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Office bearers:

President: Clyde Garrow, CSIRO, 314 Albert Street,
East Melbourne.

Vice-President: John Simkin, City of Moorabbin Library,
161 Jasper Road, Bentleigh.

Hon. Secretary: Jean Hagger, Unit 4, 2 Erne Street,
Mont Albert 3127.

Hon. Treasurer: Joyce Korn, Librarian, Australian Society of
Accountants, 49 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne 3000.

Committee Members: Coryl Muntz, Deepdene.

Winifred Mills, Port Melbourne.

Newsletter Editor: John Simkin, City of Moorabbin Library,
161 Jasper Road, Bentleigh,
Victoria 3204.

Journal Liason Officer (*The Indexer*): Coryl Muntz.

Convener, Panel of Assessors: Coryl Muntz.
(Indexes for assessment to be
directed to the Hon. Secretary.)

SURVEY OF INDEXES PREPARED IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Society of Indexers has been in existence for some 2½ years. Recently the Society decided to attempt to determine the state of the art of indexing in Australia. It seemed that the most practical way of achieving this object was by distributing a questionnaire to professionals in the field.

One of the immediate problems is to define the term *index* and *indexing*. The International Standards organization *International Standard 5127/III* defines *indexing* as the :-

Representation of data resulting from content analysis by elements of a documentary or a natural language usually to facilitate retrieval.

The *British Standard BS 3700* definition of an index is :-

A systematic guide to the location of words, concepts or other items in books, periodicals or other publications. An index consists of a series of entries appearing, not in the order in which they appear in the publication, but in some other order (e.g. alphabetical) chosen to enable the user to find them quickly, together with references to show where each item is located.

These definitions might be quibbled at but essentially they cover the main elements. Thus a wide range of products may come within the definition ranging from the traditional book index to indexes developed for machine-readable storage and retrieval systems.

The survey will attempt to determine the state of the art in the indexing of bibliographic and non-bibliographic information. It is realized that this is a somewhat ambitious task. However a partial coverage of the field will provide useful information.

A by-product of the survey might be some indication of areas having potential for development of machine-readable data bases containing information of particular significance for Australian users e.g. newspaper indexes, economic, social, sporting information and scientific and technical information relating to Australian resources. Further the survey might indicate where collaboration in these and other fields could be developed.

The questionnaire will be distributed soon so that a summary of results can be made for presentation at the Society's seminar to be held during the Library Association of Australia Conference in Canberra in August.

C. Garrow
President

BACKGROUND TO THE NEWS

by Tania Nesbit, ARMIT, ALAA
formerly Production Assistant,
Australian Broadcasting Commission

The nature of television and radio determines that libraries are of vital importance in providing information of an extremely varied scope and form. Information retrieval for current affairs and news has inherent problems which are further exaggerated by the deadlines which must be met.

Within the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), the network of libraries co-operates and inter-acts to provide a comprehensive information service for the production of television and radio programmes. Libraries are a vital part of the media because the very output is information of some kind, whether it be a news bulletin, musical score or documentary. There are always facts to be verified, pronunciation to establish, costumes to illustrate, etc.

Media libraries are unique in two main aspects. Firstly, there is the limitless variety and scope of information that must be processed and retrieved rapidly, to meet ever-present deadlines. There is virtually no boundary to the subject areas. The second lies in the fact that the very nature of the media results in the output of an immense volume of material. Obviously it is essential for media libraries to present accurate and the most up-to-date information available.

It is the producer's task to select information as his raw material, to process it, mould it and create programmes. These may be a drama script, comedy, or full length documentaries, while others take the form of interviews and discussions. In almost every case, library information of some kind is needed.

The library network of the ABC consists of:

- . Reference Library holds a wide selection of monographs, serials and overseas newspapers.
- . Current Affairs Research Library at Ripponlea studios. The holdings include news clipping files, magazines, periodicals, subject indexes and selected reference works.
- . Film Library
- . Stills Library holds photos, slides and maps.
- . Sound Library holds records, cassettes and tapes.

