



Australian Society of Indexers NEWSLETTER

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Editorial - AusSI E-Zine?

Greetings! As part of the redesign of the Web site, I will be moving material from the Newsletter into the Web site. Stay tuned. I am aiming at a hybrid service - Web and Newsletter - to disseminate news for our members. Existing non-wired members will still get their fair quota **here** but for those with Web access I will be able to spread my wings with more interesting articles, photographs and resources online.

Web Indexing Prize 97 Flak

I have had some flak about the wording of the prize last issue. It is NOT meant to be some complex ritual to make your Web site look like a book. It is meant to tease out all the possibilities that the new medium lends

itself to. So if you have a really good bookmark list like the one my brother Lyndon has for finding parts for his vintage car the '67 Honda S800 or can show us you have created an index online to a paper journal which has enhanced the readers' enjoyment of the journal, then **SEND the URL IN!** This is not an ego tripping kind of prize. It is mainly to explore the new medium and get you the Webmaster or Web surfer thinking about indexing or using indexes to electronic information. You don't have to be an egg head to enter, believe me. The simpler the design the better. Give it a go! Ring me if you're still too shy to enter: 02-91304206.

We have a bio of **Lori Lathrop** speaker at the FutureProof Conference in Katoomba this month (cost \$285). A members list is included. More news on the Research Project into Commissioning an Index by Lyn Farkas is inside. See you soon at Katoomba. Dwight Walker, Editor/Webmaster

BACK-OF-BOOK INDEXING COURSE, MELBOURNE

October 29-31, 1997

An introductory back-of-book indexing course conducted by AusSI will be held at **Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)**, Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, from **October 29-31**. Cost of course: \$225 for AusSI and Society of Editor members (\$250 for others), which includes lunch, morning and afternoon teas. For further information contact Max McMaster on phone/fax (03) 9571-6341 or email: mindexer@interconnect.com.au

Police Historical Unit Visit 17 Sep 1997, Melbourne

We have arranged to meet in the foyer at 637 Flinders St., Melbourne (next to the World Trade Centre) at 4.30 pm. **Bookings essential** by 15th September. Contact: Jenny Restarick
Tel: 03 9542 2178
Fax: 03 9542 2175
email: j.restarick@ffp.csiro.au

Dates for your Diary

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., Sydney

Tues 7 Oct "Thoughts on the role and meaning of 'style'" by Lindsay Mackerras, editor of the AGPS Style Manual, 6th ed. (upcoming). **Rescheduled** 6.30 for 7.00pm in the Rooftop Function Centre (4th floor), Australian Museum (enter from William St). Drinks and light food provided. Please RSVP Fri 3 Oct on (02) 9552 0039 [voicemail]. \$10 for members, \$12 for non-members. All most welcome.

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 (08) 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, Cost \$10.00, Contact: Geraldine Triffitt Phone 06-231 4975



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Research

Research: Guide to Indexing Services

The idea for a guide to indexing services was inspired by a "Commissioning Checklist" produced by the Canberra Society of Editors in 1994. This four-page publication is intended to assist those commissioning an editor's services. It covers project definition, selection of appropriate services, and the various levels of edit (with clear explanations of what is involved in each task) which can be commissioned. It is a useful tool not only for publishers and clients, but as an introduction to those contemplating professional editing work.

The ACT Region Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers feels a similar publication covering indexing services would be valuable for clients and practitioners. It would make clients aware of the choices available to them in the types of indexes that can be created, and of the tasks involved in various types of indexing. It would give potential indexers an idea of what to expect of indexing work. It could act as the basis for, or justification of, the indexing rates for freelance work which the Society produces at regular intervals. It could also be a working document for clarifying the skills necessary for indexing tasks, and therefore the types of training required to insure that these skills are successfully acquired.

Our intention is to produce a guide which specifies the core and peripheral tasks and skills involved in different types of indexing. Once a type of indexing is defined, identifying the tasks involved and skills needed is relatively straightforward. However, determining when a form of indexing is unique enough to demand different skills from its practitioners requires a knowledge of the wide range of indexing undertaken. We feel that to ensure that most types of indexing are considered, we need input from a good cross section of our members. We are particularly interested to know if you feel the type of indexing you do requires different skills or specialised knowledge.

For example, database indexers (ie those who index for automated information services) follow standard rules for bibliographic descriptions of the documents in hand; have a strong subject emphasis; rely heavily on thesauri and other authority lists for consistency; and deal with many documents, usually of a similar subject nature, for the same "job". Back of book indexers follow standard rules for punctuation, filing and layout; rely on the terminology of the author rather than on standardised word lists; and deal with one document without reference to others in its field. Different skills and work practices may also exist for other types of indexing, or for subgroups within the two categories noted. For example, are special skills or tasks involved in legal indexing; audiovisual, picture or photo indexing; genealogical indexing; newspaper indexing;

cumulative indexes for journal titles; or indexing for electronic media like the Internet?

It was on this basis that the ACT Region Branch applied for, and was awarded, an AusSI research grant. The purpose of the grant is to produce the guide to services, based on the information obtained from practitioners about the types of work they do and the skills and tasks involved.

It was initially our intention to gather this information through a Canberra-based workshop; however, in order to canvass the widest viewpoints from our members we are encouraging each AusSI Branch or Group to hold one of their regular meetings on this topic, between now and March of next year.

