



# Australian Society of Indexers

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 17, Number <sup>7</sup>8, August 1993

ISSN 0314-3767

### ACT Region Meetings

The ACT Region Branch has changed the date of their dinner from Tuesday 24 August to Tuesday 7 September. The same venue applies.

The speaker will be Peter Judge, formerly head of CSIRO Information Services and presently Managing Editor of *Incite*.

**Date:** 7th Sept 1993 at 7 pm  
**Venue:** Canberra Club, Moore St, City

**Cost:** \$25.00 for Members of Society of Indexers, Aust Society of Editors or ALIA  
\$30.00 Nonmembers

*Cost includes: 2 course meal, wine, orange juice, coffee & chocolates.*

**Contact:**  
Susan MacDougall (06) 201 2645  
Margaret Hyland (06) 201 2053

### ACT Region News

The 'Meeting the Data-base Indexer's' meeting on 22 June showed the variety of methods of indexing material for databases. Speakers were Judy Iltis, Australian Institute of Criminology, who described the criminology database, CINCH, Karyn Gladwish, the librarian in charge of the Attorney-General's Information Service (AGIS) and Geraldine Triffitt who spoke about the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library databases.

Of particular contrast is the vocabulary control and subject access used for these databases. CINCH abandoned their inhouse list of subject terms in favour of the *National Criminal Justice Thesaurus*, compiled by the United States Institute of Justice. The AGIS thesaurus is compiled in house, which although providing

appropriate Australian and New Zealand legal terms, has structural problems of hierarchy and relationships. The AIATSIS computer catalogue has uncontrolled free text annotations with a coded subject classification scheme. As the information retrieval system is for text retrieval and not a database (it is not a library system) the single subject code field, with no subject fields generates frequent false relationships between subjects and geographic locations.

Access to the databases vary. CINCH and AGIS are Online databases and also in CD-ROM form on AUSTROM. AGIS is also in Kiwinet through the National Library of New Zealand and CINCH disks can be mounted into INMAGIC systems. The AIATSIS catalogue, the Aboriginal Biographical Index and Australian Aborigines in the News are on the Institute's LAN with the possibility, when data correction has been completed, of being available on CD-ROM.

### Indexing Of Audio-Visual Material

Speakers Bob Pymm from the National film and Sound Archive, Greg Blood and Janet Wardman from the Australian Institute of Sport Information Service will be discussing various issues relevant to the indexing of Audio-Visual Material.

**Time:** Tues 19th October at 5 pm  
**Venue:** Griffin Centre, Canberra City

*Drinks and nibbles will be available*

### Coming events.....

The Annual General meeting for the ACT Branch has been planned for the 15th Feb 1994. The venue has yet to be announced.

## NSW Branch Report

### CINDEX Demonstration

The NSW Branch are wondering at the wisdom of holding mid winter meetings after an excellent demonstration on the value of CINDEX was poorly attended (one person present being a member of the newly formed Canberra Indexers' Group).

Garry Cousins who is a devotee of this indexing software, gave a clear and revealing talk on a lot of the CINDEX features. This follows an equally interesting demonstration held on 5 May on MACREX which was conducted by Meredith Healey. Meredith indexes legal materials and find this menu driven system to her liking. Gary also reported on his visit to the Indexers' Conference held in Washington. (Excerpts of which will be included in the September issue of *AusSI*)

## Vic News

### Book Indexing Course

A reminder for those who have not yet booked for this course. This six week course will be held at RMIT from 6 September to 11 October, on Monday nights from 6.30pm until 8.45pm. Places are limited so be quick !!!!

**Contact:**

Max McMaster: (03) 571 6341

### Law of the Land: Legal Indexing meeting

Rosemary Bunnage(Monash University) and Susan Sandford(Law Book Company) will be discussing issues relevant to indexing the law at the up and coming Legal Indexing meeting.

Rosemary will present a paper outlining the challenges involved in compiling a subject index for legislation in Victoria.

