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Filing is not as simple as ABC

In any collection of bibliographic items, whether it be a small personal address book, a library catalogue, the index to a monograph or a large data bank, there will be problems requiring choices to be made as to their solutions. Our concern is with the arrangement of terms which act as indicators to the items in the collection. For the purposes of this paper, the list of terms, sometimes called headings or entries, will be called the file.

The basic order of most files is alphabetical, terms which have no alphabetic value such as symbols and numerals preceding the alphabetical sequence. A term may consist of a number of elements; single letters, letters in words, numbers, symbols, punctuation marks and spaces.

\$\$\$ and sense
76 trombones
84 Charing Cross Road
A T & T
Abeles, M.
abelia
Able and willing

(An alternative is to file the numbers as if spoken; if this were done, the two numbers above would be reversed.) Single words may be one-word personal names, such as the names of saints, place names or subject terms. Groups of words may be the component parts of personal or corporate names, multi-word place names, subject terms consisting of more than one word, or titles of monographs, periodicals etc.

Different principles may be applied to the arrangement of terms. Let us dispose of the less important one first, word-by-word versus letter-by-letter. The latter is rarely used but it does occur in some older encyclopedias.

word-by-word	letter-by-letter
black art	black art
black book	blackbird
Black Death	black book
Black Hawk	blackcap
Black Prince	Black Death
blackbird	blackfoot
blackcap	Black Hawk
blackfoot	blackmail
blackmail	Black Prince

The more important principle is the contrived or hierarchical approach versus the 'file-as-is' approach. The former seeks to make the file responsive to an intelligent approach; the user is required to make mental insertions into the written records. The file is arranged in such a way that groupings make logical or hierarchical patterns. The 'file-as-is' approach is concerned with the way terms look rather than with their sound or meaning. The rest of this paper will deal with various aspects of these arrangements.

In both types, certain conventions are imposed on the files. Punctuation is ignored in both cases; spaces are treated differently in each case. In the hierarchical approach, spaces are taken into account in the arrangement of the terms. The convention is 'nothing before something', the space between the elements being considered as 'nothing'. This convention has been demonstrated in the 'word-by-word' example.

A further complication occurs when the term contains elements which one wants to include, often for the sake of courtesy as in the case of titles of nobility, but does not want them to interfere with the arrangement. The usual convention is to write such elements in italics or enclose them in parentheses and ignore them in filing. If a computer is used to make the file, the software program used should enable this to be done.

The major problem is what one writer has called 'the multifarious uses of one term'.⁽¹⁾ The same word can be a surname, a place name, a subject, a title or the first word of a title or phrase. In the hierarchical type of filing, there is a convention which requires the same term to be arranged in the sequence: person, place, subject, title. In groups of words, punctuation is ignored but spaces are not. In 'file-as-is', where terms are identical in wording but different in meaning, the order of precedence is title before subject. Both punctuation and spaces are ignored; the result, as can be seen from the following example is that similar elements are separated.

hierarchical	'file-as-is'
Hay, Andrew	Hay, Andrew
Hay, Ian	Hay fever [title]
Hay, <u>Sir</u> William	hay fever [subject]
Hay, NSW	Hay, Ian
Hay, Vic	Hay, NSW
hay fever [subject]	Hay-on-Wye
Hay fever [title]	hay seed
Hay-on-Wye	Hay, Vic
hay seed	Hay, <u>Sir</u> William

Personal names pose further problems. They may have a prefix, as in La Trobe, or begin with a contraction, such as McFie or St James. The problems arise because the same situation may be treated differently in different files and, indeed, in the same file. The Melbourne telephone directory is such a case; check its treatment of the Mc's and the St's! In both approaches to filing, names beginning with prefixes are filed as one word, the space being ignored. In hierarchical filing, it is usual for names beginning with contractions to be filed as though spelled out; in 'file-as-is', the names are filed as written.

hierarchical	file-as-is
La Triestina Pty Ltd	La Triestina Pty Ltd
Latrobe Studios	Latrobe Studios
La Trobe University	La Trobe University
Macfie, A.J.	Macfie, A.j.
McFie, P.	MacFie, Peter
MacFie, Peter	MacFrith, J.A.
MacFrith, J.A.	Macga, C.,
Macga, C.	McFie, P.
McGaffin, A.M.	McGaffin, A.M.
Saint-James, A.	Saint-James, A.
St. James, C.	Saint Ledger Boutique
St. Ledger, S.R.	St. James, C.
Saint Ledger Boutique	St. Ledger, S.R.

