

Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter

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Metadata does matter. *Debbie Campbell, Metadata Coordinator at the National Library of Australia gives an overview of metadata with information on the Dublin Core 15 element set, software tools, search engines and subject access.*

Introduction

The term metadata, in its current persona, has been in use since 1995 when a small group of information specialists, librarians, digital networkers and archivists met in Dublin, Ohio to discuss how Web-based searching might be facilitated. The aim was to avoid extraneous hits and large results sets. The outcome of the meeting was a metadata schema known as the Dublin Core, which is a brief 15 element set suitable for describing Web resources. (A resource may be in any Web-enabled form - an electronic journal, a home page, an article, or a database).

The 15 element set was also proposed with the intended easing of the description process in mind - the developers had experience with the USMARC bibliographic standard and other schemas, so wanted to provide a coarse standard which nevertheless permitted sensible resource discovery.

An outline and example of the Dublin Core metadata schema

In 1998, the Dublin Core was ratified as RFC 2413¹. All of the elements are optional and repeatable:

Title - the name given to the publication

Author or Creator - the person or organisation primarily responsible for the intellectual content of the publication

Subject and keywords - the topic of the resource. If you already use a thesaurus or list of appropriate keywords, you can supply values from it here

Description - a short textual description of the resource, such as an abstract

Publisher - the entity making the resource available in its present form

Other contributor - a person or organisation who has made significant intellectual contributions to the resource, such as an editor or illustrator

Date - the date associated with the creation or availability of the resource. Where practical, this element should conform with the ISO 8601 standard

Resource type - the category of the resource, such as a home page, a novel, or a dictionary. A list of standard types has been released for use.

Format - the data format of the resource, used to identify the software and hardware which might be needed to display or operate the resource. A list of standard formats has been released for use.

Identifier - a string or number used to uniquely identify the resource. The identifier may be one or more of: URL, URN, ISBN, ISSN, SICL, DOI, Handle

Source - a string or number used to uniquely identify the work from which this resource was derived, if applicable

Language - the language of the intellectual content of the resource. Where practical, this element should contain a value from RFC 1766 - see <http://ds.internic.net/rfc/rfc1766.txt>

Relation - the relationship to other resources which

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Noticeboard

The August Indexer: AusSI conference in Hobart

The next AusSI conference will be held in Hobart from 9.30 on Friday 27 to after lunch on Sunday 29 August 1999. A brochure with registration form will be included in this issue or the next one.

An interesting program has been planned, ranging from general talks such as 'What is indexing?' to specific subjects such as 'Broad queries and narrow queries' and 'Secondary indexing: managing revisions, cumulations and spin-offs'.

Specific formats and related areas are well-covered, with talks on indexing school magazines, database indexing, educational indexing, bibliography, indexing for children, and metadata for the web.

Overseas speakers include Simon Cauchi (NZ), Frances Lennie, Maria Coughlin and Alexandra Nickerson (all USA).

If you are planning to travel around Tasmania before or after the conference, you can get good information about accommodation and travel packages from the Tasmanian Travel Centre at 60 Carrington St Sydney (Wynyard). There are presumably similar offices in other states.

Tasmania seems to specialise in interesting old accommodation. Choose from school houses, gaols, colonial mansions, a deer farm and a sea captain's cottage.

The conference hotel is 'Hadleys of Hobart' Looked it up in the index to my accommodation guide with no success, fooled by its 'proper' name of 'Country Comfort Hadleys Hotel.' GB.

