search — Search Stata documentation and other resources

Description

search searches a keyword database and the Internet for Stata materials related to your query.

Capitalization of the words following search is irrelevant, as is the inclusion or exclusion of special characters such as commas and hyphens.

set searchdefault affects the default behavior of the search command. all is the default.

search, all is the best way to search for information on a topic across all sources, including the system help, the FAQs at the Stata website, the Stata Journal, and all Stata-related Internet sources including community-contributed additions. From the results, you can click to go to a source or to install additions.

Quick start

Search local keyword database and materials available via Stata’s net command for all words (word1, word2, and word3)

    search word1 word2 word3

As above, but match any word (word1, word2, or word3)

    search word1 word2 word3, or

Search for Stata Journal articles about new commands like regress

    search regress, sj

Search the manuals for entries about tabulate and related commands

    search tabulate, manual

Menu

Help > Search...
Syntax

```
search word [word ...] [ , search_options ]

set searchdefault { all | local | net } [ , permanently ]
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>search_options</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all</td>
<td>search across both the local keyword database and the net material; the default</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local</td>
<td>search using Stata’s keyword database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>net</td>
<td>search across materials available via Stata’s net command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>author</td>
<td>search by author’s name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entry</td>
<td>search by entry ID</td>
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<tr>
<td>exact</td>
<td>search across both the local keyword database and the net materials; prevents matching on abbreviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faq</td>
<td>search the FAQs posted to the Stata website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical</td>
<td>search entries that are of historical interest only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>list an entry if any of the words typed after search are associated with the entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manual</td>
<td>search the entries in the Stata Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sj</td>
<td>search the entries in the Stata Journal and the STB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Options for search

all, the default (unless changed by set searchdefault), specifies that the search be performed across both the local keyword database and the net materials. The results of a search performed with all and no other options will be displayed in the Viewer window.

local specifies that the search be performed using only Stata’s keyword database. The results of a search performed with local and no other options will be displayed in the Viewer window.

net specifies that the search be performed across the materials available via Stata’s net command. Using search word [word ...], net is equivalent to typing net search word [word ...] (without options); see [R] net search. The results of a search performed with net and no other options will be displayed in the Viewer window.

author specifies that the search be performed on the basis of the author’s name rather than keywords. A search with the author option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

entry specifies that the search be performed on the basis of entry IDs rather than keywords. A search with the entry option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

exact prevents matching on abbreviations. A search with the exact option is performed across both the local keyword database and the net materials, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

faq limits the search to the FAQs posted on the Stata website: https://www.stata.com. A search with the faq option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.
historical adds to the search entries that are of historical interest only. By default, such entries are not listed. Past entries are classified as historical if they discuss a feature that later became an official part of Stata. Updates to historical entries will always be found, even if historical is not specified. A search with the historical option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

or specifies that an entry be listed if any of the words typed after search are associated with the entry. The default is to list the entry only if all the words specified are associated with the entry. A search with the or option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

manual limits the search to entries in the Stata Documentation; that is, the search is limited to the User’s Guide and all the reference manuals. A search with the manual option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

sj limits the search to entries in the Stata Journal and its predecessor, the Stata Technical Bulletin; see [R] sj. A search with the sj option is performed on the local keyword database only, and the results are displayed in the Results window.

Option for set searchdefault

permanently specifies that, in addition to making the change right now, the searchdefault setting be remembered and become the default setting when you invoke Stata.

Remarks and examples

Remarks are presented under the following headings:

- Introduction
- Internet searches
- Author searches
- Entry ID searches
- Return codes

Introduction

See [U] 4 Stata’s help and search facilities for a tutorial introduction to search. search is one of Stata’s most useful commands. To understand the advanced features of search, you need to know how it works.

search has a database—files—containing the titles, etc., of every entry in the Stata Documentation, undocumented help files, NetCourses, Stata Press books, FAQs posted on the Stata website, videos posted on the Stata YouTube channel, selected articles on StataCorp’s official blog, selected community-contributed FAQs and examples, and the articles in the Stata Journal and the Stata Technical Bulletin. In these files is a list of words, called keywords, associated with each entry.

When you type search xyz, search reads the database and compares the list of keywords with xyz. If it finds xyz in the list or a keyword that allows an abbreviation of xyz, it displays the entry.

When you type search xyz abc, search does the same thing but displays an entry only if it contains both keywords. The order does not matter, so you can search linear regression or search regression linear.
Obviously, how many entries search finds depends on how the search database was constructed. We have included a plethora of keywords under the theory that, for a given request, it is better to list too much rather than risk listing nothing at all. Still, you are in the position of guessing the keywords. Do you look up normality test, normality tests, or tests of normality? Well, normality test would be best, but all would work. In general, use the singular, and strike the unnecessary words. For guidelines for specifying keywords, see [U] 4.6 More on search.

set searchdefault allows you to specify where search searches. set searchdefault all, the default, indicates that both the keyword database and the Internet are to be searched. set searchdefault local restricts search to using only Stata’s keyword database. set searchdefault net restricts search to searching only the Internet.

Internet searches

search with the net option searches the Internet for community-contributed additions to Stata, including, but not limited to, community-contributed additions published in the Stata Journal (SJ) and the Stata Technical Bulletin (STB). search keywords, net performs the same search as the command net search (with no options); see [R] net search.

Author searches

search ordinarily compares the words following search with the keywords for the entry. If you specify the author option, however, it compares the words with the author’s name. In the search database, we have filled in author names for all SJ and STB inserts.

For instance, in [R] kdensity in this manual you will discover that Isaías H. Salgado-Ugarte wrote the first version of Stata’s kdensity command and published it in the STB. Assume that you read his original insert and found the discussion useful. You might now wonder what else he has written in the SJ or STB. To find out, you type

