Australian Society of Indexers
NEWSLETTER

Contact for Membership 1997

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Editorial

Greetings! It's so good to see colleagues getting registered! 'You are an active group!' - about the N/L.

The Web Indexing Prize 1997 is launched. CINDEX tips will now only be published irregularly – many thanks to Garry Cousin's sterling effort. I would highly recommend you come to hear **Lori Lathrop** who is speaking at the FutureProof Conference in Katoomba in September. Full cost is $285. Alan Walker gives insights into standards. Michele Benjamin writes about the dilemmas of publishing in the internet age. I aim to publish Geraldine Triffitt's and Roxanne Missingham's 1996 Robertson conference papers soon.
See you next issue. Dwight Walker, Editor/Webmaster

Dates for your Diary

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., Sydney
Tues 2 Sep   Frank Devine, columnist and commentator, The Australian newspaper, on 'The State of the Language.' RSVP Fri 29 Aug
Meetings are held at the rooftop function centre (4th floor), Australian Museum (enter from William St). Drinks and light food provided. 6.30pm for 7.00pm. Please RSVP the Friday before each meeting on (02) 9552 0039 [voicemail]. $10 for members, $12 for non-members.

16 Sep, Perth, WA, Indexing Seminar
Alexander Library Building, Perth Cultural Centre. Light refreshments will be available from 6.30 pm and the seminar will commence at 7.00 pm.
Contact: Betty Durston, Email betty.durston@health.wa.gov.au, Phone (09) 9386 2103

27-28 Sep, Katoomba, FutureProof Conf.
AusSI's National Conference: contact Pamela Johnstone, 02-99587099, fax 02-99580699, email pnj@pnc.com.au. Full cost including registration, accommodation and all meals is **$285**.

21 Oct, Canberra, Internet Workshop
5.30-8.30pm, Library, Radford College, Bruce see p.3

VISIT TO POLICE HISTORICAL UNIT (VIC)

Following upon our most informative and entertaining tour of not only *the Age* Pictorial Library, but also the Editorial Room, the Printing Press Bay, Editorial Library, Canteen and collection of corridors the Victorian Branch now has the chance to view the Police Historical Unit on **Wednesday September 17th**.

As the Unit is unable to stay open after normal working hours, we have arranged to meet in the foyer at 637 Flinders St., Melbourne (next to the World Trade Centre) at 4.30 pm. Once again security passes are a must so I would appreciate knowing numbers and names by **Monday 15th September**. Mr.Peter Free, Manager of the Unit, will be our host during the tour and talk and will hopefully be able to join us for dinner at a nearby restaurant afterwards.

This promises to be another fascinating hands-on visit and once again numbers (and space) will be limited so first in go to the top of the list to see how realia is indexed, sorted, stored and displayed.

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New Member
David Suter, North Melbourne, Vic.

New Registered Indexers
Linda Cross
Suzanne Eggins
Berice Fisher
Caroline Jones
Ann Philpott

What's Inside

Research

Inaugural Research Grant: ACT Indexing Workshop

The ACT Region Branch of AusSI has been awarded one of the Society's inaugural research grants for its proposal to produce commissioning guidelines on the profession of indexing.

Using a "practitioners workshop" approach, the project will examine different types of indexing (eg for books, audiovisual, databases, newspapers, journal series etc) to determine the skills required as well as the core and peripheral tasks involved. The results of participants' discussions will be compiled into a guide which defines the scope and nature of tasks involved in the various types of indexing. This document is intended for use by AusSI members and prospective indexers, as well as for commercial publishers or others who may need to commission an index.

The methodology for the project will consist of convening a one-day workshop of approximately 20 practicing indexers, whose task will be to identify and describe core indexing functions. We are hoping to gather together a range of people working in special indexing areas. The workshop will consist of small group work, with each group responsible for defining the skills and tasks involved in a particular type of indexing. Members of the ACT Region Executive will provide focus questions and act as facilitators and secretaries of the groups. A core of those at the workshop will be recruited to collate workshop results and prepare the guidelines.

