

How to write an abstract for SAS Global Forum

A good informative abstract acts as a surrogate for the work itself. That is, the writer presents and explains all the main arguments and the important results and evidence in the complete paper. Even though an abstract is quite brief, it must do almost as much work as the multi-page paper that follows it. This means that it should, in most cases, include the following sections. Each section is typically a single sentence, although there is room for creativity. The parts may be merged or spread among a set of sentences. Use the following as a checklist for your next abstract:

- **Motivation:** Why do we care about the issue? This section should include the importance of your work, the difficulty of the area, and the impact it might have if successful. For a conference paper, you could, for example, refer to the topic of the panel for which you have written the abstract.
- **Problem statement:** What is the main argument of your paper? Be careful not to use too much jargon in respect to novice readers. In some cases, it is appropriate to put the problem statement before the motivation, but usually this only works if most readers already understand why the topic/ problem is important.
- **Methodology:** Describe your interpretative angle or the types of evidence used in your research. Mention key concepts, key terms, names, and make clear which aspects you will focus on (SAS procedures, statistical model, etc.).
- **Results:** What will you conclude? Foreshadow the outcome of your discussion. What is the point of your paper? Avoid vague, hand-waving results such as “very,” “small,” or “significant.”
- **Implications:** What are the implications of your answer? How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic?

Abstracts for SAS Global Forum should be 250 words or less and should not contain bullets due to the limitations of the mobile app. It should also contain the following information:

- SAS Platform (9.4, Viya, Both, or neither)
- Job role the paper pertains too (i.e. statistician, programmer, educator, etc.)
- Level of knowledge (novice, intermediate, advanced)
- Primary SAS product (Base SAS, SAS Enterprise Miner, etc.)
- Industry (or cross-industry)

Remember, put the most important information first. Use the same language that is used in your paper, including technical terms. Add keywords and phrases that quickly identify the content and focus of your paper. Be clear, concise, and use powerful language.

Adapted from University of North Carolina handouts: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html>

SAS® GLOBAL FORUM 2020

Original Abstract

SAS® offers a variety of useful tools to manipulate character data. These are very handy when data received may not be particularly clean. For example, a character string may contain inconsistent or unwanted special character or formats that cause reconciliation or merging job to fail. This paper provides an example using customer data to discuss several functions to efficiently standardize text variables. Undesirable information can be removed by leveraging the three arguments of the COMPRESS function. Undesirable blanks can be removed by the TRIM, TRIMN or STRIP functions. Inconsistent formats or special characters can be standardized with a consistent character using the TRANWRD, UPCASE, LOWCASE, and PROPCASE functions. However, there may a need to add or reorder a substring. The concatenation operator (||) or functions CAT, CATT, CATS, CATX, SUBSTR, or SCAN can also be used to clean and modify a dataset. The intended audience for this presentation is beginner to intermediate SAS users with good knowledge of Base SAS.

Identifies the motivation

Problem Statement

Methodology

Identify the audience

Edited Abstract

This version adds in a little extra information regarding the results the programmer will achieve, the implications of those results and the technical information of the paper.

SAS® offers a variety of useful tools to manipulate character data. These are very handy when data received may not be particularly clean. For example, a character string may contain inconsistent or unwanted special character or formats that cause reconciliation or merging job to fail. This paper provides an example using customer data to discuss several functions to efficiently standardize text variables. Undesirable information can be removed by leveraging the three arguments of the COMPRESS function. Undesirable blanks can be removed by the TRIM, TRIMN or STRIP functions. Inconsistent formats or special characters can be standardized with a consistent character using the TRANWRD, UPCASE, LOWCASE, and PROPCASE functions. However, there may a need to add or reorder a substring. The concatenation operator (||) or functions CAT, CATT, CATS, CATX, SUBSTR, or SCAN can also be used to clean and modify a dataset. By standardizing the data, the programmer will no longer drop data due to the inconsistencies. This will allow for reporting with of the full dataset instead of the subset of what was originally received. This allows for clearer reports to the client for decision making purposes. The data included in this paper are Energy data from data.gov and was analyzed using Base SAS 9.4. The intended audience for this presentation is beginner to intermediate SAS users with good knowledge of Base SAS.

Results

Implications

Identifies the technical info of the paper:

- SAS Platform (9.4, Viya, Both, or neither)
- Job role the paper pertains too (i.e. statistician, programmer, educator, etc.)
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