Dates for your diary	
Soc. Editors (NSW) meeting	1 June
ACT Region mid-winter dinner	June
ASI conference in Indianapolis	9-13 June
Indexing courses in Qld	5-7, 8 July
SI conference in Canterbury	16-18 July
AusSI conference in Tasmania	27-29 Aug

ACT Region Branch

The ACT region branch held the first of its planned seminars on 1 May. A bright and helpful look at data indexing was provided by Lynn Farkas, who is also the Branch President. An article sent to the *Canberra Times* worked at convincing all writers that an index is essential to raise the sale price of a book. A long list of helpful events is planned for the coming year including an extension of the metadata seminars held last year, a good look at some indexing packages and that deep and meaningful question: what makes a good web index? June will be the mid-winter dinner, December will be the summer solstice dinner and that will mean it's Christmas again. Committee meetings for this year will continue to be held on the first Tuesday of each month.

NSW Branch: Ask an indexer

Do you want ideas on progressing your indexing skills? Are you relatively new to the profession and need some help? The NSW Branch of AusSI is organising a workshop with a panel of experienced indexers to answer any questions you may have relating to the skills of being an indexer. The aim is to provide an open forum for discussion, a 'nuts and bolts' session for people to further their expertise in either technical or intellectual areas. If you are interested in participating in such a workshop please ring Madeleine Davis on 02 9514 3176 or email her: redcliff@hermes.net.au so that the NSW committee can finalise the date and venue.

Book, Database and Pictorial Indexing courses - Queensland.

Expressions of interest are sought from persons who would like to attend:

* A three-day Introduction to Book Indexing course to be held in Brisbane 5-7 July 1999.

The physical assessment/evaluation of submitted indexes is an important part of the course.

* A one-day Abstracting and Indexing for Databases/Pictorial Indexing course to be held in Brisbane 8 July 1999.

Presenter: Max McMaster BAgSc, GradDipLib. Please register your interest by 7 June 1999, to Ann Cross, tel: (07) 3847 2463, fax: (07) 3397 7449, or email: hamcross@hotmail.com.



Noticeboard

NSW Society of Editors

Meets monthly at Judicial Commission Conference Centre, 5th floor Wynyard House (just above Wynyard Station) at 6.30 for 7.00. Cost \$15 including drinks and light eats. Next month's talk is on 1st June. Kay Fay will discuss 'Tips and traps in writing and editing annual reports'.

Kay is an experienced freelance editor who currently teaches NSW public servants how to produce quality annual reports. RSVP by Friday 28th May to (0002) 9294 4999 (voicemail).

Indexing humour

So, okay, I'm indexing Pharmacoeconomics and I need a little levity. Here goes:

What's Skindex?:

- a) a new piece of indexing software
- b) a dermatological quality-of-life-instrument
- c) the name of an indexing business whose owner's initials are S.K.

The correct answer is b. Look it up in Medline. Honest. *Sent to Index-L by Shelley Greenhouse (reprinted with permission).*

The Language Instinct

The Language Instinct, by Stephen Pinker, has been recommended to me for indexers who are interested in how language works. Pinker argues that language is not so much learned as hard-wired into the human brain. Among his illustrations: nonhearing people learn language as readily as the hearing; they simply learn a different language. An entertaining and controversial book.

NLA archiving electronic journals

The National Library now archives any Australian electronic journals which are indexed/abstracted in Australian or overseas databases, as part of the Library's PANDORA project.

More information at: <http://www.nla.gov.au/pandora/>
(Info sent to aliaINDEXERS by Sandra Henderson)

New indexing standard.

Standards Australia has published the Australian and New Zealand standard for indexing. It is AS/NZS 999.1999 (an easy number to remember!) and is called 'Information and documentation - Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes'.

The standard 'provides guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes. These apply to indexes of books, periodicals, reports, patent documents ... and also to non-print materials, such as electronic documents, films, sound recordings...'

This standard is identical to ISO 999.1996. It costs \$54 retail and \$43.20 for members.. The ISBN is 0-7337-2636-4.

Details on the web at <http://www.standards.com.au/>. I believe you can order via the web, or pay and then download a copy from the web. Alternatively telephone Standards Australia. GB.