We are hoping to keep the costs of attendance at the workshop minimal, in order to encourage contributions from a good cross-section of AusSI members. Grant funding will be used to offset the venue costs of the workshop so that there will be no workshop fee; as well as to compensate (with an honorarium) the core group who will prepare the guidelines for their time on the project. We may also be able to provide some extra assistance (eg billeting or some travel costs for interstate participants) where required.

The workshop is tentatively scheduled for **March 1998** (during Canberra's glorious autumn). Although our planning is only in the very early stages at the moment, we expect it to be a day to think deeply about our profession and help define its many facets. We will keep AusSI members updated on our progress in organising this event, including a program for the day and a formal call for participants, over the next few months.

However, we would be interested in expressions of interest, or reactions to the project, in these early planning stages. Therefore, if you would like to be involved in the workshop or contribute topics you would like to see covered, please contact

Lynn Farkas (c/-Datascape Information Pty Ltd, GPO Box 1870, Canberra ACT 2601, tel (06) 286 3529 or (06) 286 4818 ah, fax (06) 286 6570, e-mail jgllspie@pcug.org.au) or

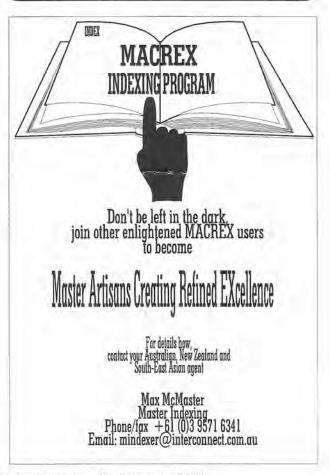the ACT Region Branch, GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601.

Lynn Farkas

Indexing Rates (1997 not released yet)

The 1996 recommended rate for freelance *back-of-book* indexers has been kept at **$35.00 per hour** in line with rates for freelance editors. Although the Society recommends this rate, individual indexers are free to charge above or below this as they deem appropriate.
Database indexing rates are more variable, and are usually charged on a per record basis, so rates will vary depending on the complexity of the indexing required.

Indexing Seminar in Perth, Western Australia
16 September 1997

The Western Australian Branches of the Society of Editors and Women in Publishing, together with the WA members of the Australian Society of Indexers, have arranged a seminar on Indexing.

An interesting and stimulating evening on Indexing is planned for Perth, WA. The program will include topics such as the development of a conceptual index, as well as presenting an author's perspective on indexing technical illustrations and professional handbooks.

Associate Professor Les Stein, Law School, University of Western Australia and Dr Charles Watson, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Health Sciences), Curtin University of Technology, and President, Australian Faculty of Public Health Medicine, will address these topics. Finally, the speakers, with representatives of the three Societies will form a panel to lead discussion and answer queries.

The seminar will be held at the Alexander Library Building, Perth Cultural Centre on **16 September 1997**. Light refreshments will be available from 6.30 pm and the seminar will commence at 7.00 pm.

Contact:
    Betty Durston
    Email betty.durston@health.wa.gov.au
    Phone (09) 9386 2103

INTERNET WORKSHOP
focusing on indexing

When:
Tuesday 21 October 1997
from 5.30pm to 8.30pm

Where:
Library, Radford College, College Street, BRUCE

Program:
A panel consisting of Geraldine Triffitt, Roxanne Missingham, Shirley Campbell and Susan MacDougall will demonstrate relevant reference sources, search engines, how to find relevant information and how to create your own index.

A light meal will be served - Cost $10.00

Contact:
Geraldine Triffitt
Phone 06-231 4975

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f the futureproof indexer

"The Futureproof Indexer" is the title of the forthcoming conference, organised by the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers. Speakers will come from both Australia and overseas, and a range of activities, including papers, panels, workshops and clinics, will be provided.

The program will alert indexers to knowledge and skills needed to operate in the rapidly changing environment of the information industry. While designed for professional indexers, the conference will also be useful for information professionals in fields related to indexing— publishers, editors, librarians, and technical writers.

