 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING
TO BE ANNOUNCED

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SO YOU WANT TO INDEX?

The AusSI short course in indexing held in Canberra, 4-6 April 1986, was very well-attended, and another course is scheduled for 4-6 July 1986 at Ballarat College of Advanced Education. As there is an obvious interest in training for indexing, we are including in this issue an edited version of 'So you want to index?' by Peter Greig. Our thanks to Peter and to the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada for permission to include the article, which first appeared as a supplement to the IASC Bulletin vol. 7, no. 2, December 1984.

What is an index?

An index is a detailed list of all the names (personal, corporate, geographical and place names), subjects, events and other matters treated in an item of material, with an indication of their location within that item.

The arrangement of an index may be alphabetical, classified, chronological, numerical, alpha-numerical or by some other method, but it should present the indexed information in a different way from which it is presented in the original item.

Indexes are most frequently associated with the written word and with printed documents (manuscripts, books, pamphlets, periodicals and newspapers), but they can also provide access to information in iconographic materials (maps, pictures, etc.) and to physical artifacts ('realia').

Learning to index

Most indexers have learned to index by actual experience, supplemented by reading manuals on indexing.

A few courses are available, but for the most part these are offered by library schools. A list of available courses is maintained by the American Society of Indexers (Education and Training in Indexing for Document and Information Retrieval, compiled by James D. Anderson, 1981, 147 p.)

A correspondence course in indexing is offered by the Society of Indexers (Great Britain) through the Rapid Results College (for further information write: The Careers Adviser, Rapid Results College, Dept. PSI, Tuition House, London SW19 4DS, England). A short and intensive correspondence course, Book Indexing Postal Tutorials (BIPT), geared to the indexing of an actual book manuscript is also available (for further information, write: Michael Gordon, 1 Underwood Cottages, Clyst Hydon, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 2NT, England).

Some indexing services are willing to hire inexperienced indexers with related training in library or information science or because of the individual's particular subject knowledge. Such services will provide on-the-job training in indexing methodology.
Essentially indexing can ONLY be learned through actual experience and by actual practice. Some currently available books on indexing may be of help to the beginning indexer:

**Bibliographies**


**Standards**


**Manuals**


*Chicago manual of style*. 13th edn. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982. (Chapter 18, on indexes, is also available as a separate offprint from the University of Chicago Press, 5801 South Ellis Ave, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 60637).

* To be updated in a regular feature in *The indexer* commencing with vol. 15, no. 1, 1986.


Freelancing


Journals

ASI newsletter no. 1, 1973- . American Society of Indexers, New York. (Published five times a year).

AusSI newsletter vol. 1, no. 1, December 1977 -. Australian Society of Indexers, Melbourne. (Quarterly).


The indexer vol. 1, no. 1, 1958 -. Society of Indexers, London. (Journal of the Society of Indexers and affiliated American, Australian and Canadian societies; published twice a year).

Is there a career in indexing?

Mary Petherbridge was perhaps the earliest freelance indexer, running her own business as far back as 1895. Writing in 1904, she foresaw increased opportunities for experienced indexers in designing and providing access systems for records maintained by associations, corporations and government agencies, as well as in the more familiar fields of book and periodical publishing. Today, the fields of book and periodical information continue and the new word for collections of information is 'databases'. Hans Wellisch pointed out in the May/June 1984 newsletter of the American Society of Indexers that we now have 'an exponentially growing number of databases, both in printed and in electronic form, that need thorough indexing and abstracting.'

A limited number of positions are available in indexing services and there is an increasing recognition of the services which can be provided only by the freelance indexer. The indexer has unique possibilities of work of ever-increasing variety and challenge today. Some indexers use alphabetically-sorted cards; others are using computers or word processors to index individual publications, document collections or databases. Opportunities exist but they must be sought after; the experienced indexer can do much to create even further opportunities of work.
Starting as an indexer

Job opportunities for the beginning indexer may be scarce. It is essential to obtain part-time or full-time experience, initially in a subject field in which you are competent, either by working for an indexing service or by freelance employment. It may even be necessary to compile a certain number of free indexes so long as you can be assured of recognition for the work.