Hans Wellisch

A profile of Hans Wellisch by Hazel Bell appears in the July 1998 issue of Journal of Scholarly Publishing: 'Personalities in Publishing: Hans Wellisch'. (*Sent to Index-L by Bonny McLaughlin*)

From the editor

Electronic indexing features in this issue, with an article by Debbie Campbell on metadata. Having just completed my first metadata project I found this extremely useful. Creating metadata is much like database indexing and abstracting. It is important to know how the searching system works, and to think about people searching 'blind', without the ability to browse or consult a thesaurus. Potential users and targeted users must also be considered. The purpose of the site might affect the choice of indexing terms.

Planning for the conference is progressing well. Jon and I are planning our 2-week Tassie holiday too. Hope to see many of you there.

Glenda Browne



(Metadata, cont from page 31)

exist as discrete resources themselves, such as images in a document, chapters in a book, or items in a collection

Coverage - the spatial and/or temporal characteristics of a resource

Rights management - a link to a copyright notice, to a rights-management statement, or to a service that would provide information about terms of access to the resource.

An example of this style of metadata (as applied to the MetaMatters home page) is shown in the box below (This example is provided in HTML version 3.2.).

Australian tools available for metadata creation and management

Dublin Core metadata may be created with Australian tools. You may choose to write your own metadata or to use a software generator to provide a minimum set of metadata. These tools and others were developed in 1998 under the auspices of the MetaWeb Project, a joint collaboration between the Australian Defence Force Academy, Charles Sturt University, the Distributed Systems Technology Centre and the National Library of Australia, to improve access to Australian resources on the World Wide Web. The tools can operate at an organisational or on a personal level; their best use is as a prototype to illustrate the enhanced benefits of metadata searching to your organisation. Any business or agency interested in creating high quality metadata can emulate the tools to create an in-house repository of metadata accessible either internally or externally. The software was

(Continued on page 35)

```
<META NAME="DC.Identifier" LANG="en" CONTENT="http://www.nla.gov.au/meta.html">
<META NAME="DC.Creator" LANG="en" CONTENT="National Library of Australia">
<META NAME="DC.Creator.Email" LANG="en" CONTENT="metadata@nla.gov.au">
<META NAME="DC.Publisher" LANG="en" CONTENT="National Library of Australia">
<META NAME="DC.Contributor" LANG="en" CONTENT="Graphic design by Peter Rohen, Fusebox Press;
http://www.fusebox.effect.net.au">
<META NAME="DC.Contributor" LANG="en" CONTENT="Site name provided by Jan Whitaker, of
JLWhitaker Associates; jwhit@primenet.com ">
<META NAME="DC.Rights" LANG="en" CONTENT="Commonwealth of Australia 1999">
<META NAME="DC.Title" LANG="en" CONTENT="MetaMatters">
<META NAME="DC.Subject" LANG="en" CONTENT="metadata creation">
<META NAME="DC.Subject" LANG="en" CONTENT="metadata architectures">
<META NAME="DC.Subject" LANG="en" CONTENT="resource discovery">
<META NAME="DC.Subject" LANG="en" CONTENT="subject gateways">
<META NAME="DC.Description" LANG="en" CONTENT=" This Website is intended to help Web content
providers improve the effectiveness of searching for information resources on the World Wide Web, by
describing the metadata schemas available for use in Australia and their Australian implementations. ">
<META NAME="DC.Language" SCHEME="RFC1766" LANG="en" CONTENT="en">
<META NAME="DC.Coverage" LANG="en" CONTENT="Commonwealth">
<META NAME="AGLS.Function" LANG="en" CONTENT="Recordkeeping Standards - Advice (NAA
Functions Thesaurus)">
<META NAME="DC.Date" SCHEME="ISO8601" LANG="en" CONTENT="1999-04-08">
<META NAME="DC.Type" LANG="en" CONTENT="Document">
<META NAME="DC.Format" SCHEME="IMT" LANG="en" CONTENT="text/html">
```

Figure 1. Metadata from the MetaMatters home page.

