29 Using the internet to keep up to date

Contents

29.1   Overview

Stata can read files over the internet. Just to prove that to yourself, type the following:

```
. use https://www.stata.com/manual/chapter28, clear
```

You have just reached out and gotten a dataset from our website. The dataset is not in HTML format, nor does this have anything to do with your browser. We just copied the Stata data file `chapter28.dta` onto our server, and now people all over the world can use it. If you have a website, you can do the same thing. It is a convenient way to share datasets with colleagues.

Now type the following:

```
. update query
```

We promise that nothing bad will happen. `update` will read a short file from www.stata.com that will allow Stata to report whether your copy of Stata is up to date. Is your copy up to date? Now you know. If it is not, we will show you how to update it—it is no harder than typing `update`.

Now type the following:

```
. net from https://www.stata.com
```

That will go to www.stata.com and tell you what is available from our user-download site. The material there is not official, but it is useful. More useful is to type

```
. search kernel regression, net
```

or equivalently,

```
. net search kernel regression
```

That will search the entire web for additions to Stata having to do with kernel regression, whether the additions are from the *Stata Journal*, Statalist, archive sites, or private user sites.

To summarize: Stata can read files over the internet:

1. You can share datasets, do-files, etc., with colleagues all over the world. This requires no special expertise, but you do need to have a website.

2. You can update Stata; it is free and easy.

3. You can find and add new features to Stata; it is also free and easy.

Finally, you can create a site to distribute new features for Stata.

29.2   Sharing datasets (and other files)

There is just nothing to it: you copy the file as-is (in binary) onto the server and then let your colleagues know the file is there. This works for `.dta` files, `.do` files, `.ado` files, and, in fact, all files.

On the receiving end, you can `use` the file (if it is a `.dta` dataset) or you can copy it:

```
. use https://www.stata.com/manual/chapter28, clear
. copy https://www.stata.com/manual/chapter28.dta mycopy.dta
```

Stata includes a copy-file command and it works over the internet just as `use` does; see [D] **copy**.

29.3   Official updates

Although we follow no formal schedule for the release of updates, we typically provide updates to Stata approximately once a month. You do not have to update that often, although we recommend that you do. There are two ways to check whether your copy of Stata is up to date:

select	or type
Help > Check for updates	`. update query`

After that if an update is available, you should

click on	or type
Install available updates	`. update all`

After you have updated your Stata, to find out what has changed

select	or type
Help > What's new?	`. help whatsnew`

29.3.1   Frequently asked questions about updating

1. Could something go wrong and make my Stata become unusable?

   No. The updates are copied to a temporary place on your computer, Stata examines them to make sure they are complete before copying them to the official place. Thus either the updates are installed or they are not.

2. I do not have access to the internet from within Stata. Is there a way to update Stata manually?

   Yes. Open your web browser to https://www.stata.com/support/updates/ and follow the instructions on that page.

29.4   Downloading and managing additions by users

Try the following:

select

Help > SJ and community-contributed features

or type

```
. net from https://www.stata.com
```

and click on one of the links.

29.4.1   Downloading files

We are not the only ones developing additions to Stata. Stata is supported by a large and highly competent user community. An important part of this is the *Stata Journal* (SJ). The *Stata Journal* is a refereed, quarterly journal containing articles of interest to Stata users. For more details and subscription information, visit the *Stata Journal* website at https://www.stata-journal.com.

The *Stata Journal* is a printed and electronic journal with corresponding software. If you want the journal, you must subscribe, but the software is available for free; see the instructions below.

Installing software from the Stata Journal

1. From within Stata, select **Help > SJ and community-contributed features**.

2. Click on *Stata Journal*.

3. Click on *sj10-4*.

4. Click on *st0015_6*.

5. Click on *click here to install*.

or

1. Type . net from https://www.stata-journal.com/software

2. Type . net cd sj10-4

3. Type . net describe st0015_6

4. Type . net install st0015_6

The above could be shortened to

```
. net from https://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj10-4
. net describe st0015_6
. net install st0015_6
```

You could also type

```
. net sj 10-4
. net describe st0015_6
. net install st0015_6
```

29.4.2 Managing files

You now have the `concord` command, because we just downloaded and installed it. Convince yourself of this by typing

```
. help concord
```

and you might try it out, too. Let's now list the additions you have installed—that is probably just `concord`—and then get rid of `concord`.

