EDITORIAL

Fancy it being Winter already. The weather seems to know it, and here in Melbourne some would think it best to curl up indoors, with our noses buried in the backs of books – however, a number of us did venture out recently to attend our **General Meeting, success-fully run on the theme of 'Indexing as a business'**.

Our speakers provided enough information and stimulation to sustain two meetings, and a horde of hungry, thirsty indexers (23 in all) descended on the impressive spread organised by Treasurer, Joyce Korn. Thanks go to the two speakers, Vesta Iskra and Kerry Herbstreit, for making it such a worthwhile meeting. Vesta, a tax accountant at Nelson Parkhill BDO, spoke on taxation for indexers, and Kerry, freelance editor/indexer and until recently specialist bookseller, spoke on quoting for an index. A hand-out prepared by Kerry has been reproduced here with her permission. While the April issue contained a piece by Garry Cousins (NSW President) on the same topic, it was felt that with a matter of such importance to indexers, we ought to explore various ways of skinning the cat. I hope to bring you an account of Vesta's talk in the next issue.

Indexers Available is back from the printers. Members will receive a free copy shortly.

Three reminders: (1) places are still available for the Databases and Database Design Workshop, to be held at CSIRO Information Services Branch, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne on Tuesday, 30 July 1991, 9.00am – 5.00pm (cost $125 – members, $150 – others. Victorian members should have received an application form with the last newsletter. Others should contact Max McMaster on (03) 418 7335 or Lea Giles-Peters on (03) 418 7339. See the May issue of the Newsletter for full details.

(2) The **next meeting of the NSW Branch** will be held on Wednesday 10 July 1991, at 6.00 for 6.30pm (see notice in this Newsletter).

(3) Recommendations for the **Australian Society of Indexers Medal** should be sent to the Secretary, Australian Society of Indexers, GPO Box 1251L, Melbourne, 3001 as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, 23 August 1991. Details were published in the May issue – any queries about Medal entries should be put to the Secretary, Ian Odgers, telephone (03) 418 7275.

Thankyou to those who have sent contributions to the Newsletter – some items received will appear in the next issue, or in the next 'expanded' issue in September or October.

Helen Kinniburgh.

BRISBANE INDEXERS MEET (AND EAT)

Despite being 'stood up' by our President (on some weak excuse about no one paying his

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airfares) a group of Brisbaners interested in indexing met in May. This was the first time there had been such a meeting in Queensland and the fact that it was held round a dinner table was seen as a good omen by all present.

An advertisement in the local ALIA (Australian Libraries and Information Association) Newsletter attracted three people interested in indexing or in learning about it, to add to the four members of AusSI present. The evening gave us the opportunity to share experiences and talk about work we had done. As so often with freelancers, each of us had come to indexing by a different route and led very different working lives. We agreed that other meetings of this type would be of value and hope Max really will attend the next one. The only un-resolved question was – the same restaurant or a different one!?

Jean Dartnall
QLD Correspondent

NEW REGISTERED INDEXER

The Society congratulates Dr Simon Cauchi, who recently qualified as a Registered Indexer.

MEMBERS' FORUM

This column exists as a learning exchange. Members should send in queries and comments on any aspect of indexing. Readers with expertise in a given area are invited to respond. In the March issue, a member asked whether Australian honours should be recognised in an index.

On personal names and Australian honours

This responds to the question in Members' Forum, March 1991.

Australian honours should be recognised and treated no differently from traditional (Imperial) honours.

The pre-fixed titles Sir and Dame have ceased to be conferred in the Order of Australia but there are still many people so styled either from one of the older orders (eg. St Michael and St George) or in the Order of Australia.

It is incorrect to say that people 'receive the Order of Australia'. They are appointed Companions (AC), or Officers (AO), or Members (AM) of the Order of Australia or are awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). For a person's name in an index one has the choice of:

a) showing no titles, or
b) showing only pre-fixed titles, e.g. Sir, Doctor, Archbishop, etc., or
c) showing pre-fixed titles, e.g. Dame, the Hon, etc. and post-nominal titles e.g. AO, MSc, MP.

My book Dear you, AGPS, Canberra, 1991 gives more detail on this.

Robert Hyslop ISO

TO PREPARE AN ESTIMATE FOR AN INDEX

(Presented to the Australian Society of Indexers general meeting, Melbourne, Monday 27 May 1991.)

1. Do not, under any circum-tances, quote, or even estimate for work on an index without seeing the complete set of page proofs.

