

sasCommunity.org - *Your SAS*[®] Site: What it is and How to Get Started

Art Carpenter
California Occidental Consultants

ABSTRACT

From around the world, the community of SAS users, programmers, developers, as well as others interested in the broader application of SAS software, are increasingly making use of the sasCommunity.org wiki site. Fast becoming the clearing house for all information that is related to SAS, sasCommunity.org is operated and run by SAS users. It is free, and it is open to contributions from everyone.

Learn how you can make use of this site. Find out how you can contribute. Discover how you too can quickly make a difference in the world wide community of SAS users. Join the thousands of other SAS users that are a part of the creation of a site that is greater than the sum of its parts.

INTRODUCTION

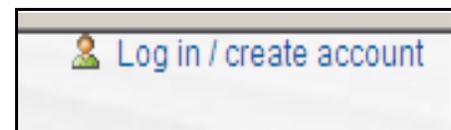
Sponsored by the SAS Global User Group Executive Board and governed by a Community Advisory Board, sasCommunity.org is a SAS user site which has been implemented in a wiki environment. It is the wiki environment that makes this sasCommunity special. A direct result of this environment and how it has been implemented, is the opening up of the site to all SAS users. Anyone can add content to the site, individuals and groups can work together to write, add, and enhance information on the site.

When someone posts to the site, you can correct a spelling mistake or add a link to the reference without asking permission and without knowing a special password. We all get to work together to improve the information on the site. The entire community benefits from each contribution.

sasCOMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The sasCommunity site is found at www.sasCommunity.org. Anyone can browse the site, however you must log in to change or add content.

Establishing a user ID is easy and free. Lafler and Shipp (2007) discuss the steps in detail, but it is both straightforward and easy. Select Log in / create account, and you will be directed to a log in screen. Here you either enter your log in information or initiate a request to create an account.



special page

Log in / create account

Log in

Don't have an account? [Create an account](#).

You must have cookies enabled to log in to sasCommunity.

Username:

Password:

Remember my login on this computer

The site asks us to create an account and to sign in to prevent malicious software from attacking the site. All you need to have is a valid e-mail address. Once you have requested an account, a link will be sent to your e-mail address that you specify in the application, click on the link and your ID will be verified. Once verified you can add and edit content on the site. Depending on the speed of the e-mail servers, it takes less than 5 minutes. Remember everyone can contribute, even if all you

do is correct someone else's grammar or spelling, you will be improving the site.

The expectation is that articles that are added to sasCommunity.org will be modified, enhanced, corrected, and improved by other users. You do not need to ask permission of the articles' initial creator to make a change. Go ahead, be bold.

Site organization

Unlike the hierarchical structure that many of us have experienced under directory based systems such as windows, the wiki structure is very flat. Primary content is added to pages called 'articles'. Articles with similar content are grouped into 'categories' through the use of 'category tags', which are essentially internal links. Any given article or category can be linked to any number of other categories.

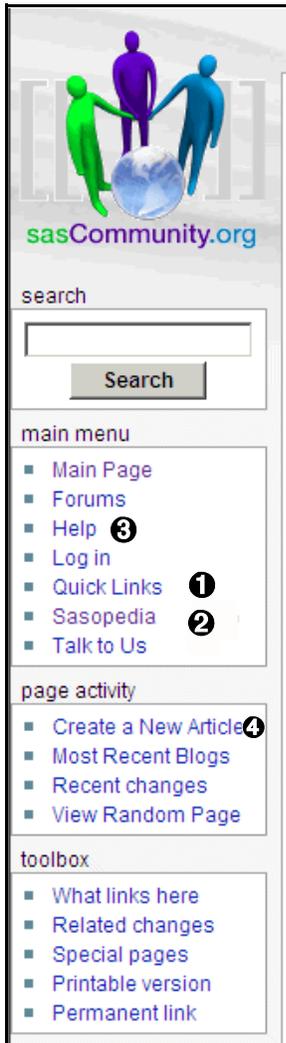
One of these categories is the SASOPEDIA. This high level category is used to organize all categories and articles about SAS. Within SASOPEDIA there is a category for SAS STATEMENTS, which contains the category LIBNAME, which contains articles on various aspects of the LIBNAME statement.

Users, like you, can create both articles and categories. You can add links to any article or category if you think that it will improve the flow of information.

