



Center for Clinical Trials

Department of Biostatistics  
Department of Epidemiology  
Department of International Health

Department of Medicine  
Department of Ophthalmology  
Oncology Center

Thursday, 8 December 2005

Memorandum

To: Center for Clinical Trials Students, Staff, and Faculty

Fr: Curtis Meinert

Re: Tables 101: On creating templates

There is a sameness to the things we do in front of computers. I spend most of my time producing – memos, letters, manuscripts, slide sets, dictionaries, and books. It is not long before you "discover" the virtues of templates.

But, if one sets about creating a library of templates, the job is unlikely to be undertaken because it is simply too daunting. So forget that. Concentrate instead on creating templates one at a time. The best starting point for any given "template" is the last document produced similar to the one to be produced. Retrieve it, modify it, save it to a new name, and go. Keep repeating the process until you have a robust template.

Robustness comes by having settings for individual files that do not "conflict" or get overridden when assembled into a master document (see *Tables 101: Master documents*). Indeed, when building templates it is useful to think "master" document. The memo template used for this series of memos was constructed anticipating the possibility that the entire series might eventually be assembled into a bound document. To allow for that possibility, the memo template comes with a hard page ending to ensure a "new page start" for each memo. Similarly, the subject line of the memo is marked for list generation to provide a ToC if and when the collection is assembled into a whole.

Repetitive tasks should be "macroized". For example, the task of building a master document can be driven by a series of macros. Management of the Dictionary is driven by hundreds of macros.

(Fri 9:18am) 15 Jul 05

VTables.101BuildTem.WPD

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[Tables 101]J:\BuildTem.wpd/bjc