Specific information may be needed from each to be able to put a programme to air. For example, a news item on allegations of atrocities committed by China in an attack on Vietnam could include information from each source, as follows:

- . The Reference Library would search for historical background and an overall perspective on the issue, using encyclopaedias and general reference works.
- . News clippings files and magazines would be searched for evidence substantiating or disputing the claims. The Research Library concentrates on providing information on the latest developments.

- The Film Library would search for relevant film footage.
- The Stills Library would search for photographs and maps.
- The Sound Library would be requested to select and supply appropriate music to be dubbed onto the film, if necessary.

It must be remembered that all this must be done under great pressure, as time is a most important factor. Sometimes it is a matter of minutes before all this has to be co-ordinated and presented to the reporter and producer.

There is a greater emphasis on the accuracy of background research as competition between stations becomes fiercer and audiences more critical and aware. Not only this but the legal ramifications are a consideration. For example, in 1978 a TDT reporter asked for background on the freeway proposed by the Country Roads Board through Alexandra Parade and the Domain. The reporter made statements on air to this effect and promptly next morning a legal writ was served to the producer by the CRB. However, we had found in the initial research that newspaper articles and an annual report by CRB had inadvertently mentioned these plans, so that the ABC could not be blamed for libel or misrepresentation.

The Reference Library. This exists to ensure that accurate information is provided to meet programme deadlines. An important function is to supply information to producers at an early stage in their planning. For example, in planning *Power without glory*, the producers and directors needed to read literature of the period extensively, to be familiar with manners, attitudes and customs of all levels of society. The set designers needed books with lavish illustrations of street scenes, buildings, furniture, clothes and people. This is typical of much of the work performed by the Reference Library. It is organized along the lines of a public library, including an extensive reference collection and overall stock of approximately 17,000 monographs. The collection is classified by Dewey and uses Sear's subject headings.

The News and Current Affairs Research Library. Because of the very nature of current affairs and news, all enquiries have to be answered quickly, more or less instantly. In spite of this facts and background information must be verified.

This Library concentrates on press cuttings from major newspapers such as *The Age*, *The Australian*, *The Sun*, *The National Times*, and *Financial Review*, which are filed by Subject and Personal sequences. The organization of the collection presents problems, identical to those of newspaper libraries; a great volume of material; a wide range of subjects; immediacy and accuracy of retrieval. A basic reference collection is also held, including encyclopaedias, Who's Who, almanacs and dictionaries. Indexes such as *Keessing's Contemporary Archives*, *Guidelines*, *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, and *Facts on File* are constantly used as a guide to magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Bulletin*, *New Statesman*, etc. The users of this service include most programme makers, script writers, reporters, journalists and researchers, so the librarian should be aware of the future plans of all these.

Facts often have to be checked or supplemented within minutes. For instance, if there was a major air crash, some of the additional facts needed may include:

- when was the last comparable crash?
- what is the biggest number of fatalities to date?
- has the same type of plane crashed before? When? Where?

The answers to these questions can rarely be found in reference works, because they are unlikely to be sufficiently up-to-date. This kind of detailed information can best be found in up-to-date newspaper files and periodicals.

One of the biggest problems is to decide which principles to adopt for subject indexing. The indexing of news is difficult because we are trying to organize current information while it is still in a fluid state, before the underlying trends become apparent. The problem is made more difficult because the indexing scheme must be able to cope with the following prerequisites:

- . Produce any specific cutting given reasonable data.
- . Produce any significant fact published in newspapers.
- . Produce background information on any person or subject.
- . Be capable of expansion with new topics.
- . Allow for frequent change of headings and subdivisions.
- . Allow rapid retrieval.
- . Employ memorable headings for ease of retrieval.

Geoffrey Whatmore of New York Times Information Bank explains it thus:

We are filing for finding. We are also attempting to arrange news in categories in which it appears in the mind of the enquirer - and under the same names. It is the skill of the information worker to translate the enquirers' language into the terms used in the classification. 1.