BECOMING A SITE CONTRIBUTOR

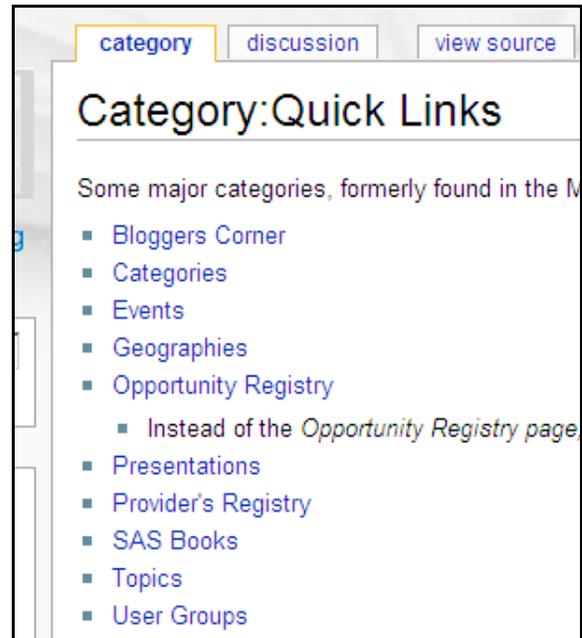
Once you have logged onto the sasCommunity site, you can become a contributor. Remember a contributor is anyone who improves the content of the site. Correcting small mistakes of another contributor is important too! As you become more confident you may want to add an example or an explanation to someone else's article. Later you may want to create your own article. It does

not have to be a special topic. If it is something that you had to learn it is something that someone else has yet to learn. Someone always knows less about SAS than you do right now.



Exploring sasCommunity

Your primary navigation of the sasCommunity site will probably be through the use of the navigation pane, which appears on the left side of the sasCommunity page. Selecting the 'Quick Links' ① opens the category 'Quick Links'. This category is a portal to most of the commonly accessed categories on the site. These include a list of all categories, books about SAS, general SAS topics (see Sasopedia ②), and an access point to information on various User Groups.



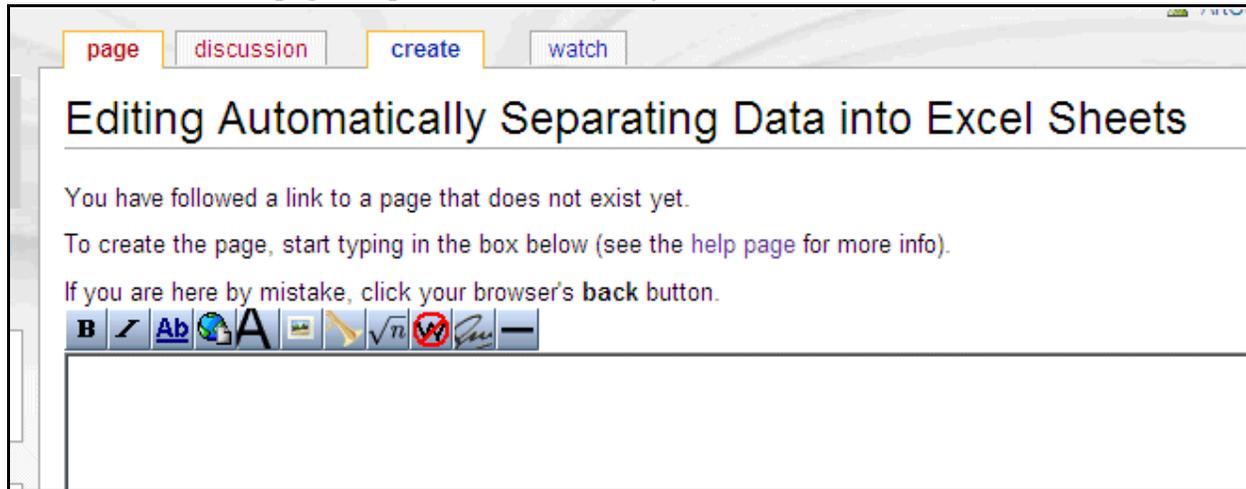
Creating an Article

Although you can contribute to the community of users by editing the articles of other users, at some point you will probably want to add content by creating an article of your own. This is not difficult, but can be confusing at first. If at any point you have a question about how to work with the site or whenever you just want to find out more, use Help ③, which will point you to a great deal of information on how to use the site.

The easiest way to create either an article is to go to the 'Create a New Article' link ④. This takes you to a dialogue which prompts you for the name of the new article. Think carefully



about the name; it is virtually impossible to rename an article later. Enter the name and click on the “Create article”. We have chosen to create an article titled “Automatically Separating Data in Excel Sheets”. A page is opened which allows you to enter the information for the article.



