

Book Review

Getting Started with the SAS System Using SAS/ASSIST Software,

Version 6 Second Edition

Order #P55542, \$15.95, SAS Institute, Inc.

Reviewed By

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Getting Started with the SAS System Using SAS/ASSIST Software is a task oriented introduction to both SAS/ASSIST and the SAS System in general. As such, it is intended for the beginner rather than the more experienced SAS user.

The book begins with a short introduction to the philosophy and advantages of the SAS System and a brief overview of SAS/ASSIST. It continues by describing how to invoke SAS, enter commands, as well as use menus and function keys. Then it presents clear step by step instructions for invoking and using ASSIST and creating and deleting the sample datasets included with the software.

The rest of the book uses these datasets to introduce the capabilities of SAS/ASSIST, and, by extension, SAS itself. Chapters are organized around specific tasks, such as producing reports in various formats, data management or analysis, or saving the source code produced by SAS/ASSIST. Each section begins with a description of the task and definition of the terms involved; following are clear step by step instructions for carrying out the task using the sample data are provided. These instructions appear comprehensible and complete, a requirement where beginners are involved.

A nice feature of this book is the inclusion of references to other SAS documentation for each topic, both for SAS/ASSIST and for SAS language and procedures. Another, possibly overlooked, highlight is the inclusion on the inside front cover of a map of the menus and submenus found in SAS/ASSIST. This map also cites the additional products required to be licensed to provide full functionality of the menu items listed. This feature of SAS is one that was not otherwise adequately pointed out in the rest of the book.

In summary, this book would serve as an excellent introduction to SAS/ASSIST. Many new SAS users now have prior experience on graphical user interfaces and would feel more comfortable with the SAS/ASSIST interface than with the traditional SAS environment. After gaining a certain level of competence using SAS through SAS/ASSIST, they might then be more ready to use Display Manger or batch submission to accomplish the same tasks.