Generally, we can say that the more specific and direct the headings, the easier they are to understand, the simpler to find and retrieve material. Subject headings should ideally employ the same words as appear in the news, the current terminology. This, however, presents its own set of problems. As an example, in the case of the dismissal of the Whitlam Government by Sir John Kerr in November 1975, the subject of the issue changed constantly with each development, as follows:

*Economics - Foreign Loans
Politics - General
Australian Labor Party
Liberal Party
Governor General
Constitution
Elections - Federal, Dec. 1976
Demonstrations
Kerr, Sir John
Whitlam, Gough*

Looking now at the subject retrospectively, we may refer to the *Constitutional Crisis*.

We cannot look ahead to know where a particular topic will lead, so headings must constantly be changed and amended to cope with developments. A current affairs research library is useless unless it keeps up with the news of the minute. This sometimes means clippings filed in the morning may be out of date by the afternoon. Not only must articles be indexed thoroughly but filed immediately for rapid retrieval.

The main problem I encountered was whether to approach indexing from *grouped* or *direct* headings. We can illustrate this problem by looking at the subject *Women as priests in the Catholic church*. The classed or grouped headings may include:

*Religion
Religion - Catholic Church
Religion - Christianity - Catholic Church - women
Religion - Church of England
Religion - Church of England - women*

or, as a direct heading:

*Women and the Church
or even Women as Priests*

Even though we have *see* and *see also* references, the file is in one place and may be overlooked.

In the above example, the point of view is important. We may be looking at it from the slant of the story:

- . background on modern day church, or
- . women's movement, and acceptance in male spheres, or
- . acceptance by the Catholic Church of women.

They all require the same file but from a different subject approach depending on the story being researched.

The smaller the library, the more specific and direct the headings should be. As the collection grows, however, a degree of grouping becomes essential to retrieve all related topics. There are advantages in both methods. If *direct* headings used, the advantages are:

- . Rapid retrieval
- . Easier to understand and remember
- . Simpler to find
- . Fewer *see* references

The disadvantages are:

- . Splits related topics
- . Needs extensive *see also* references

If *grouped* headings employed, the advantages are:

- . Gives overall scope of topic
- . Better for in-depth inquiries
- . Fewer *see also* references

The disadvantages are:

- . Leads to very long headings
- . Uncertainty in many placings
- . New topics difficult to fit
- . Hard for others to remember

The key decision in subject indexing is the importance of the subject in that particular library. A few years ago we might have had:

Aircraft - Noise
Oil - Pollution
Water - Pollution
Air - Pollution

At present because of increased awareness and interest, pollution would be the major heading in a current affairs area, and so would become:

Pollution - Water
Pollution - Air
Pollution - Oil

We must continually update headings because of changing emphasis in current affairs and journalese jargon.

Because we are dealing with reporters and newspaper language it is necessary to reflect this in subject headings. Newspapers tend to *tag* topics and this is how the story is identified by reporters and the public at large. For example:

The Loans Affair
The Constitutional Crisis
The Land Scandal
The Minus Children
The Beach Inquiry
The Red Bikini Girl

Reporters and researchers adopt this jargon and so would ask for The Land Scandal file instead of *Victoria: Housing Commission: Land Inquiry*.

One solution to these problems is *multifiling*. It is necessary in many cases because there is so much overlapping of topics covered in each newspaper article. News topics interact with each other and are wanted from many points of view. However the abuse of multifiling can cause great extravagance as far as storage is concerned. It becomes time consuming and the collection becomes unwieldy as far as space is concerned. Many newspaper libraries have separate files for Personal, subject, countries and sport. Personal files obviously overlap many subjects but I limited these to articles dealing with the person's biography, with cross references to issues. For example, Bob Hawke's file contains articles about *the man* but not each industrial dispute in which he was involved.

As well as having a card index of all subject headings used plus *see* and *see also* references I found it invaluable to put *see also* references to related topics on the actual manila folder of the file.

In the fields of television and radio, information is required instantly and I think it is important to realise that the collection, however well organized, cannot solve all our problems. Other organizations hold collections of specialized material and they are usually accessible. A good example is the La Trobe Library, where holdings cover all aspects of Australian history, geography, literature and anthropology. The newspaper collection has accumulated over the years and is vital for research in historical detail. For example, in *Power without glory*, the researchers wanted to know how much a bottle of whisky cost in 1935. The answer was found by looking at advertisements in *The Argus* and *The Herald* for that time.