(Metadata, cont from page 34)

written in the JAVA programming language, which permits its deployment on a range of UNIX and NT platforms. They are available free-of-charge from, and can be trialled at, the MetaWeb Project site⁴.

Scope of the management tools

The software includes:

A gatherer, which collects metadata from previously identified sites.

The gatherer targets particular sites based on URLs (Uniform Resource Locators, which are the Web addresses) provided to it by a Web administrator or service support person.

A broker which indexes the metadata and makes it available for querying.

The broker creates the database indexes used for subsequent searching. Almost any open (Web accessible) database software, which may already be resident on your site platform, can be used to store these indexes.

An application programming interface (API) for many different metadata repositories.

APIs are pieces of software which permit programs

and databases built for different platforms to interoperate intelligently, but they are generally transparent to creators and users of data.

A query interface, which allows refined searching based on any or all of the Dublin Core metadata elements.

The query interface has matching capabilities that permit the stem of words to be searched. For example, providing the word *wildflower* will find *wildflower* and *wildflowers*; providing the phrase *wild flower* will match with both *wild flower* and *wildflower* and other occurrences of the word *wild* or *flower*. Some word stems are also addressed in a rudimentary way: *libraries* will find *library*. However, different search interfaces will support other variations of these capabilities. For example, more sophisticated services may host a thesaurus to match the singular and plural versions of words which do not have the same stem, such as *mouse* and *mice*.

The ability to search on the metadata however, is intended to improve on the searching offered by the commercial Web search engines. The latter usually create indexes automatically by parsing each word in the full text of a Web document, thereby often not focusing on the topic of the resource. Some Web search engines, such as Alta Vista, do create indexes

(Continued on page 36)