```
. search Salgado-Ugarte, author
```

Names like Salgado-Ugarte are confusing to many people. `search` does not require you to specify the entire name; what you type is compared with each “word” of the name and, if any part matches, the entry is listed. The hyphen is a special character, and you can omit it. Thus you can obtain the same list by looking up Salgado, Ugarte, or Salgado Ugarte without the hyphen.

Actually, to find all entries written by Salgado-Ugarte, you need to type

```
. search Salgado-Ugarte, author historical
(output omitted)
```

Prior inserts in the SJ or STB that provide a feature that later was superseded by a built-in feature of Stata are marked as historical in the search database and, by default, are not listed. The `historical` option ensures that all entries are listed.

### Entry ID searches

If you specify the `entry` option, `search` compares what you have typed with the entry ID. The entry ID is not the title—it is the reference listed to the left of the title that tells you where to look. For instance, in

```
[R]  regress  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Linear regression
      (help regress)
```

`[R] regress` is the entry ID. This is a reference, of course, to this manual. In

```
FAQ  . . . . . . . . . . . Analysis of multiple failure-time survival data
      . . . . . . . . . . . . M. Cleves and I. Canette
      07/09 How do I analyze multiple failure-time data using Stata?
```

“FAQ” is the entry ID. In

```
SJ-7-1  st0118  . . A survey on survey stat.: What is and can be done in Stata
      . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . F. Kreuter and R. Valliant
      Q1/07  SJ7(1):1--21  (no commands)
      discusses survey issues in analyzing complex survey
      data and describes some of Stata’s capabilities for
      such analyses
```

“SJ-7-1” is the entry ID. `search` with the `entry` option searches these entry IDs.

Thus you could generate a table of contents for the *User’s Guide* by typing

```
. search [U], entry
(output omitted)
```

You could generate a table of contents for *Stata Journal*, Volume 1, Issue 1, by typing

```
. search sj-1-1, entry
(output omitted)
```

To generate a table of contents for the 26th issue of the STB, you would type

```
. search STB-26, entry historical
(output omitted)
```

The `historical` option here is important. STB-26 was published in July 1995, and its inserts have been marked as historical.
Return codes

In addition to indexing the entries in the User’s Guide and all the Reference manuals, search also can be used to search return codes.

To see information on return code 131, type

```
    . search rc 131
```

```
[P]   error ................................. Return code 131
      not possible with test;
      You requested a test of a hypothesis that is nonlinear in the
      variables. test tests only linear hypotheses. Use testnl.
```

(output omitted)

If you want a list of all Stata return codes, type

```
    . search error, entry
```

(output omitted)

Acknowledgment

We thank Nicholas J. Cox of the Department of Geography at Durham University, UK, and coeditor of the Stata Journal and author of Speaking Stata Graphics for his contributions to the search command.

Also see

[R] help — Display help in Stata
[R] net search — Search the Internet for installable packages
[U] 4 Stata’s help and search facilities