Australian Society of Indexers
NEWSLETTER

What's in a name?

Our Society was established 17 years ago. Tagging along faithfully throughout that period has been our ever-present Newsletter. It is the members' voice, an open forum, tireless harbinger of current happenings and occasional gold mine of information.

Does it deserve a fresh coat of paint? The computer age has enabled us to produce it "in-house" on our own PC. Graphics have become a reality. We can scan articles electronically.

But could it be time for ... a new _name_?

Maybe! At least we are entertaining the thought. In fact, we are now actively seeking suggestions.

One of our sister societies has already successfully made the transition. For many years the American Society of Indexers has published a newsletter called, not surprisingly, _American Society of Indexers Newsletter,_ or (more affectionately) _ASI Newsletter_. This year they have done some re-thinking, re-vamping and re-naming. The result is a rather stylish lemon-tinted production simply named _Keywords_. It even comes complete with a neat logo/masthead on the front cover depicting a key fitting into a lock. Readers reactions have been very favourable!
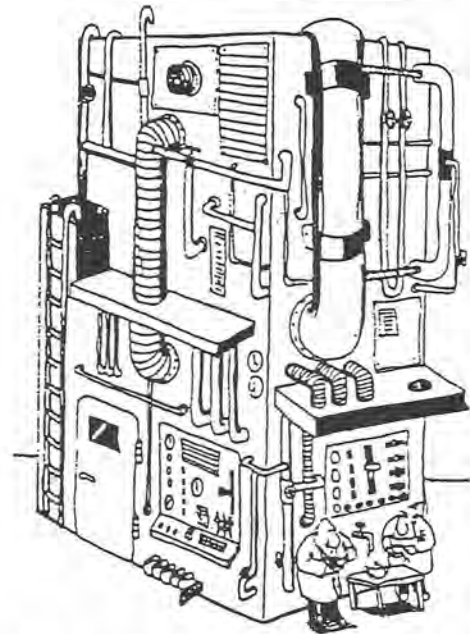
A cursory glance around other word-oriented Australian-produced mags reveals plenty of creativity by our local wordsmiths. NSW Society of Editors produces _Blue Pencil_; SA Society of Editors puts out _the word_; National Book Council issues a sketchy supplement to _Australian Book Review_ called _Thumbnail_. Macquarie University's Dictionary Research Centre has just started a new bulletin concerned with language usage called _Australian Style_.

Now is the time to test your own creativity and/or wit. We are running a competition to find the "ideal" name for our faithful newsletter. The prize will be a free AusSI subscription for 1993 (or a refund if you have already paid). Ideas for a newsletter logo/masthead (serious or otherwise) can also win a prize.

Entries should be addressed to the Secretary (See back page). Closing date: January 18, 1993. So why not jot down some ideas when you send in your 1993 subscription renewal?

Steve Sunter

This is our new computer-assisted indexing system. It also makes a great cup of tea !

Establishment of ACT Branch

A meeting was held at the University of Canberra, Library, on October 22 to inaugurate a Canberra Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers.

The meeting was preceded by drinks and snacks in the library's senior common room. This provided the opportunity for the 30 people present to meet each other before the more formal part of the evening.

Geraldine Triffitt welcomed the participants and explained the procedure of the meeting. She moved the motion, seconded by Anne Dunbar-Nobes, that a Canberra Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers be formed. The motion was carried unanimously by the financial members of the Society who were present.

An interim committee was appointed to examine the national constitution and draw up a constitution for the Branch. The interim committee consists of the following people; Jennifer Cole, Barbara Dickens, Margaret Hyland, Hilary Kemp, Geraldine Triffitt and Laurelle Tunks. A meeting was later arranged for the committee for Wednesday 4 November.

A questionnaire was given to all participants to fill in their preferences for activities, meeting times and venues.

Brenda Gerrie then spoke about the delights and pitfalls of setting up a business, such as an indexing or database management consultancy. She outlined the projects that her company, Infoscan had been involved in, to demonstrate the range of contract work available, and the need to plan to have a continuous flow of work.

She had found that setting up an office required careful planning, and that it was better to go for quality goods from the start, than face equipment failure from buying cheaper (but less efficient) machines or furniture.

She demonstrated from her experience that "working in her own home, and in her own time" had its pitfalls. For example, being at home meant being at the mercy of the telephone or fax machine at all hours of the day. Multi-skilling was a necessity to run a house and a business efficiently. Tendering for a contract may mean working against the clock to meet a deadline, and the same was true if the tender was successful.

