3 Resources for learning and using Stata

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3.1 Overview

The *Getting Started* manual, *User's Guide*, and *Reference* manuals are the primary tools for learning about Stata; however, there are many other sources of information. A few are listed below.

- Stata itself. Stata has a `search` command that makes it easy search a topic to find and to execute a Stata command. See **[U] 4 Stata's help and search facilities**.
- The Stata website. Visit https://www.stata.com. Much of the site is dedicated to user support; see **[U] 3.2.1 The Stata website (www.stata.com)**.
- The Stata YouTube Channel. Visit https://www.youtube.com/user/statacorp. The site is regularly updated with video demonstrations of Stata.

- *The Stata Blog*, Twitter, and Facebook. Visit https://blog.stata.com, https://twitter.com/stata, and https://www.facebook.com/statacorp. See **[U] 3.2.3 The Stata Blog: Not Elsewhere Classified** and **[U] 3.2.5 Stata on social media**.
- The Stata Press website. Visit https://www.stata-press.com. This site contains the datasets used throughout the Stata manuals; see **[U] 3.3 Stata Press**.
- The Stata Forum. An active group of Stata users communicate over an Internet forum; see **[U] 3.2.4 The Stata Forum**.
- The *Stata Journal*. The *Stata Journal* contains reviewed papers, regular columns, book reviews, and other material of interest to researchers applying statistics in a variety of disciplines. See **[U] 3.4 The Stata Journal**.
- The Stata software distribution site and other user-provided software distribution sites. Stata itself can download and install updates and additions. We provide official updates to Stata—type `update query` or select **Help > Check for updates**. We also provide community-contributed additions to Stata and links to other user-provided sites—type `net` or select **Help > SJ and community-contributed features**; see **[U] 3.5 Updating and adding features from the web**.
- NetCourses. We offer training via the Internet. Details are in **[U] 3.6.2 NetCourses**.
- Classroom training courses. We offer in-depth training courses at third-party sites around the United States. Details are in **[U] 3.6.3 Classroom training courses**.
- Web-based training courses. We offer the same content from our classroom training over the web. Details are in **[U] 3.6.4 Web-based training courses**.
- Organizational training courses. We offer both in-person and virtual customized training for your institution. Details are in **[U] 3.6.5 Organizational training courses**.
- Webinars. We offer free, short online webinars to learn about Stata from our experts. Details are in **[U] 3.6.6 Webinars**.
- Books and support materials. Supplementary Stata materials are available; see **[U] 3.7 Books and other support materials**.
- Technical support. We provide technical support by email and telephone; see **[U] 3.8 Technical support**.

3.2 Stata on the Internet (www.stata.com and other resources)

3.2.1 The Stata website (www.stata.com)

Point your browser to https://www.stata.com and click on **Support**. More than half our website is dedicated to providing support to users.

- The website provides answers to FAQs (frequently asked questions) on Windows, Mac, Unix, statistics, programming, Mata, Internet capabilities, graphics, and data management. These FAQs run the gamut from "I cannot save/open files" to "What does 'completely determined' mean in my logistic regression output?" Most users will find something of interest.
- The website provides detailed information about NetCourses, along with the current schedule; see **[U] 3.6.2 NetCourses**.
- The website provides information about Stata courses and meetings, both in the United States and elsewhere. See **[U] 3.6.1 Conferences and users group meetings**, **[U] 3.6.3 Classroom training courses**, **[U] 3.6.4 Web-based training courses**, and **[U] 3.6.5 Organizational training courses**.

- The website provides an online bookstore for Stata-related books and other supplementary materials; see **[U] 3.7 Books and other support materials**.
- The website provides links to information about statistics: other statistical software providers, book publishers, statistical journals, statistical organizations, and statistical listservers.
- The website provides links to resources for learning Stata at https://www.stata.com/links/resources-for-learning-stata. Be sure to look at these materials, as many outstanding resources about Stata are listed here.

In short, the website provides up-to-date information on all support materials and, where possible, provides the materials themselves. Visit https://www.stata.com if you can.

3.2.2 The Stata YouTube Channel

Visit Stata's YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/user/statacorp to view video demonstrations on a wide variety of topics ranging from basic data management and graphics to more advanced statistical analyses, such as ANOVA, regression, and SEM. New demonstrations are regularly added.

3.2.3 The Stata Blog: Not Elsewhere Classified

Stata's official blog can be found at https://blog.stata.com and contains news and advice related to the use of Stata. The articles appearing in the blog are individually signed and are written by the same people who develop, support, and sell Stata.

3.2.4 The Stata Forum

Statalist is a forum dedicated to Stata, where thousands of Stata users discuss Stata and statistics. It is run and moderated by Stata users and maintained by StataCorp. Statalist has a long history of high-quality discussion dating back to 1994.

