

# makehlp

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Richard Williams posted on stataлист (11 Apr 2008)

*"Writing programs is kind of fun, but writing help files is pure drudgery"*

- I wrote `makehlp.ado` in 2000 for Stata7 (UCLA still host it)
- I updated it in 2007 and 2012 to produce the helpfiles from syntax lines
- Big update in 2018 to change the way we write adofiles

I never renamed it to `makesthlp.ado`..

# The Syntax

I try and keep these things simple (this command is still in its infancy)

```
makehelp, file(string) [ replace ]
```

```
ssc install makehelp
```

```
which tabstat
```

```
cp /Applications/Stata/ado/base/t/tabstat.ado tabstat1.ado, replace
```

```
makehelp, f(tabstat1) r
```

```
help tabstat1
```

# The default output for any ado-file

- Creates a template for the SMCL help file
- Inspects the syntax line(s) and creates the options table
  - tries to keep the default values of the options
  - works out the shortcuts for the options
- Scans the whole ado file to check if it is a return class program
  - Creates lists of returned values (grouped by scalar, local and matrix)

# Customising the ado file to include the helpfile

Somewhere in your **ado file** you need to specify the block of text that contains the helpfile text.

```
/*
```

```
START HELP FILE
```

```
< help file text >
```

```
END HELP FILE
```

```
*/
```

# The inner text

Introduced new syntax

Single line options

```
opt[ ]  
author[ ]  
institute[ ]  
return[ ]  
email[ ]
```

Multiple line options

```
title[  ]  
desc[  ]  
opt2[  ]  
example[ ]  
references[ ]  
seealso[ ]  
freetext[ ]
```

# Example

```
ssc install radar  
viewsource radar.ado
```

```
/*  
START HELP FILE
```

```
title[Radar plots or Spider plots]
```

```
desc[  
{cmd:radar} produces a radar plot from at least two variables.
```

The axes of the radar plot will start at the top of the diagram and proceed in a clockwise direction.

```
Missing values are included in the radar plot as gaps in the line joining observations.  
]
```

```
opt[lc the string argument is a {help colorstyle}list, specifies the colors for the observations (not axes).]  
opt[lp the string argument is a {help linepatternstyle}list and specifies the patterns for the observations (no  
opt[radial specifies a variable to be plotted as spikes along the spokes of the plot.]  
opt[* additional {help twoway_options} can be specified. ]
```

```
opt2[rlabel specifies the ticks and labels of the spokes. The default is to have 5 values displayed, note that  
the value that is the centre or smallest tick is suppressed but the value is included as a note below the  
graph. The note can be overwritten by using the {hi: note()} option.  
]
```

```
return[maxarea is the returned maximum area of the radar polygon given the maximum and minimum values on the pl
```

```
example[
```

```
The examples below highlight the use of the {hi:radar} plot on the Auto dataset.  
Click below (after the dataset is loaded to see the distribution of weight for the foreign makes of car  
{stata radar make weight if foreign, aspect(1)}  
]
```

```
author[Dr Adrian Mander]  
institute[MRC Biostatistics Unit, University of Cambridge]  
email[adrian.mander@mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk]
```



seealso[

{pstd}

Other Graphic Commands I have written: {p\_end}

{synoptset 27 }{...}

{synopt:{help batplot} (if installed)} {stata ssc install batplot} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help cdfplot} (if installed)} {stata ssc install cdfplot} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help contour} (if installed)} {stata ssc install contour} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help drarea} (if installed)} {stata ssc install drarea} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help graphbinary} (if installed)} {stata ssc install graphbinary} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help metagraph} (if installed)} {stata ssc install metagraph} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help palette\_all} (if installed)} {stata ssc install palette\_all} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help plotbeta} (if installed)} {stata ssc install plotbeta} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help plotmatrix} (if installed)} {stata ssc install plotmatrix} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help surface} (if installed)} {stata ssc install surface} (to install) {p\_end}

{synopt:{help trellis} (if installed)} {stata ssc install trellis} (to install) {p\_end}

{p2colreset}{...}

]

END HELP FILE

\*/

# Last thoughts

- I am happy to work with people to iron out any issues with the command
- Do we (stata community) think this is the write syntax to use?