When your client commissions you to prepare the index, you should check immediately or as soon as possible to find out if there are any limits on the

index in the following three regards:

* deadline
* budget
* pages of text for an index

Any, or more usually, all three, may be limited, and this will have an immediate effect on the work you can do. Occasionally, any or all of these constraints can vary as the index is being compiled. Check if this is so whenever you are speaking with your client.

2. Consider drawing up a contract detailing the work that you understand you are required to do for your client. Stating the basic details and any limitations you have agreed verbally. It might seem unnecessary, but if there is a dispute abut payment, or what you were supposed to do, it could be a vital backstop. As your work proceeds, if there are any significant changes to the work that you agree on verbally with the client, confirm them in writing.

3. When you receive the page proofs, immediately check the word-count of the text. My experience is that frequently the client has no accurate idea of the word-count.

* Count the number of pages of text. Deduct any pages not to be indexed, such as illustrations, preface, appendix, etc.
* Count the number of lines of text on an average page. This may not be a FULL page.
* Count the average number of words per line. This will usually be about 10. (Count words in 20 lines, say, and divide result by 20).
* Multiply pages by lines by words. To be safe, round up to the nearest 500.
* Also note the number of lines of the whole text.

4. Estimate, keeping in mind the limitations mentioned in section 1 above, the type of

index likely to be appropriate. A helpful guide to follow here is in Book indexing, by M.D. Anderson (Cambridge University Press); read 'planning the index', particularly pages 3 to 9, which includes a discussion on the length of the index. A similar discussion on the length of an index is made on pages 29-30 of Indexing, the art of, by G. Norman Knight (George Allen and Unwin). A brief summary of the recommendations of length follows:

histories: 5 - 8%
biographies: 1 - 6%
travel/geography: 2 - 5%
science (secondary and lower tertiary): 3 - 5 %
advanced tertiary and large highly specialised texts: often 3-column, up to 15%

My own descriptions of indexing density are:

very light: <2%
light: 2 - 4%
medium: 4 - 6%
heavy: 6 - 10%
very heavy 10 - 15%

5. Calculate the probable density of the index by finding the relevant percentage (as in section 3) of the number of lines of text. This will give you the number of lines of index (one line containing two columns). A rougher approximation is to find the percentage of the number of pages of text. This will give you the number of pages of a standard two-column index.

6. Using your own records of indexes you have compiled, estimate as best you can the time you are likely to need for the index. You can probably index at the rate of about 6000 to 7000 words an hour of very light material such as a cookery book or a light autobiography. Serious non-

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fiction for general readers may be indexed at about 3000 to 5000 words an hour. Highly specialised, technical, academic, etc. work needs to be considered very carefully, and you may work at the rate of as little as 2000 words per hour.

7. With your resulting estimate of hours, calculate an all-up cost for the index using your hourly rate. Currently, experienced indexers can charge about $30 per hour if working on system cards. If you use a computer reasonably competently and quickly, you should be able to charge about $35 per hour. If you have academic or technical qualifications that are essential to the work you are about to do, you should charge a margin above the figures just mentioned - maybe an extra $5 - maybe more if you are virtually the only person who could possibly do the job.

I quote from a recent article, 'Freelancing: how to do it', by Cathryn Game, in the Society of Editors Newsletter (May 1991), **'Remember you are a business, not a charity, so behave like one'**.

8. You may now decide whether to quote on an hourly rate, giving an estimate of the time you will take, or do this calculation yourself, round it up to the nearest $100, and quote a lump sum for the whole job. If you use the 'lump sum' method, remember you can't bill your client for any time spent over your original quoted figure, unless the client agrees (preferably in writing) that you need to do more involved work than was originally undertaken.

9. After you have worked on - say - one or two chapters, check to see how your rate of work compares with your quote, proportionately. Also calculate whether the number of entries you have produced is roughly in proportion to the index

required for the whole book. If your rate of work or the number of entries varies significantly from your estimate or your quote, either adjust your working methods, or if this seems unsuitable, contact your client immediately and agree on what course to follow. If you both agree to change the style, complexity or size of the index, confirm this in writing.

When you start work, keep accurate records of all, repeat, ALL, the work you do on the job. Yes, that includes phone calls to the author, publisher, designer, visits to the library to find relevant refgerences, and don't forget to list any out-of-pocket expenses such as couriers, faxes, photocopying, etc. if these are required.