Topics will include:

The Keynote Address: Life in a time of Cultural AIDS:The Equilibrium of Chaos, will be given by John Nieuwenhuizen, author of "Asleep at the Wheel: Australia on the Superhighway".

Other program topics include The Profession of Indexing, Indexing Electronic Publications, Software Developments, and, The Future of Indexing: What Do We Expect?

Workshops will be held on: Indexing Skills for Technical Communication and Database Indexing, clinics on CINDEX, MACREX and a nuts and bolts practical session on indexing have been organised.

In addition, "**Birds of a Feather**" discussion groups on nominated topics of special interest such as genealogy and law will be organised and there will be an exhibition area for software demonstration and new products.

For details see *Dates for your Diary* on page 1 or visit the Society's home page:

    http://www.zeta.org.au/~aussi

Quick Guide 13:
Indexing Your Book by John Vickers
The Society of Authors (UK), 1996

Send a cheque/money order (no credit cards) for $6 made out to "D Walker" for "John Vicker's indexing booklet" to:

AusSI Editor, 6/333 Old South Hd Rd, Bondi 2026

Standards

President's Letter: Standards, Standards!

Dear Colleague,

In my last letter I made a few comments about standards, and here is the promised expansion of those remarks.

ISO 999

I referred to the new international standard for indexing, which was reviewed by Kingsley Siebel in the June issue of this Newsletter, described by Pat Booth's in "The Indexer" (Vol.20(3), April 1997, p.114), and earlier discussed in detail by Drusilla Calvert in "The Indexer" (Vol.20(2), October 1996, pp.74–77).

What is under discussion is the second edition of the international standard — the first was published in 1975 — and the successor to the 1988 British Standard, which our Society has endorsed.

The rather long-winded citation for the new 47-page international standard is:

> ISO 999:1996 Information and documentation — Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes. Geneva: International Organization for Standardization, 1996.

Of course, the standard is not truly international, since the Americans, who do their own standards-setting, have been working on their indexing standard for some years, but their experts have not been able to agree on a text.

Which brings me to my point.

Standard — not Straightjacket

Ten years ago I used the phrase "a standard need not be a straightjacket" in a paper entitled "Standards for cataloguing and indexing photographs"*. I went on to say:

> "The best standards are those which provide a framework within which differing needs may be met. It is always useful, for instance, to have different levels of detail from which to choose, as with AACR2.

> "...it is now possible for small institutions and even individuals to compile large databases suited to their local needs. The danger is that local variation may become so great that it interferes with communication and economy, but the opportunity should be seized to develop acceptable standards which can forestall such a disaster as well as providing the flexibility which is desirable".

In short, I am in favour of permissive standards. I suspect that the Americans may have difficulty in agreeing on a standard because they may be trying to be too prescriptive. The new international standard is permissive on some points, which seems to me sensible when the profession has a range of views. Kingsley Siebel's paper indicates that — in some cases, at any rate — he would have preferred more definite rulings. But it seems to me that the standard is permissive within a respectable framework of options, and can be used as a yardstick to distinguish between what is good indexing practice and what is not.

Some examples of the new standard's non-prescriptive good advice:

> "Prepositions should as far as possible be used only if their absence might cause ambiguity)" (clause 7.2.2.5)

> "Conventionally, the digits 10–19 in each hundred are given in full" (clause 7.4.3.1)

> "Where the index consists of a few main headings and many subheadings, the presentation of main headings in a different type face or style from subheadings may be useful" (clause 9.4.1.3)

Not that the standard lacks definite instructions. There are plenty of unqualified "shoulds". But these are mostly limited to matters on which experienced indexers would agree.

And by the way, if today I were writing the paragraph quoted above, I would now write "a standard need not be a straitjacket". Notice the difference in spelling. The Macquarie Dictionary (which of course is descriptive rather than prescriptive) records both spellings. It is my preference which has changed. But doesn't this rather support my argument against rigidity?

What's the use?