The wiki editor is somewhat crude, but includes a tool bar with some of the common editing tasks. These include Bold, Italics, internal and external links, headers, tools to insert files and formulas and lines, and a author timestamp. There is help on the use of the editor and editor symbols under the Help link , but it is often easiest to just look at someone else’s page to see how they built their article (if you edit someone’s page without saving changes, you can see their edit commands). The editor uses a modified markup language, so if you know HTML many of its statements can be used on the wiki as well. If you just copy your content from a word processor, such as MSWord, much of the formatting will be lost, but the text copies fine.

The full text of the article which we just created can be found at: [http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Automatically Separating Data into Excel Sheets](http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Automatically_Separating_Data_into_Excel_Sheets). Notice that the article name becomes part of the URL.

Once you have edited the information on your new article you need to save it. At the bottom of the editing window you will find buttons to SAVE or PREVIEW your work. The PREVIEW button allows you to see how your page will look and the SAVE actually saves your changes. Remember the PREVIEW button does **NOT** save your content, and if you leave the page without saving it you will loose your changes.



Watching a Page

Notice that just above the SAVE and PREVIEW buttons there is a check box, selected by

default, that allows you to watch a page. You can watch any page on sasCommunity, but you should at least watch pages you create or are interested in. When changes are made to watched pages you will automatically be sent an e-mail notifying you of the change (the particulars of the notification are set in your preferences on your user page - see the end of this paper for more details on watching a page). This allows you to make sure that the change is helpful. It is easy to undo a change if someone else made a mistake on your article.

Adding Links

One of the most useful aspects of publishing articles on a wiki is the ease to point to other supportive information sources. These links can be to other articles local to sasCommunity or they can be external to the wiki by being elsewhere on the web.

Creating an internal link is easy. If you want to link to the article that we have just created simply add the article name surrounded by two square brackets the link to our article is

[[Automatically Separating Data into Excel Sheets]]

Watch your spelling! And the title is case sensitive.

An external link to a location outside of the sasCommunity is just as straightforward. This time the entire URL is enclosed in single square brackets, such as:

[<http://support.sas.com/kb/12/637.html> here].

Notice that I have included the word here preceded by a space. By default the URL does not show, so we can add display text by separating it from the URL by a space. The word 'here' will be displayed in the article.

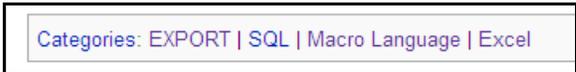
Pointing to categories

Now that we have created an article we want other readers to be able to find it. We do that by linking it to categories. Remember a category is a collection of articles on a similar topic. Our article uses a PROC SQL step to create macro variables, which are then used to build a series of PROC EXPORT steps which write to an Excel workbook. Folks interested in any of those topics might want to read our article so we will add our article to those categories.

A category is just a special type of article, so we will use an internal link to point to the four categories that we have identified. The text that we add to the bottom of our article is:

```
[[category:EXPORT]]
[[category:SQL]]
[[category:Macro Language]]
[[category:Excel]]
```

The user sees:



Categories: [EXPORT](#) | [SQL](#) | [Macro Language](#) | [Excel](#)

TIP OF THE DAY PROJECT

We have just written an article and added it to sasCommunity where users will hopefully find it. How can we increase its exposure? How can we increase the odds that it will be found by the person that needs the information? The "Tip of the Day" allows us to gain exposure for our article. Every day a different tip is displayed on the main page of sasCommunity. The tip itself is usually only a sentence or two, perhaps a snippet of code. Almost always the tip will link to

other internal or external articles that will tell the reader more about the topic.

Clearly the article that we wrote about the automatic process of writing data to individual sheets of a Excel workbook will not fit into a tip, but we can write a tip saying that it can be done with a link pointing to our article.



