



Australian Society of Indexers

NEWSLETTER

Volume 15 Number 8 September 1991 ISSN 0314-3767

EDITORIAL

Q: What is a Pan Ass Member?

A: Someone who sits on a panel for a long time, assessing indexes. Mopping their brows, the members of the Panel of Assessors recently emerged with a welcome announcement — we have a Medal winner. In the tradition of previous years, the details of the winning entry are kept top secret until the night of the Medal Dinner. Please come for what is sure to be an enjoyable evening (details below).

The NSW Branch had its first Annual General Meeting on 28 August. NSW President, Garry Cousins, presented the Annual Report of the Branch. This will be published in the October 'expanded' issue of the Newsletter. Also, a new committee of six was elected, however, positions have not yet been allocated.

We have nine new members this month! An indication that the profession of indexing is alive and well. And in the interests of encouraging the proliferation of artful indexers, the six-week introductory course kicked off on Monday, 24 September. We wish the participants well in what should be a valuable training experience.

Helen Kinniburgh

SOCIETY OF INDEXERS MEDAL DINNER

The Australian Society of Indexers Medal for 1991 will be awarded at a dinner to be held on Wednesday, 23 October. The name of the winner will be announced, together with details of runners-up. A certificate will also be presented to the successful publishing house. The winning entry together with the runners-up will be on display.

VENUE: Graduate House
University of Melbourne
224 Leicester Street
Carlton Vic.

TIME: 7:00 for 7:30 pm

COST: \$30.00 per head, all incl.

RSVP Ian Odgers (03) 418 7275 or Max McMaster (03) 418 7453 by Wednesday, 16 October, payment in advance to The Secretary, Australian Society of Indexers, GPO Box 1251L, Melbourne, 3001. Please advise if vegetarian required.

HAZARDS AND STARS FOR INDEXERS

I recently accepted an index to a book on the economic progress in SE Asia during the last decade. It was the first offer from this (overseas) publisher, with a promise of more. As the schedule for publication was very tight I had to work from manuscript. This was the first *hazard*, but there was no other way, considering the time for material to go back and forth.

The manuscript showed the book was not well edited. The status of some important persons was described differently, and some names were spelt inconsistently; there were a number of unexplained acronyms; the illustrations were not included nor given any references; a number of Prime Ministers of one country were referred to but only some were named. There were whole chapters devoted to one or other country, but when they were referred to elsewhere, there were no cross-references, etc. etc.

I took courage and wrote to the publisher (*hazard 2*), but when the proofs arrived I was thanked (1 *star*), and all the matters were put right. A list of abbreviations explained all the acronyms (2 *stars*), so I was able to refer to the list in my preliminary note.

My initial suggestion that even though the book was not a large one, the text called for a more detailed index was readily accepted (3 *stars*). [Later I realised that this was welcome as a manuscript of 125 folios was blown out to 184 printed pages and the index was left in the same type size as the text to make it a decent sized book]. I must say the finished product was impressive with some innovative features from this international publisher.

I completed the index to the manuscript folios¹, not giving a thought to how they would translate when the pages arrived (*hazard 3*). However, I had time to think

and when they did arrive I first ruled off the manuscript and inserted book pages against these rules. I also ruled off the book pages to show exactly where each manuscript folio began and ended. Great care had to be taken to fit the manuscript footnotes into the proof pages. I then went through the draft print-out of the index and inserted true page numbers against each entry. A fair deal of editing and adjustment was necessary at this time in view of the many figures, tables, graphs, new footnotes and some textual changes.

The final index (in hard copy plus disk) went off air, ahead of schedule. As there was no time for proofs to be sent I requested that the index be read carefully against my copy (*hazard 4*). The book was published on time and a copy sent to me by air with a note of appreciation (4 stars). I naturally turned to the index, and that was when the real truth dawned!

My disk had been used to save resetting, but as no specifications were given to me of page size or type area of each column, the index had to be reformatted by the printer, and he really made his contribution!!

The first error I found was mine. I had failed to translate one manuscript folio locator to true page number (*hazard 5*) and this mistake appeared in 2 places (out of 1060 lines). After sending proof pages, the printer had taken the first 2 lines of page 61 back to page 60, so two entries had the incorrect location reference (*hazard 6*). My continuation lines were incorrectly interpreted (*hazard 7*), and could be misunderstood by a user (*hazard 8*), or condemned by a reviewer (*hazard 9*). For example, in one page the heading (the name of a country), and the subheading ('financial sector') were both to be continued. As only the name of the country was inserted by the printer, and as the sub-subheading read 'reinforcement', the entry now read as if the country and not its financial sector was being reinforced (*hazard 10*).

The wrap-around lines were incorrect throughout, and were simply ranged (vertically) with the line above it. Long cross-references were similarly treated. This would give the impression that I was careless with my alpha arrangement (*hazard 11*).

