

Analytics Modernization - Optimizing SAS Investments with Data Wrangling

Analytics Technology Landscape Has Shifted

Even “data-first” companies have been surprised by the size and speed of the tectonic shift now taking place in analytics technology. More people in the organization need to consume, analyze, and report using new and more diverse data sources—and it needs to be done faster. These changes, combined with the sheer volume of data coming from technology innovations have exponentially increased the requirements for data storage & processing, preparation, analytics, predictive modeling, and visualization products.

Expectations have changed so fast, and are now so high that full stack solutions from IBM, Oracle, and Microsoft cannot innovate fast enough to match newer, more nimble players. SAS, a market leader in analytics and statistics for decades, maintains leadership in their core data science and analytics solutions but are unable to keep up in other areas. New entrants in the analytics industry are thus taking on incumbents by unbundling and specializing from day one on specific areas such as data preparation, widely recognized as the most painful and time-consuming aspect of the analytics process.

“As predictive analytics becomes operationalized, the focus is shifting from algorithm to architecture. Safety, transparency and repeatability are valued even more highly than perfect accuracy. Data preparation plays a critical role in this evolution by ensuring consistency and efficiency in the data quality pipeline that feeds the algorithms.”

Stephen Smith
Research Director, Data Science
at Eckerson Group

The Challenges of Preparing Data with SAS

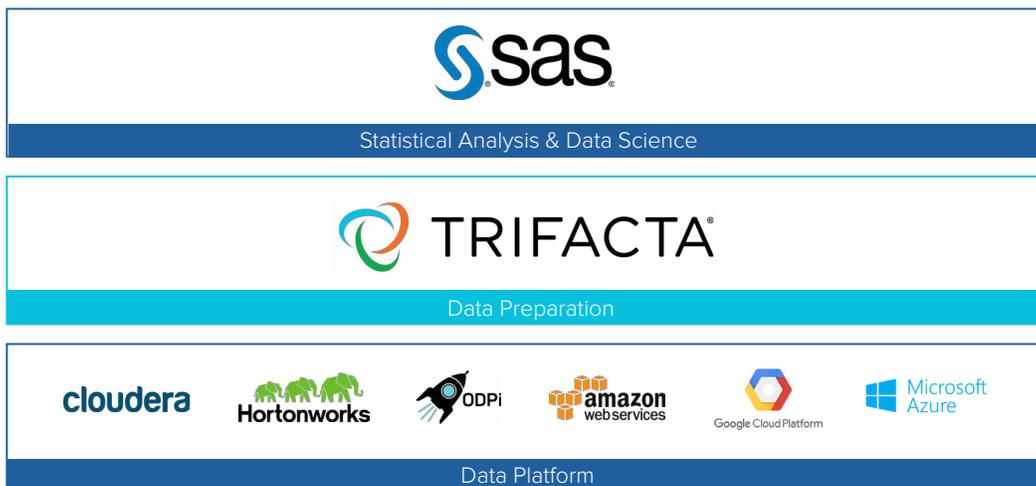
Valuable data analysis has always relied on clean, well-structured data. In the past, this was an easier task, with fewer data sources and fewer consumers of data. SAS became the standard for analytics over time, and it made sense for analysts to rely on SAS code for manipulating, or “wrangling”, data in preparation for analytics. Some of these scripts have been written and refined over years to prepare their data. As just one example, [70% of the Royal Bank of Scotland’s SAS code was just for data preparation](#), and even then the SAS code couldn’t support the analysis of semi-structured data, like customer support chat logs.

As data sources grow in size, diversity, and complexity, along with demands for faster turnaround, more and more companies have discovered they are using SAS products for use cases they were never designed for. When data moves beyond relational databases into [big data and cloud platforms](#), it's extremely challenging to transition existing SAS code and deployments to these platforms. Given the expensive nature of SAS developers and licenses and the opportunity costs of slow analysis and insight, the expense of data preparation has become too great to maintain and scale utilizing this traditional approach.