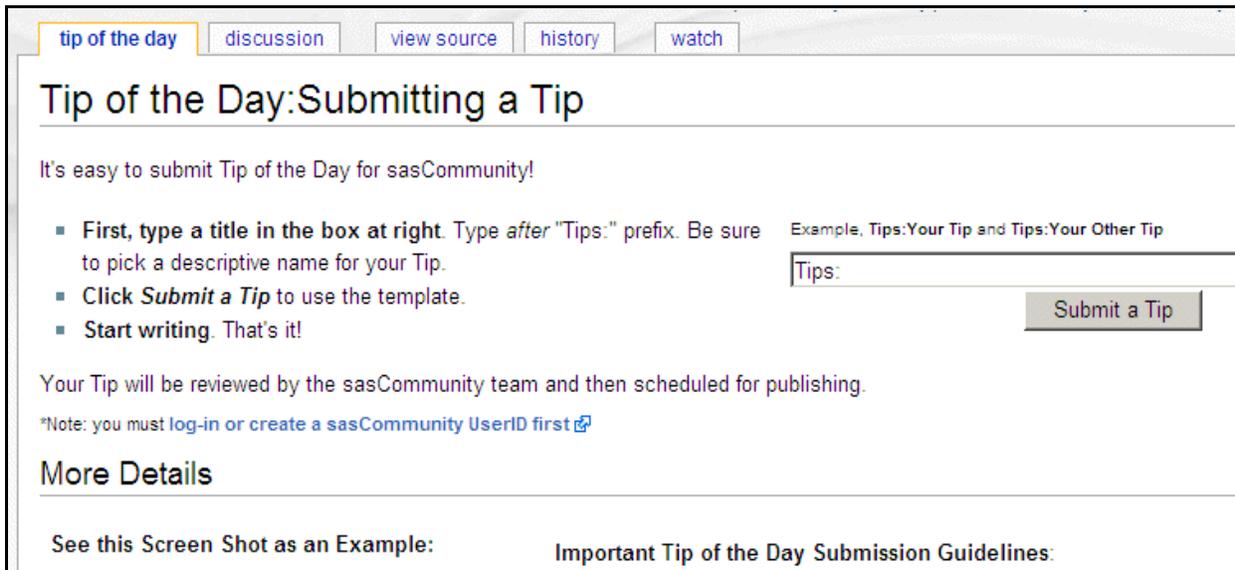
Today's tip can be found prominently displayed on the site's main page. Since this is the primary entry point for most users of the site, virtually everyone visiting the site will see your tip on the day that it is displayed.

At the bottom of the tip is information about the Tip of the Day Project. Here you can find

information on previous and upcoming tips as well as a link so that you too can submit your own tip. There is also a link to the article on the Tip of the Day, which gives you more information on the project as well as how to sign up for a RSS feed of the tip.

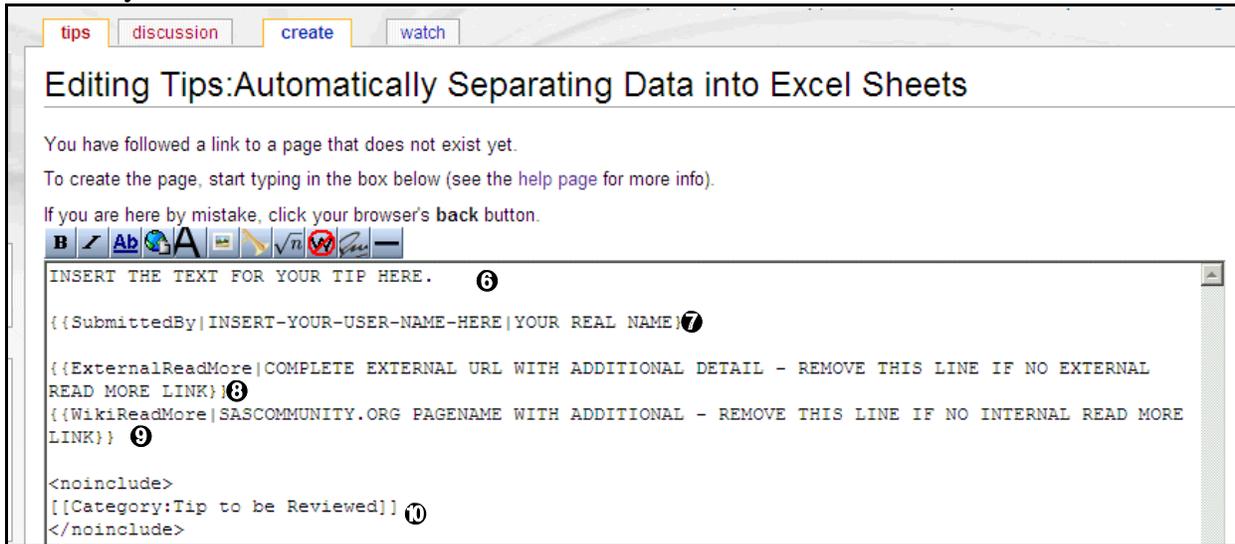


Since we want to submit a tip to the project, we click on "Submit a Tip" . This brings up a article that was written just to help us create a tip. Not only does it prompt us for a name, but it also provides a number of useful guidelines for creating an effective tip.