Taking courage from my first sally with the publisher I made bold to point to the errors. Not only was this well received, but a few weeks later a second book of 600 pages was sent for indexing — this time in page proofs and with a series of specifications for presentation of the index. (5 stars — not bad).

1. The term 'folio' (folium = leaf) is used by printers to refer to a (typed) sheet of manuscript, as distinct from 'page' in a printed

book, though it is used interchangeably in conversation. Folio is also used to describe a sheet of paper folded in half, and further to describe (the largest) book size. In law it has been used for centuries to state the number of words (generally 72) that make up a 'folio' in a document.

Kingsley Siebel

JUNIOR INDEXERS

The following is from a letter accompanying an unusual Medal entry:

At Woodlands Church of England Girls Grammar School we have been developing two magazine indexes for National Geographic's *World* (USA) and Ashton Scholastic's *Eyespy* (Australia). These magazines are part of the Junior School Library's collection, which is for the use of girls from five to twelve years.

To my knowledge there is no magazine index published in Australia for primary school students. *Guidelines* is a widely used and respected magazine index in secondary schools, but the magazines, which it indexes are mostly too difficult for primary age students. So, here we were with two excellent magazines, both readable and informative, ever-increasing in number, but with no simple, speedy way of accessing the information therein. *Eyespy*, for example, contains much useful information for research on Australian themes, particularly the environment and animals. It begins in 1987 and at present goes to issue no. 5/91.

Hence my decision to construct our own indexes! How could we achieve this? Primarily school libraries are notoriously understaffed — I work half-time with no clerical assistance. The only feasible method of moving ahead with the idea was for the girls to construct the indexes themselves.

Girls in Years Six and Seven (so girls of ten to twelve years):

- select the major articles in each issue
- read each one
- and try to describe it in one or two words, i.e., assign a subject heading to the article.

I have talked to the girls about ASCJS subject headings and we have this text on hand. However, I do not insist that the girls use these subject headings if they are confident using their own natural language. After all, the point of the exercise is to gain access to the information in the magazines, and children often choose a more appropriate subject

heading for other children than an adult would. Some major articles are entered using two or three different subject headings if need be. The girls enter the data directly into our Apple IIe computers.

...I interfere as little as possible in the construction process. I do rationalise some subject headings e.g. KOALAS and KOALA BEARS would both become KOALAS.

...the indexes are quite simple:

- subject headings (in alpha order)
- title of article
- issue
- page number(s)

The indexes are available as a print-out or on an Apple disk. In 1990 I began marketing the *Eyespys* index in publications for other teacher/librarians, both in South Australia and Australia-wide, at \$8.00 for the print-out and \$10.00 for the Apple disk. We will update the index annually at a reduced cost.

I am sure that you will have much more sophisticated indexes entered for the Australian Society of Indexers Medal. So, I am submitting ours feeling a little uncertain about its appropriateness and status. I have never seriously indexed a publication before! Nevertheless, I wanted to tell you about it, because I believe that it is a unique project, of which I am proud. It brings together three aspects of my professional life, about which I can become quite passionate — the education of young children, access to information, and libraries.

Margaret Strickland

[This letter and the index concerned were discussed at the last meeting of the AusSI National Executive. All Committee members were impressed, and agreed that an encouragement award is in order. It was felt that a small contribution (e.g. a relevant subscription) to the Woodlands School Library would be appropriate. The Society will consult the school on what they will find most useful.]

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr A Dobrovits
34 Amor Street
HORNSBY NSW 2076

Mrs A Grant
137 Shackleton Circuit
MAWSON ACT 2607

Ms C Henry
114 Roberts Street
NORTHCOTE VIC 3070

Ms J Johnson
14 McCormack Street
PORT MELBOURNE VIC 3207

Mrs A Ketley
8 Edgoose Avenue
MONT ALBERT NORTH VIC 3129

Miss N Knappe
10/17 Princes Street
Cottesloe WA 6011

Ms M Phillips
9/2 Sexton Street
Cook ACT 2614

Ms R Tonk
GPO Box 11506
WELLINGTON NZ

Ms S Tuckwell
61 Stewart Street
PADDINGTON NSW 2021

REGISTER OF FREELANCE PUBLISHING SERVICES

Hobsons Press (Australia) Pty Ltd, in association with the NSW Society of Editors, is putting together a register of freelance publishing services. New South Wales members of the Society of Indexers who have not been contacted directly are invited to call the editor, Melody Lord, on (02) 267 8816 (as soon as possible). A basic entry in the register costs \$55.00. Advertisements are also for sale.

DEADLINE: OCTOBER ISSUE

Contributions should reach the Editor at the address below by Monday, 7 October 1991. Contributions on 3.5" Mac disk appreciated.

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