Editor's preface

The book you are reading reprints 33 Stata Tips from the *Stata Journal* from 2014 to 2023, with thanks to their original authors. It is a sequel to *One Hundred Nineteen Stata Tips* from 2014, reissued together with this volume. The *Journal* began publishing tips in 2003, beginning with volume 3, number 4. The Editors are now pleased to reprint this selection in this book. Among past and present Editors, Nicholas J. Cox has overseen the production of these Tips from the beginning, with continued support and encouragement from H. Joseph Newton and Stephen P. Jenkins.

The *Stata Journal* publishes substantive and peer-reviewed articles ranging from reports of original work to tutorials on statistical methods and models implemented in Stata, and indeed on Stata itself. Other features include regular columns such as "Speaking Stata", book reviews, and announcements.

We are pleased by the external recognition that the *Journal* has achieved. The *Stata Journal* is indexed and abstracted by CompuMath Citation Index, Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Sciences, RePEc: Research Papers in Economics, Science Citation Index Expanded (also known as SciSearch), Scopus, and Social Sciences Citation Index.

But back to the Tips. There was little need for tips in the early days. Stata 1.0 was released in 1985. The original program had 44 commands, and its documentation totaled 175 pages. The current version, on the other hand, has hundreds if not thousands of commands—including an embedded matrix language called Mata—and Stata's official documentation now totals more than 18,000 pages. Beyond that, the user community has added several hundred more commands and many more pages explaining them or the official commands.

The pluses and the minuses of this growth are evident. As Stata expands, it is increasingly likely that users' needs can be met by available code. But at the same time, learning how to use Stata and even learning what is available become larger and larger tasks.

The Tips are intended to help. The ground rules for Stata Tips, as found in the original 2003 statement, are laid out as the next item in this book. We have violated one original rule in the letter, if not the spirit: some Stata Tips have been much longer than three pages. However, the intention of producing concise tips that are easy to pick up remains as it was.

The Tips grew from many discussions and postings on Statalist, at Stata conferences, meetings, and workshops, and elsewhere, which underscores a simple fact: Stata is now so big that it is easy to miss even simple features that can streamline and enhance your

sessions with Stata. This applies not just to new users, who understandably may quake nervously before the manual mountain, but also to longtime users, who too are faced with a mass of new features in every release.

Tips have come from Stata users as well as from StataCorp employees. Many discuss new features of Stata, or features not documented fully or even at all. We hope that you enjoy the Stata Tips reprinted here and can share them with your fellow Stata users. If you have tips that you would like to write, or comments on the kinds of tips that are helpful, do get in touch with us, as we are eager to continue the series.

Among many complementary resources, and beyond the all-important help files and manual volumes, I want to flag two features of the StataCorp website, https: // www. stata.com, namely, the FAQs ("Frequently asked questions on using Stata") and the Stata Blog, *Not Elsewhere Classified*. Both share the primary aims of alerting you to features of Stata and how to use them easily and effectively. They also include many contributions from the user community.

Nicholas J. Cox, Editor
October 2023