(1) Horner, J. *Cataloging*. Association of Assistant Librarians, London, 1970, p. 275.

Horner draws attention to a further problem. 'It is difficult to see why only these names should be made uniform and inaccurate, while SYMTH is filed apart from SMITH.'⁽²⁾ This may be alleviated by the use of references, 'SMYTH see also SMITH' and vice versa. Such references may be filed either at the beginning or the end of the group; either way, there is no guarantee that the user of the file will find them.

Titles pose problems when they begin with an article, such as *The Age*, *Die Meistersinger*, *A dictionary of music*. Both types of filing recommend ignoring the article, even though it may be written as part of the term. Difficulties occur when different languages are used in the same file. An article in one is a word in another; woe betide the filer who files 'Die Meistersinger' before the subject 'die sinking', who files 'A bas les masques' after 'an apple for the teacher'. Fortunately for most of us, there are readily available lists of definite and indefinite articles in various foreign languages.

There are many other problems which may occur, even though infrequently. Several codes of rules are available to suggest solutions and to ensure uniformity of treatment. The main ones are:

For the hierarchical approach:

ALA rules for filing catalog cards. 2nd ed. Chicago, American Library Association, 1968.
British Standards Institution. *The preparation of indexes to books, periodicals and other publications*. London, BSI, 1976. (BS 3700 : 1976)

For the 'file-as-is' approach:

ALA filing rules. Chicago, American Library Association, 1980.
British Standards Institution. *Specification for alphabetical arrangement and the filing order of numerals and symbols*. London, BSI, 1985. (BS 1749 : 1985)

The 'file-as-is' approach has been developed especially to facilitate both the preparation and search of bibliographic records without having special linguistic knowledge, and by using automated means. Only a few special features, such as ignoring initial articles and italicized words, need to be included in the software program used to arrange the file. There is no need to consider punctuation; only rarely is there the need to distinguish between categories of identical terms. Certainly, 'similar elements that differ in form (e.g. numbers expressed in digits and those expressed in words) are filed in different positions. The inconvenience of having sometimes to look in two places is outweighed by the fact that no special linguistic knowledge is required to find a numeral or an abbreviation when its printed form is known'.⁽³⁾

The understatement of the century occurs in the introduction to the *ALA filing rules*. 'The major principles and features of the present rules should be comprehensible to regular users of files in which the rules are applied. For even regular users, however, guidance and assistance may be necessary, and for new or occasional users, it may be particularly important to provide a system of explanatory and illustrative devices'.⁽⁴⁾ Suggested devices are listed and explained. First, there should be a readily available version of a brief statement of the essential rules; this may be in the form of a handout or an eye-catching insertion into the file, whether this be on cards, in a book, in microform or on computer. Other insertions explain briefly particular rules, such as the treatment of names beginning with prefixes. Users are helped to find a specific

(2) Ibid., p. 271.

(3) *ALA filing rules*. American Library Association, Chicago, 1980, p. 2.

(4) Ibid., p. 4.

term, the location of which may be unexpected; as in the case of words spelled in different ways; they are instructed to use their initiative and look in all likely places.

Filing, like life, was not meant to be easy!

Jean Hagger

* * * * *

Indexing with Word 3.01

My reaction on reading the last issue of the Newsletter was disappointment, as I had decided to write an article on computer assistance for indexers. However, I decided to go ahead as the article was written about a specific program and I had used a program familiar to all users of the Apple Macintosh, so here it is:

Microsoft Word 3.01 is a well-known program loved (and hated) by many. I have belonged to both categories and have concluded that it is an admirable program and that my periods of hatred stem from ignorance - go back and study the manual instead of fuming.

Word 3.01 has an indexing system of its own which is unsuitable for an indexer, but useful for the preparation of an index to a short report. Cues are given at the beginning and end of words which are to appear as headings in the index. You compile the index as you write the document. For subheadings, you give the cue, the heading, the subheading and the cue; for sub-subheadings you give the cue, the heading, the subheading, the sub-subheading and the cue. This is all too cumbersome for a lengthy index.

