The annual general meeting of the Society
will be held on Wednesday, October 12th
at CSIRO, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne
at 8 p.m.

Sherry will be served at 7.30 p.m.

The programme will include a description of
the activities of CSIRO with demonstrations

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DO YOU WANT COPIES OF The Indexer?

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS

Office bearers - 1976-77:

President: Clyde Garrow, C.S.I.R.O., 314 Albert Street,
East Melbourne.

Vice-President: John Simkin, City of Moorabbin Library,
161 Jasper Road, Bentleigh.

Treasurer: Joyce Korn, Librarian, Australian Society of
Accountants, 49 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne.

Secretary: Sylvia Ramsden, 62 Don Road, Healesville, 3777.

Committee members: Jean Hagger, Department of Librarianship,
Royal Melbourne Institute of
Technology.

John Hawker, 26 McIlwrick Street, Windsor.

Ed Lewis, 1 Psychological Research Unit,
Commonwealth Department of
Defence.

Coral Muntz, C.S.I.R.O.

Newsletter editor: John Simkin, City of Moorabbin Library,
161 Jasper Road, Bentleigh,
Victoria, 3204.

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The annual general meeting of the Society will be held on
Wednesday, October 12th at C.S.I.R.O., 314 Albert Street, East
Melbourne, at 8 p.m.

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Agenda

1. Apologies

2. Minutes of meeting 6th October 1976

3. Matters arising from the minutes

4. Annual report

5. Treasurer's report

6. Membership fee, 1977-78

7. Election of office bearers (see nomination form, page 9)

8. Future activities

9. Other business

Followed by a description and demonstration -
"The indexing work of CSIRO."

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN INDEXER

Clyde Garrow
Manager, Information Service
C.S.I.R.O.

When, in the 1940's, Vanevar Bush proposed the automated information retrieval scheme MEMEX, most people regarded it as science fiction, perhaps in the same category as flying to the Moon.

We all know that moonflight was achieved in 1969 by Apollo 11. Now considerable progress is being made towards total information storage and retrieval. This should become evident by a quick browse through the latest issue of *Computer-readable bibliographic data bases: a directory and data book* published by ASIS in October, 1976, edited by Martha E. Williams and Sandra H. Rouse.
(Data about bases, by T. Brandhorst in *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science,* vol. 3, no. 2, 1976).

The following statistics highlight developments in the storage and retrieval of information by computer:-

Worldwide Production of Machine-Readable Data Bases

By Producers	No.	%	No. of Records (millions)	% of Records
Produced in U.S.A.	160	58	46.3	89
Produced outside U.S.A	117	42	5.7	11
	277	100	52	100

By Category	No.	%	No. of Records (millions)	% of Records
Sci-Tech	161	58	25.6	49
Medicine or Life Science	28	10	6.6	13
Non-Sci-Tech	42	15	4.3	8
Sci-Tech-Related	46	17	15.5	30
	277	100	52	100

Clearly the United States of America dominates the storage and retrieval of information by computer, and the major development has taken place in scientific and technological information. Of the 52,000,000 records now in machine-readable form 33,000,000 are accessible in the United States of America by on-line interrogation techniques - by using a terminal linked to the computer centre.

As effective indexing is the key to information retrieval the role of the indexer is self-evident.

INDEXING OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Sue Healy
Community Affairs Librarian
State Library of Victoria

What is community information? You have seen something of one library-based system in the tape of Clara Jones, but there are many other kinds of agencies. Most of the information agencies at present operating in Victoria are run mainly by volunteers - the Citizen's Advice Bureaux and centres like the Learning Exchanges. Government departments are often de facto information agencies. Many individuals such as doctors, lawyers or the secretary of the senior citizens club find themselves in the position of advising others. Sometimes they have a wide knowledge of the services available in the community, often they don't. And so, more formalised arrangements are made to back up the people who are expected to have the answers - or the *gatekeepers* in the current jargon.

I still haven't said what community information is, though I've tried to explain who delivers it. It is hard to define, but it is basically the knowledge that people need to help them to solve the problems they face in daily living. For instance, material for a student's essay on alcoholism is not really community information; the address for *Alcoholics Anonymous* for a problem drinker is. Many people are not aware of help that is available, or even assistance to which they have rights by law. The growing number of specialised services has led to a situation where it is very difficult to locate the appropriate agency, and therefore information centres have been created to refer clients to the right place.