Many knowledgeable users are active on the forum, as are the StataCorp technical staff. Anyone may join, and new-to-Stata members are welcome. Instructions for joining can be found at https://www.statalist.org. Register and participate, or simply lurk and read the discussions.

Before posting a question to Statalist, you will want to read the Statalist FAQ, which can be found at https://www.statalist.org/forums/help/.

3.2.5 Stata on social media

StataCorp has an official presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. You can follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/stata. You find us on Facebook and Instagram at https://www.facebook.com/statacorp and https://www.instagram.com/statacorp. Connect with us on LinkedIn at https://www.linkedin.com/company/statacorp. These are good ways to stay up-to-the-minute with the latest Stata information.

3.2.6 Other Internet resources on Stata

Many other people have published information on the Internet about Stata such as tutorials, examples, and datasets. Visit https://www.stata.com/links/ to explore other Stata and statistics resources on the Internet.

3.3 Stata Press

Stata Press is the publishing arm of StataCorp LLC and publishes books, manuals, and journals about Stata statistical software and about general statistics topics for professional researchers of all disciplines.

Point your browser to https://www.stata-press.com. This site is devoted to the publications and activities of Stata Press.

- Datasets that are used in the Stata *Reference* manuals and other books published by Stata Press may be downloaded. Visit https://www.stata-press.com/data/. These datasets can be used in Stata by simply typing `use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r18/`*dataset_name*; for example, type `use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r18/auto`. You could also type `webuse auto`; see [D] **webuse**.
- An online catalog of all our books and multimedia products is at https://www.stata-press.com/books/. We have tried to include enough information, such as table of contents and preface material, so that you may tell whether the book is appropriate for you.
- Information about forthcoming publications is posted at https://www.stata-press.com/forthcoming/.

3.4 The Stata Journal

The *Stata Journal* (SJ) is a printed and electronic journal, published quarterly, containing articles about statistics, data analysis, teaching methods, and effective use of Stata's language. The SJ publishes reviewed papers together with shorter notes and comments, regular columns, tips, book reviews, and other material of interest to researchers applying statistics in a variety of disciplines. The SJ is a publication for all Stata users, both novice and experienced, with different levels of expertise in statistics, research design, data management, graphics, reporting of results, and in Stata, in particular.

The SJ is published by and available from SAGE Publishing. Tables of contents for past issues and abstracts of the articles are available at https://www.stata-journal.com/archives/. PDF copies of articles published at least three years ago are available for free from SAGE Publishing's SJ webpage.

We recommend that all users subscribe to the SJ. Visit https://www.stata-journal.com to learn more about the SJ. Subscription information is available at https://www.stata-journal.com/subscription.

To obtain any programs associated with articles in the SJ, type

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

or

- Select **Help > SJ and community-contributed features**
- Click on **Stata Journal**

3.5 Updating and adding features from the web

Stata itself can open files on the Internet. Stata understands http, https, and ftp protocols.

First, try this:

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

That will load an uninteresting dataset into your computer from our website. If you have a home page, you can use this feature to share datasets with coworkers. Save a dataset on your home page, and researchers worldwide can use it. See [R] **net**.

3.5.1 Official updates

Although we follow no formal schedule for the release of updates, we typically provide updates to Stata approximately once a month. Installing the updates is easy. Type

```
. update query
```

or select **Help > Check for updates**. Do not be concerned; nothing will be installed unless and until you say so. Once you have installed the update, you can type

```
. help whatsnew
```

or select **Help > What's new?** to find out what has changed. We distribute official updates to fix bugs and to add new features.

3.5.2 Unofficial updates

There are also "unofficial" updates—additions to Stata written by Stata users, which includes members of the StataCorp technical staff. Stata is programmable, and even if you never write a Stata program, you may find these additions useful, some of them spectacularly so. Start by typing

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

or select **Help > SJ and community-contributed features**.

Be sure to visit the Statistical Software Components (SSC) Archive, which hosts a large collection of free additions to Stata. The `ssc` command makes it easy for you to find, install, and uninstall packages from the SSC Archive. Type

```
. ssc whatsnew
```

to find out what's new at the site. If you find something that interests you, type

```
. ssc describe pkgname
```

for more information. If you have already installed a package, you can check for and optionally install updates by typing

```
. ado update pkgname
```

To check for and optionally install updates to all the packages you have previously installed, type

```
. ado update all
```

See **[U] 29 Using the Internet to keep up to date**.

3.6 Conferences and training

3.6.1 Conferences and users group meetings

Every year, users around the world meet in a variety of locations to discuss Stata software and to network with other users. At these meetings, users and StataCorp developers alike share new features, novel Stata uses, and best practices. StataCorp organizes and hosts the Stata Conference in both the United States and Canada, as well as supports meetings worldwide.

Visit https://www.stata.com/meeting/ for a list of upcoming conferences and meetings.

