

Delivering SAS® expertise to your cloud

The power of SAS® Remote Managed Services



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Introduction

The adoption or integration of a new technology can present many barriers within an organization. One barrier involves the significant expertise required to get the most from your investment. Another barrier is IT-focused, as many organizations struggle to define and meet service levels – and keep up with demands for an efficient and effective 24/7 infrastructure.

Still, organizations must make wise investments in systems and technology. They need solutions that provide the most value for the cost and are flexible enough to grow with the organization. So how does an organization select a management solution that meets both its current and future needs without breaking the budget? By choosing SAS Remote Managed Services.

SAS Remote Managed Services fulfills customers' application management needs when they require or prefer that the solution and data remain within their chosen cloud provider. These customers still need application management and support to design, install, configure, support and maintain SAS platforms. For SAS Remote Managed Services implementations, customers provide all the necessary infrastructure to operate and maintain the systems through their preferred cloud provider. This includes:

- Servers.
- Operating systems, Kubernetes platform, storage, networking and infrastructure.
- Storage.
- Account management.
- System security.
- Networking.
- Backup and recovery.
- Ongoing infrastructure support.

SAS Remote Managed Services provides remote monitoring and management of SAS software and services for customers that deploy SAS solutions through a third-party cloud provider. This service allows customers to fully capitalize on the skill, knowledge and expertise of SAS experts. The offering contains service operations management; SAS application management; capacity planning; and event, incident and problem management within the defined service level agreements. It also provides 24/7 support for SAS software, which includes the following:

- Scheduled maintenance of the SAS software.
- SAS platform monitoring and license monitoring.
- Data platform management, including the installation, configuration and maintenance of required SAS solution data stores (RDBMS and Hadoop instances).
- Cloud service delivery management, including the facilitation of ongoing service management activities, a fixed point of escalation for issues and continual service improvement reviews.

This white paper describes the many advantages of SAS Remote Managed Services and why it is the right fit and value to meet the demands on today's organizations.

How SAS® RMS solutions are managed in SAS® Viya®

SAS Viya is the latest AI, analytic and data management platform that runs on a modern, scalable architecture that takes advantage of cloud technologies in a more significant way than in the past. With the extensive use of software containers and microservices, the SAS Viya software stack relies on Kubernetes to support its deployment and workload management. With this transition has come the need for your IT support organization to expand its capabilities beyond traditional hardware and networking support. SAS Remote Managed Services administrators and support teams are experts at both SAS Viya operations and its underlying use of Kubernetes. As a result, SAS Remote Managed Services includes management of Viya software deployed on several leading cloud-managed Kubernetes platforms, but not management of the underlying Kubernetes infrastructure.

Service models

SAS Remote Managed Services provides a value-added service to customers by improving the management capabilities of SAS solutions. With over 40 years of experience, SAS has a proven track record in managing its solutions. In addition to supplying customers with continuous access to the required skills and expertise, SAS Remote Managed Services also provides access to an extended global network of professional services and support experts.

The SAS Remote Managed Services model includes full lifecycle management of the SAS platform. The customer provides and manages the network, hardware and operating systems. SAS implements connectivity to the customer site, deploys and tests the SAS platform, sets up monitoring, and provides ongoing support and maintenance.

To optimize performance, stability and security, SAS uses its expertise and best practices when installing SAS solutions. SAS retains the largest global resource pool of certified SAS administrators, with the support of project managers, IT and other teams available to support the SAS software. When applicable to the SAS solution, the SAS database administration team works with the customer-provisioned RDBMS to support the SAS solution.

All SAS software is installed according to a set of common documented standards. After deployment, the platform is transitioned across to management and support. This helps ensure that 24/7 support is achievable from any of SAS' global authorized staff.

Granting SAS® access

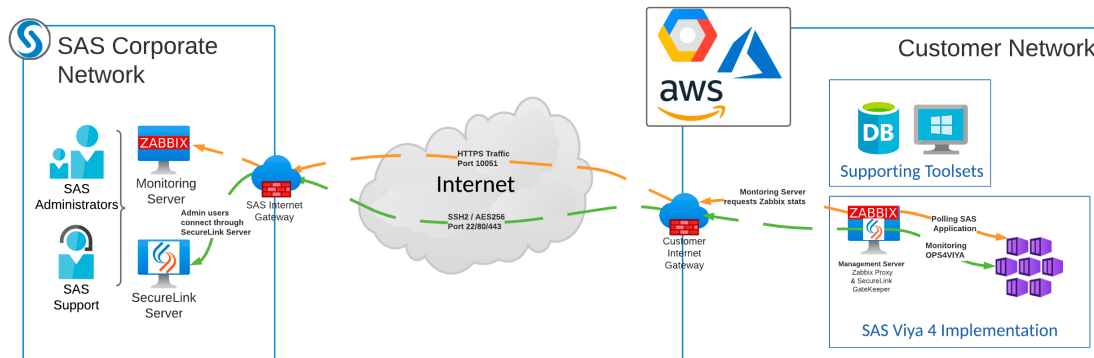
The SAS Remote Managed Services team accesses the SAS platform through a remote connection. Where possible, the team has a direct connection with the customer's environment, which enables it to gain access to the SAS software to perform scheduled support and maintenance tasks. It also allows the SAS platform to communicate directly with the SAS Remote Managed Services team to proactively send alerts when an event or an incident occurs.

