This paper introduces you to the Publications Division at SAS Institute, gives you some interesting facts and statistics about our publications, then describes some of the publications projects underway and our future plans.

Introduction

The primary function of the Publications Division at SAS Institute is to provide SAS® and SYSTEM 2000® software users with the most complete, up-to-date, and best documentation possible. The division is a self-contained publisher. We perform all the functions of a publishing company including technical writing, graphic arts, and sales. Most of our manuals are printed by one of the largest book printers in the United States. Some of the short run printing jobs are done at our print shop in Austin, Texas.

Technical Writing

The Technical Writing Department performs the writing, editing, copyediting, and proofreading functions for all SAS Institute documentation. Since all our writing is done in-house, writers are able to work closely with software developers and thus keep up-to-the-minute during the development process.

Most of our technical writers are in Cary, North Carolina; writers for SYSTEM 2000 documentation are located in Austin, Texas, with the SYSTEM 2000 software developers.

Graphic Arts

The Graphic Arts Department performs the complete book production process for SAS software documentation, including design, typesetting, pasteup, and photography. This group also does the design and production work for ads and promotional materials for the Institute.

Currently, production for all SYSTEM 2000 documentation is done in Austin. We hope in the future to produce SYSTEM 2000 documentation using our typesetting system in Cary.

Publications Sales

All book orders, including those for SYSTEM 2000 manuals, are processed through the Cary office by the Publications Sales Department. This group is also responsible for maintaining our large inventory and for shipping and receiving.

Facts and Figures

The many publications currently available from the Institute include 102 SAS manusis, 55 technical reports, and 81 publications documenting SYSTEM 2000 DBMS.

The Publications Division produces many forms of documentation to support the Institute’s software: preliminary documentation, installation instructions, HELP files, technical reports, and manuals.

Preliminary Documentation

Preliminary documentation is prepared to go with alpha and beta test versions of the software. This early draft of the document eventually becomes a product user’s guide.
Preliminary documentation has a limited distribution and is not sold through the Publica-
tions Sales Department. You probably haven’t seen any preliminary documentation
unless your site has had a test release of one of our products.

Installation Instructions
Installation instructions are a part of the installation package that also includes the soft-
ware and other documentation. This technical documentation describes how to install
the software and gives other important information to the SAS installation represent-a-
tive.

HELP Files
HELP files provide on-line documentation as part of the software. Full-screen users
can access these short descriptions of SAS System procedures or features by entering
a keyword or pressing a function key.

Technical Reports
Technical reports are a very important part of SAS Institute’s documentation. These
reports provide temporary updates to the manuals between major releases of the SAS
System.

SAS technical reports are designed to provide information on a variety of topics to
a variety of audiences. The series letter indicates the topic area and/or the audience
to which the technical report applies.

For example, all updates to products in the SAS System between major releases
are documented in the P-series (P for products). Supplemental procedures not docu-
mented in the SUGI Supplemental Library User’s Guide are temporarily documented
in the S-series. A select group of reports not intended for the general audience are
documented in the U-series and the Y-series.

Manuals
The major category of SAS Institute documentation is, of course, our manuals. SAS
Institute manuals are of several types:
  • basic reference
  • operating system companions
  • additional product manuals
  • special topics
  • training
  • SYSTEM 2000 data base management system manuals.

Basic reference
The basic reference manuals for Version 5 of the SAS System are the SAS User’s
the SAS Procedures Guide provide the basic reference material for Version 6 of the
SAS System. These manuals document the DATA step and procedures in the base
SAS product.

Operating system companions
Each new operating environment requires the addition to the basic reference material
of special information pertinent only to users of that system.
Additional product manuals
Each SAS software product has its own user’s guide, a basic reference manual documenting procedures and features in that product.

Special topics
Other manuals include documentation for selected groups of users, for example, those new to the SAS System, or those interested in VSAM processing or in computer performance evaluation.

Training
Manuals to support SAS Institute Training programs include VIEWS for instructor-based training, and workbooks and course coordinator’s guides for video-based and computer-based training.

SYSTEM 2000 DBMS
SYSTEM 2000 products also have their own set of documentation.

1984-85 Fiscal Year
During the 1984-85 fiscal year which ended November 30, 1985, SAS and SYSTEM 2000 users purchased 483,412 SAS manuals, 84,484 technical reports, and 13,631 publications documenting SYSTEM 2000 DBMS. Of that number, 52,720 manuals, 8,089 technical reports, and 494 SYSTEM 2000 publications were sold to SAS and SYSTEM 2000 users in Europe.


In Europe, these same books are the top four on the bestseller list, but in a slightly different order. The top seller in Europe is also the SAS User’s Guide: Basics, Version 5 Edition, which sold 6,186 copies in Europe during 1984-85. Note that this total is 10% of the total sold to all countries.


Future Directions
What is in store for our users in the future? During 1986 we will be producing documentation for additional products in the SAS System for Personal Computers, a Version 5 edition of the SAS/QC™ User’s Guide, and a Version 5 edition of the SUGI Supplemental Library User’s Guide. Most of these manuals are currently underway.

We also plan to provide companions for operating systems that become available and to update existing companions as needed to reflect Version 5 changes and enhancements.

In support of new instructor-, video-, and computer-based training courses, we are currently working on many VIEWS, workbooks, and course coordinator’s guides.
But perhaps most important, we in the Publications Division are aware that with the increasingly widespread use of SAS software comes a greater need for end-user documentation. Currently, our documentation is primarily reference, and we see from our SASware ballot results each year that users want more examples.

We are currently working on several manuals that we hope will meet this need, including one on the macro facility, statistical applications guides for regression and for time-series analysis, and applications guides for each SAS software product.

We recognize that people begin using the SAS System for a variety of different tasks and for that reason we are planning a primer series, designed for these new end users, that will have a totally new look. Primers will be short and will document single, simple applications of the software. The goal is for users to become productive quickly.

At SUGI 11 in Atlanta in February of this year, we polled SAS users to determine what primers would be most helpful. From that meeting and from our own conversations with users, we have compiled a list of ideas for primer topics. Suggested topics include

- getting started with SAS software
- producing simple reports with SAS software
- writing letters with SAS software
- simple forecasting with SAS software
- managing projects with SAS software
- simple spreadsheets with SAS software
- formatting written documents.

Other future plans include documentation that combines features from several products. For example, we would like to be able to show in one book how the applications programmer in the information center can use each one of the wide variety of SAS software products.

The success of the Institute is due in part to listening to our users. The Publications Division wants your input in making plans for future documentation.