10. Return your work promptly, along with your written account. I always request payment within 14 days, and specify what that date will be. You may receive it within 14 days; you may not. If payment has not been received within 3 weeks, I feel you are justified in ringing your client and politely reminding them that you haven't received payment and could they please send a cheque promptly. After all, they have received the work you undertook to provide. Weekly reminders - at first polite, but later quite blunt - should be made thereafter if they fail to pay. Again, quoting Cathryn Game, 'This does not mean being aggressive, just pleasantly assertive. If you can't assert yourself, go and learn.'

Kerry Herbstreit
Registered Indexer

NEXT NSW MEETING

The next meeting of the NSW Branch will be held on

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Wednesday 10 July 1991, at 6.00 for 6.30pm in Seminar room 1, 11th floor, State Library of New South Wales.

Mary Turner, who works on the CSIRO Australis data-bases, will be speaking on 'Indexing databases on CD-ROM'.

The meeting promises to be of interest not only to indexers involved in database indexing, but to anyone who would like to know more about CD-ROM technology.

A small donation will be requested to cover costs.

INDEX REVIEW

Directory of Australian Associations 5th ed. (Information Australia, Melbourne, various dates). Edited by Amanda Slade.

This looseleaf directory lists Australian associations "classified by the service or principal type(s) of activity covered" and boasts a subject index that is updated with every sectional revision.

A scope of the work is included and mentions those groups not listed, such as alumni associations. It states that cross-referencing is provided, but does graciously admit to some errors and omissions.

However, the subject index is an extremely poor example of an index. My guess is that it is computer generated on keywords - but what little cross-referencing there is, is not very helpful.

If I was to look for an association on snakes or amphibians I would need to know that these are classified under HERPETOLOGY as there is no 'see' reference under SNAKES or AMPHIBIANS although there is a 'see' reference from REPTILES to HERPETOLOGY. But herein lies another problem - under the

REPTILES see HERPETOLOGY entry there is one reference for an association! This does not happen within properly indexed works - all like objects, or in this case associations, are always grouped together under one subject with 'see' or 'see also' references used to direct the user to a preferred heading.

The example above is not a one-off mistake - there are far too many occurrences of this type, and worse. What does one make of the WELFARE see COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS entry with a smaller Social Planning heading underneath. SOCIAL PLANNING as a heading is not used.

A 'see' reference is always used to direct the user to a particular heading - there should be NO entries under the non-preferred headings - some entries have 3 (e.g. INTELLECTUALLY HANDICAPPED see RETARDED PERSONS) listed underneath but only one of these 3 associations appear also under RETARDED PERSONS.

There appears to be no consistency with the form of the entries used.

Indexing usually requires the listing of subjects in the plural, of industries rather than occupations, and of countries rather than nationalities. This index includes both singular and plural terms, industries and occupations, and countries and nationalities, e.g. AFRICAN, AMERICA, DOLL, DRAUGHTSMEN, FOOD INDUSTRY, and LIBRARIES and LIBRARIANSHIP.

Sometimes the same association is entered with different addresses - this is different from entries for other organisations which have different state secretaries etc., which are listed under the one generic association name, e.g., Australian Council

for Education Through Technology has both an entry under an ACT address and a Queensland address. Very confusing.

The definite article "THE" takes on a new importance in this index - all associations beginning with "THE", e.g., THE AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION has its entry filed under THE rather than the first letter of the next work. This is reflected in the main directory as well.

The edition I have reviewed informed me that the next edition will be a bound one rather than the looseleaf folder which has sectional updates, e.g., A, B-E etc., throughout the year. I can only presume that it will now be an annual volume (or else, will there be a bound volume every two months?). There is no mention of how frequently updating of this directory will take place.

The directory itself is an invaluable tool for any information collection in Australia, but I would strongly recommend that the publishers employ a qualified indexer (and there are quite a few around) to edit at least the subject classification list. It would eliminate confusion and make the directory easier to use.

Mary Turner

UK CONFERENCE 1992

The Society of Indexers' conference will be held from 17-19 July 1992, at Chester College, Chester. For those who subscribe to The Indexer, details and booking forms will be included in the next issue. Anyone requiring further information or wishing to contribute, please contact Mrs C. Tyler, The Kopje, Wybunbury Lane, Stapeley, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7JP, UK.

DEADLINE - JULY ISSUE
Contributions should reach the Editor at the address below by 5 July 1991.