Indexing for community information involves problems different from those in indexing books or periodicals. When the material is collected, it can be in a variety of formats with no uniformity of terms or meaning. Attempts to standardise the methods of collection can help, but organisations offering a service tend to see it as unique, and prefer to provide their own description.

The first step in collecting information about services and organisations is to check all available lists, directories, files and notice-boards in the area. Sometimes one facility will be found under a variety of names, or it may not be clear if it is a section of a larger unit - for instance, a clinic may be attached to a hospital or function independently. Since each unit should only be contacted once for details, planning should include a pre-sorting of these problems of nomenclature.

Now we have a list of organisations that have to be contacted. Ideally this should be done by a personal visit to the site, but this is not usually possible because of insufficient time and staff. Most have to be canvassed by phone or questionnaire, and the answers recorded on data sheets. As much as possible of the service's descriptions should be tabulated - location, hours open, target group, any special limitations. If the system is manual, then the details are entered on cards, which then have to be organised into some useful order.

This is where people in information agencies start to develop nervous conditions and insomniac tendencies. At every meeting or seminar devoted to community information, there is the hope that the messiah of the information industry will appear. A ready-made system with no drawbacks is all they ask, but the so-called *experts* don't seem able to produce it. It has to be simple to be used by voluntary workers as well as professionals; it has to be accurate to provide useful referrals; it has to be quick to satisfy a client waiting at the desk. So far no system has fulfilled any one of the criteria, let alone all three.

Most small agencies starting their files begin with a list
of subjects. If they are library-trained, they add *see* references
from synonyms. Problems begin when a service is designed for one
specific target group - which is more important, the group or the
service? So it may go under both, or under one with a reference
from the other. In a small file it is fairly easy to remember
where an item is likely to be found, but as the file grows, more
and more of the material is hidden in the system. A few well-known
services are heavily used, and many others, often more appropriate,
are ignored. The more effective the collection effort, the more
problems are faced in arrangement. Often there are many different
people attempting to retrieve material from the file. Failure
to find something is more serious than failure to find a book
in the local library. If there is an organisation that provides
frail elderly people living alone with a flashing light to alert
the neighbours that they need help, and this fact is not communicated
to such a person when they come into the agency, a tragic accident
could happen that could have been avoided.

Efforts to overcome the problem in Victoria have been made
in the last few months. A thesaurus of social welfare terms is
at present being constructed by John Bailey of the RMIT Department
of Librarianship. This was compiled by taking as many terms as we
could find in use, and analysing them until the major facets
became clear. The two most important aspects seem to be target
groups and services, with agents and problems or needs as of
secondary importance. These main areas have been subdivided,
and the thesaurus is being tested on the entries in a range of
published directories. Another project is being carried out by
Barry MacIntyre of the same department. He is indexing the terms
used by Citizens' Advice Bureaux in their files in order to give
them some basic consistency of approach. Peter Allen will speak
of the use of indexing in the VCOSS directory. Other published
directories are used for community information, particularly
Migrants' Melbourne, which is used generally, not just for special
ethnic services. Its index is fairly basic, but in most cases
leads the user to roughly the right section. One especially
complex directory has four separate indexes scattered through the
publication. It is naturally very hard to find anything, even the
right index.

Let me give you a few examples of the kind of inquiry that we
receive, and would expect to answer from the community information
files; may I add that until the thesaurus is finished the files
are kept under alphabetical order of name of organisation except
for a few added entries under subject.

A woman rang to find out whether she had the right to see her
credit rating. I suggested she contact the Council for Civil
Liberties. I also found out that it was possible to pay a fee -
quite a hefty one - and obtain the rating. I now have this infor-
mation under *Credit rating* , but the referral to the Council for
Civil Liberties only appears there because the question has
already come up once. It would not be possible to enter the
Council under all aspects of civil rights.