Brenda's lively speech provided very practical advice and this was taken up by the audience in the question period which followed. Particularly pertinent seemed to be rates of pay for indexers, and the variation between rates for back-of-book indexing and those for database indexing.

Geraldine Triffitt

Notes: The ACT Branch is now going strong with 24 financial members of the Society. Furthermore, Canberra has just formed a new regional Society of Editors, with 86 financial members.

SOFTWARE REVIEW

IN>SORT™
Indexing Program

Available for IBM PC's and Macintosh. Supplier: Kensa Software, PO Box 4415, Northbrook, IL, USA   60065 (Ph: 708-559-0297) Price: US$129 + P&P, etc.

Reviewed by Max McMaster

According to the publicity brochure:

> "IN>SORT is very easy to learn and use (unlike the much more expensive programs) because it is simple... If you have a knowledge of indexing and some common sense about computers and software, you'll be writing entries in minutes, without having to look at the manual".

If only this was true!

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                            │
│  F1=HELP          C:NEWFILE     SC= 0  E= 0  C= 0    INSERT ON  │
│  ┌─────────────────┬──────────────────┬──────────────────┐ │
│  │ W> WRITE ENTRIES│ A> ALPHABETIZE   │ L> LOAD DISK FILE │ │
│  │ E> EDIT ENTRIES │ F> FORMAT/INDEX  │ S> SAVE TO DISK   │ │
│  │ G> GO TO SCREEN │                  │ D> DELETE DISK FILE│ │
│  │ X> EXIT PROGRAM │ C> CHANGE DRIVE C:│ R> RENAME DISK FILE│ │
│  └─────────────────┴──────────────────┴──────────────────┘ │
│                                                            │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 1. Main Menu

Getting into IN>SORT is very simple indeed, once you type "insort" you are immediately taken to the main menu [fig. 1]. To begin a new file [i.e. a new index] select W> WRITE ENTRIES from the menu. You are now ready to enter your index entries.

At this point some of the differences between IN>SORT and other indexing packages such as *Macrex*, *Cindex* or *Index4* become apparent. Entries load from the bottom of the screen, (rather than the top) and scroll off the top of the page, which is disconcerting initially [see fig. 2]. The other major difference is the structure of the entries. IN>SORT uses a chevron (>) as the sub-heading and sub-sub-heading delimiter, and the comma (,) to separate text from page numbers, e.g.

houses> timber> control of termites in, 32-4

```
┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
║ 1  plants> adaptation to salinity, 118       ║
║ 2  plants> frost-protected, 225              ║
║ 3  plants> tolerance to drying, 115          ║
║ 4  plasmids, 238, 241                         ║
║ 5  pigface, 115                               ║
║ 6  pig breeding, 204-5                         ║
║ 7  pigments, 111, 185                          ║
║ 8  plasmids, 277                               ║
║ 9  \{I}\Plasmodium\{i}\, 130                   ║
║ 10 pigs, 154-6                                 ║
║ 11 pigs> stress in, 204-5                      ║
║ 12 pollination, 145                            ║
║ 13 plants> \and the\ environment, 101-2        ║
║ 14 potassium> in soils, 120                    ║
║ 15 platypus, 68-9                              ║
║ 16 polar bodies, 320                           ║
║ 17 piebald genotype> in sheep, 199             ║
║ 18 plant viruses, 144                          ║
║ 19 plant growth                                ║
║ 20 ^Edit ^V>insert ^Y>delete ^A>home          ║
║    ^Z>end  CR> for next....ESC> to main        ║
└────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 2. WRITE screen

To exclude articles or prepositions from alphabetisation, enclose with reverse slashes, e.g.

housing> \for \poultry, 66

I found having to remember to use the chevron (rather than a comma as for most indexing packages) to separate the sub-headings plus the need to add the comma at the end of the text tiresome.

See and *See also* references could be added in the same manner as a normal entry, e.g.

Lambs> See Sheep

The disadvantage here was that standard formats like underline, italic or bold could not be chosen at this stage (as would normally be the case with *See* and *See also*'s) and could only be added once the file was exported out of IN>SORT into a word processing package.

Once you have completed adding new entries it is very simple to change from the WRITE ENTRIES menu to the EDIT ENTRIES menu. Editing is carried out by selecting the relevant numerical entry (as for other packages) and amending the text.

Once you are happy with the edited entries the index is ready for "alphabetisation" (or what we would call sorting). The default sort in IN>SORT is letter-by-letter which was very much a surprise to this reviewer, as in Australia we tend to follow the word-by-word system. However, IN>SORT specifies it follows *The Chicago Manual of Style* which prefers the former [fig. 4]. If you prefer word-by-word sorting this can be chosen by responding with W or w at the file name prompt; the file name will be requested a second time, then sorted word-by-word.

Unlike other packages, IN>SORT does not carry out a merge function (i.e. physically merging entries and page numbers of duplicate entries) at this time but does this during formatting (see later). To my eye, seeing the presence of repeated entries on the screen goes against the grain; it may only be aesthetics, but it pains me dearly! One aspect of IN>SORT which is confusing is the naming of files. If you call your index e.g. *Biology* this name is retained up until the alphabetisation phase, when depending on the letters being sorted, in my case only the P's, a file name of *P-P* was allocated. If this had been a complete index the file name allocated would be *A-Z*, and this could be very confusing if you were involved with more than one index at a time.

