

THE STATA JOURNAL

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Stata tip 9: Following special sequences

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Did you know about the special sequences stored as *c*-class values? [P] **creturn** documents various constant and current values, which may be seen by **creturn list** or which may be accessed once you know their individual names. For example, **c(filename)** stores the name of the file last specified with a **use** or **save** in the current session. However, various special sequences have been added in updates on 1 July 2003 and 15 December 2003 and so are not documented in the manuals. Here is the list:

- **c(alpha)** returns a string containing a space-separated list of the lowercase letters.
- **c(ALPHA)** returns a string containing a space-separated list of the uppercase letters.
- **c(Mons)** returns a string containing a space-separated list of month names abbreviated to three characters.
- **c(Months)** returns a string containing a space-separated list of month names.
- **c(Wdays)** returns a string containing a space-separated list of weekday names abbreviated to three characters.
- **c(Weekdays)** returns a string containing a space-separated list of weekday names.

Even the display of one of these lists can be useful. Note the local macro notation `' '` ensuring that the contents of the list are shown, not its name:

```
. display "'c(Months)'"
```

A common application of these lists is specifying variable or value labels. Suppose that a variable **month** included values 1 to 12. We might type

```
. tokenize 'c(Months)'  
. forvalues i = 1/12 {  
  2. label def month 'i' "'i'", modify  
  3. }  
. label val month month
```

Finally, the SSC archive (see [R] **ssc**) is organized alphabetically using folders **a** through **z** and **_**. We could get a complete listing of what was available by

```
. foreach l in 'c(alpha)' _ {  
  2. ssc describe 'l'  
  3. }
```