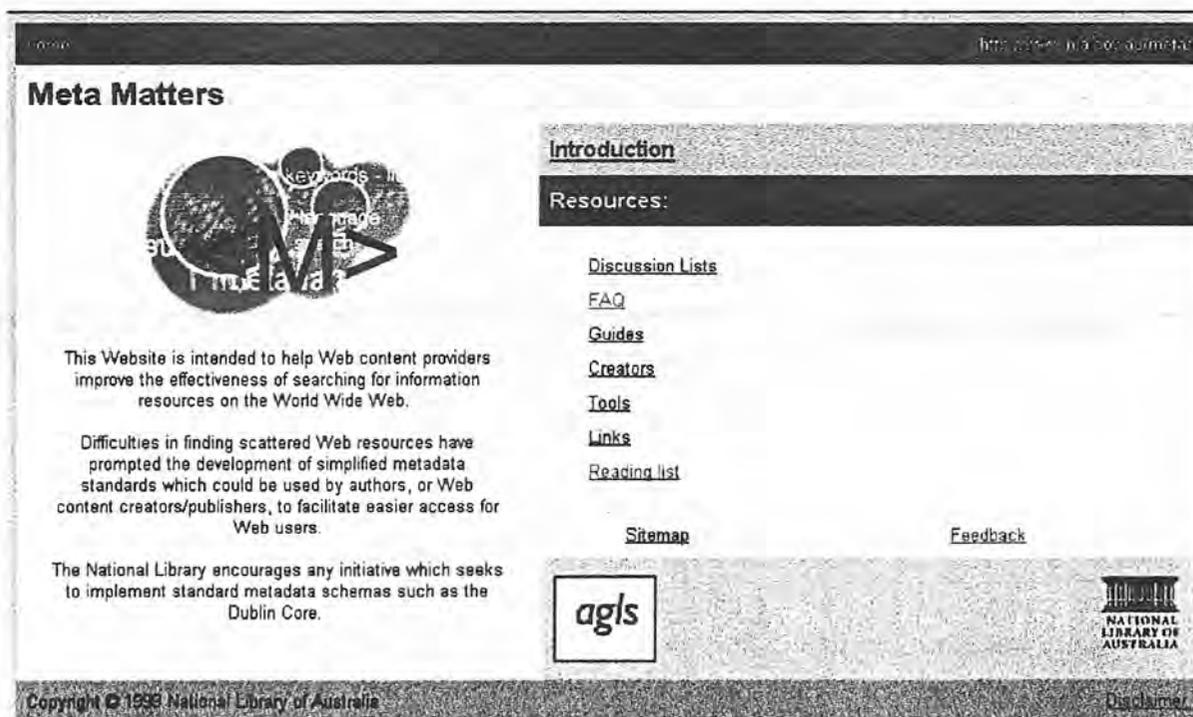


Figure 2. MetaMatters website.

(Metadata, cont from page 35)

based on an early metadata representation.

It appears as follows:

```
<META NAME="KEYWORDS"
CONTENT="metadata creation, metadata
architectures, resource discovery, subject gateways">
```

```
<META NAME="DESCRIPTION" CONTENT="
The MetaMatters Web site is intended to help Web
content providers improve the effectiveness of
searching for information resources on the World
Wide Web, by describing the metadata schemas
available for use in Australia, and Australian
implementations. ">
```

The National Library of Australia has decided to include both Dublin Core style and Alta Vista style metadata in the home page of each of its services. This will achieve two aims: the commercial search engines need only gather and hold links to the entry points for services, thereby reducing the quantity of indexed data; and the Web pages for these sites will be kept up to date on the Library's site, thereby avoiding the risk of out-of-date information being made available by the search engines.

The National Library creates and embeds Dublin Core metadata routinely as part of the process of creating Web pages. As well as facilitating the effectiveness of the new search engine to be launched for the site by mid year, this procedure also permits the National Library to make those resources available to other gateways. Each resource only needs to be described once, but it can be gathered by other sites such as AusInfo's gateway to Commonwealth government resources³, where those sites recognise standard metadata.

Guidelines for applying the metadata suited to many gateways must address such issues as whether to represent a location by its abbreviated form, *ACT*, or in its full form, *Australian Capital Territory*. A good metadata creation tool will generate one when the other is selected from a list of controlled values, so that both representations are stored and therefore made searchable. In other cases, a single word such as *Australia* may be used to encompass all States and Territories. In the end, the choice of which metadata values to provide must be based on knowledge of what people are most likely to search on. The goal of enhancing resource discovery must always be kept in mind when creating metadata.

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Registration

This statement of criteria for assessing books submitted for AusSI Registration was prepared by the Panel of Assessors, and has been adopted by the Society.

Registration is certification by the Australian Society of Indexers that a person has produced an index of sufficient quality to meet the professional standards of the Society. Successful candidates may be listed as Registered Indexers in the Society's publications.

The index submitted should provide efficient and effective access to all sources of information relevant to the work's readership. It should display the indexer's understanding of indexing practices and processes, modified as required by external publishing requirements.

This broad knowledge will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Identification of relevant material

1A. Analysis

- The index should be subject-based. It should contain terms for concepts as well as for names and objects.
- The index should include main headings and subheadings. Long strings of undifferentiated page references should be avoided; these should be broken up between main headings and subheadings. Some index terms may appear as both main and subheadings.
- The index should also include cross-references (and/or double-indexing) to lead from synonymous terms and to lead to related headings.

1B. Description

- The language of the index should be succinct.
- Words and phrases used to describe concepts in all levels of headings should reflect the language of the text, although

other terms familiar to the work's intended audience may be needed in cross-referencing.

- The relationship between headings and subheadings should be clear; prepositions may be needed to avoid ambiguity.

1C. Comprehensiveness

- The index should be comprehensive. It should provide access to all topics of potential interest to the book's intended audience.
- Examiners will judge comprehensiveness by sampling: coverage of topics represented by chapter, section and subsection headings in the index; coverage of smaller topics in the index; and following single page references in the index back to the text and examining surrounding text.