One practical use of standards (including style guides) is as points of reference in drawing up contracts between indexers and publishers or other employers, and for settling any disagreement or dispute between these parties on matters of professional practice.

A standard can therefore be an educational tool, not only for indexers themselves, but also for editors, publishers and others who commission indexes.

Since the advent of desk-top publishing, many of those who commission indexes have very little background in editing and publishing, and may query or even ask us to change things which we accept as normal good practice— or indeed as *standard*. It can also help to be able to point out to inexperienced editors that there are tasks which it is *standard* for them to perform in publishing an index, such as inserting continuation lines:

> 'If an index entry runs on to a new page, the index heading and subheading and sub-sub-heading applicable to the run-on entries should be repeated, followed by the word "continued", or an abbreviation of that word, in parentheses.' (clause 9.4.1.5)

What we are doing about it

The AusSI National Executive has obtained a review copy of ISO 999 from the Standards Australia IT/19 committtee, and we are circulating this among the members of our committee. If the committee is happy with it, we can recommend to Standards Australia that the international standard be "cloned" as an Australian Standard, which means it would be republished with an AS number, and would be available for sale in Australia more cheaply.

I have also been in touch with Janet Shuter, who chairs the UK committee responsible for ISO 999 and for all other UK standards in the area of indexing — there are rather too many of these standards at present. Her committee is already looking at revision of ISO 999, which is inevitably a long process, and towards the rationalisation of indexing standards. As this work goes on, our committee can provide comments and pass on your opinions, to help ensure that the published standards meet our needs.

Alan Walker

President

* Walker, Alan. "Standards for cataloguing and indexing photographs". Paper delivered at the Australian Photographic Access Network conference: "Access to Australian Photographs", held at the Australian Museum, Sydney, 13 February 1987. 14 pp.

WEB INDEXING PRIZE 97
Application Form

Name of applicant:

Organisation:

Address:

Email:

Applicant's role in creating the index:

URL (Address) of Web index:

Brief description of the purpose of the index:

Brief description of the way the index was created:

Software used:

WEB INDEXING PRIZE 97

The Australian Society of Indexers is again offering its prize for a World Wide Web index. The prize was first awarded last year (see the article in "The Indexer" April 1997* and http://www.zeta.org.au/~aussi/).

Eligibility:

Anyone in the world may enter. To be eligible for the award, you must have been the major creator of an index currently accessible on the World Wide Web.
The index should cover material which is available online.

The Prize:

The winner will receive the following prizes:
* Free membership of the Australian Society of Indexers for one year
* An inscribed copy of *Indexers – Partners in Publishing: proceedings of the 1st International Conference...Marysville, Vic.* (AusSI, 1995)
* Free subscription to *The Indexer* for one year (being negotiated).

The name of the winner will be announced and the winning index described on the AusSI Web site, in the *AusSI Newsletter*, and in *The Indexer*.

Judging:

The prize will be presented to the indexer of the best index submitted, as long it is of sufficient quality.
The index should show application of sound indexing principles in the Web environment.
For the award, indexes are judged for outstanding professional achievement, so enough material is required, both in quality and quantity, to test it. The index should be substantial in size, the subject matter should be complex, and the language, form and structure of the index should show an indexer's expertise. It should fill the needs of the information indexed and the users.
In addition, the winner will show their skill, ingenuity and creativity by applying it successfully to the Web environment, e.g. multimedia enhancements, hypertext links and frames.
The layout and appearance of the index should help, encourage, and be fun for users (cool!).

Panel:

The prize will be judged by a panel of experienced indexers and Web site creators, nominated by the national executive of the Australian Society of Indexers: Dwight Walker, Alan Wilson, Steve Sunter.

How to enter:

Simply fill in the attached application form and forward it to the Web Indexing Prize Co-ordinator, from whom any further information is available:
> Dwight Walker, AusSI Webmaster
> PO Box R598, Royal Exchange NSW 1225, Australia
> telephone: +61 2 9130 4206
> email: aussi@zeta.org.au

Deadline:

As soon as possible, but no later than 30 November, 97.
* Dwight Walker. "AusSI Web indexing prize winners" *The Indexer* Vol.20 No.3, April 1997, pp.121–4.