The following list provides the ways that customers can grant SAS the required access to their systems in order to manage and maintain the SAS platform.

- For SAS Remote Managed Services management, SAS requires a site-to-site VPN or over the internet access to provide proactive monitoring and alerting. When monitoring agents are installed onto the operating system of the SAS servers, alerts for significant events are sent back to the SAS team, allowing it to respond (see Figure 1).
- For administrative connectivity, SAS is partnering with Securelink to deliver secure, compliant support for our remote managed services customers. Securelink is designed to manage the remote support connections between SAS and the customer solution enabling us to access and administer the SAS platform.

Each SAS Remote Managed Services platform results in a multisite implementation.

Figure 1 depicts the architecture, assuming a default configuration where a VPN or internet connection and active monitoring are in place.



The information contained in this document is considered confidential and covered under the terms of any SAS agreements as executed by Customer and SAS Institute Inc.

Figure 1: SAS Remote Managed Services architecture with internet traffic.

Data privacy and security

For many years, customers have asked SAS to provide solutions and manage sensitive data for a wide variety of sectors globally. This includes sectors where data security, privacy and control are of paramount importance, such as government, banking/financial services, pharmaceuticals and health care. This responsibility lies at the heart of the services that SAS offers around data protection. This section describes the privacy, security and control for the service models described. In a majority of cases, the customer controls data within its own SAS platform, as defined by the customer's data security policies.

Data privacy

All data is treated as confidential and is made available only to authorized SAS personnel requiring access to perform their duties during installation or ongoing maintenance. Content cannot be used or disclosed by SAS personnel, other than what is required to perform the management services as authorized in customer agreements – or is required to comply with legal or regulatory requirements. Direct access to content is limited to what is necessary to perform management services or to fulfill any legal requirements.

Personnel security

SAS works with the customer to adopt the customer's existing security policies for gaining access to the remote systems. If these processes are not in place, SAS can work with the customer to define them based on previous experience and documented best practices. All SAS personnel are required to adhere to SAS policies and procedures at all times, including the SAS conduct policy. It is the customer's discretion to request further checks.

Physical security

Because all servers and data remain on the customer's cloud, physical security controls follow the customer's security policies and procedures. SAS servers reside in a SAS managed data center, which is audited annually by a third party.

Logical security

The customer is responsible for implementing all logical security controls and providing SAS personnel with access to the SAS platform, based on these controls.

Where continual access to the customer's platform is granted through a dedicated VPN to safeguard the customer's systems, SAS Remote Managed Services system administrators take measures from within the SAS environment to protect the SAS remote management server from all known threats such as malware, viruses and unauthorized access. SAS uses two-factor authentication for appropriate SAS staff and SAS subcontractors to access systems hosted at the primary SAS data center if required by regulation or customer contract. Two-factor authentication is not required for customers to access SAS solutions. Other logical security policies include:

- All data transmissions to and from SAS are completed over secure and encrypted channels.
- Customer data or other content is not stored at the SAS data center.
- All systems with a Microsoft operating system are configured with antivirus software.
- Access to the SAS remote management server is approved and logged.
- All connections must be made through a secure connection.

It is SAS policy that customer material be encrypted while in transit and at rest, whenever possible.

Service operations management

The SAS Remote Managed Services team provides a single point of contact and customer liaison. This team may call upon a global resource pool to ensure the operational integrity of its customers' platforms.

This team uses ITIL and SAS best practices to provide event and incident management. Events are triggered when a process or element of SAS is not functioning correctly. Incident management is engaged to restore normal service operation as quickly as possible and minimize the adverse effect on business operations.

SAS' Remote Managed Services team performs a root cause analysis of identified incidents and works with the customer's support team if the issue involves the customer-provisioned elements of the platform. Resolving an incident can prevent further or related incidents and allows these lessons to be shared for future prevention.

Support options for SAS® Remote Managed Services

Proactive monitoring and support

A team of experts actively monitors its customer's SAS platform on a 24/7/365 basis, responding to events and incidents and taking the lead in co-managing its customer's SAS platform and solutions. Customers retain access and control and receive the added benefits of SAS' customer support, best practices and issue resolution processes.

Active monitoring of the SAS environment involves SAS configuring the automatic creation of tickets based on monitoring triggers.

Monitoring for SAS Remote Managed Services includes:

- SAS software monitoring via automated health checks utilizing Zabbix via site-to-site VPN.
- Incident response time SLA with guaranteed response times for each severity level of incident.
- Measuring SLA performance, reporting results and cloud scorecards.