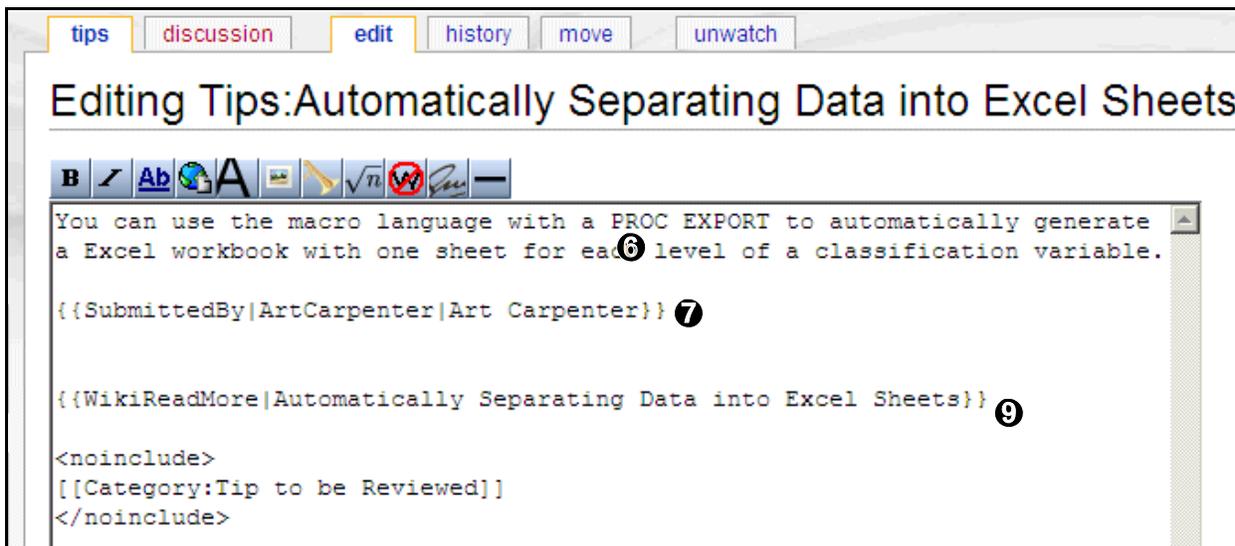


Let's create a tip with the same name as our article. We type or paste this name into the dialogue box following the word "Tips:" and click on the Submit a Tip button. We will be creating an article, so again we see the edit window. This time, however, some information has been filled

in for us. In fact a template has been accessed so when we submit a tip all we have to do is essentially ‘fill in the blanks’.



Our tip text will replace the first line of the template text ⑥. We want others to know who submitted the tip so that they can comment and ask us questions, so we add our user name and/or our real name ⑦. Since tips generally point the reader to more information on the tip’s topic, we want to establish either external links ⑧ or internal links ⑨. Again all we do is paste in the appropriate text. For our tip we only have an internal link to our article so we will delete the text pointing to an external link. The tip will be reviewed by other sasCommunity users (you too can review tips). ⑩ After it has been review, it will be promoted to a queue to be used as a tip.



Once saved the tip text is ready for review. Remember to watch this page so that you will receive an e-mail to let you know when the tip is reviewed.

tips discussion edit history move unwatch

Tips:Automatically Separating Data into Excel Sheets

You can use the macro language with a PROC EXPORT to automatically generate a Excel workbook with one sheet for each level of a classification variable.

Submitted by Art Carpenter. Contact me at my Discussion Page.

...read more

Category: Tip to be Reviewed

REFINING THE LOOK OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

The wiki editor is not a WYSIWYG editor, so if you are unfamiliar with markup languages, you will want to pick up a few tricks to make your page look nicer. First look at the site's help page for hints and FAQ. A good starting point is

http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Help:Syntax_Summary

even more information on editing a wiki page can be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_edit_a_page

SAS Code

When you place SAS code in your article, you can highlight it by surrounding it with the source tag.

```
<source lang="sas">
  your_sas_code;
</source>.
```

By default your code will be left justified. If you want it to be right justified surround the <source> tag with the <div> tag.

```
<source lang="sas">
proc sql noprint;
select distinct age
      into :idage1 - :idage99
      from sashelp.class;
%let agecnt = &sqllobs;
quit;
</source>
```

```
<div style="float:right"><source lang="sas">
your_sas_code;
</source></div>
```

Coloring Text

In a similar way you can also change the color and font of your text by using the font tag with

the color= option. Within your text simply surround the text that is to be colored with the font tag. The following tag would change the associated text green: ` your text `. Nancy Wilson included a tip on this topic to the Tip of the Day Project, see it at:

http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Tips:Changing_FONT_color

CHECKING YOUR PROFILE AND PREFERENCES

When you login to sasCommunity the upper right corner of the browser window will contain links to your personal account area.