Susan, who is involved in compiling a composite index to laws in Australia, will be discussing issues relevant to this project.

**Date:** 29th Sept 1993

**Venue:** RMIT Function Room.  
Building 8, Level 2  
(street level) Enter via glass doors near the State Bank

**Time:** 5.30pm for 6.00pm until 7.30pm.

*Light refreshments will be served.*

**RSPV date:** Monday 27th September

**Contact:**

Max McMaster: (03) 571 6341

Ian Odgers: (03) 418 7275



*"Computer, nothing! I'm replacing you with a box of paper clips and a peg board!"*

## EDITORIAL

### Choosing an indexing package: How do you ensure quality control?

In the July issue of *AusSI Newsletter* I included a letter about the perils of computer aided indexing. This highlighted an obvious need for careful research before choosing an indexing package.

Readers of *AusSI* will be aware of several packages such as *CINDEX*, *MACREX* and *IN>SORT* which have been reviewed in the past few issues. How do you sift through the pros and cons of each package and make the right decision?

Here are some questions that you may want to keep in mind when evaluating a package.

Firstly, what are your needs? what is it you do and do not want from a package? What are the different features, styles and methods of each package? What is the structure of the entries, how are subheadings, page references and *see also* references treated?

What editing features are offered? Is editing carried out at point of entry or when the document is transported into a word processing package? How does the package treat sorting; is it letter by letter or word by word? At what stage does the package carry out merge functions? Do entries get merged automatically upon entry?

And what about printing options. Is printing done via a word processing package or DOS print commands and how do these features relate to your needs? Other features such as speed of indexing, save options, movement through text and other time saving techniques all need to be considered.

Factors such as compatibility are important. Are the packages IBM compatible or suitable only for a Macintosh, if so are there any conversion packages available? What are the future plans for the package...any upgrades being planned? If so, when and what would the cost be and

how responsive is the new version to user needs? What organisations use this package and what record does this package have with these users?

And what about the vendor, is the vendor situated locally and what kind of user services does the vendor offer? Is there a help desk? What kind of user aids/manuals/demonstration disks are available, and do they seem more complicated than the package?

And lastly has the program been designed for both the newcomer and/or the experienced?

This is by no means a comprehensive list of questions, and perhaps is of more use to those 'newcomers' to indexing, but useful nonetheless in steering buyers away from the scenario highlighted by last month's anonymous contributor.



**'MACREX, CINDEX, IN>SORT,  
How do I chose?  
AAAaRRRRR!!!!!!'**



## BOOK REVIEW



### **Automated Support to Indexing**

Reviewed by Andrew Giles-Peters  
Gail M Hodge, 1992 NFAIS Report Series  
3, NFAIS, Philadelphia PA, 1992, 176  
pages.

This report concerns the practice rather than the theory of indexing. After a brief discussion of the purposes of indexing and of automated support to indexing it proceeds to the main business which is the present and then comment on a collection of case studies of the use of support technologies in a variety of organisations. The case studies are presented in three chapters devoted respectively to non-profit, governmental/intra-governmental and commercial organisations although it does not seem that much rests on this division. The commentary on the case studies analyses them in terms of four levels of automated support: computer support to clerical activity; computer support to quality control; computer support to intellectual activity; and automatic indexing. Following this are chapters on current academic and corporate research projects in the field; commercial indexing software; the future of related technologies; and, last but not least, a brief chapter on "Getting Started on the Continuum". Appendices give contact addresses for the organisations studied and brief details and producer addresses for the products mentioned. There is also a 12 page bibliography.

The conclusion Hodge comes to on the basis of the case studies is that whilst purely automatic indexing remains a dream, automated support to indexing has a real contribution to make to database producers. Properly planned and implemented support systems increase productivity, improve the cost-effectiveness of quality control and shift the intellectual focus of indexing to higher level questions. Furthermore automated support can be introduced incrementally.