1D. Arrangement

- The index should be logically arranged. This normally means alphabetical arrangement, but it may be effective to use another arrangement (such as chronological) at the subheading level.

2. Style

- The index should be consistent in its arrangement and in matters such as punctuation, capitalisation etc.
- Wherever possible, the style of the index should reflect the style of the text (the spelling of words, the use of en rules or hyphens, how spans of figures are shown, etc).

3. Processing

- Page references should be accurate.
- Cross-references should be used correctly.
- There should be no spelling errors.

Victorian Branch: Annual Report 1998

During 1998, the Victorian Branch focussed its attention on activities for the members. A continuous program of events reflected this focus and included the AGM and annual dinner in March, three general meetings and two indexing workshops.

At the AGM and annual meeting, we congratulated the Society's first Life Members, Joyce Gillespie and Jean Hagger. Tributes to their work and dedication were written and read by John Simkin and Josephine McGovern and were responded to by the recipients. Also Certificates of Merit were awarded to Clodagh Jones, Dorothy Prescott and Max McMaster for their contributed indexes to the AusSI Medal Award.

During the year, we held three general meetings for members.

- On 6 July, we met to discuss the topic 'What is Indexing' as part of a survey conducted by the ACT Branch. Geraldine Sutter, Dorothy Prescott and John Simkin led the discussions with their views on the core functions and responsibilities of an indexer and the required skills. The Committee were pleased that the meeting was attended by both 'back of book' and database indexers. Feedback from the meeting was passed onto the ACT Branch for inclusion in their national survey.
- On 10 September, the ghosts of 1839 came alive through the obsession of Ken Smith, of the Port Phillip Pioneers Society. Ken has worked collecting and indexing information on the period from the first land sale on 1 June 1837 to the day when the Port Phillip district became the state of Victoria on 1 July 1951. During his talk, Ken shared his detailed and unique indexes and maps of the early Melbourne from property records, rate books and newspapers. We welcomed at the meeting other members of the Port Phillip Pioneers Society and members from local historical groups.
- On 25 November, a small group heard an interesting and entertaining talk entitled 'The Hazards of uncatalogued records' by Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, historian and a member of the

Victorian Branch Committee. Her research focussed on EM Forster of Cambridge and the Tongan Queen, Salote. Elizabeth catalogued all the Forster's papers which were accessible in one room - Queen Salote's records were spread throughout the Commonwealth and involved making numerous trips to Archival and Records collections throughout the world.

Two workshops were held during 1998. In February, a three day 'Back of Book Indexing' workshop was held, followed by an 'Abstracting and Indexing for Databases' workshop in May. The scheduled workshops on 'Preparing Annual/Cumulative Indexes to Journals' in November and a second day 'Back of Book Indexing' workshop in September were cancelled because of lack of interest. Our thanks to Max McMaster and George Levick who conducted the 1998 workshops.

The planning of the Second International Conference of the Society in Hobart continued throughout the year. The Committee, assisted by Clodagh Jones in Hobart are developing a program of interesting and challenging papers and sessions. There is interest from many parts of Australia as well as from New Zealand, the United States and United Kingdom.

Two members of the Committee, John Simkin and Max McMaster represented the Victorian Branch at a national workshop 'What is

indexing?' in Canberra, as part of the ACT Branch survey.

Other activities include membership of National Committee subcommittees and responses to issues brought forward by the National Committee. The President and Vice-President are members of the National Committee. Max McMaster (as Convenor) and George Levick continued to work on the Indexing Medal Award Committee for 1998.

On behalf of the Victorian Branch, I thank the members of the Branch Committee for their work throughout the year, especially Jenny Restarick, our Secretary and Joyce Gillespie, our Treasurer. I would also like to thank my employer, the Australian Council for Educational Research, for the use of its meeting rooms for Committee meetings, workshops and general meetings.

Margaret Findlay, President, 1998 (16 March 1999).