It is essential, as you gain more experience and confidence as an indexer, to build a portfolio of published work and letters of recommendation from authors and publishers. This will facilitate obtaining future work and provide new opportunities for employment. The professional indexer learns from each new experience and creates new job opportunities not only by continually advertising his/her skills, but also by constantly promoting the need for indexes to publishers, authors and others.

Registers and opportunities for employment

For the experienced indexer, recognition by one's colleagues through inclusion on a register of indexers can be an important means of possible employment. There are two kinds of register: a register of accredited indexers requires some form of evaluation of each indexer's past work; a register of known indexers simply lists an indexer without any attempt to critically examine his/her work. The Society of Indexers (Great Britain) maintains a register of accredited indexers whose members' work is stringently evaluated by a panel of peers before inclusion on the register. The American Society of Indexers has published a Register of Indexers (edited by Fay Dickerson and revised annually) which lists known indexers and provides some indication of their individual subject specialties. The Australian Society of Indexers has also established a register of accredited indexers whose work is evaluated by a panel of assessors and publishes Indexers available, which lists registered and non-registered indexers available to take commissions. The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada is currently establishing a register of known indexers.

* * * * * * * * *

INDEXES TO
THE SECRET ARCHIVES OF THE VATICAN

An interesting exercise for an indexer is to read books, of course, not only to study the index but to practice 'getting into the skin' of what the author is trying to say and to imagine how you would index the book. We have, perhaps, become slightly accustomed to being asked when there is a mention of the words 'the Index', 'What's that - the thing at the end of the book?'

But indexing does not apply only to book indexing in the 20th century as was brought home very forcibly to me lately when reading about the Secret Archives of the Vatican in a book by Maria Luisa Ambrosini.

Archival work is very different from library work (as the Society of Archivists, Australia will tell you!) but when material to be indexed goes back in a 'collected' sense to before 1612 and vast quantities of it remain unexplored, one can well imagine with what a present-day indexer and cataloguer may have to contend.
The 'silent invisible work of staff', who have to prepare new indexes to documents which will never be finished in their lifetime, makes even a complicated book index today appear the essence of simplicity.

It is, of course, a rare privilege to enter and gain permission to research in the Secret Archives and the Vatican Library and when a member of staff can merely indicate in a general way the indexes recommended to be consulted, it must be a daunting prospect for any researcher. To learn that there are 684 indexes compiled by various authors, nearly all handwritten, could bring on a bout of mental indigestion, especially when the indexes to not lead just to one source, but the researcher may have to look into a variety of different documents located in different places.

Censorship is nothing new and there is an Index of Prohibited Books drawn up at the end of the 5th century which caused consternation among the writers and publishers of the time.

However imperfect the indexes which give detailed information on, for example, the Lutheran controversy, are thought to be, because there is an index it must lead somewhere and these indexes are a history lesson in themselves.

Rules and Regulations of the 17th century are interesting to read for a modern day indexer. The custodian of the Vatican Library and the Secret Archives had to keep the library open for at least three hours every day, unless it was a Holy Day, starting at 1.00 p.m. All officials and employers had to be present and 'doing what is pertinent' at this time. (There were to be no slackers!). The scriptores had 'to take copies of books ill-treated by time, to make indices and titles for the books without taking codices, indices and documents to their own homes.' The scriptores were also directed 'to file the documents and make the indices and for no reason to allow anyone to read such documents without specific permission.' The famous Cardinal Borghese was the Librarian at the time.

(Perhaps the publisher for whom I compiled my first index may have heard of this regulation, for I had to attend the publisher's office every day until finished - an enjoyable time when I learned more Australian swear words than ever before and my education in that direction was greatly enhanced. Nowadays publishers have learned to trust indexers to work at home and one has the luxury of having proofs sent by courier to the door and collected by the same means when finished, thus saving time and money and wear and tear on the indexer.)