If you find a dead dog in the street outside your home,
then you may ring someone to find out whose job it is to remove it.
I looked through several directories to see if the problem was
listed, but didn't find it. Luckily I remembered a conversation
with Mrs Mills when she was at Prahran Library, that it was the
local council's job. Most entries dealt with sick or injured
animals, so if the dog was still breathing, you would have had a
better chance of getting an answer,

In the thesaurus that is being developed, under the main
aspect *Problems* the subdivision *Health* includes *Vetinary Health;* there
is also a subdivision *Social problems* which includes *Disposal of the dead.*
I feel that if we can work with this kind of classification we will
have a more effective way of finding related services than by a
simple index. It isn't easy; terms can mean so many different
thing to different people in this field, and some of the concepts
are very complex: take the term *Single mother* - you have her

relationship to the child or children, the fact that it is a
female, that she is not married but stands in an ex-relationship
to the father, either deserted or separated. All of these aspects
can have a bearing on the service, and need to be included in the
indexing. It seems to me that a classified system is more likely
to treat them adequately. However, it is more mind-boggling for
a volunteer to be confronted by the schedules than by an alpha-
betical listing. We hope that in time it will be possible to
produce a basic version that is less formidable. The problem of
civil rights, to return to the earlier example, is better filed
under social needs than under the separate problems, so long as
there is a note covering the scope of the other areas (such as
Personal problems - financial). Until we have used the system for a
while, it is hard to know how easy it is going to be.

A Personal View

by Chris Uhl

My indexing experience is limited to Romola McSwain's *The Past
and Future People* (O.U.P. 1977), a book which is a converted Ph.D. thesis,
designed for an academic audience. While the publishing agent classified
the work as anthropology, I felt the book had exceptional value as a
document in the field of cultural history, and therefore compiled an
index including references to German, Japanese and Australian influences
on the Karkar Islanders. I would not suggest that it requires academic
experience to compile an index of an academic study, though this
helps sometimes. Many academic theses try to impress through a use
of jargon, though this book was practically free from it.

The terms were generous - a straight fee of $130 for an eight
page index. This created problems, for some entries had to be omitted.
Nevertheless, the major problems, I felt, were those encountered in
identifying with the user of the index. I came to realise that uniformity
over setting out the index was a major problem. For example, when a
concept or word is used over a number of pages is it correct to use the
symbol f, ff, passim or (say) 128-32? Which is easier for the reader?
As a user of indexes, I prefer the use of bold type to emphasise the
important pages, and to omit the misleading symbols f, ff, etc. Surely
it is the job of the indexer to appreciate and note when the writer
puts his/her energies into explaining a term at length, and when the
writer is referring only marginally to an idea or concept. As far as
the reader is concerned, he/she generally wants to get to the heart of
the matter first - hence bold type would be of advantage. If the
reader is a scholar, the faint type entries in the index can also
be followed up.

Secondly, the names of authorities, writers, etc. In some cases,
it is impossible for an indexer to find in a specialised field whether
e.g. two Smiths referred to are the same one or not. Writers often
omit, due to excessive reverence, distinguishing initials or titles.
Communication between indexer and author are surely necessary, but often
difficult. In my case, the author, I was told, was so sick and tired
of her Ph.D. and book (understandably perhaps) that she wished no
further contact with it. As a Ph.D. student, I sympathise.

As far as audience is concerned, I have found that, as an academic
teacher, students hardly know how to use a library, much less a book.
Something needs to be done with regard to teaching students the
importance of the index. That can only be done when uniform settings
of an index are achieved.

The Pizzicato Language of the 1970's

by Jean Uhl

A recent book-indexing assignment brought an acute realisation that the English language, like the old grey mare, is not what it used to be. Acronymic language is getting worse with a proliferation of A - full stop, Z - full stop and every letter of the alphabet inbetween, full stop. Pity the poor indexer with initials instead of words - initials which mean nothing to those not used to the jargon of a specific subject.