In command mode, you can type

```
. ado dir
[1] package st0015_6 from https://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj10-4
      SJ10-4 st0015_6. Update: Concordance correlation...
```

If you had more additions installed, they would be listed. Now knowing that you have *st0015_6* installed, you can obtain a more thorough description by typing

```
. ado describe st0015_6
  (output omitted)
```

You can erase *st0015_6* by typing

```
. ado uninstall st0015_6
package package st0015_6 from https://www.stata-journal.com/software/sj10-4
      SJ10-4 st0015_6. Update: Concordance correlation...
(package uninstalled)
```

You can do all of this from the point-and-click interface, too. Pull down **Help** and select **SJ and community-contributed features** and then click on *List*. From there, you can click on *st0015_6* to see the detailed description of the package and from there you can click on *click here to uninstall* if you want to erase it.

For more information on the `ado` command and the corresponding menu, see [R] **net**.

29.4.3 Finding files to download

There are two ways to find useful files to download. One is simply to thumb through sites. That is inefficient but entertaining. If you want to do that,

1. Select **Help > SJ and community-contributed features**.

2. Click on *Other Locations*.

3. Click on *links*.

What you are doing is starting at our download site and then working out from there. We maintain a list of other sites and those sites will have more links. You can do this from command mode, too:

```
. net from https://www.stata.com
. net cd links
```

The efficient way to find files is to search; that is, use Stata's `search` command:

```
. search concordance correlation
```

Equivalently, you could select **Help > Search...**. Either way, you will learn about *st0015_6* and you can even click to install it.

29.4.4   Updating additions by users

After you have installed some community-contributed features, you should periodically check whether any updates or bug fixes are available for those commands. You can do this with the ado update command. Simply type ado update to see if any updates are available, and if they are, type ado update, update to obtain the updates. See [R] **ado update** for more details.

29.4.5   Video example

How to download and install user-written commands in Stata

29.5   Making your own download site

There are two reasons you may wish to create your own download site:

1. You have datasets and the like, you want to share them with colleagues, and you want to make it easier for colleagues to download the files.

2. You have written Stata programs, etc., that you wish to share with the Stata user community.

Before you create your own download site, you may wish to submit a command you have written to the Statistical Software Components (SSC) Archive. The SSC Archive contains the largest repository of community-contributed Stata software on the web. Stata has a command (see [R] **ssc**) that makes it easy to find and install packages from the SSC.

For information about submitting a command you have written to the SSC, see http://repec.org/bocode/s/sscsubmit.html.

If you do wish to create your own download site, making one is easy; the full instructions are found in [R] **net**.

At the beginning of this chapter, we pretended that you had a dataset you wanted to share with colleagues. We said you just had to copy the dataset onto your server and then let your colleagues know the dataset is there.

Let's now pretend that you had two datasets, ds1.dta and ds2.dta, and you wanted your colleagues to be able to learn about and fetch the datasets by using the net command or by pulling down **Help** and selecting **SJ and community-contributed commands**.

First, you would copy the datasets to your home page just as before. Then you would create three more files, one to describe your site named stata.toc and two more to describe each "package" you want to provide:

```
─────────────────────────────────── begin stata.toc ───────────
  v 3
  d My name and affiliation (or whatever other title I choose)
  d Datasets for the PAR study
  p ds1 The base dataset
  p ds2 The detail dataset
─────────────────────────────────────── end stata.toc ───────────
```

```
                                                              begin ds1.pkg
    v 3
    d ds1.  The base dataset
    d My name or whatever else I wanted to put
    d This dataset contains the baseline values for ...
    d Distribution-Date: 26sep2024
    p ds1.dta
                                                                end ds1.pkg
```

```
                                                              begin ds2.pkg
    v 3
    d ds1.  The detail dataset
    d My name or whatever else I wanted to put
    d This dataset contains the follow-up information ...
    d Distribution-Date: 26sep2024
    p ds2.dta
                                                                end ds2.pkg
```

The Distribution-Date line in the description should be changed whenever you change your package. This line is used by ado update to determine if a user who has installed your package needs to update it.

Here is what users would see when they went to your site:

```
. net from http://www.myuni.edu/hande/~aparker

http://www.myuni.edu/hande/~aparker
My name and whatever else I wanted to put

Datasets for the PAR study
PACKAGES you could -net describe-:
    ds1                The base dataset
    ds2                The detail dataset
```

```
. net describe ds1

package ds1 from http://www.myuni.edu/hande/~aparker

TITLE
      ds1.  The base dataset

DESCRIPTION/AUTHOR(S)
      My name and whatever else I wanted to put
      This dataset contains the baseline values for ...
      Distribution-Date: 26sep2024

ANCILLARY FILES                                    (type net get ds1)
      ds1.dta
```

```
. net get ds1
checking ds1 consistency and verifying not already installed...

copying into current directory...
      copying  ds1.dta
ancillary files successfully copied.

. _
```

See [R] **net**.

For suggested citations, see the FAQ on citing Stata documentation.