I have simply created an index quite speedily using some features of the program. The procedure is as follows:

1. Go to Format - Sections and specify Columns 2 and spacing 1.5cm or whatever you want for a two-column neat-looking index.
2. Go to Format - Show Ruler and Create and indent of 0.5 cm.
3. Create your headings (I have inserted 'sub' for clarity) and let the subheadings run on in any order - Example 1.
4. Select the whole index, go to Document and highlight Sort. The result is Example 2. The headings only are sorted.
5. Delete 'sub' and bring the subheadings to their indented position - Example 3.
6. Click before 'art & artefacts' and shift click after 'employment 190'. This selects the subheadings. Again go to Document and select Sort and the subheadings will be sorted - Example 4.

That basically is all there is to it.

Another great advantage of the Mac is the scroll bar, i.e. the box at the right of the screen. When you are about to create a heading and think 'Have I already made it?' quickly scroll through the index to the approximate spot, e.g. C for computers, to ensure it is there. This is so much faster than shuffling through index cards.

Another advantage is the use of Search - Find to quickly go to any heading or subheading.

I have also been in the position of having the whole document I was indexing on disc. This will not always happen but is an added bonus, especially when you omit to create a heading for a topic which doesn't seem important then later change your mind. You can quickly go through the early parts of the document with Search - Find and find the occurrences which you passed over earlier.

Having given all the good points to this indexing aid, I must give a warning, but not before I urge any card indexers who have access to an Apple Macintosh to try this. The saving in time and effort is great - you will be converted.

Warning:

For indexes of any length you will reach the stage when you ask the computer to sort your headings and it will say it does not have sufficient room. I did not resent this as the initial spade work was done and of course the subheadings, being short, never have this disadvantage and will always sort. Thus for a long index some moving of the final headings into alphabetical order is done by normal computer methods for inserting.

Example 1:

Aborigines sub art & artefacts, 87-88,
103, 123, 125 tourism projects,
110 trainees, 110 land, 75
employment, 190
Airports, 33-34
ACT Administration, 2, 75, 103, 178,
address, 224

Example 2:

Aborigines sub art & artefacts, 87-88,
103, 123, 125 tourism projects,
110 trainees, 110 land, 75
employment, 190
ACT Administration, 2, 75, 103, 178,
address, 224
Airports, 33-34

Example 3

Aborigines
art & artefacts, 87-88, 103, 123,
125
tourism projects, 110
trainees, 110
land, 75
employment, 190
ACT Administration, 2, 75, 103, 178,
address, 224
Airports, 33-34

Example 4:

Aborigines
art & artefacts, 87-88, 103, 123,
125
employment, 190
land, 75
tourism projects, 110
trainees, 110
ACT Administration, 2, 75, 103, 178,
address, 224
Airports, 33-34

Olga Howell

'Ecdysiast' v. 'Stripper'

I noticed in the last issue of *Editorial Eye* an item of trivia about the word 'ecdysiast', which is respectable enough to be in Collins Dictionary as well as Morris's book of strange facts, though Collins describes it as 'facetious'. I regard it as perfectly valid and in fact invaluable. I had occasion to create the abstract noun 'ecdysiasm' derived from Mencken's coinage when indexing *Healthright*, which I used to do each year when I was its editor. What other headword could I have used?

Juliet Richters

* * * * *

Proposed New South Wales branch

A meeting of New South Wales members is being planned for early April in Sydney to determine whether members wish to form a New South Wales branch and, if so, the form the branch should take and the activities it should undertake. Once a date has been set, all New South Wales members will be advised. Meanwhile, the steering committee may be contacted care of Michael Wyatt, 22 Kendall Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010.

* * * * *

Course in book indexing

The book indexing course run at the University of New South Wales in 1987 was repeated during November-December 1988. This time the course had the endorsement of the Australian Society of Indexers.

Although the fee was raised to \$150 to allow for inflation, we attracted 25 applicants. This turned out to be the ideal number for the course.

As a result of last year's student evaluations, we made some changes to the course. Students' responses this year were much more positive.

Michael Wyatt

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NEWSLETTER - MARCH ISSUE

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 27 February 1989.

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