Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS, INDEXERS AVAILABLE & THE INDEXER FOR 1999

Subscriptions for 1999 were due on 1 January 1999. If you haven't sent in your renewal (included with last month's newsletter) by February 28 this will be your last newsletter. Back copies of newsletters will not be sent to members who renew after this date.

Applications for inclusion in *Indexers Available* closed on January 31. Subscribers to *The Indexer* who do not renew by 28 February will also miss the mailing list which we send to the UK and will have to wait until October for their April issue.

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Overseas telecommuting

With fast global mail and telecommunications there is no reason why some indexing jobs can't be done anywhere in the world, writes Glenda Browne.

Globalisation is with us, and surely no more so than in the knowledge and information field. I can send and receive parcels within Australia by Australia Post Express Post at very reasonable cost with guaranteed overnight delivery. There are very few indexing jobs (certainly book indexing jobs) now that cannot be done anywhere.

This brings both opportunities and threats. I have read on Edline (an editor's newsgroup) that copyediting work from companies in the UK has been contracted to workers in India – they speak good English and they work for much lower wages than copyeditors in the UK. To one company at least, it has made economic sense.

But in the Asian market it is possible that our experience and technical skills will be valued by publishers in countries such as Singapore and the

What's Inside

Noticeboard

National and NSW Branch Annual General Meetings

The National and NSW Branch AGMs will be held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 24 March 1999 at the Malabar Restaurant, 332 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest. Nomination forms and more information such as RSVP dates are on the back page.

Victorian Branch Annual General Meeting

The Annual General meeting of the Victorian Branch wil be held at Graduate House, 224 Leicester St., Carlton on Tuesday March 16th, 1999. Sherry and nibbles at 7 pm prior to the commencement of dinner at 7.30 pm. Cost, including wines, soft drinks and coffee, with a 2 course meal (choice of meat or non-meat) is $30 per head. Dress – smart casual.

During the evening there will be a brief AGM, consisting of Reports from the President and Treasurer, and the Election of Office Bearers. A highlight of the evening will be the announcement of the Society's Indexing Awards.

RSVP by March 9th, 1999 to Jenny Restarick (BH) 03 9545 2178 (H) 03 9528 2539 Fax 03 9528 2539 email Jenny.Restarick@enquiries.csiro.au. Nomination forms available from these contact points also.

ACT Branch Annual General Meeting

The ACT Branch will set the date for the ACT AGM and other meetings for the coming year at the committee meeting to be held in the second week of February. Members will be advised of the dates.

Dates for your diary

Indexing course (Vic)	22–24 Feb
Victorian Branch AGM	16 March
National and NSW Branch AGMs	24 March
ACT AGM	to be decided
ASI conference in Indianapolis	9-13 June
SI conference in Canterbury	16-18 July

1998 Web Indexing Prize

The Australian Society of Indexers is proud to announce the winner of the 1998 Web Indexing Prize:

1st: Tasmania Online
tol.editor@central.tased.edu.au
http://www.tas.gov.au

This was a very well designed index with good indexing and layout. The breadth and range of links plus the use of metadata in their site search engine was impressive.

2nd: Acxiom's Online Magazine Index
marisol@marisol.com
http://www.acxiom.com/caseinpoint/cip-ix-home.htm

This is an index of an online magazine which had a strong 'manual' index to it. There was a good cross-referencing structure too.

3rd: Australian Film Commission
p.langmead@afc.gov.au
http://www.sna.net.au

This film and sound directory was well designed with two levels of 'index'.

There is a full list of the entrants on the AusSI Web site.

The judges were:

Dwight Walker (Coordinator), WWWalker Web Development

Maureen Henninger, SILAS, UNSW

Kerry Webb, Australian Library and Information Association

Kerry's report for *inCite* is at http://www.alia.org.au/incite/wwww/9902.html

Back-of-book indexing course

An introductory indexing course is being conducted in Melbourne by the Victorian Branch, and will be held at ACER, Prospect Hill Rd, Camberwell, 22-24 February.

Cost, including morning and afternoon teas: $225 AusSI and SocEd members; $250 others. For further information, contact Max McMaster, tel/fax (03) 9571-6341, e-mail: mindexer@interconnect.com.au.

▌ Noticeboard

Society of Indexers (GB)

The Society of Indexers (SI) is moving out of London to larger premises in Sheffield. The new address is:

Society of Indexers
Globe Centre
Penistone Road
Sheffield S6 3AE

Tel: 0114 281 3060   Fax: 0114 281 3061

Email: admin@socind.demon.co.uk
Website: http://www.socind.demon.co.uk

Society of Indexers Website Update

The SI (GB) website now contains an online version of *Indexers Available.*

On the web you will also find information on joining the SI; training courses in indexing; publications; services to indexers, authors and publishers; and much more.