One can start at the simplest level by having the indexer do the data entry directly thus avoiding the costs and errors introduced by double handling; the next step is to supply authority lists, thesauri and spelling checkers on-line; a third step is interactive or batch verification of terms, etc. Only a large organisation with considerable resources and an extensive "knowledge base" can sensibly take the next step to the machine generation of candidate index terms for human verification.

Of course this summary of Hodge's summary leaves out all the interesting details and methods which are to be found in the case studies. None are described in great detail but there is certainly material here for any one interested in improving indexing.

### **LAST CALL !!!**

#### **Indexers Medal**

For all of you who are intending to submit applications for the Indexers Medal, the deadline is drawing near, so be quick!

The society will accept entries no later than **Friday 27 August 1993**.

# LETTERS

## Indexing from the Desktop

*Here's a letter published in the April 1993 issue of Intercom (newsletter of the US Society for Technical Communication)*

I disagree with the message in the article "Indexing From the Desktop - One writer's Method" in January 1993 issue of *Intercom*.. As former director of a software documentation group, I am convinced that the most efficient and cost-effective way to develop an index is to use a professional indexer who creates the index from final pages at the end of the project. When writers index their own manuals, the results are generally inconsistent and incomplete, requiring numerous editing and revision cycles. In my experience, using professional indexers cuts the time and cost by more than half and improves quality immeasurably.

Few technical writers are trained indexers. (The examples in the article illustrate that point.) Furthermore,

writers' schedules generally do not allow time for them to index as they write and then follow procedures such as the nine steps described by the author. Indexing is a specialised skill that requires formal training and incredible concentration. It is a separate activity and it can't be done "on the side" while writing. The more I work with professional indexers, the more I respect their skills and expertise.

**Tana Schimberg**  
Senior Member  
San Francisco Chapter

## 'Inverted headings'....citation

Hans Wellisch has supplied readers with the missing bibliographical citation for the second reference of his article published in the June issue of *AusSI Newsletter* titled "Inverted headings".

*Key Words*, 1 (6) (May-June 1993), pp. 12-13.

## AUSTRALIA'S TOP 20 PUBLISHERS

	Group	Owner	Estimated Turnover
1.	Reed	Reed Elsevier (UK)	\$115m
2.	Harper Collins	News LTS (USA/Aust)	\$106m
3.	Pearson	Pearson (UK)	\$ 95m
4.	Thomson	Thomson Corp (Canada)	\$ 75m
5.	Ashton Scholastic	Scholastic Inc (USA)	\$ 70m
6.	Transworld	Bertelsmann (Germany)	\$ 70m
7.	Lansdowne	Weldon Int (Aust.)	\$ 67m
8.	CCH	CCH (Aust)	\$ 65m
9.	Reader's Digest	Reader's Digest (USA)	\$ 50m
10.	Macmillan & Pan	Macmillan Ltd (UK)	\$ 40m
11.	Hodder & Stoughton	Hodder & Stoughton (UK)	\$ 26m
12.	Jacaranda Wiley	Wiley (USA)	\$ 25m
13.	Simon & Shuster	Paramount Comm (USA)	\$ 25m
14.	Random House	Advance Publ (USA)	\$ 22m
15.	Universal Press	Universal Press (Aust)	\$ 20m
16.	Harlequin Mills &Boon	Harlequin Ent (Canada)	\$ 20m
17.	McGraw-Hill	McGraw-Hill (USA)	\$ 18m
18.	Harcourt Brace	Harcourt Brace (USA)	\$ 17m
19.	Allen & Unwin	Allen & Unwin (Aust)	\$ 15m
20.	OUP	Oxford University (UK)	\$ 13m

*This list appeared in DW Thorpe's May edition of 'Australian Bookseller and Publisher'.*

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**Next Deadline - September 14, 1993**



News, views and reviews are always welcome. Floppy disks will be appreciated where articles are longer than one A4 page (preferably 3.5" Macintosh disks; Microsoft Word software; IBM is also OK).