Journal publishing – is there a future?

Managing learned journals has never been a particularly easy task. Balancing the needs of academic authors and readers against the demands of the print manufacturing industry and the requirements of the library profession does not make for a comfortable life but nowadays the job has become positively dangerous to one's mental health.

First, almost every interface in the chain of provision is under attack. The task of deconstruction is an appealing one in the postmodern world but, after everything has been taken apart, common sense – if nothing else – demands that something be put in its place and that's where I begin to worry.

Let's start with the reader going to the library looking either for something specific or with a vaguer requirement to research or read around a particular topic. Going to the library! No need for that: just use a search engine on the Internet or use one of the specifically academic services available.

Librarians? – a dying breed according to some. But, judging from some of the pathetic calls I get, particularly from young students, who have never heard of abstracting services and who want the journal of psychology – whichever of the thousands that may turn out to be – the need for librarians hasn't gone away yet. And the reactions I get, ranging from puzzlement to astonishment, when I suggest trying the library make me feel that librarians must be nearly as bad as publishers in getting across the message that they are here to help chart a course through information overload.

Librarians look to electronic networks to solve their chronic underfunding problems and have little sympathy with notions that publishers need to be paid to develop new products or in order to stay in business at all. But, until searching and other computer skills are as common competences as reading, training and explanation is required and must be resourced. The old way of a short orientation talk and trip round the library will no longer do. Maintenance and provision of networks is not a cost free exercise either and institutions are also beginning to realize that the much trumpeted cost savings of manufacture and postage are actually a redistribution of expenses from central publishers to local printers.

Scientific research is increasing at a giddy rate; it has to be published; most of it has to be read by at least somebody. Some argue that we don't need that arcane process called peer review – researchers can put their papers up on their own websites and invite comment; intelligent agents and search engines will direct interested parties; papers can be refined and revised and put up again for further revision and comment. Then everything can be linked with everything so that lines of comment and argument can be traced and followed up and so on ad infinitum. We can do away with primary and secondary publishers and libraries and agents all in one fell swoop.

I have two concerns here.

- One is what happens to the authoritative record?
- The second is who is ever going to have the time to do all this even within a very narrow topic?

It is difficult enough now to solicit prompt and substantial comments on papers – and I worry that if peer review isn't given a higher profile in research assessment exercises it may be squeezed out of academic life anyway – but I can't see busy academics bothering to write unsolicited comments on any and every paper that appears on a website.

Who would even have time to do the necessary trawling? If we want filters and quality control someone has to do the gatekeeping. If we want links somebody has to sort out a sort of universal hook-and-eye system between abstracts and articles and a way of compiling and maintaining abstract databases. I have a nightmare about links running from incorrect text references to incomplete bibliographies sent out to search the infinite forever. And who will support the copy editors to check the references from which the links are constructed?

Don't get me wrong: I like the idea of improving the critical discourse of science by allowing fast and universal access, commentary and links from desktop to desktop but not at the cost of complete overload and the cluttering up of capacity with low grade material. The virtual laboratory, in which interested groups can pool knowledge and resources, create links, comment forward to newer work and backward to raw data and the tools for analysis, sounds like a wonderful researcher's playground "Added value", maybe but "free"? – I don't think so.

And what about copyright? Copyright law is under attack from both ends and is in danger of being blown apart by the conflicting pressures. Big business interests want to make everything copyright and it is already possible to envisage a scenario in which memory is made illegal because it infringes copyright! Academic interests want everything to be free. Exactly where on the scale the pointer will eventually stop is anyone's guess but research is going on into watermarking and other forms of uniquely identifying authorship and ownership all of which are necessary steps on the road to equitable returns and protection. Publishers are caught in the uncomfortable position of knowing that without copyright they have no business worth investing in and without authors on their side the same applies.