Training Courses & Workshops

The SI (GB) offers an open learning course giving a thorough grounding in the principles and practice of indexing, which leads to the status of Accredited Indexer in the UK. There is also a series of workshops for beginners and more experienced indexers, held at various venues, from March through to October. Discounts are available for SI members.

Join the pilgrimage, become a part of: THE INDEXER'S TALE

The SI (GB) annual conference will be held in Canterbury, Kent from 16 to 18 July 1999.

Details and booking form can be found on the Society's web page www.socind.demon.co.uk/conf1999.

Move over Geoffrey Chaucer! The indexers are coming!

International news

Christine Jacobs is organising a column of international news for *The Indexer* to replace the old *Shoebox* column. If you have news of any special indexing activities (not only AusSI ones) or special projects please let me know.

Society of Editors Prize

Congratulations to Madeleine Davis (NSW Branch secretary), who won the Society of Editors Prize for outstanding scholarship in the Language, Editing and Writing course within the Macquarie University Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing program.

American Society of Indexers

ASI has a new address:

American Society of Indexers
P.O. Box 39366
Phoenix, AZ 85069-9366

Phone: 602-979-5514
Fax: 602-530-4088

Website: http://www.asindexing.org

IndexFun

I was reading an article on records management thesauri and saw IndexFunAlpha as part of a web address. I thought it sounded like a light-hearted place to visit, until I saw that Fun stood for Functions.

See http://www.aa.gov.au/IndexFunAlpha.html for the Australian Archives' thesaurus of functional terms, used for retrieval in its databases of record holdings.

Other useful addresses for records management sites are http://www.rmaa.com.au and http://www.records.nsw.gov.au. Information on standards is available at http://www.niso.org.

From the editor

Welcome back for another year of indexing news.

This issue I have used up a lot of material that I had tucked away for a rainy issue. I am soon going to be in urgent need of copy.

So please start writing! If you have offered or been asked for contributions last year you will probably soon receive a gentle reminder...

Glenda Browne

How would **you** index fake fried eggs?

Thanks to Christine Shuttleworth for permission to reprint her posting to INDEX-L.

I was proud and delighted to see among Helen Schinske's friend's amusing quotes about indexes the following entry:

> *Eggs, fried, bogus*

It's from an early index of mine and is still my favourite entry of all time. The book (Henry Porter's *Lies, Damned Lies. Chatto & Windus, 1984*) was on the theme of 'how much can you believe of what you read in the papers?' and includes a lot of funny stories about how journalists have twisted, mangled or even invented facts to make a good story.

The item in question was about the type of heatwave traditionally described in the UK by the cliche 'Phew, what a scorcher!' A staff photographer was instructed to demonstrate that it was so hot you could fry an egg on the bonnet of a car.

The photographer was unable to get a real egg to fry in the heat, and eventually resorted to buying a plastic 'fried egg' from a joke shop, placed it on the car bonnet and photographed it.

Well, how would you have indexed the incident?

Lightbulb jokes

Madeleine Davis and Caroline Colton have created our very own lightbulb jokes

Q: How many indexers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None. No-one ever bothers to ask them!......*OR*

A: One. But it must be done by tomorrow and we don't know what bulb it is and we are not telling you where the socket is.

Q: How many indexers does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: *See* indexers

Q: Where do indexers go when they die?

A: *See under* Ground

They were inspired by these editor jokes:

Q. How many editors does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A. Only one; but first they have to rewire the entire building.

Q. How many sales directors does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A. (pause) I get it! This is one of those lightbulb jokes, right?

Q. How many managing editors does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. You were supposed to have changed that lightbulb last week!

Q. How many art directors does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. Does it HAVE to be a lightbulb?

Q. How many copy editors does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. The last time this question was asked, it involved art directors. Is the difference intentional? Should one or the other instance be changed? It seems inconsistent.

Q. How many marketing directors does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. It isn't too late to make this neon instead, is it?

Q. How many proofreaders does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. Proofreaders aren't supposed to change lightbulbs. They should just query them.

Q. How many writers does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. But why do we have to CHANGE it?

Q. How many cover artists does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. Why is there...an eggbeater, I think?...sticking out of this light fixture?

Q. How many publishers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A. Three. One to screw it in, two to hold down the author.