In the 1560s, a Congregation of the Index was established in Rome so that the decrees of the Council of Trent were carried out. This was updated in 1571 to continue and publish the Tridentine Index, issued seven years previously by the Council of Trent. How would you cope with 4250 processes in an Archives only partially indexed when the indexes are in Latin and highly classified? What you are looking for may be listed alphabetically but also according to some other classification and, where no analytical index exists, it would be necessary in the event of anyone tackling the job of compiling an index to go through all 4250 processes.

How would a researcher these days get on in a library if notice was taken of the 1927 ruling that 'whoever for his own convenience needlessly avoids carrying out normal research work in the indices and habitually troubles archivists, scriptors and ushers will render himself unwelcome'? In other words, don't make a nuisance of yourself!
One thing to be said for modern day technology in the compiling of indexes and catalogues is that in the 1950s an extensive card index was made for the use of the public at the Archives in Rome so as to coordinate all books and articles based on Archives material which have been written in many languages in many places. Luckily, at the request of scholars, several copies of this index were made for use at centres of historical research and, on the advice of major American libraries, the index was published in book form. The undertaking in only one volume amounted to 12,000 analytical index cards which related to only 135 files.

One of our first energetic members, Dorothy Prescott, who did so much valuable work in map indexing, would be interested to learn that all the maps and plans discovered in the Secret Archives dating back centuries have not yet been located 'as they are not listed in the indexes'. Still housed in the tubes and folders in which they were found they are only labelled with the region applicable and if indexes do exist in a different location they cannot be consulted without permission. Modern microfilming must disturb the ghosts of those ancient scriptores who wrote everything by hand, laboriously, but as it was pointed out recently, what is the greatest need is the photographing of the imperfect indexes which are in enormous quantities - fire, war or other catastrophes would undo the work of centuries and surely cause all those ancients to rise up from their graves.

Could a translating machine - apparently a possibility in the not too distant future - tell a scientist whether an article in say, Russian or Hungarian, is worth being translated by a human? If it could, then there might be a hope that some sort of indexing might be compiled for such a gigantic undertaking as the complete indexing and cataloguing of what must be the largest and most important collection of documents in the world.

The contemplation of this should make our State Libraries and Public Record Offices feel that their task is minimal compared with Rome's - after all, Australia is not yet quite 200 years old. But what of the coming years, the years of the 2000s, where will indexing be then?

Jean Uhl

* * * * * * *
NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Library, Australian Council for Educational Research
Mrs S. Haggerty
Mr P.A. Harvey
Mrs K. Lewis
Mr G. Lloyd
Mrs P. Lynch
Mr M.J. McMaster
Mr F. McWilliam
Mr D. Mercer
Ms S. Rothbury
Ms E.K. Whelan
Mr M. Wyatt

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Sunbury, Vic. 3429
12/5 Robe Street,
St. Kilda, Vic. 3182
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BOOK REVIEWS - INDEXES MENTIONED

The AUSTRALIAN and South Pacific directory of applied research and program innovation in teacher education: preservice and inservice. Comp. William Young. South Pacific Association for Teacher Education. Reviewed by Liz Oley, Australian college libraries vol. 4, no. 1, March 1986.

'There is no index by individual researcher. One would think this would be a useful access point in such a directory. Checking details of a particular researcher of unknown whereabouts entails a sequential search of the directory listing ...'

With about 480 entries in the directory there are only 360 entries referred to in the subject index. This means that not only is there no multiple referencing but also many entries are obviously not accessible through the subject index.
For example a check under the term 'Youth' revealed one entry in the subject index - this was not the one on the page opposite the index page itself referring to 'Youth in transition'. A further check revealed this was not the only missing entry from this category. 'Literacy' was not in the subject index yet more than one program referred to the area. Moreover an entry on page 57 under 'Judgement training - a program to prepare instructors for judgement training of pilots' appears not to have been included in the subject index at all. Again it is understood this limitation is due to time and budget constraints.


'It's usefulness is only limited by the lack of an index.'


'An index is also provided.'