Your Profile

Your account user name, mine is ArtCarpenter, is a link to your profile page. This is a location where others can learn more about you. You choose the content, so you can control how much - if any - information is included. For examples of profile pages that utilize a number of different techniques look at:

- Art Carpenter <http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:ArtCarpenter>
- Don Henderson <http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:Donh>
- Phil Miller <http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:Statprof>
- Nancy Wilson <http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/User:NancyWilson>

Not all of the sasCommunity users choose to even create a profile page. That is OK - you get to decide how much or how little you want to share.

Setting Your Preferences

Selecting 'my preferences' brings up the dialogue box for preference specification. The preferences are fairly self explanatory, so just explore each tab. A couple of details are discussed below.



E-mail Control

On the user profile tab you can select how the site, as well as the other users of sasCommunity, can contact you via e-mail. The next to the last check box allows the other users of the site to send you an e-mail. The addresses of e-mail sent through sasCommunity are hidden so you can control

who can learn your e-mail address. The first check box enables the site to send you an e-mail when a page on your watchlist is changed. Watching pages is discussed in the next section.

E-mail

Your e-mail address was authenticated on March 25, 2007 at 19:51.

- E-mail me when a page on my watchlist is changed
- E-mail me when my user talk page is changed
- E-mail me also for minor edits of pages
- Enable e-mail from other users
- Send me copies of e-mails I send to other users

Your Watch Settings

Since anyone can change any page at anytime, it is often important to know when a page near and dear to your heart has been changed. This can be done automatically by watching that page.



You will notice the 'watch' tab at the top of each page.

Selecting this tab adds the page to your 'watchlist'. Assuming that you have checked the first box on your profile's e-mail settings, you will receive an e-mail from sasCommunity when the page is changed. You can then go to the page and see the change for yourself. For pages that



you are watching, the 'watch' tab is renamed to 'unwatch'.

You can read more about using the watch / unwatch feature of sasCommunity at:

www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Leveraging_the_Watch/Unwatch_feature

SUMMARY

sasCommunity.org is a growing community of SAS users. Built on a wiki environment, which allows participation from all SAS users, everyone is encouraged to contribute to the knowledge base of the site. The site is run by users for the SAS user community.

Become a member, it is free, and easy. Contribute - everyone, no matter how new they are to SAS, can make a contribution. Certainly it is the sum total of everyone's contributions that makes the site so valuable to SAS users around the world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Art Carpenter's publications list includes four books, and numerous papers and posters presented at SUGI, SAS Global Forum, and other user group conferences. Art has been using SAS® since 1977 and has served in various leadership positions in local, regional, national, and international user groups. He is a SAS Certified Advanced Professional Programmer, and through California Occidental Consultants he teaches SAS courses and provides contract SAS programming support nationwide.

Art currently sits on the Community Advisory Board for sasCommunity.org.

AUTHOR CONTACT

Arthur L. Carpenter
California Occidental Consultants
10606 Ketch Circle
Anchorage, AK 99515

(907) 865-9167
art@caloxy.com
www.caloxy.com



REFERENCES

Lafler, Kirk P. and Charles Shipp, 2008, "Collaborate with SAS® Users Around the World with sasCommunity.org", proceedings of the SAS Global Forum 2008 Conference, SAS Institute Inc., Cary NC, paper 214-2008.

<http://www2.sas.com/proceedings/forum2008/214-2008.pdf>

The article created in this paper can be found at:

http://www.sascommunity.org/wiki/Automatically_Separating_Data_into_Excel_Sheets

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Don Henderson (User:Donh) and Phil Miller (User:Statprof) have been instrumental in establishing [sasCommunity](http://sasCommunity.org). Both are currently site administrators and both sit on the Community Advisory Board. The current chair of the Community Advisory Board is Nancy Wilson (User:NancyWilson).

TRADEMARK INFORMATION

SAS, SAS Certified Professional, SAS Certified Advanced Programmer, and all other SAS Institute Inc. product or service names are registered trademarks of SAS Institute, Inc. in the USA and other countries.

® indicates USA registration.