



Converting Data from ASCII to SPSS System Files

Some data files, especially older ones, will not be available as SPSS system files, but instead will be provided with a fixed-format ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) file and an SPSS syntax file. Once you have downloaded your files and, if necessary, unzipped them:

- Start SPSS and open the syntax file (the one with the “.sps” extension).
- Find the “FILE HANDLE” command and replace “data-filename” with the path to your data file (the one ending in “.txt”). For example, if you download ICPSR Study 4131 (ABC News Pennsylvania Poll, Sept. 2004) in a directory on your “C” drive called “Temp,” the path created will be “C:\Temp\5268001\ICPSR_04131\DS0001_ABC_News_Pennsylvania_Poll,_September_2004__\04131-0001-Data.txt.” (This is admittedly pretty unwieldy, and it might be a good idea to move and rename the file before proceeding). The FILE HANDLE:

```
FILE HANDLE DATA / NAME="data-filename" LRECL=225.
```

would become:

```
FILE HANDLE DATA /  
NAME="C:\Temp\5268001\ICPSR_04131\DS0001_ABC_News_Pennsylvania_P  
oll,_September_2004__\04131-0001-Data.txt " LRECL=225.
```

- Find the “SAVE OUTFILE” command (probably the last one in the file), and replace “spss-filename.sav” with the name and path of the SPSS system file you wish to create. If the command is preceded by an asterisk, remove the asterisk. For example,

```
SAVE OUTFILE="spss-filename.sav".
```

would become:

SAVE

OUTFILE="C:\Temp\5268001\ICPSR_04131\DS0001_ABC_News_Pennsylvania
_Poll,_September_2004__\04131-0001-Data.sav".

From the menu bar, click on "Run" and "All."

If no "SAVE OUTFILE" command exists, create one from scratch. Note that all SPSS commands end with a period.