At the same time, the trend in market leaders is towards self-service business analytics tooling and processes, and the bottlenecks created by the coding requirements of SAS-only environments can limit the full adoption of self-service data within an organization. As a result, the emergence of stand-alone data preparation technology vendors have become an attractive complement to the core statistical and analytics packages SAS provides. These vendors make data preparation more accurate, consistent, efficient, and intuitive, and their business analytics teams are enjoying unprecedented results.

Trifacta: A Leader In New Data Preparation Category

Trifacta is a data preparation solution, built to streamline the process of getting analysis-ready data to stakeholders in a cost effective way, enabling companies of all sizes to gain competitive advantage from their data. Designed to work in harmony with SAS, as well as other legacy and modern analytics tools, [Trifacta balances self-service for analysts and business users with powerful data exploration and extraction tools](#). Trifacta has employed a better approach to data wrangling that brings together the latest techniques in data visualization, machine learning and human-computer interaction to make the process of preparing data more intuitive and efficient. Analysts at over 7,300 companies in 143 countries utilize Trifacta to more quickly explore and prepare diverse data for a variety of analytic purposes.



Trifacta is routinely recognized as the top data wrangling vendor by leading industry analysts. In the [2017 Forrester Wave on Data Preparation](#), Trifacta was recognized as the leading vendor in the category. [Dresner Advisory Services](#) has ranked Trifacta as the top data preparation vendor over the past three years 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Benefits: Trifacta Data Wrangling + SAS Analytics

SAS is still the market leader in analytics—and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. But analytics organizations around the globe have realized the benefits of a specialized data preparation solution that complements their existing analytics investments (such as SAS). The transition allows organizations to not only maintain all of their existing SAS analytics investments that are working well, but also adopt a solution specifically for data preparation, thereby expanding and accelerating their ability to drive analytics value out of SAS.

Trifacta can not only interoperate with existing SAS investments but also with new cloud platforms like AWS, Azure and GCP, and big data platforms such as Cloudera and Hortonworks, customers who have switched data preparation from SAS to Trifacta have reaped substantial benefits. Here are just two examples:

“With Trifacta as a partner, we are on our way to building a world-class data capability that will help us better understand and better serve our customers.”

Christian Nelissen
Head of Data and Analytics,
Royal Bank of Scotland



Accelerating Analytics

The Royal Bank of Scotland reported a 90% faster concept-to-delivery speed by using Trifacta. When more people in business units have access to data from all sources, transformational insights can be found faster than ever before.

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Cost Savings

Suntrust Bank reduced the cost of software used for compliance reporting by nearly 60% just by transitioning to Trifacta for data preparation. And software isn't the only opportunity for cost savings available: SAS programmers are notoriously expensive to hire and retain, while business analysts are at least 25% less expensive. Reducing the demand for SAS programmers means companies can afford to hire more analysts to help businesses draw meaning and action from their data.

The Transition from SAS To Trifacta For Data Prep

Analytics teams have many options for transitioning their SAS data preparation work to Trifacta. Here are three of the most common data-prep scenarios and their transition process:



Faster Data Preparation

Trifacta and its consulting partners have various ways to streamline these efforts. The goal is to automatically analyze SAS code to understand the existing workflow and then rebuild, enhance, and automate that workflow in Trifacta in a scalable way.



Less Reliance on Costly Technical Resources

For business users who rely on their technical counterparts or consultants to prepare data in SAS, switching to Trifacta can dramatically lower consulting costs as well as shorten data preparation times.



Maximize ROI on SAS Investment

Rather than relying exclusively on IT or data science teams, business users can choose to change the entire data analytics process to allow them to do their own data preparation in Trifacta—using its powerful but intuitive user interface. Training and support can be managed by Trifacta's partners for full support along the learning curve.

Summary

The powerful analytics and statistical modeling tools in SAS have made it a market leader. But to get the most out of it, teams need to stop spending over 80% of their time on data preparation. SAS customers in all industries can enhance the ROI they can generate from SAS by using Trifacta to streamline the data wrangling process, saving time and money in the process. At the same time, speed-to-insight is dramatically improved with Trifacta by making data preparation a more efficient and intuitive process that a wider range of analysts are able to contribute to.

Getting started with Trifacta is easy. Just download [Trifacta Wrangler here](#). More information is available at <http://trifacta.com>. Or, email team@trifacta.com for more details.