And for the librarians - the only joke I ever found in all my years teaching Cataloguing:

Q; How many cataloguers does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Only one, but first they have to wait to see how the Library of Congress has done it .

Specialisation

A naturopath used to advertise in the *Blue Mountains Gazette* that she specialised in: acne, ageing, allergies, anaemia, anorexia, anxiety, arthritis, asthma, bad breath, bladder problems, bowel problems, bronchitis, bulimia, candida infections, cold sores, colds... and so on.

She might have *dealt* with these problems, but there is no way she could *specialise* in them all.

Similarly, I don't believe indexers can claim to have, say, 20 specialties. Certainly most of us would competently index in many different areas, but that is quite different to specialising in them. To specialise means that we would have greater knowledge and competence in these areas than the average indexer, and that we make some extra effort to keep up-to-date in these fields.

I was therefore interested to read in *SIdelights* (the newsletter of the [British] Society of Indexers), that Elisabeth Ingham[1] feels much the same, and says "If asked, I never recommend anyone from *Indexers Available* if s/he claims too many specialisms. I assume that all my publishers expect me to keep up to date in my few chosen specialisms to a level which would be impossible if I spread my interests too wide."

> "she specialised in: acne, ageing, allergies, anaemia, anorexia, anxiety, arthritis, asthma, bad breath, ..."

While I agree that you cannot specialise in 20 areas of learning, I don't believe that you must be a specialist in an area to be a competent indexer.

One characteristic of indexers is that they tend to be highly qualified, showing both the desire and the ability to learn. A good indexer if not familiar with the subject matter of the works they are indexing, will learn it as they go. So if an indexer doesn't know already, they can always learn on the job.

There are also works which can be readily understood by lay-people, and others where the concepts and jargon make it much more difficult to pick up 'on the run'.

The general consensus seems to be that science (including technology and medicine) and law are fields where specialist knowledge might be handy. Even within science there are 'soft' and 'hard' areas.

I have indexed articles on statistics and mathematics, where I could pick out keywords from the thesaurus (e.g. *multivariate analysis*) but was totally baffled as to what the paper was about. Someone might be modelling the movement of waves, but there was no way I could tell whether they were talking about ocean waves, or radio waves, or something else. I put the blame here on the people who wrote the paper, and feel that every article should start with one plain English sentence saying what it is about. And just as user-friendly software helps experts as well as novices, so I believe these sentences would help expert readers by setting the scene and giving the reason for the detail that follows.

Strangely, the other area which I found challenging was molecular biology. Since this is the area in which I did my degree this makes me believe that a novice could not do justice to this area of science at all (although I have been told that maybe I knew *too much*, and made it difficult for myself).

Other areas of science are more generally understandable. After years as a biochemist, my sister has started a PhD studying feral turtles. She says she thoroughly enjoys herpetology research meetings as everything the people talk about can be readily pictured. Counting populations of frogs or crickets or turtles is easier to imagine than measuring quantities of chemicals and fiddling with genes that can never be seen.

Legal indexing is one field which I imagine would be difficult for novices, not because the content would be incomprehensible, but because there are certain sorts of information which must be indexed in legal materials that do not exist in other works, for example, cases in Tables of Cases. Maybe one simple lesson would get us going, but we do need some special introduction before we should be set loose on a legal minefield.

So should we specialise? For me, at least, one of the great joys of indexing is that it is possible NOT to specialise, to be a jack-of-all-trades, and to learn a little bit about many things. No, I do not wish to specialise. But there are some areas of knowledge which I approach with caution, and on which I would not cas t my indexing skill without sorme further learning or expert advise.

Glenda Browne.

1. Ingham, E. Indexers with specialisms should stick to those specialisms. *SIdelights: Newsletter of the Society of Indexers* Spring 1997

AGLS metadata

At its meeting on 19 November the Online Council of Ministers, a Federal/State/Territory/Local government committee of Online Ministers chaired by Senator Alston, endorsed the following recommendation:

'That the Online Council endorse the use by Australian Governments of Australian Government Locator Service metadata, where appropriate.'

Although some individual jurisdictions have already mandated the use of AGLS metadata, this is the first time that the AGLS online resource discovery metadata standard has been endorsed by the relevant peak Ministerial council covering all Australian jurisdictions.

email from Adrian Cunningham, National Archives of Australia (the AGLS National Maintenance Agency)

Visit the AGLS home page at http://www.naa.gov.au/govserv/agls/

ISSN Online

The ISSN Register is now available on the Web

The ISSN Register was already available on CD-ROM (ISSN Compact): ISSN Online is now (as from August 1998) one of the fundamental bibliographic resources available over the Web.