3.6.2 NetCourses

We offer courses on Stata at both introductory and advanced levels. Courses on software are typically expensive and time consuming. They are expensive because, in addition to the direct costs of the course, participants must travel to the course site. Courses over the Internet save everyone time and money.

We offer courses over the Internet and call them Stata NetCourses™.

- **What is a NetCourse?**
  A NetCourse is a course offered through the Stata website that varies in length from 7 to 8 weeks. Everyone with an email address and a web browser can participate.
- **How does it work?**
  Every Friday a lesson is posted on a password-protected website. After reading the lesson over the weekend or perhaps on Monday, participants then post questions and comments on a message board. Course leaders typically respond to the questions and comments on the same day they are posted. Other participants are encouraged to amplify or otherwise respond to the questions or comments as well. The next lesson is then posted on Friday, and the process repeats.
- **How much of my time does it take?**
  It depends on the course, but the introductory courses are designed to take roughly 3 hours per week.
- **There are three of us here—can just one of us enroll and then redistribute the NetCourse materials ourselves?**
  We ask that you not. NetCourses are priced to cover the substantial time input of the course leaders. Moreover, enrollment is typically limited to prevent the discussion from becoming unmanageable. The value of a NetCourse, just like a real course, is the interaction of the participants, both with each other and with the course leaders.
- **I've never taken a course by Internet before. I can see that it might work, but then again, it might not. How do I know I will benefit?**
  All Stata NetCourses come with a 30-day satisfaction guarantee. The 30 days begins after the conclusion of the final lesson.

You can learn more about the current NetCourse offerings by visiting https://www.stata.com/netcourse.

NetCourseNow

A NetCourseNow offers the same material as NetCourses but it allows you to choose the time and pace of the course, and you have a personal NetCourse instructor.

- **What is a NetCourseNow?**
  A NetCourseNow offers the same material as a NetCourse, but allows you to move at your own pace and to specify a starting date. With a NetCourseNow, you also have the added benefit of a personal NetCourse instructor whom you can email directly with questions about lessons and exercises. You must have an email address and a web browser to participate.

- **How does it work?**
  All course lessons and exercises are posted at once, and you are free to study at your own pace. You will be provided with the email address of your personal NetCourse instructor to contact when you have questions.
- **How much of my time does it take?**
  A NetCourseNow allows you to set your own pace. How long the course takes and how much time you spend per week is up to you.

3.6.3 Classroom training courses

Classroom training courses are intensive, in-depth courses that will teach you to use Stata or, more specifically, to use one of Stata's advanced statistical procedures. Courses are taught by StataCorp at third-party sites around the United States.

- **How is a classroom training course taught?**
  These are interactive, hands-on sessions. Participants work along with the instructor so that they can see firsthand how to use Stata. Questions are encouraged.
- **Do I need my own computer?**
  Because the sessions are in computer labs running the latest version of Stata, there is no need to bring your own computer. Of course, you may bring your own computer if you have a registered copy of Stata you can use.
- **Do I get any notes?**
  You get a complete set of printed notes for each class, which includes not only the materials from the lessons but also all the output from the example commands.

See https://www.stata.com/training/classroom-and-web/ for all course offerings.

3.6.4 Web-based training courses

Web-based training courses, like classroom training courses, are intensive, in-depth courses that will teach you to use Stata or, more specifically, to use one of Stata's advanced statistical procedures. Courses are taught by StataCorp, and you join the course online from your home or office.

- **How is a web-based training course taught?**
  These are interactive, hands-on sessions. Participants work along with the instructor so that they can see firsthand how to use Stata. Questions are encouraged.
- **Do I need my own computer and Stata license?**
  You will need a computer with a high-speed Internet connection to join the course and to run Stata. If you do not have a license for the current version of Stata, you will be provided with a temporary license.
- **Do I get any notes?**
  You get a complete set of notes for each class, which includes not only the materials from the lessons but also all the output from the example commands.

See https://www.stata.com/training/classroom-and-web/ for all course offerings.

3.6.5 Organizational training courses

Organizational training courses are courses that are tailored to the needs of each institution. StataCorp personnel can come to your site to teach what you need, whether it be to teach new users or to show how to use a specialized tool in Stata. This training is also available virtually.

- **How is an organizational training course taught?**
  These are interactive, hands-on sessions, just like our classroom training courses. You will need a computer for each participant.
- **What topics are available?**
  We offer training in anything and everything related to Stata. You work with us to put together a curriculum that matches your needs.
- **How does licensing work?**
  We will supply you with the licenses you need for the training session, whether the training is in a lab or for individuals working on laptops. We will send the licensing and installation instructions so that you can have everything up and running before the session starts.

See https://www.stata.com/training/organizational/ for all the details.