```
F1=HELP                    NEWFILE          LINES= 0      CHARS= 0

     ┌──────────────────────┬────────────────────────────────────────┐
     │      IN>SORT         │ 1> column width:  40                    │
     │    (C) FORMATTER     │ 2> subentry indent:  2                  │
     │    Version 4.7       │ 3> sub-subentry indent:  4              │
     │                      │ 4> turnover indent:  6                  │
     │  F> FORMAT/INDEX     │ 5> line-by-line or run-in (L/R):  L     │
     │  C> Change drive C:  │ 6> alphabet letter break (Y/N):  Y      │
     │  X> Exit program     │ 7> single/double spacing (S/D):  S      │
     │  ESC> to main menu   │ 8> formatted filename:  FORMED          │
     └──────────────────────┴────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 3. FORMAT menu

Once sorting is complete the index is ready for formatting using the FORMAT menu [fig. 3]. A number of options are available as to style and these are very simple to use. The final, formatted version of the index is allocated the default name *Formed*, however you may choose any name which is easily identified. The formatted *Biology* index [fig. 5] has been created using the line-by-line (or set-out) style.

```
photosynthesis, 16-18, 345
photosynthesis> rate of, 108
phototropism, 49, 50, 11, 345
phylum> See specific phyla, e.g. Sporozoa
piebald genotype> in sheep, 199
pig breeding, 204-5
pigface, 115
pigments, 111, 185
pigs, 154-6
pigs> stress in, 204-5
Plantae (kingdom), 8, 335-7
plant growth, 49, 50, 101
plants> adaptation to salinity, 118
plants> and the environment, 101-2
plants> frost-protected, 225
plants> tolerance to drying, 115
plant viruses, 144
plasma cells, 148, 149
plasmids, 238, 241
plasmids, 277
Plasmodium  130
platypus, 68-9
polar bodies, 320
pollination, 145
potassium> in soils, 120
```

Figure 4. Sorted index

```
photosynthesis, 16-18, 345
  rate of, 108
phototropism, 49, 50, 11, 345
phylum, See specific phyla, e.g. Sporozoa
piebald genotype, in sheep, 199
pig breeding, 204-5
pigface, 115
pigments, 111, 185
pigs, 154-6
  stress in, 204-5
Plantae (kingdom), 8, 335-7
plant growth, 49, 50, 101
plants
  adaptation to salinity, 118
  and the environment, 101-2
  frost-protected, 225
  tolerance to drying, 115
plant viruses, 144
plasma cells, 148, 149
plasmids, 238, 241, 277, 277
Plasmodium, 130
platypus, 68-9
polar bodies, 320
pollination, 145
potassium in soils, 150
```

Figure 5. Formatted index

To print the index you need to export the file out of IN>SORT either into a word processing package and thereby use the word processor's printing facilities or make use of the DOS Print command.

Although I have been comparatively scathing in my comments about IN>SORT, one factor I haven't mentioned is price, which is a prime consideration for many indexers. At a cost of around $A 200, compared to around $A 500 for Cindex or Macrex there is a substantial price differential. Some of the niceties of the "bigger" packages may not be present, but if you are prepared to forego some of these niceties, and can afford the extra time to get everything right (file transfers, italicising *See* references, etc.) then IN>SORT will serve you well. It is a good down-to-earth indexing package.

