



Cornell University

# Office of Statistical Consulting

Colleges of Human Ecology and Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Division of Nutritional Sciences

## StatNews #34: SAS and SPSS Updates

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Over the last few years several statistical packages have improved dramatically. When a new release of a statistical package appears on the market today, it becomes more and more difficult to appreciate the changes that have been made.

The latest version of SPSS is now version 9 both for PC and Macintosh. SPSS took a big step when introducing version 7, since this included for the first time a general linear models module. The versions since improve the package steadily but without major additions. One notable addition in the latest version is the multinomial logistic regression module as well as the ability to plot ROC curves, which is a very useful tool to assess logistic regression models. The format of the dataset is uniform across all the latest versions of SPSS.

SAS came out last Spring with its new version 7. A new version 8 should be coming out in October. The upgrade to version 7 is noteworthy. The most obvious change is the new interface. The output Window is now accompanied by a result window which lets us navigate and manage the output better. In addition SAS incorporated in the software the Analyst application (under the Solutions Analysis menu). This will enable SAS users, who wish to do so, to benefit from a friendly user interface, similar to SPSS and Minitab, to obtain basic statistical analysis. Digging a little deeper in the program we can discover several new procedures that might be of some interest to you such as surveyreg (regression for complex surveys) and nlinmix (nonlinear mixed models) as well as some new procedures for spatial prediction and some additional nonparametric modeling procedures. Many of these procedures are experimental in version 7 and will be finalized in version 8.

If you are planning to upgrade to version 7 of SAS, one problem you might encounter if you often exchange datasets with colleagues, is the difficulty of using version 7 datasets in version 6. SAS version 7 will create datasets with the extension .sas7bdat that cannot be read with SAS version 6. It is possible though in SAS version 7 to create and work with datasets with the extension .sd2 which are compatible with version 6.

With SAS, locating the right documentation is difficult. The Help menu has been rendered more useful with the newer version, but a manual is still needed. Since the SAS documentation seems to increase in volume exponentially, there is now a CD available that contains all the documentation for version 7. A new version of the CD, covering version 8 is due out in October.

To have more detailed information you might want to look on the SAS web site at <http://www.sas.com/rnd/app/da/new/> or contact the Office of Statistical Consulting for a trial run.

For information on obtaining statistical software at Cornell, please see <http://www.human.cornell.edu/admin/statcons/software.htm>.

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