Having read the Introduction to the book to be indexed (35 pages) and discovered there were 26 acronyms ranging from intelligible, reasonably intelligible and absolutely incomprehensible (even if one did crosswords regularly) I concluded that (a) it was essential for an indexer to be absolutely 'with it' these days, and (b) that a glossary of terms was essential to include with the general index but printed separately. After consultation with the co-operative publisher, I was relieved to find he received the idea with acclamation. One has to remember that a book may well be read and an index referred to by a lay person reading for general purpose, as well as by a student of the specific subject for whom it was presumably written in the first place. But, I challenge anyone even with an IQ of 180 to hazard a guess and come up with the right answer on, e.g. SAM (without full stops), VPC (without full stops), Pambos (a word), A.C.M.E. and C.O.M.G.O. SAM turned out to have nothing to do with the current 'Uncle' of toothpaste, shaving cream and other toileteries but stood for Signal System for Assessment Modification. VPC had nothing to do with a bonding substance ("sticks everything from a postage stamp to elephants' tusks") but, translated, meant Verbal Problem Checklist. (Icould think of nothing more appropriate than to stick VPC up in large letters on my desk in front of the index I was endeavouring to compile.) Pambos, the honey of them all, stood for Procedure for the Assessment and Modification of Behaviour in Open Settings. A.C.M.E. was nothing to do with a Wringer but stood for Association of Couples Marriage for Enrichment, and C.M.G.O., Conference of Marriage Guidance Organisations. Who would have guessed? If we must have acronyms why make them longer by using initial letters for Of, The, At, etc. as is done in some cases? The only one I really felt at home with was C.S.I.R.O. but I would hazard a guess that half the population would not know the correct translation of even those well-known letters. In case any reader is interested, the book was on Social Welfare in Australia. If there is a change of Government before the book is released my index will probably have to be remodelled.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS - AUSSI

To add further to Jean Uhl's discomfort (see above) our colleagues of the Society of Indexers have dubbed us AUSSI. Our committee, at a recent meeting, decided that the acronym would probably stick so have accepted it for use in "pizzicato" communications.

Mr. Ainsworth Gordon, secretary
of the Society of Indexers, writes -

Dear Mrs Ramsden,

I'm sorry your letter of 21 May has gone so long unanswered
- my wife and I have been on holiday, and I'm now struggling
to catch up with a fortnight's accumulation of letters, as well
as various matters which were in midstream when we went away.

Matters seem to have gone splendidly on both sides over
the affiliation. Our AGM on May 19 followed your example, and
approved the Terms of Affiliation with complete unamity.

So far as *The Indexer* is concerned, I take it that two things
will now go ahead automatically:
(1) The cover and title page of the next (October) issue
will carry the addition: "and of the Australian Society of
Indexers".
(2) The agreed Terms of Affiliation will be printed in
full in the text.

I take it too, that arrangements will be made direct with
Mr. Harrod about distribution of the October issue to members
of AUSSI, on the lines of Clause (6) of the T of A; and that
your Treasurer will be sending a cheque or other remittance
to our Treasurer, as laid down in Clause (7). These are both
administrative matters which need not be the responsibility
of your Journal Liason Officer, though they can be if you wish.

Mr. Harrod aims to get the copy for the October issue
sorted out by mid-August, I believe. I have not had time to
contact him since I got back from holiday, but I shall be seeing
him tomorrow, when we have a Council meeting, and doubtless
I shall find that there have been all sorts of developments
whilst I've been away.

We are getting more and more involved with our plans for
celebrating the Society's 21st anniversary next year. The big
event will of course be the international conference - the first
of its kind there has ever been. We do hope that, amongst the
members of AUSSI, there will be some who by good fortune will
be in the UK next summer, and who will be able to join us
during the weekend of 14-16 July 1978. We are doing our utmost
to get as many of the details as possible arranged in time
for publication in the October *Indexer*, in order to enhance the
possibility of attendance by overseas members. Naturally, our
most particular hope is that both the affiliated Societies will
find it possible to be represented. The biggest problem,
needless to say, is money; and nowadays that seems to grow
more difficult all the time.

Yours sincerely,

***

From the Society of Indexers Annual report, 1976-77:

Membership:
For the first time, the end-of-year membership has reached
the 400 mark:

	31/3/76	+	New members	=	Peak figure	-	Withdrawn* (see note)	=	31/3/77
UK & Eire	318	+	82	=	400	-	44	=	356
Overseas	42	+	7	=	49	-	5	=	44
TOTAL	360	+	89	=	449	-	49	=	400