on your LAN and let everyone look at and print it**
- **Reference and Procedures manuals are by special order (print on demand) only. Print them yourself (over 2000 pages, so it will take a while)**
- **The Books By Users series will continue**
- **You can order the version 7 OnLine Docs now**

Documentation

Two new manuals you might want to consider:

- *The Little SAS Book: a primer*, by Susan Slaughter, the second edition of a book which has proven popular with new users.

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- *PROC TABULATE by Example*, by Lauren Haworth, a set of examples of what you can do with PROC TABULATE, including an interesting section on how to trick it into producing output it really doesn't want to produce.

Papers

There were many good papers in the Proceedings – too many, in fact, to list here. You can order a copy on paper or CD-ROM from SAS Institute.