One source of information often overlooked is personal contact by phone. We should not become too proud to ask for help from experts. Often the information required can be obtained immediately by phoning the relevant government department, university or company who specialise in the field. For example, in our example of the air crash, it would be less time consuming to phone the Public Relations Office at the Department of Transport than search through years of files of magazines. The reporters and producers don't care how the information is obtained, as long as the service is fast and accurate. The librarian's prestige can be greatly increased if a little initiative is used in this regard.

The Film Library. The collection includes a vast quantity and range of film which has to be available for transmission at short notice. The ABC film library holds ten million feet of film at present and the estimated increase for this year alone will be over one million feet. All film received by the library remains in the section of Current Stock for approximately 3 months, to allow sufficient time for deciding if required permanently. During this period departments such as News, Drama or Light Entertainment submit retention forms indicating which programmes they wish retained, in whole, part and if permanently. It has been found from experience advisable not to mix new intake, for which there is a high level of enquiries with older material. If it is to be retained permanently it is transferred to the Archive Vaults, put into enamelled cans and labelled giving its accession number, title and copyright.

The main catalogue consists of a card file arranged by title of programme with details of film sequences used in each, e.g. the number of reels, type of sound, name of producer and editor, copyright. Other files are arranged by accession number and, most important, by subject headings.

Accuracy of indexing is vital to pinpoint specific items required. While one can search through a book for the information it contains, searching a film without the aid of comprehensive indexes is more difficult. It is time consuming to view a 30 minute film for a 30 second sequence without the help of an indexing system. Most television items consist of many sequences of film edited together. Some of these shots may consist of seconds of images spliced together. A 3 minute film story may contain hundreds of images, all of which have been recorded and indexed for future use.

Shots are indexed under a wide variety of headings and sub-headings. Personalities are listed alphabetically, and there are also section headings such as Actors, Tennis Players, Boxers, with a chronological order of sub-headings. General subjects deal with every subject imaginable and contain sub-headings with a description of the filmed shot.

e.g. *BRAZIL - RIO DE JANEIRO* (Main heading)

sub-heading *Beach* - man playing ball 12 feet
 - cars along road 13 feet
 - sea front 11 feet
 - palms and bathers 20 feet
 City - from top of building 10 feet
 - with crucifix in foreground 9 feet

This catalogue, no matter how detailed, can only indicate what material should be consulted. No verbal description can give a complete impression or substitute for viewing of the film. The final decision is often a matter of aesthetics as to whether certain shots are suitable for inclusion.

There have been experiments at the ABC using computers for indexing and retrieval of film. They have not been successful because the requests tend to be too general and a human element is required to suggest alternatives. It is not purely a matter of retrieval, but assessing suitability. Computer programmed indexing would be more suitable for repository libraries such as the State Film Centre.

Stills Library. There is a great need and scope for the use of pictorial material in television productions. The main source of pictorial material at the Ripponlea television studios is the Stills and Slides collection which is administered by the Film Librarian. The collection holds thousands of photographs and slides. These consist mainly of portraits of outstanding personalities such as politicians, sportsmen, celebrities; also maps, charts, and general topics for use in news stories. These are often superimposed behind the newsreader or compere as he is reading the relevant story. The subject could be anything, and once again as in most media libraries, immediacy is the most important consideration. If the material is not available from the collection, other resources both within and without the organization may be called upon.

One of the most useful and reliable pictorial sources for television are the newspaper pictorial libraries. Each day newspapers contain many photographs of people, places and things, taken by staff photographers or obtained from overseas press agencies such as Reuter, Australian Associated Press or United Press International. This is an invaluable source of information for news and current affairs programmes on television. The collections are comprehensive and wide in scope.

