

Creating a “Log” File in Stata

This set of notes describes how to create a log file within the computer program Stata. It assumes that you have set Stata up on your computer (see the “Getting Started with Stata” handout), and that you have read in the set of data that you want to analyze (see the “Reading in Stata Format (.dta) Data Files” handout).

A log file records all your Stata commands and output in a given session, with the exception of graphs. It is usually wise to retain a copy of the work that you’ve done on a given project, to refer to while you are writing up your findings, or later on when you are revising a paper.

A log file is a separate file that has either a “.log” or “.smcl” extension. Saving the log as a .smcl file (“Stata Markup and Control Language file”) keeps the formatting from the Results window. It is recommended to save the log as a .log file. Although saving it as a .log file removes the formatting and saves the output in plain text format, it can be opened in most text editing programs. A .smcl file can only be opened in Stata.

To create a log file:

You may create a log file by typing

```
log using "filepath & filename"
```

in the Stata *Command* box.

On a PC:

If one wanted to save a log file (.log) for a set of analyses on hard disk C:, in the folder “LOGS”, one would type

```
log using "C:\LOGS\analysis_log.log"
```

On a Mac:

If one wanted to save a log file (.log) for a set of analyses in user1’s folder on the hard drive, in the folder “logs”, one would type

```
log using "/Users/user1/logs/analysis_log.log"
```

If you would like to replace an existing log file with a newer version add “replace” after the file name (Note: PC file path)

```
log using "C:\LOGS\analysis_log.log", replace
```

Alternately, you can use the menu: click on File, then on Log, then on Begin. Navigate to the folder where you want to save your log file, enter the file name, and specify whether you want to save the log as a .log or .smcl file. Then click Save.

Either way, the previously-written file will be erased and overwritten with a log of your current Stata session.

If that is not what you want (i.e., if you want to retain the work you did before) . . .

To append material to a previously-written log file:

If instead you want to add some additional output to an existing log file, you can do so in one of two ways:

First, you can type (Note: PC file path)

```
log using "C:\LOGS\analysis_log.log", append
```

in the Stata *Command* window.

Or, using the Stata menus, click on File, Log, Append, select the log file that you would like to add material to, and click OK.

Your new material will appear at the end of the previously-written log file.

Closing a log file

When you are done with your session, you can close your log in one of two ways:

You can type

```
log close
```

in the Stata *Command* window.

Or, using the menus, click on File, Log, Close.