

## SESUG Paper Guidelines

### 1. Overview

The SAS User Group conferences serve as a method to exchange information among your fellow professionals. Accordingly, we would like to help you to present your paper in a way that will present you well. So, we have put together this series of (hopefully) helpful guidelines for people who are planning to publish and present their paper.

Please keep in mind, these guidelines are provided in order to help you. Hopefully, you will find them useful. We provide them primarily for the novice or only-occasional presenter – though we do believe there are valid pieces of advice here for even the most seasoned presenter.

### 2. Abstract

The Abstract is an introduction to your paper. It serves as an invitation to read your paper and to come see your presentation, so you want to give them every reason to read on. In other words: give the reader a reason to read your paper or attend your presentation. "Here's a problem, and here's a cool way to solve it." It should clearly state the principles found in your paper, and give the reader enough of the subject to intrigue them to read your paper – and attend your presentation. As such:

- a. State your intentions as clearly as you can in simple, straightforward English.
- b. Avoid passive voice whenever you can; show that you enjoy your subject!
- c. Avoid "buzzwords", acronyms, highly technical terms, and the like whenever reasonable to do so.
- d. Along those lines, give your audience some idea of the level of your paper. You don't want to frustrate attendees by presenting material that is too simple or too advanced for them, so briefly mention prerequisites ("working knowledge of the macro language", for example).
- e. Keep the length to 200 words or less. An overlong Abstract will be skipped over; people want an introduction to your paper, not the paper itself condensed into a single long paragraph. Even within the 200 word limit, use paragraphs or lists to separate major ideas.

Here's an example, from the SUGI 31 Proceedings: [DATALINES, Sequential Files, CSV, HTML and More – Using INFILE and INPUT Statements to Introduce External Data into the SAS<sup>®</sup> System](#), by Andrew T. Kuligowski, Nielsen Media Research:

#### ABSTRACT / INTRODUCTION

The SAS<sup>®</sup> System has numerous capabilities to store, analyze, report, and present data. However, those features are useless unless that data is stored in, or can be accessed by, the SAS System. This presentation is designed to review the INFILE and INPUT statements. It has been set up as a series of examples, each building on the other, rather than a mere recitation of the options as documented in the manual. These examples will include various data sources, including DATALINES, sequential files, CSV files, and HTML files.

In the example, Andy gives a clear and brief overview of the paper, the intent of what the Tutorial will present, and what kind of material will be covered.

### 3. Biography (Bio)

Remember that your Bio is the tool used to introduce you to both the Section Chair and the User Group audience. Your Bio will be used by the Section Chairs to help them decide which papers to accept. As such, it needs to be clean, clear, correct, and free of grammatical errors. As with the paper, let someone read it first and help you find things that might be difficult for a stranger to understand.

Your Bio should be brief; do try to hold it to 75 words. Remember that the User Group will be printing it in some of our literature, as well as potentially posting it on the web page, as a way of introducing our attendees to you. At the conference, a speaker in the room will use the Bio to introduce you before your talk. Please, make it easy on everyone by making your Bio clear and concise to everyone.

The Bio should be written in 3rd person. E.g., "Joe has been as SAS user since 1920" rather than "I have used SAS since 1920".

If you like, you can include contact information, such as a website or e-mail address in your Bio. However, keep in mind that those items should also be at the end of your paper.

Here's an example; this is the Bio of Maribeth Johnson, SESUG's current Executive Council President, from the [www.sesug.org](http://www.sesug.org) website:

Maribeth Johnson has been an Assistant Professor in the newly formed Department of Biostatistics at the Medical College of Georgia for two years. For 11 years prior to that, she was a consulting research statistician in the Office of Biostatistics at the same institution. She previously worked in the University of Georgia's Department of Animal and Dairy Science for 11 years as a statistical programmer. She has MS degrees in Animal Breeding from VA Tech and in Statistics from UGA. She has been using SAS since 1980. Maribeth serves on the Executive Council of the SouthEast SAS Users Group where she is currently the newly-elected President.

### 4. Paper Guidelines

We conform, generally, to the SAS Global Forum (SGF) guidelines (located on the SGF website, <http://support.sas.com/events/sasglobalforum/2007/c4pqanda.html>). Simply put, the papers should be no longer than 10 pages for a 20-minute paper, 20 pages for a 50-minute paper. If you find that your paper is longer than that, please discuss it with your section chair.

Papers should consist of a simple format:

- a. Header, containing the paper title, and the author's name and affiliation.
- b. Abstract, as you submitted early in the paper process. Minor changes are of course permitted, but the abstract should not be rewritten.
- c. The main body of your paper, with examples and illustrations as appropriate, to make the point of the paper.
- d. Summary or Conclusions
- e. Bibliography, citing any references you used in the paper
- f. Copyright notice for any copyrighted material or references you used, including SAS.

Your paper should be built as a single PDF, and adhere to the limits shown above. If you have additional material (extra code samples, slides, *et al.*) that would like to have included with your paper, please either make them a part of the PDF you submit as Appendices; or contact your Section Chair, who will ask if additional files can be added to the CD.

Please remember that each paper is intended for the purpose of conveying what you know to others. As such, you should do your very best to ensure your communication is clear. We have had to ask for rewrites on a paper, not because the concepts in the paper were bad; but because the format did not conform to standards or the paper was so poorly written that we were concerned about embarrassing the author. Please, let your peers read the paper, proofread, and comment on how to present your material.

#### 5. Common Errors:

- a. SAS - not Sas or S.A.S. SAS is not an acronym, and should not be treated as one – it is the name of the programming environment.
- b. SAS capitalizes keywords in their training literature; it would be helpful if you do the same. As in, PROC TABULATE, not Proc Tabulate. And be consistent all through the paper in how you use them.
- c. If you use acronyms in the paper, the first usage should define them. As in, "I work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)". Thereafter, refer to the acronym: "The FBI is located in downtown Washington DC, with offices all over the country."

#### 6. General Comments

ALWAYS, always, let someone else read your paper before you send it in! Find someone with a good command of words, and accept their compliments with a smile, and their criticisms with the same smile. A lot of people you have never met will be reading your paper; you wish to present yourself clearly. So, letting someone wise review your paper is a good way to ensure you haven't overlooked something that might embarrass you later.

If you are concerned in the slightest that your command of the language or subject is not as good as you would like, take the time to find someone to review your paper from that perspective. In many corporate structures, it is mandatory that your paper be reviewed by your management and/or peers before you submit it for publication. Take advantage of that, by letting other eyes see your paper.