



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

THE STATA JOURNAL

Editor

H. Joseph Newton
Department of Statistics
Texas A & M University
College Station, Texas 77843
979-845-3142; FAX 979-845-3144
jnewton@stata-journal.com

Editor

Nicholas J. Cox
Department of Geography
University of Durham
South Road
Durham City DH1 3LE UK
n.j.cox@stata-journal.com

Associate Editors

Christopher Baum
Boston College
Rino Bellocco
Karolinska Institutet
David Clayton
Cambridge Inst. for Medical Research
Mario A. Cleves
Univ. of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
William D. Dupont
Vanderbilt University
Charles Franklin
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Joanne M. Garrett
University of North Carolina
Allan Gregory
Queen's University
James Hardin
University of South Carolina
Stephen Jenkins
University of Essex
Ulrich Kohler
WZB, Berlin
Jens Lauritsen
Odense University Hospital

Stanley Lemeshow
Ohio State University
J. Scott Long
Indiana University
Thomas Lumley
University of Washington, Seattle
Roger Newson
King's College, London
Marcello Pagano
Harvard School of Public Health
Sophia Rabe-Hesketh
University of California, Berkeley
J. Patrick Royston
MRC Clinical Trials Unit, London
Philip Ryan
University of Adelaide
Mark E. Schaffer
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh
Jeroen Weesie
Utrecht University
Nicholas J. G. Winter
Cornell University
Jeffrey Wooldridge
Michigan State University

Stata Press Production Manager

Lisa Gilmore

Copyright Statement: The Stata Journal and the contents of the supporting files (programs, datasets, and help files) are copyright © by StataCorp LP. The contents of the supporting files (programs, datasets, and help files) may be copied or reproduced by any means whatsoever, in whole or in part, as long as any copy or reproduction includes attribution to both (1) the author and (2) the Stata Journal.

The articles appearing in the Stata Journal may be copied or reproduced as printed copies, in whole or in part, as long as any copy or reproduction includes attribution to both (1) the author and (2) the Stata Journal.

Written permission must be obtained from StataCorp if you wish to make electronic copies of the insertions. This precludes placing electronic copies of the Stata Journal, in whole or in part, on publicly accessible web sites, fileservers, or other locations where the copy may be accessed by anyone other than the subscriber.

Users of any of the software, ideas, data, or other materials published in the Stata Journal or the supporting files understand that such use is made without warranty of any kind, by either the Stata Journal, the author, or StataCorp. In particular, there is no warranty of fitness of purpose or merchantability, nor for special, incidental, or consequential damages such as loss of profits. The purpose of the Stata Journal is to promote free communication among Stata users.

The *Stata Journal*, electronic version (ISSN 1536-8734) is a publication of Stata Press, and Stata is a registered trademark of StataCorp LP.

Stata tip 18: Making keys functional

Shannon Driver
StataCorp
s.driver@stata.com

Did you know that you can create custom definitions for your *F*-keys in Stata?

F-key definitions are created via global macros. On startup, Stata sets the *F*-key defaults to

| <i>F</i> -key | definition |
|---------------|------------|
| <i>F1</i> | help |
| <i>F2</i> | #review; |
| <i>F3</i> | describe; |
| <i>F7</i> | save |
| <i>F8</i> | use |

You can redefine these keys if you wish.

When a definition ends with a semicolon (;), Stata will automatically execute that command as if you typed it and pressed the Enter key; otherwise, the command is immediately entered into the command line as if you had typed it. Stata then waits for you to press the Enter key. This allows you to modify the command before it is executed.

For example, to define the *F4* key to execute the `list` command, you would type

```
. global F4 "list;"
```

The “F4” here is actually a capital F followed by the number 4.

The best place to create these definitions is in an ASCII text file called `profile.do`. Every time Stata is launched, it looks for `profile.do` and, if it finds it, executes all of the commands it contains. For more information, type `help profile`.

Let’s say that you want to create a definition for *F4* to open a window showing the contents of a particular directory. You could do this on Windows by typing

```
. global F4 "winexec explorer C:\data;"
```

On a Macintosh, you could type

```
. global F4 "'!open /Applications/Stata8/Stata;"
```

You can also create *F*-key definitions to launch your favorite text editor.

```
. global F5 "winexec notepad;"
```

Yet another application is programming the ‘ and ’ keys, which Stata uses to delimit local macros. Many keyboards do not have the left- or open-quote character of this

pair, so an alternative is to define an *F*-key to be that key. For symmetry, you might want another *F*-key to be the right- or close-quote character. But how do you define a replacement for a key if you do not have that key in the first place? One answer lies in Stata's `char()` function:

```
. global F4 = char(96)
. global F5 = char(180)
```

You may want to make a note that *F10* is reserved internally by Windows, so you cannot program this key. Also, not all Macintosh keyboards have *F*-keys.

For more information on this topic, please see [U] **13.2 F-keys**.