



Cornell University
Office of Statistical Consulting
Colleges of Human Ecology and Agriculture and Life Sciences
Division of Nutritional Sciences

StatNews #04: Translating Data Reliably

July 1, 1996

Have you ever been in a situation where you used Epi Info for entering your data, then used SPSS for your data manipulation, switched to SYSTAT for your statistical analysis but still needed to use SAS for one additional type of analysis not available anywhere else? Translating data between software programs used to be rather difficult, erratic and time consuming. Now this can be done in a matter of seconds in a very reliable way.

Several different translation packages exist now but we have been relying very successfully on DBMS/COPY. DBMS/COPY version 5.10 is a utility that translates data between over 70 different database management systems, spreadsheets, statistical analysis, ODBC and other application packages. The spreadsheet grabber in DBMS/COPY enables you to visualize a database before translating it. In addition you can choose to translate only a subset of variables or records. The translation will preserve variable names, labels and other data attributes.

Different systems take some very different approaches to the problem of reading, writing and organizing records. DBMS/COPY works in a similar manner to Federal Express. Federal Express transports every parcel to the company hub in Memphis, and from there delivers them to their specific destination. Analogously, DBMS/COPY reads the records written by the various software packages, copies the essential elements of these records into a specific place in memory, and from there writes it to the destination software. Thus DBMS/COPY only has to be able to read/write information from every supported system from/to an intermediate format.

DBMS/COPY exists for PC (Dos and Windows versions) and costs \$295. It is very user friendly. A couple of years ago a Macintosh version was available too, but it has been discontinued. The company plans to come out with a new Macintosh version in the near future. There is also a Unix version available for \$495.

We have DBMS/COPY available for you to use if needed. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need a file translated or if you need more information on the software.

Author: [Francoise Vermeylen](mailto:fmv1@cornell.edu) (fmv1@cornell.edu)

This newsletter was distributed to faculty and graduate students in the Division of Nutritional Sciences and the College of Human Ecology, and faculty in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, by the Office of Statistical Consulting. Please forward it to any interested colleagues and research staff. Anyone not receiving this newsletter who would like to be added to the mailing list for future newsletters should contact statcons@cornell.edu. Information about the Office of Statistical Consulting can be obtained at World Wide Web address <http://www.human.cornell.edu/admin/statcons/>.