

## SPREADING THE NEWS: USING SYSTEM OPTIONS

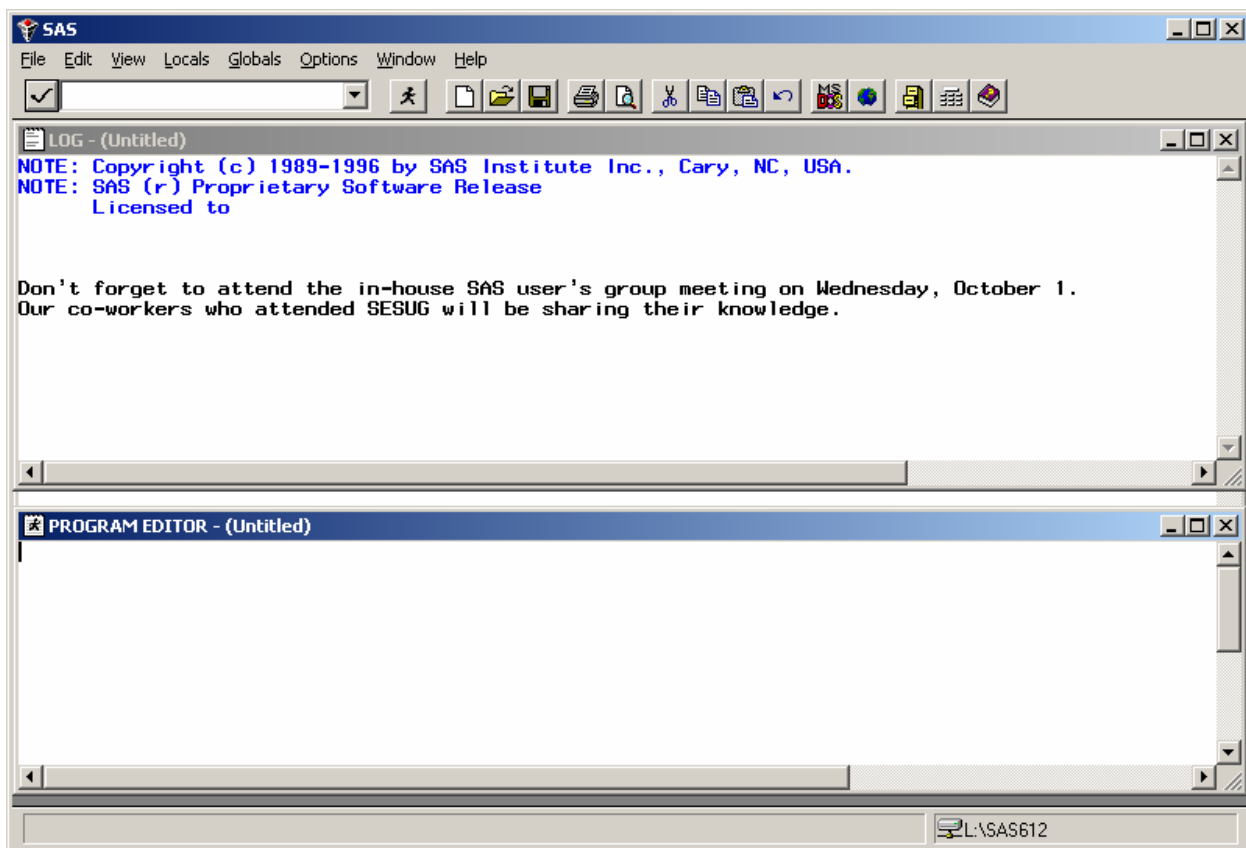
Deb Cassidy, Dublin, OH

### ABSTRACT

Have you ever wanted to send out a message to all SAS programmers at your site? Then the NEWS system option may fit your needs. Using this system option, you can have your news written to the SAS log at the start of a SAS session. This paper will briefly cover how to specify system options using NEWS as an example. You will also learn where to find out more information about the many, many options that are available.

### INTRODUCTION

Would you like to remind your fellow SAS users of an upcoming event? Would you like to point them to a website with helpful tips? E-mail announcements and other means work fine for some companies but not for those where it is hard to identify specific users. One method is to use the NEWS option in SAS. The following screen shows the beginning of a SAS session. You will see the usual copyright/license information but there is now a custom message that will be seen by anyone viewing the log.



### HOW TO CREATE A NEWS MESSAGE

It is really quite easy.

- Create a text file with your message and store it in a location that is assessable to all users.
- Change your SAS config file to include the following option:

**-news mydrive:/my\_sas\_news\_file.txt**

specifying your location of the text file. Isn't that easy?

Please note that this was written for Windows. Your operating system may require specification of the file name in a slightly different manner but the "-news" part should be the same.

Don't like the idea of changing *the* SAS config file? Are the config files for each individual in *different* locations so this method is not feasible? You can also specify the NEWS option as part of your shortcut to SAS. My shortcut for SAS 9 is:

"C:\Program Files\SAS\SAS System\9.0\sas.exe" -news c:\sasnews.txt

Some options can also be specified in the autoexec. However, NEWS is not one of them. Options specified in the autoexec are often in the form

```
OPTIONS option-name=value;
```

If you are working in SCL, you can also change the options via SCL code.

### **MORE OPTIONS**

There are actually hundreds of system options. Some are available only in certain operating systems while others have different valid values based on the operating system. How do you learn about all the options? One simple method is

```
PROC OPTIONS;  
RUN;
```

This will write the current values of all available options to your log.

If you prefer using menus, you can select TOOLS→OPTIONS→SYSTEM and select the category you want. If you change an option here, it is only set for the current session. Once again, NEWS is an option that cannot be changed this way but many others can. You will see NEWS on the list but you will not be able to make a change.

### **WHAT'S THE CURRENT SETTING?**

How do you know the current setting of an option? You can do it via the menu as noted above. If you want to write the information to the log then you can use

```
PROC OPTIONS VALUE;  
RUN;
```

This will also give you information regarding how the value was set. Some examples are:

- Shipped Default
- SAS Session Startup Command Line
- Config File(s)
- Internal
- Options Statement
- Invocation
- During session

You can also look at the view VOPTIONS in the SASHELP library.

If you are familiar with the dictionary tables in SQL, then try

```
proc sql;  
select * from dictionary.options;
```

If you need to know an option and use that information within your code, then consider the **GETOPTION** function. For example,

```
DATA ONE;  
X=GETOPTION('YEARCUTOFF');  
RUN;
```

Returns the value for yearcutoff. However, this is a function where the default length is \$200 so you will want to specify a length and understand how SAS returns the value before you try to use this.

There is also an OPLIST system option that is available on some operating systems. This will run at invocation and write the settings in place at invocation to the log.

### **GETTING HELP WITH OPTIONS**

To get help with options in SAS 9, you can use the online documentation and follow this path:

- SAS PRODUCTS
- BASE SAS
- SAS LANGUAGE CONCEPTS
- SAS SYSTEM OPTIONS

### **CONCLUSION**

There are many system options and NEWS is just one of those. In addition, there are several ways to set the options. Just check out some of the methods provided to list options as well as the online documentation to find out more.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Deb Cassidy  
[Deb.cassidy@cardinal.com](mailto:Deb.cassidy@cardinal.com)  
614-757-7136