The ISSN Register is a comprehensive tool which can be used for several purposes: world-wide bibliographic searches on serial publications; cataloguing (records can be downloaded and re-used for specific purposes); constitution of controlled authority files based on ISSN (database management)

The ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) is universally accepted as the prime means of identifying serials (journals, magazines, periodicals of any kind), a vital first step for the management of the articles or contributions they contain. Its use is essential throughout the information chain, from publisher (and from the author of every single contribution or article) to the reader, through document delivery utilities, abstracting and indexing services, subscription agents, libraries, union catalogues, newsagents, for the efficient management of research, ordering and cataloguing. To date, some 900,000 serials published in 180 countries have been registered and have had an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) assigned. The ISSN network, an intergovernmental organization, is based in 67 National Centres which obtain data at source in

the framework of national bibliographies and legal deposit. Each year, it identifies more than 40,000 publications.

The ISSN International Centre in Paris, which is responsible for the coordination of the network, registers itself titles published by international institutions (United Nations, Unesco, OECD, European Community...) and international associations (scientific unions, learned societies, etc.) i.e. currently more than 13,000 titles.

The sustained growth of electronic serials is reflected in ISSN Online. More and more e-serials (whether online or on different magnetic or optical media) are being added to the ISSN Register. ISSN Online is updated frequently (at least on a monthly basis).

Each month some 4,000 new records are added to the ISSN Register and thousands of amendments and corrections are input. All the additions to the ISSN Register may be searched and browsed separately.

ISSN Online is a truly multilingual database: some 150 different languages are represented in the ISSN Register. Non Latin scripts are transliterated into the Latin alphabet according to the corresponding ISO standards. Special characters and diacritics are rendered through Unicode characters and displayed on most available browsers.

ISSN Online is available to all Internet users on a free trial basis. The trial period expires after one month, during which up to 40 search requests may be launched, 400 records visualised and 10 records downloaded (in their original ISO 2709 exchange format). Just fill up the trial request form

http://www.issn.org/online/trial.html

and you will receive your temporary password by e-mail. ISSN Online is available on a subscription basis, either yearly or monthly. Please refer to the subscription page

http://www.issn.org/onlineprice.html

for more information.

Your comments and suggestions will be highly appreciated.For more information about ISSN Online, please contact us at the following address:

online@issn.org

Pierre Godefroy, Assistant to the Director / Assistant du Directeur, ISSN International Centre / Centre international de l'ISSN, 20 rue Bachaumont, 75002 Paris, France

godefroy@ISSN.ORG

Telecommuting, *Continued from page 1*

Philippines. I read this suggestion years ago (perhaps in *The Indexer*) but have not heard of any local indexers who have pursued such markets. Perhaps local contacts would also be crucial.

Indexing help has been requested on Index-L for two jobs based in Hong Kong; one request has come from a New Zealand based indexer. So indexers themselves obviously feel that indexing work can be delegated to indexers anywhere. Indexers are recruited through the Internet, and work is sent by email, courier or fast mail.

One disadvantage of long-distance indexing is that post and courier costs are greater. When books are sent by email (as is happening more and more), it costs the same to print out everywhere.

Recently a recruitment firm advertised for abstractors to work for a UK company in Australia. They needed work done during the UK night to be ready the next morning. Rather than have a UK abstractor staying up all night, they decided to look for a DownUnder abstractor to do it in waking hours, receiving the documents and sending the abstracts electronically. They were apparently inundated with offers.

Web indexing: HTML-Indexer

HTML-Indexer is a program for use by professional indexers (and others) who want to create indexes to web pages. It enables automatic updating of web indexes with minimal work, while also allowing for intellectual input into the index entries.

I have only had time for a quick look at the program. If you have trialled it or used it and would like to write a review for the *Newsletter*, please let me know. Otherwise find more details on the web at:

http://www.brown-inc.com/indexer/FAQ.htm

Kathy Varjabedian from Los Alamos National Laboratory Research Library created an index to the monthly newsletter of her library using HTML-Indexer. See it at http://lib-www.lanl.gov/libinfo/news/newsindx.htm. In a message to the Web Indexers Mailing List she noted that in a web index the entry and the locator are essentially the same, so that entries have to be more explicit to avoid the problem of multiple entries with identical wording. She also used more double entry than she normally would have, as the software doesn't accommodate *See* and *See also* references. G.B.

