Assigning Libnames in SAS

Background

In order for SAS to read or write a SAS data set, it must know the directory (or folder) that contains the data set. SAS calls a directory or folder a library and assigns “nicknames” to these libraries. SAS calls these nicknames libnames. In order to read or write SAS data sets, one must first assign a libname to a library. Think of this process as assigning a nickname to a directory (or folder).

There are two ways to assign a nickname. The first is to create a LIBNAME statement in the Editor window and then submit that statement. The second is to use the point-and-click interface in the Explorer window. Each method is explained below.

Method 1: The LIBNAME Statement

1.1 Go to the Program Editor window.

1.2 Type in a LIBNAME statement. The general syntax for a LIBNAME statement is

    LIBNAME nickname ‘name-of-directory’;

where

    nickname = a valid SAS beginning with either a letter or an underscore and having no more than 8 characters.
    name-of-directory = the path and name of the directory enclosed in quotes.

Suppose that we wanted to assign the nickname rmlib to the physical directory /home/facstaff/carey/p5741ndir/QMIN_Repeated_Measures. Then the desired LIBNAME statement would be

    LIBNAME rmlib ‘/home/facstaff/carey/p5741ndir/QMIN_Repeated_Measures’;

1.3 Submit the LIBNAME statement.
Method 2: Point-and-Click Interface with the Explorer Window.

2.1 Open the Explorer Window. In any SAS window, select View from the menu bar, and then select Explorer from the pull-down menu:

![Image of SAS window with View and Explorer options selected]

2.2 Select the option to create a new library. In the Explorer window, right click (on a Mac, Command-click) on Libraries and select New from the drop down menu.

![Image of Explorer window with Libraries and New options highlighted]
2.3 **Give the nickname.** The New Library window will appear. Enter a name (no more than 8 letters) for the library. In this example, the nickname of the library is “rmlib.”
2.4 **Click on the Browse button.** The Select Directory window will appear. Navigate to the desired directory by double clicking on the directory in the left-hand side of the window. In the example given below, the directory is `/home/facstaff/carey/p5741ndir/QMIN_Repeated_Measures`. Click the OK button when the desired directory has been selected.
2.5 Check the assignment. The New Library window will be reactivated. It will now include the name of the selected directory as shown below. Click on the OK button.