Note: This review was based on an IBM or compatible computer version (with DOS 2.1 or later); a Macintosh version is also available. The only essential difference, I believe, between the two programs is the presence of the pull-down windows on the Mac.

BOOK REVIEW

Indexing biographies and other stories of human lives.

Reviewed by Jennifer Pritchard

Narratives are stories of human lives, history, biography and autobiography, fiction (Hazel Bell has indexed works by A.S. Byatt, a writer of novels notable for their complexity). Indexing them requires skills other than those needed for technical works. However, this is a genre, not a specialism, because an indexer may have no knowledge at all of the subject of the narrative. Hazel Bell's previously published articles on this genre are listed at the end of the paper.

Hazel Bell's description of what the narrative indexer should attempt applies to some extent to nearly all kinds of indexing: "In deciding which factors to make index entries for, we are not extracting selected terms, leaving an unindexed mass, but reducing the entire text to denser units ... ". As well as being shown this admirable goal, we are shown how to go about achieving it.

Hazel Bell is well chosen as the author of this paper, the first in a series which the Society hopes will: "stimulate indexers in all specialisms to think more deeply about their principles and methods of work". Her writing is particularly helpful for beginning or uncertain indexers because rather than prescribing, she explains; rather than taking orthodoxy for granted, she makes her own judgements.

Before beginning work, a narrative indexer must read the book through, for inoculation against becoming too interested in what it relates and also to recognise important characters or themes and their "overall pattern of development". The word "pattern" is emphasised again in the chapter on editing. Each long entry must be traced once more through the book in a process similar to literature study, or writing. Thomas Hardy is quoted: "... as in looking at a carpet, by following one colour a certain pattern is suggested, by following another colour, another ...". Each long entry in an index represents a single strand through the book.

Panic which might be induced by realisation of what we have taken on is calmed by the author's clear exposition of how to proceed: by going through the book paragraph by paragraph, making

lists for potential headings and subheadings, asking ourselves continually how everything fits in.

Chapters advising on problems common to all indexing emphasise those intensified by the narrative genre, i.e. choice among personal names, the formation and arrangement of subheadings and not least in importance, treatment of the subject of the book.

The personal names chapter, near the beginning of the paper (because name permutations must be resolved early) is the most comprehensive guide as to what to do that I have seen. It also has a useful section on "glosses", i.e. dates or explanation supplied by the indexer to add information to a name.

The author's wide knowledge of literature is evident throughout this paper, and her skill with words would need to be shared by indexers attempting to write subheadings which are "vivid, content-rich, topical rather than syntactical, concise, about five words long, beginning with a significant word, and forming a natural phrase in direct order ". These are the subheadings of award-winning indexes, and award-winning indexes are considered and quoted from in this paper.

Subheadings should also attempt to reflect the attitudes of the text. I see this as meaning that the indexer should attempt to see things as the author sees them. A passage quoted from F.A. Pottle's index to Boswell's *London Journal* echoes the author in its phrasing. The Boswell passage is quoted as an example of chronological order (of events, not of pages) for sub-headings. Although it is stylistically pleasing and has the beginning, middle and end of a good drama, I think that alphabetical arrangement by keyword makes it easier for readers to find specific information. Alternative solutions are discussed and a pleasure in reading Hazel Bell's writing is in considering her less conventional approaches.

Treatment of the subject of the book is a point where Hazel Bell disagrees with the 'No room at the top' school of G.V. Carey, G. Norman Knight and M.D. Anderson, who allow the main character in a narrative index only those few personal entries which cannot be placed under independent headings. She has commented (in a 1989 *Indexer* article) that omission of a detailed entry for the main character seems simply to be "... increasing the deplorable lack of indexes by adding a new category, partially unindexed books". In this paper, she asks what is to become of secondary characters? And how far should we extend this policy of omitting major topics? She sees dispersal of topics to other headings as misleading for those readers for whom inclusion of a subheading implies that all important references concerning it will be listed as subheadings. She mentions the difficulty for readers with no previous knowledge of a subject who may not know for what headings to look.

Hazel Bell also has something forthright to say on the irritating problem of undifferentiated "page strings", which in indexing circles are considered as unacceptable if they exceed more than five or six in number, and which indexers attempt in various unsatisfactory ways to dispose of. She suggests that they be allowed to remain to give their "honest message", in a conscientiously compiled index, that there are twelve or twenty minor references to the topic.