Note: Some ancillary infrastructure information (e.g., CPU, memory ports) may be collected and used to prescribe action if a pending or existing SAS software issue exists. Although the focus of monitoring is SAS software components.

- Capacity management, which includes a typical assessment based on capacity as the platform's metrics are recorded and extrapolated from the data collected.
- A direct line to SAS Technical Support, which triages to the SAS Remote Managed Services desk. Customers can alternatively use the web-based ticketing system, which submits a request directly to the SAS Remote Managed Services support team.
- The SAS support team works and manages the ticket and gains access to the customer's system, to connect into the customer's on-site remote management client machine.

System and software maintenance

Best practices dictate that the operating system, Kubernetes platform and SAS software receive updates on a regular basis, and in a controlled manner, to avoid data corruption or end-user disruption. The scheduling of these events is at the customer's discretion. When customers make changes to their infrastructure or software that could affect the SAS platform (for example, system updates, storage changes or network reconfiguration), customers must notify SAS prior to any scheduled maintenance in accordance with a contracted notice period. SAS provides support by preparing the platform for such an event. In addition, SAS and the customer agree upon established maintenance windows to enable regular backup tasks or other scheduled tasks to be performed, without disrupting the end users or corrupting the platform.

The SAS Remote Managed Services team ensures that its customers are using the latest SAS software updates, where appropriate. These software updates are installed and managed by experts, providing optimal uptime of the environment for the users community. SAS provides ongoing application support for licensed software, including installation of hot fixes and patches that may be required to address reported issues. Services for upgrades and migration from one set of hardware to another can be agreed upon and incorporated into a customer agreement.

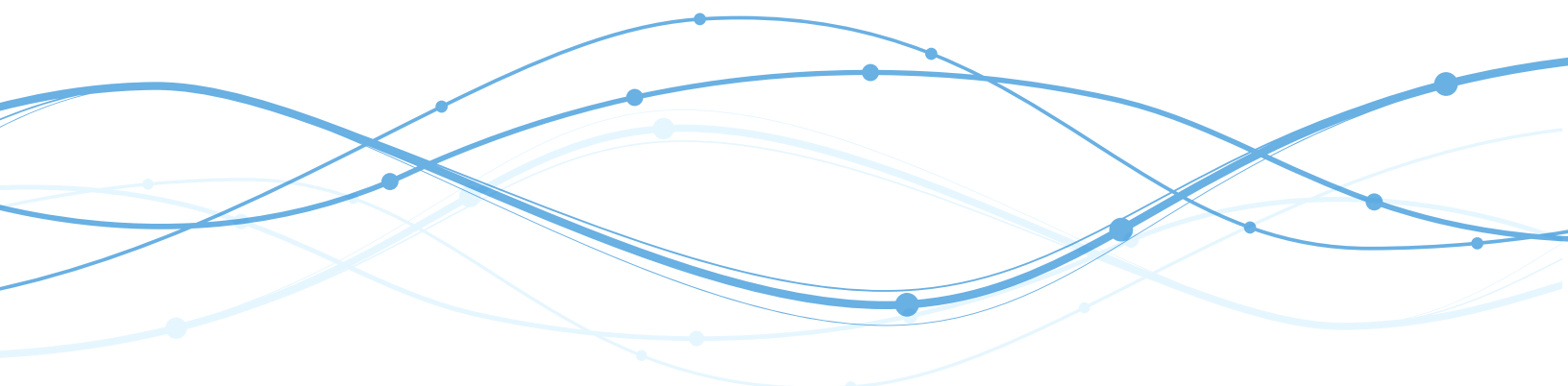
Conclusion

With its combination of SAS best practices, customer-driven security and privacy settings, as well as industry standard incident and problem resolution procedures, SAS Remote Managed Services is an excellent offering for SAS customers. SAS Remote Managed Services is the best fit for customers who require the level of expertise, governance and service operations management and monitoring of their SAS platforms, while ensuring the security and integrity of their data by keeping their solutions in their own third-party cloud provider.

For more information on SAS Remote Managed Services, please contact your local SAS account executive.

Glossary of Terms

| Term | Description |
|--------------|--|
| SAS software | The SAS software stack that is being managed by SAS, from the SAS servers to the RDBMS (if being managed as part of SAS Remote Managed Services). |
| SAS platform | The SAS software and services combined with associated third-party software. |
| ITIL | The information technology infrastructure library (ITIL) is a set of practices for IT service management that focuses on aligning IT services with the needs of business. |
| RACI matrix | RACI stands for responsible, accountable, consulted and informed. A responsibility assignment matrix describes the participation by various roles in completing tasks or deliverables for a project or business process. |
| TLS | Transport layer security is a cryptographic protocol that provides communication security over a computer network. |
| AES 256 | The Advanced Encryption Standard is a specification for the encryption of electronic data established by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (256 refers to the key length used). |
| Firewall | A technological barrier designed to prevent unauthorized or unwanted communications between computer networks or hosts. |



Learn more about [SAS Remote Managed Services](#).