'Admittedly there are comprehensive subject indexes but again, these are subdivided into 'Subject' and 'Personal name'. The personal names include authors such as Charles Dickens and librarians such as Charles Cutter.'


'I have one major criticism of the publisher and Hugh Clarke. There is no index, nor was there one for "Last Stop Nagasaki". No story is complete without an index. In fact, it's annoying for the reviewer and the reader to laboriously scan many pages to refer back to some item of interest.'


'The most ironic paper is on the characteristics of a good book index. Ironic because the index to this book is poor. Lack of cross-references (eg. SDC to Orbit, Lockheed to Dialog), inconsistent indexing of individuals' names, and an indexing policy which is semi-random - sometimes key topics on a page enter the index, sometimes not, with no rhyme or reason. The paper on book indexes says no index term should refer to more than ten page numbers, but a number of terms in this book index do precisely that!'


'The present volume is however complete in giving abstracts for all items included, together with very full name (individual and institution) and subject (Precis type) indexes.'

'All items are individually numbered and are included in the very thorough and comprehensive indexes. The author index includes also editors and translators. The title index includes variations created by different publishers and by translation into different languages. The subject index includes multiple references to individual works where applicable and is extremely helpful in locating materials on specific subjects and topics. See also references, both in the text and in the indexes are also relevant and helpful. Cross-references in the text, for example, will indicate which of comparable items are more up to date, scholarly, or comprehensive. The indexes are clearly not an afterthought, but an essential and integral feature of the whole work.'


'My only complaint is that, as usual, minor characters in the text do not appear in the index, a matter of great frustration to all genealogists.'


'Unfortunately, the Library Association has not facilitated this usage by its haphazard arrangement of the papers with no subject or author index. Although detailed indexing will occur in Australian library and information science abstracts, it would be useful for those browsing through this publication to be able at least to identify the major themes contained in it without having to scan every title.'


'The lack of an index and reference map of Australia is a frustrating and an inexcusable fault in a book which is destined for many reference shelves.'


'It seems incomprehensible that in a book on northern Australia, sugar cane rates two page references in the index, both occurring in the introductory historical chapter, and that Townsville (where are to be found 100,000 of the north's less than one million people) does not appear in the index at all!'


'The index appears to be adequate and through generous spacing is easy to read.'


'An index is a notable omission, and one which I hope will be corrected in future editions - in this edition the very full content pages are some consolation.'
NOTES AND NEWS

AusSI will be conducting a residential course in indexing at Ballarat College of Advanced Education during the weekend 4-6 July 1986. Prospectuses have been sent to all those who responded to our request for expressions of interest in the course.

Anyone who has undertaken any research on Victorian history would have used the indexes to the Argus newspaper covering the years 1846-1858 and 1910-1949 and deplored the lack of any index to the intervening years. Dr John Hirst, lecturer in Australian History at La Trobe University, is co-ordinating a project to index the Argus from 1859-1910. The project, which commenced early in 1984, depends on volunteers to help index the approximately 15,750 issues of the paper which appeared during this period. Guidelines and other assistance is given to all volunteers. If you are interested in becoming involved in this worthwhile project, please contact:

Dr. John Hirst
History Department
La Trobe University
Bundoora 3083
Telephone: (03) 478 3122


The indexes to Victoria's pre-1896 birth, death and marriage records are reviewed by Dom Meadley in The genealogist vol. 5, no. 1, March 1986, pp. 3-5.

Thanks to all those who responded to our request for contributions to the 'Book reviews - indexes mentioned' section of the Newsletter. We are always looking for material for this section. If you have come across any items which would be suitable, please send them to the Editor, Australian Society of Indexers, G.P.O. Box 1251L, Melbourne Victoria 3000.

In the AusSI membership list, published in our last issue, Mr E. Zalums, 10/18 Edensor St, Epping NSW 2121, was inadvertently included in the South Australian section.
We welcome contributions to the Newsletter. If you have any material you feel would be suitable for inclusion, please send it to the Editor, Australian Society of Indexers, G.P.O. Box 1251L, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, by Monday 28 July 1986.

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