3.6.6 Webinars

Webinars are free, live demonstrations of Stata features for both new and experienced Stata users. The *Ready. Set. Go Stata.* webinar shows new users how to quickly get started manipulating, graphing, and analyzing data. Already familiar with Stata? Discover a few of our developers' favorite features of Stata in our *Tips and tricks* webinar. The one-hour specialized feature webinars provide both new and experienced users with an in-depth look at one of Stata's statistical, graphical, data management, or reporting features.

- **How do I access the webinar?**
  Webinars are given live using either Adobe Connect software or Zoom.
- **Do I need my own computer and Stata license?**
  You will need a computer with high-speed Internet connection to join the webinar and to run Adobe Connect or Zoom. You do not need access to Stata to attend.
- **What is the cost to attend?**
  Webinars are free, but you must register to attend. Registrations are limited so we recommend registering early.

See https://www.stata.com/training/webinar/ for all the details.

3.7 Books and other support materials

3.7.1 For readers

There are books published about Stata, both by us and by others. Visit the Stata Bookstore at https://www.stata.com/bookstore/. We include the table of contents and comments written by a member of our technical staff, explaining why we think this book might interest you.

3.7.2 For authors

If you have written a book related to Stata and would like us to consider adding it to our bookstore, email bookstore@stata.com.

If you are writing a book, join our free Author Support Program. Stata professionals are available to review your Stata code to ensure that it is efficient and reflects modern usage, production specialists are available to help format Stata output, and editors and statisticians are available to ensure the accuracy of Stata-related content. Visit https://www.stata.com/authorsupport/.

If you are thinking about writing a Stata-related book, consider publishing it with Stata Press. Email submissions@statapress.com.

3.7.3 For editors

If you are editing a book that demonstrates Stata usage and output, join our free Editor Support program. Stata professionals are available to review the Stata content of book proposals, review Stata code and ensure output is efficient and reflects modern usage, provide advice about formatting of Stata output (including graphs), and review the accuracy of Stata-related content. Visit https://www.stata.com/publications/editor-support-program/.

3.7.4 For instructors

Teaching your course with Stata provides your students with tools and skills that translate to their professional life. Our teaching resources page provides access to resources for instructors, including links to our video tutorials, *Ready. Set. Go Stata.* webinar, Stata cheat sheets, and more. Visit https://www.stata.com/teaching-with-stata/.

3.8 Technical support

We are committed to providing superior technical support for Stata software. To assist you as efficiently as possible, please follow the procedures listed below.

3.8.1 Register your software

You must register your software to be eligible for technical support, updates, special offers, and other benefits. By registering, you will receive the *Stata News*, and you may access our support staff for free with any question that you encounter. You may register your software electronically.

After installing Stata and successfully entering your License and Activation Key, your default web browser will open to the online registration form at the Stata website. You may also manually point your web browser to https://www.stata.com/register/ if you wish to register your copy of Stata at a later time.

3.8.2 Before contacting technical support

Before you spend the time gathering the information our technical support department needs, make sure that the answer does not already exist in the help files. You can use the `help` and `search` commands to find all the entries in Stata that address a given subject. Be sure to try selecting **Help > Contents**. Check the manual for a particular command. There are often examples that address questions and concerns. Another good source of information is our website. You should keep a bookmark to our frequently asked questions page (https://www.stata.com/support/faqs/).

If you do need to contact technical support, visit https://www.stata.com/support/tech-support/ for more information.

3.8.3 Technical support by email

This is the preferred method of asking a technical support question. It has the following advantages:

- You will receive a prompt response from us saying that we have received your question and that it has been forwarded to *Technical Services* to answer.
- We can route your question to a specialist for your particular question.
- Questions submitted via email may be answered after normal business hours, or even on weekends or holidays. Although we cannot promise that this will happen, it may, and your email inquiry is bound to receive a faster response than leaving a message on Stata's voicemail.
- If you are receiving an error message or an unexpected result, it is easy to include a log file that demonstrates the problem.

Please visit https://www.stata.com/support/tech-support/ for information about contacting technical support.

3.8.4 Technical support by phone

Our installation support telephone number is 979-696-4600. Please have your serial number handy. It is also best if you are at your computer when you call. Telephone support is reserved for installation questions. If your question does not involve installation, the question should be submitted via email.

Visit https://www.stata.com/support/tech-support/ for information about contacting technical support.

3.8.5 Comments and suggestions for our technical staff

By all means, send in your comments and suggestions. Your input is what determines the changes that occur in Stata between releases, so if we do not hear from you, we may not include your most desired new feature! Email is preferred, as this provides us with a permanent copy of your request. When requesting new features, please include any references that you would like us to review should we develop those new features. Email your suggestions to service@stata.com.

3.9 Reference

Haghish, E. F. 2019. On the importance of syntax coloring for teaching statistics. *Stata Journal* 19: 83–86.

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