The ACT Region Branch will provide background information and focus questions for the groups, but the emphasis of the meeting and the types of indexing and skills covered will be up to each group. We are hoping that each Branch or Group's responses can be coordinated by a nominated representative. The workshop in Canberra in March will be a "working bee" of these representatives, whose collective task will be to develop the guide from the information provided.

I will be contacting Branch or Group executives in the near future to discuss the feasibility of this approach. In addition, members of the ACT Region Branch committee will be mounting a "Birds of a Feather" discussion session at the "Futureproof Indexer" conference in Katoomba in September.

We encourage all of you who will be attending the conference to drop in on the session so we can explore this topic together.

We would also be interested in any feedback from overseas indexers. The task of defining the nature and breadth of our profession is one which I'm sure has engaged us all at various times, and we in Australia would be happy to reap the wisdom of those who have trod this path before!

To further pursue this topic, please contact: Lynn Farkas (c/- Datascape Information Pty Ltd, GPO Box 1870, Canberra ACT 2601, tel (02) 6286 3529 or (02) 6286 4818ah, fax (02) 6286 6570, e-mail jlspie@pcug.org.au) or the ACT Region Branch, GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601.

Lynn Farkas



Society of Indexers (UK) TRAINING IN INDEXING



Open-learning course for indexing books, periodicals, images and other information media. Write to:

Training Administrator, Society of Indexers, Mermaid House, 1 Mermaid Court, London SE1 1HR, UK



Speaker Bio

LORI LATHROP IN AUSTRALIA

The President-Elect of the American Society of Indexers, Lori Lathrop, will be visiting Australia this month, for the Katoomba conference of the Australian Society of Indexers. Lori is one of three Americans who have registered to attend the conference.

While she is in Australia, Lori will also present a two-day workshop in Sydney. With her husband, Dave, she will also be spending some time touring Australia, including a visit to friends in Melbourne.

Lori is an experienced indexer, technical writer, editor and corporate trainer, who is widely recognized for her indexing expertise. Her book "An Indexer's Guide to the Internet" was published by ASI in 1994. She is currently Vice-President of the American Society of Indexers, is past President of the Colorado Chapter of ASI and is a member of the Rocky Mountains Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.

Lori runs her business, Lathrop Media Services, out of Idaho Springs, Colorado. As well as providing indexing services for corporate clients (such as Asymetrix, Digital Equipment Corporation, IBM, and other) and for publishing houses (IDG Books Worldwide, International Thomson Computer Publishing, Osborne McGraw Hill, Van Nostrand Reinhold, and others), Ms Lathrop regularly delivers one- and two-day versions of her indexing skills workshop for technical communicators for such corporate clients as AT&T, Mentor Graphics, Texas Instruments, and others.

Lori has presented workshops for the American Society of Indexers national conferences and local chapters. If you are attending the Katoomba conference, you will have the opportunity to attend her one-and-a-half hour session. She is also involved in planning the ASI's 30th Annual Conference, to be held in Seattle on 13-16 May 1998. Two Australian indexers, Alan Walker (the current President) and Max McMaster (who chairs the Panel of Assessors) have been invited to conduct sessions at this conference.

Indexing Skills Workshop for Technical Communicators 30 Sep-1 Oct, Sydney

Her Sydney workshop is intended for indexers and technical writers who want to create quality indexes for both printed manuals and online documentation. This workshop provides a step-by-step method for creating quality indexes - indexes that help readers retrieve the information they need when they need it. It includes a session on evaluating quality and usability. It will be held at the University of New South Wales over the two days **30 September and 1 October**, and costs \$310. To enrol, contact Maureen Henninger or Leslie Pace, Continuing Education, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052 (Phone: 02 9385 3592, fax: 02 9385 3430, email: L.E.Pace@unsw.edu.au).

Conference Update



Stop Press

www.indexres.com

Official Sponsors are: (1) **CINDEX** - Francis Lennie from Indexing Research, the developers of CINDEX, USA, will be present and demonstrate the software.

(2) **The Federation Press** - an Australian publishing company now nine years old. The founding Directors, Kathryn Fitzhenry, Christopher Holt and Diane Young, all previously from the corporate publishing world, started the company with a view to producing books that deal with current social, political and cultural debates at affordable prices. 02-9552 2200

Systematics Information Systems will be exhibiting and demonstrating their new "Hierarch Thesaurus Manager" - a fully featured, standalone Windows-based thesaurus management package for complete thesaurus creation, searching, management and publishing.

"The Futureproof Indexer" is the Society's Annual conference on 27-28 September in Katoomba. It is organised by the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers. Speakers are coming from Australia and overseas and a range of activities — 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 aimed at professional indexers, the conference will also be useful for information professionals in fields related to indexing—publishers, editors, librarians, and technical writers. Topics 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 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 *Diary* p.1 or the Society's home page: <http://www.zeta.org.au/~aussi>





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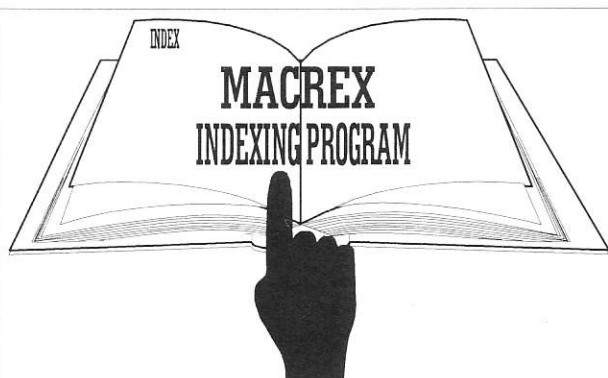
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