As an interested bystander rather than a practising indexer, I enjoy reading Hazel Bell's articles in *The Indexer* and learning how she thinks. *Indexing Biographies* is valuable in showing how her thinking is done and suggesting ways for indexers to find their own solutions. It is a particular pleasure to read.

Note: *Indexing Biographies* has also been reviewed by:
  1. Hilda D. Spear in *The Indexer* 18(2): p.132;
  2. Susan Lohmeyer in *American Society of Indexers Newsletter* (110): p.6.

LETTERS

Indexer's Medal 1992

Congratulations to the medal winners, and a big bouquet to the judges for their excellent report; it would have been yet more useful if supported by a few examples of some of the better attributes cited.

I offer some constructive comments.

Indexers who submit entries for a medal or accreditation may be encouraged to make observations (not excuses). These may well be in response to the judges' form of questions.

How many good indexes have been ruined by bad publishers or lax typesetters? How often are indexers given the opportunity to proof read their work (I have yet to meet a publisher who will deny this right to an author)? Typography is completely out of the realm of choice of an indexer. We see that the index that was highly commended had to cope with 'space restraints' and that even the medal winners experienced 'bad turnover lines' and 'typos'.

It is the indexer's work that is adjudged against this scenario - and yet the publishers receive a certificate!

In spite of all this our medal winners of 1992 overcame - not only for themselves but for their publishers. Having raved about publishers' lapses it was refreshing to note that this year's publishers actually deserved their certificates for their 'effective typography' and for lifting the veil of 'anonymity'.

But why no certificate for the authors for whose work one index was thought to be a 'valuable adjunct'? Were they at the dinner? Were they anonymous by choice in the report?

I am really leading up to something I find difficult to say, but must. How much association or influence has our Society on publishers in general? I have looked in vain for instances where publishers have been addressed on indexing or where this subject appears in any of their conferences. Is there any publisher who is a member (even an associate member) of our Society? Even in England this is a problem, though SI has I think made some headway, and their link with the Library Association is strong. It seems strange that we cannot do without publishers but that 'they' don't think the same way about us.

I note from a newsletter that crossed my desk today that members of Women in Publishing, Society of Editors and the Gallery Club receive concession entry to ABPA Seminars. Is AusSI known to them?

What do we do to counter this state of affairs? I noted that John Curtain spoke at a meeting of the ABPA recently but not on indexing. Should he be appointed our Hon. (-ary or -able) Ambassador?

If we cannot do anything more I hope publishers will be encouraged to attend, and have an opportunity to hear from the Society at the proposed 1995 Conference.

Kingsley Siebel

Honours to Society Member

Some indexers are also authors (and vice versa). One of our members, Nick Renton, has recently been awarded the 1992 Jackson Prize by the Institute of Actuaries of Australia (IAA). The honour was awarded for publications produced outside the Institute. The two books Nick wrote were *Understanding Dividend Imputation* and *The Retirement Handbook*. Nick has been a prolific writer over many years and his latest books have been well received.

1993 Subscriptions

Membership fees are due from January 1:

$35 Metropolitan Sydney, Melbourne;
    ACT region; NZ;
$30 Others.

Please send cheques to the Secretary, together with renewal form.

1993 AGM Dinner

The first meeting of the new year to be held at Spring Park Tea Rooms, 3 Spring Road, Malvern, at 6:30 for 7:00pm on Wednesday, Feb 24th. The dinner will include a brief session for official business and change-over of office-bearers. Cost is $25 (including drinks).

New Members

The Society welcomes the following new members:
Mrs J. Cole, Murrumbateman, NSW
Ms E. Estbergs, Kambah, ACT
Mr R. Hyslop, Yarralumla, ACT
Ms S. MacDougall, Belconnen, ACT
Ms S. White, Fadden, ACT

New Registrations

The following members have met the standards required for becoming a registered indexer of the Society:
Trischa Baker
Anne Dunbar-Nobes
Angela Grant

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Next Deadline - January 25, 1993

News, views and reviews are always welcome. Floppy disks will be appreciated where articles are longer than one A4 page (preferably 3.5" Macintosh disks; Microsoft Word software; IBM is OK).

THANK YOU for all your letters & contributions in 1992.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas & Happiness in the New Year.