On the Web.

Third prize in the AusSI Web indexing competition went to: Peter Langmead (p.langmead@afc.gov.au) Australian Film Commission, Sydney, Australia
Directory on Screen Network Australia
<http://www.sna.net.au/>

Role: Created Directory section in Screen Network Australia site. Identified appropriate sites from web searches and trade press and created database of sites. Developed descriptor scheme and directory structure to enable multiple paths to sites for different users groups.

Purpose: To provide gateway to sites for or about the Australian film and television industry and their audiences.

Hardware and Software: Filemaker Pro database on Macintosh server. Query interface programmed by Beyond Online who developed the site for Screen Network Australia.

(Metadata, cont. from page 36)

Information providers are welcome to participate in Australian developments.

The MetaWeb Project established an Australian metadata discussion list, where international developments in metadata standards are discussed. Anyone with an interest in the future of the Web can join the metadata community to influence the proposed applications of standards as they are intended for use in Australia. The community, which consists of information providers from a range of libraries, archives, government agencies, and publishing companies, as well as anyone with an interest in maintaining a Web page, is keen to share its experiences with new agencies attempting to set up a metadata enabled Web site.

The National Library has established an information site to assist in the learning process. Called *MetaMatters*, it provides a very useful starting point for new information providers or those enhancing their Web skills. Services include details on how to subscribe to the discussion list, Australian initiatives, links to user guides, a select reading list, tools, and metadata schemas in use around Australia¹.

1. http://www.purl.org/DC/about/element_set.htm
2. <http://purl.nla.gov.au/metaweb/home>
3. <http://www.fed.gov.au>
4. <http://www.nla.gov.au/meta/>

Published indexes

Lloyd George's ferocity

The index to Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* was discussed in *The British Revolution: British politics, 1880-1939. Vol. 2* by Robert Rhodes James as an example of Lloyd George's 'ferocity' to Maurice.

The book says: "This division marked the end of the Liberal Party as a unified force. The schism already created by the events of December 1916 was now substantially increased by the bitterness of the Maurice Debate."

The index entries referred to in the note are:

'Maurice, Sir Frederick: comfortably placed as any politician...subservient and unbalanced...his astonishing arithmetical calculations...the instrument by which the Government was to be thrown out...intrigues against the Government, his mind being apparently unhinged...tool of astuter men...his double-dealing denounced by Lloyd George...his grave breach of discipline condoned by Asquith...dismissed.'

The index to the book itself is much milder:

Lloyd George, David (later Earl)...and Maurice debate, 107.

From the sublime to the ridiculous:

Overheard on daytime TV, when a man had to cook pastry.

Where shall I look for it?

It's a long shot, but you could try 'P'.

Chilling comment on Antarctic book

In Tim Bowden's review of *The endurance: Shackleton's legendary Antarctic expedition* he concludes: "I find it inexcusable that a book of such scholarship and quality could be published without an index".

(by Caroline Alexander, published by Bloomsbury, 214 p., \$39.95. ISBN 0 7475 4123X). GB.

Time terminology

A writer in the *Sydney Morning Herald* has brought up the issue of language about time as we enter the new millenium. Not for a while will being the best of anything this century be such a complement, and 'the turn of the century' will mean just last year. Some indexing might need careful wording. GB.

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This newsletter is sent free to all members of the Australian Society of Indexers. It is published 11 times a year, with a combined issue for Jan/Feb. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

Copy should be sent to the editor by the last day of each month for publication in the middle of the next month. I am delighted to receive contributions, both large and small, from members. Please contact me if you have any questions about suitable items for publication. The editor reserves the right to cut and edit material.

If greater than one A4 page, please send files on a disk or via email in Rich Text Format, Word for Windows, or plain text (ASCII).

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Please send image files in Windows Metafile (WMF), JPEG, or PCX format. Photographs and camera-ready copy can be scanned by the editor.

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