From the literature

The *IASC/SCAD Bulletin* from the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada (vol 20, nos. 3-4) contains a number of interesting articles.

ISKO conference

Michèle Hudon reported on the International Society for Knowledg eOrganization conference (ISKO) held in Lille, France. The theme was *Structures and relations in knowledge organization.*

Members of ISKO include linguists, philosophers, classificationists, thesaurus designers and indexers. Many have library training, but others come from fields such as mathematics and computer science.

The emphasis at the ISKO conferences is on research; with information which is often interesting but not easily applicable to daily work.

Recurring themes at the conference included graphic representations of knowledge organization schemes and knowledge organization in the online environment.

For more information see: http://www.ceit.sk/wwwisis.htm.

SI conference

Christine Jacobs reported on the SI conference held at Tynemouth.

Nancy Mulvany demonstrated software which puts indexes online and makes them searchable. In an online bookstore shoppers can search for subjects of interest and find books (ranked for relevance) in which those terms are found in the index.

Standards for online display of indexes (and therefore for the display of all indexes) will be needed.

Good indexes will help sell books, indexes and indexers will be more visible, and indexers will be held more accountable for their work.

Book Reviews

A number of books are reviewed including:

ASIS Thesaurus of Information Science and Librarianship / by Jessica L. Milstead. Medford: N.J.: Information Today, 1998. 192 pp. (ISBN 1-57387-050-1).

Thesaurus Construction and Use: A Practical Guide (3rd ed) / Jean Aitchison, Alan Gilchrist, David Bawden. - Colchester, UK: Aslib, 1997. 212 pp. G.B.

From the Webmaster

By the time you receive a printed copy of this Newsletter it should also be mounted on our Website for all the world to see. It will shortly be followed by an online version of *Indexers Available.* Bit by bit we are moving towards purely electronic communication.

Naturally there are losses as well as gains from this change. Computer screens are not yet as portable as printed publications. Even the highest-quality displays find it hard to match the contrast and legibility of black text on white paper. For that reason, rather than trying to reproduce the printed newsletter exactly, as we have done in the past, I'll be adapting the style and format to suit the Web.

There are plusses too: I can make my pages as long as I want, so I don't have to say 'continued on page 7...'. I can add colour and provide links between related articles. We may even - gasp! - run to an online index with hyperlinks to articles (volunteers please!).

My current plan is that after a year or so Newsletter material of lasting interest will be assimilated, Borg-like, into the main Website, while transient material is removed. If there's a demand to archive back issues that can be arranged.

Email addresses

At the moment, as you would have noticed, AusSI officials and committee members use their own personal email addresses. This can cause confusion when officials change, as they do after an election. (More than a year after the changeover I still occasionally get mail intended for Dwight.) This year I'll be looking into the possibility of setting up a standard set of email addresses along these lines:

aussipres@whatever.com.au
aussimemsec@whatever.com.au
aussieditor@whatever.com.au

These will then act as 'aliases' for the real addresses, so that mail sent to *aussieditor* will be automatically redirected to whoever happens to be in that position.

There are plenty of free (and paid) services on the Internet that offer this facility: the trick is to find one that is reliable and relatively easy to use. If anyone has had any (good or bad) experience in this area to relate I would be interested to hear from you.

Jonathan.

Newsletter and Webmaster contacts

National Executive

Australian Society of Indexers

Annual General Meetings: National and New South Wales

Notice

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Society of Indexers will be held at the Malabar Restaurant, 332 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest, NSW 2065 at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 24 March 1999.

The Annual General Meeting of the New South Wales Branch of the Society will also be held during this meeting.

The AGMs will be followed by an Indian banquet, at a cost of $24.50 per person, drinks included.

RSVP: Garry Cousins 02 9560 0102 by 19 February 1999.

Elections

Nomination Form

We, the undersigned members of the Australian Society of Indexers, nominate the person named for the office indicated for the year following the Annual General Meeting for 1999:

Name of person nominated:..

Office (please circle): **National Committee:**   President
                                                                       Vice-President
                                                                       Honorary Secretary
                                                                       Honorary Treasurer
                                                                       Committee Member

Office (please circle): **New South Wales Branch:** President
                                                                       Vice-President
                                                                       Honorary Secretary
                                                                       Honorary Treasurer
                                                                       Committee Member

Signature of nominator:..
Signature of seconder:..
Signature of nominee:..

Nominations must reach the following address by 3 March 1999:

The Secretary
Australian Society of Indexers
PO Box R598, Royal Exchange, Sydney NSW 1225

Please photocopy this form if you want to keep the newsletter intact.