The Reference Library within the ABC is also invaluable for supplying pictorial material to all television programmes. There is obvious value for costume design, set references, characterization. These can be obtained from a variety of sources such as illustrated books, cartoons, magazines and newspapers. Even the smallest illustration can be enlarged by means of the camera to give an effective illustration. For example, in a story done by This Day Tonight on the meaning of Hell to people, the Reference Library was asked to supply all material relating to this subject. The primary source was a reference work *Themes in art* and from this were found some paintings which dealt with the subject of Hell. An attempt was made to locate reproductions of particular art works mentioned. Works by Michaelangelo and Dante's *Inferno* were relatively easy to locate in the Reference Library's art collection, but further enquiries had to be made to the Art Library at the State Library of Victoria for more obscure works.

Newspaper cartoons are also invaluable for political and social comment, and must not be overlooked by any librarian working within the media. A good example is shown by an item which appeared on This Day Tonight on the evening of the sacking of parliamentarian Rex Connor, over the Loans Affair. The producer of This Day Tonight asked for all cartoons containing Rex Connor to be made available, within two hours. This involved searching through a cartoon collection at This Day Tonight Research Library, going into the Age and Herald/Sun Pictorial Libraries and searching through all cartoons published for the last few years. These were then edited together and suitable music added, and this made a humorous and poignant story on that subject. The librarian must not overlook any potential sources for illustrative material.

Sound Library. Most programmes on radio and television require music, voice and sound effects. Television requirements are perhaps a little more stringent, since these must match the visual presentation that appears on the screen at every point. The Sound Library is therefore a very important source of services to the media industry. The Australian Broadcasting Commission Sound Library consists of three separate departments.

The Record Library holds approximately 60,000 LP and EP records for programme and reference purposes. These include classical, modern orchestral, and instrumental, religious and choral, spoken word, jazz and latest pops. In addition there are mood music records especially designed for background or incidental use in films, radio and television.

The Record Library is orientated toward radio music programmes, and one of the most important functions of the library is to plan and compile music programmes for all ABC Radio. This is done by the grams operators who are employed as part of the library staff. The library caters for ABC only and is not open to the public or other companies for borrowing. However, there are many requests from the public for information on pieces of music played, and this is an important public relations function of the Record Library.

As in all libraries in the media, the sheer volume of new material makes indexing a problem. New daily stock of records is required immediately by the staff for inclusion in programmes and therefore cataloguing and processing is never ending. The catalogue consists of an alphabetical card sequence of artist and title of track. The contents of the LP and record number are also included on the card.

The classification and storage of the actual records is by category of music. This is done according to a system which has been evolved by the ABC and is now used by all sound libraries in the ABC. It involves a three letter scheme which denotes the category.

e.g. VAA Martial music
VBB Choral and secular music

The classification then proceeds by consecutive numbers. It is a time consuming process to classify records as each track must be listened to before the appropriate classification made.

The Sound Effects Library consists of tapes and discs which include every kind of sound imaginable from handclapping to bell ringing. These are used in radio drama, television productions and any programme which requires sound effects.

CONCLUSION

The unique function of media libraries is well illustrated by R.D. Hewlett, who is head of library services in the BBC.

Most other specialised industries have a product or range of products which are tangible. They take a raw material - steel, crude oil or food - and process it in some way, thereby changing into a product which is marketed. The information needs of such industries are usually highly specialized and complex, they might well call for librarians who are not only qualified as professionals, but also experts in the special nature of the product. Nevertheless, it remains true that in such industries, libraries and information resources are secondary features, not an essential part of the mainstream.

In the industries of broadcasting and press (media), the position is different. The product is itself information. The raw material of every program is in some sense information, whether it takes the form of a musical score, television documentary or a compilation of gramophone records. 2.

This is even more so the case with news and current affairs programmes.

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From the *IASC : SCAD Newsletter: Vol. 2, No. 1, January 1979*

PUNCH ON THE USE (ULTERIOR) AND VALUE (COMMERCIAL) OF INDEXES

Two recent issues of the British magazine *Punch* contain articles which, in an unconsciously related fashion, indicate some rather doubtful uses for indexes and the monetary values which the authors hope to derive from their suggested practices.