The very seamlessness of the electronic product makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish the original from the plagiarized or downright fraudulent material. What assessors and examiners are going to do I can't imagine. Virtual reality can be made so much more interesting than real reality these days! These problems have yet to be faced but they indicate that protection is not solely for the purpose of extracting fees.

Talking of fees, as at some point we must: I can imagine the unified database with universal links and a secure micropayment system; what I can't imagine is that individual document delivery can be charged at a rate sufficient to pay the overhead costs of maintaining high quality filters and links and of making available today articles whose popularity or value will only be realized (if ever) at some time in the future. Enthusiasts say that wider availability and universal access will lead to greater access of individual documents and that increased hit rates will pay for the system. I'm not so sure.

Would that hundreds if not thousands of people were panting to read about "models for asymmetrical proximities" or "interoceptive exposure" in our journals. But more people might access a paper on "erotic transference" and how long before the market dictates that we only publish the popular or that we make sure that article titles contain at least one sexually alluring keyword to attract punters of every description?

Call me a pessimist if you like but at various points during the past years I have been called upon to argue about why we should supply enhanced services to libraries if it could undermine the value of society membership and why we should supply electronic services to members that could undermine our library subscription income; not to mention why we should upgrade our systems and our skills at vast time and expense in order to destroy our core business. I have spent hours pondering definitions of "journal" and "site" in order to draw up documents to decrease income by allowing site licences – an uncomfortable and probably temporary remedy to an increasingly chaotic situation. And don't even ask me when I last had the time to sit down and read a decent novel. Why are we doing this?

Answers on a postcard please to...

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Fax: +44 0181 365 3413
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check current and advance contents of

BPS journals on

http://journals.eecs.qub.ac.uk

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UNSW Indexing courses 97
Introduction to Book Indexing Aug 6, 13, 20
Those who will benefit from this course include those who are or who are planning to become indexers, editors responsible for indexing, librarians responsible for compiling indexes. The course covers the following topics:
    Introduction to indexing
    Methods
    Analysis of text
    Selecting terms
    Principles of subject access
    Headings and subheadings
    Cross references
    Alphabetical arrangement
    Style
    Editing for publication
    Dealing with editors and publishers
    Indexing as a business

Computer–Aided Indexing August 27
A one day workshop on computer–aided indexing covering:
    an overview of indexing theory
    kinds of indexing computers can and cannot do
    functionalities, capabilities and constraints of
      software packages
    word processing software
    indexing software – Cindex and Macrex
    hands–on practice with Cindex and Macrex

Indexing Skills Workshop for Technical Communicators Sep 30 & October 1
This course will include:
    Standards and guidelines
    Index formats
    Planning an index
    Analysing the document
    Generating entries
    Refining and enhancing
    Vocabulary control
    Fixing bad indexes
    Indexing online documents

For more complete details, please see the following Web page:
http://idt.net/~lathro19/wkshp.html or contact us. This course is part of a five day workshop on Information Design. **Lori Lathrop** is taking this.

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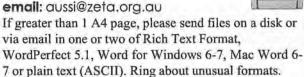
✉ Writing to the Editor ✍

COPY DEADLINE: 31 August 1997

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If greater than 1 A4 page, please send files on a disk or via email in one or two of Rich Text Format, WordPerfect 5.1, Word for Windows 6-7, Mac Word 6-7 or plain text (ASCII). Ring about unusual formats.

Advertisements and Photographs

Please send image files in Windows TIFF, JPEG, CorelDraw or EPS with embedded fonts format. Send camera-ready or good quality hardcopy with EPS in case the fonts won't transfer across. Photographs / camera-ready can be scanned at high resolution by the printer.
Quark Xpress: Mac users need to send the Quark Xpress file and the fonts by Mac disk or use the Extensis QX-Tools add-on which will embed the fonts. PageMaker produces EPS with embedded fonts already.
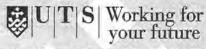
AusSI Newsletter Ad Rates

Full page: $80, Half page: $40, Quarter page: $20

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