Jo Grimond, former leader of the British Liberal Party, considers the use of the index in memoirs, particularly in the context of the political autobiography, under the title *Behind Hard Covers* (*Punch*, v. 275, no. 7196, September 6, 1978, p. 352-353). Imminently prepared to give the reading public his own view of what really happened, Grimond pauses for due and cynical consideration of the economic aspects of his projected autobiography. In common with his political colleagues of a literate bent, Grimond concludes from his market survey that the only efficient way to plan the work (i.e. to plan the book's *Shape*) is to begin with the index. Success depends on the inclusion of certain names and Grimond considers the four categories of individuals, presumably in order of their priority, whose names should appear in the index: potential reviewers if they are known; influential colleagues if future advancement is desirable; *The Great*, beginning with Churchill, and backed by suitable anecdotes in the text; and, the notorious. To assist interested colleagues and the general reader, Grimond suggests a general subject heading of *Scandals* with the applicable names of the notorious grouped under this heading. Having established the general outline for the autobiography through careful consideration of the names to be included in the index, Grimond then examines in equal detail the other scholarly attributes which the work must contain: pictures (preferably with *The Great*); dedication and acknowledgements (the use of humour and footnotes are discussed; publishers apparently do not favour the use of footnotes); and last, of minor concern, the text itself for which the author should already have been paid in advance. The full text is not as critical as those portions which will be extracted for publication in the Sunday Press. Presumably careful attention should also be given in writing the text to any details specifically hinted at in the index. Grimond concludes with a few philosophical thoughts on the ubiquitous and tedious nature of the contemporary political memoir and on the common insipidity of political prose.

J. E. Hinder opens *You, Too, Can Be a Book-Reviewer* (*Punch*, v. 275, no. 7203, October 25, 1978, p. 705) in a near-Cartesian vein: *I read; therefore, I can review books*. The illiterate must content themselves with careers as critics of drama, film and television. Contrary to popular belief, and even though an ability to read is incumbent on members of the book-reviewing fraternity, Hinder hastens to assure aspiring book-reviewers that they are not expected to read entire books. Short, popular works of fiction (largely mysteries and historical romances) are the only exception; these can be easily identified by their glossy and lurid covers. However, it is unlikely that the book-reviewer will suffer much eye strain since devotees of the *short, popular works of fiction* only read tabloids and tabloids do not publish reviews.

Sunday newspapers which contain reviews are an essential element in the education of a book-reviewer and approximately four weeks of training is recommended. A close examination of the published reviews indicates the two categories of material which concern the book-reviewer. Little needs to be said about novels: they are generally reviewed in batches; they should be dealt with *briskly*; and they need not be read from cover to cover. Essential reading for a novel consists of the dust jacket (for pertinent information about the plot), a few pages at the beginning, a few more in the middle of the book and the last three pages. Hinder then suggests a number of stock phrases into which the information gleaned from the reviewer's selective perusal can be set for the reader's edification.

Works of non-fiction are the other staple of the book-reviewing trade. These works are reviewed on an individual basis. The advantage of non-fiction over the novel is that the former contains an index. Hinder does not specify what the reviewer should do if a work of non-fiction does not have an index, although presumably an entire review could be constructed around the theme of how much more useful the study would have been if it had been indexed. Where an index is present the reviewer is advised to examine it carefully for a person, place or subject on which (s)he is informed. The purpose of this exercise is to find some error in the work. This will demonstrate the reviewer's superior knowledge and suitability as a reviewer of this particular work, and show that the book has been read carefully. The balance of the view should consist of quotations taken from scattered paragraphs in the work. Hinder concludes with a discussion of the economics of selling review copies once the intellectual task is completed.

It is interesting to note that Stephen Leacock, in *Index: There Is No Index (My Remarkable Uncle and Other Sketches*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1942), foresaw not only Grimond's suggestions about including *The Great* in an index, but also Hinder's suggestion of how a book-reviewer might best make use of an index. In typical fashion Leacock went beyond Grimond in his discussion of entries relating to famous persons; references in the index might lead to such sentences in the text as: *was as fat as Churchill*, and *owned a Churchill designed blimp suit*. A new vista for name-dropping in an index is thus opened up for political autobiographers. Leacock felt that reviewers should be compelled to read a book in its entirety, and not just the index. However, for the convenience of the *gentle reader* he admitted that an index was a necessity.

Research grant for a newspaper index

Dietrich Borchardt, Chief Librarian of La Trobe University, has been invited to supervise and administer a research project designed to study the characteristics and costs of an Australian newspaper index. The Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services has allocated \$4,000 to this investigation which is to be completed in three months.

The absence of an Australian newspaper index has long been deplored by many historians, political scientists and others concerned with public opinion and national policy issues - at least in so far as these matters are reflected in the daily press. The great importance and influence of the press has been well recognized for over 200 years. Yet it is difficult to come to grips with it when it is almost impossible to trace its message except by a most tedious process of leafing through every page. There exist two major indexes to newspapers, *The Times* (London) - late lamented - and the *New York Times*. The latter has been produced in machine readable form for several years and constitutes a significant complement to the information services operated for the US Congress.

The study which AACOBS has now funded is to lead to some positive proposals for an Australian newspaper index and how and where it is to be compiled.

Extracts from: *The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada:*
a night flight presentation delivered at the Sixth Annual
Canadian Association for Information Science Conference,
by Peter E. Greig. Montreal: 11 May 1978.

The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada is a new society and still less than a year old. Tonight I would like to outline the events which led to the establishment of the society, detail some of its accomplishments during the past eleven months and suggest some of its immediate concerns for the future.

The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada owes its inception to a recommendation proposed at the Canadian abstracting and indexing services workshop convened by the Committee on Bibliographical Services for Canada in March 1977.

The Committee on Bibliographical Services for Canada was established in 1975 as a committee of the National Library Advisory Board in response to the main resolution of the National Conference on the State of Canadian Bibliography (Vancouver, 1974). The committee chairman is a member of the National Library Advisory Board and committee members include invited representatives from Canadian agencies, associations and institutions concerned with bibliographical activity in the academic, professional and public sectors. A permanent secretariat is provided for the committee by the National Library of Canada.

The committee's terms of reference include the responsibility to determine the needs of bibliographical activity, where such activity is defined as the identification, description and dissemination of recorded information. The members of the committee, from their first meeting, have emphasised that this definition of bibliographical activity includes both indexing and abstracting.

The committee began to investigate the Canadian indexing and abstracting situation following its October 1975 meeting. A survey of Canadian indexing and abstracting services with publicly available products was undertaken in February 1976. As a result of this survey, and at the invitation of the National Librarian, the committee convened a workshop with representatives from eighteen Canadian indexing and abstracting services in March 1977. Summary reports of the workshop and its recommendations appeared in the March-April 1977 and May-June 1977 issues of *National Library News*. The full proceedings of the workshop is available on request from the committee secretariat.

..... While the society has achieved not a little in its first eleven months of existence, it must concentrate in the coming year in creating that awareness of indexers and abstracters, and of the crucial value of their work, which is so clearly stated in the constitution and bylaws as a major objective of the society. At the same time there must be a greater effort on the part of members of the society as a forum for their communication. The society's executive can assist this at both the national and the regional level by planning practical and theoretical workshops similar to those which have been so successful in the Ottawa region. Finally, because of the difficulties inherent in holding frequent national meetings in Canada, more emphasis must be placed on the development and encouragement of the regional groups to ensure the vitality of the society as a national association.

The power of the indexer

The following appeared in *The Age*, Saturday March 17, in a review by Nancy Keesing of *Louisa Lawson*, by Iorna Oliff.

.....One quite inexplicable matter is that the author who so greatly admires early New South Wales feminists - Maybanke Anderson, Rose Scott, Louisa Lawson et al - refers to recent feminists in an invariably derogatory tone as "women's libbers" or "libbers". The publishers reinforce this inappropriate slang by indexing all references to women's crusades for civil and personal rights, at all periods, under "Women's Liberation".

A great number of women, whether or not they are directly associated with the Women's Movement, will be affronted by this tone and usage. By this gaffe alone sales will be lost precisely where they might have been expected, since Louisa Lawson is one of the symbolic figures of Australian feminists of all ages and degrees of activism.