Australian Society of Indexers
NEWSLETTER

Editorial

In the October issue of the *AusSI Newsletter* we present the second and final report from Garry Cousins on the American Society of Indexers' 25th Annual Conference. We also include Susan Sandford's paper on 'law Indexing' presented at the 'Law of the Land' meeting. Details of up and coming regional meetings and workshops have also been included.

Medal Dinner

The Australian Society of Indexers Medal for 1993 will be awarded at a dinner to be held on Tuesday 23rd November. 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. The dinner includes a 3 course meal & drinks.

Venue: Graduate House
University of Melbourne
224 Leicester Street, Carlton
Time: 7.00 for 7.30 pm
Cost: $30.00 per person (all incl.)
RSPV: By Tuesday 16 November

Payment in advance to The Secretary, Society of Indexers, GPO Box 1251, Melbourne, 3001. Please advise if vegetarian required.
For further information contact :
 Ian Odgers: *(03) 418 7275*
 Isabelle Mentha: (03) 418 7201

ACT News

A dinner was held on 7 September at the Canberra Club. The speaker was Peter Judge, Editor of *Incite* and former Officer-in-Charge, Central Information Library and Editorial Section, CSIRO.

In his witty and informative style, Peter transported us from the world of the ducal palazzo in Venice where Gianni de Michelis extorted the perquisites required for an after dinner speaker able to speak and advise on subjects as wide ranging as art and neuro-surgery (not merely dinner at the Canberra Club), to our world of indexing or more specifically the *Australian Science Index.*

The change from the shoebox card index prepared by Beth South and Maud Bridges for their monthly issues of *ASI* to computer produced indexes with a detailed thesaurus brought with it both increases in size and complaints from users. It was apparent that the human face of indexing and particularly the understanding of the convolutions undertaken by the human brain to obtain information was lacking.

The need for good indexers was apparent. Their lack and the financial constraints led to the demise of the *Australian Science Index* in the early eighties.

Following this despairing note, Peter ended his speech, as only he can, with an unlikely story of which the elements were an Irish Bureaucrat, a Japanese hospital patient in Dublin and the tragic results of cross-cultural misunderstanding.

Geraldine Triffitt

ACT Annual Meeting

The annual meeting and buffet dinner has been planned for 15 February 1994. The cost, exact time and place at the University of Canberra has yet to be finalised.

NSW News

A brief reminder that the next NSW meeting will be held at The State Library of NSW, The Jean Garling Room (Mitchell Wing), on Tuesday 16 November at 6.00pm for 6.30pm. The theme is 'NUTS AND BOLTS - REVISITED'

Contact: Alan Walker (02) 380 5875

LAW INDEXING: The Laws of Australia

A paper presented by Susan Sandford, at The Australian Society of Indexers Legal Indexing meeting on the 29th of September in Melbourne. Susan Sandford is Senior Editor at the Law Book Co. in Melbourne.

This paper consists of a brief introduction to *The Laws of Australia*, an overview of the system chosen for indexing, then more detailed discussion of the Index, the Table of Cases and the Table of Legislation.

The Laws of Australia is an encyclopedia of the Australian Law arranged into 35 broad titles. Each of these titles has its own index and tables, there will also be a cumulative index and consolidated tables.

The indexes are commissioned individually from freelance indexers and the tables are compiled and edited in-house.

The index together with the Table of Cases and the Table of Legislation and the Table of Contents forms the key to access the information contained within the title.

Authors are requested to submit material in a common style consisting of propositions of law augumented by discursive commentary using authority and illustrations from case law and legislation. Further illustration is provided by way of reference to articles, books, and reports etc.

The work sets out to be an Australian account so Australian authoritites are used, and, because Australia is multi-jurisdictional the work provides

Legislative reference to each of the State and Territories where necessary.

The Laws of Australia is aware of the latest technological trends and embedded codes within the text enable the extraction of case and legislation tables, and provide for future electronic production. The Table of Contents is compiled by extracting headings from the text.

When I began to discuss the index needs with the programmer and the person who was to index the first volume, I realised that we had to make several choices. Our immediate need was for an index to one title "Equity", a subject which actually fits neatly into already defined parameters. The index for Equity was not a difficult task. However, as future titles were issued there would be some overlap in subject matter. With over 400 authors it is quite probable that differences in terminology will arise, whereby the same subject may be referred to in different ways.

One method which could be used to solve this problem would be to establish a list of subject headings or keywords which would be used in the index, this method is used in works of a similar scope. These keywords could then be used for framing propositions within the work and a high degree of consistency and uniformity would be established.

Problems with this method for indexes are that they can become an inflexible list, new items cannot be easily added as it upsets the work which has already been done. The main problem for us was that many of our titles did not yet have an approved contents or scope. Assignments of catchwords, when you're not quite sure what will be covered, can be a tricky business. And, of course, we needed the index.

I chose a second method. This was to set up guidelines for the indexer which stressed the need to index with the whole work in mind. These guidelines cover the level and scope of indexing. We decided and stress that each index is to be compiled in relation to existing indexes.

The first index was typeset and established as the master index on our system, each subsequent index is keyed into the master index and by using embedded codes we are able to electronically extract and typeset the index for the particular titles in production.

During this process we will be able to clarify such things as inconsistencies in references and resolve them. And, because we always have a master index each indexer is able to be supplied with a copy of the current master index as a reference.

The Index in Greater Detail
The guidelines for indexing *The Laws of Australia* cover style notes for the contents of the index. Matters such as scope, indexing of propositions leading to necessary further indexing of text of a particular paragraph, terminology, level of indexing, and references are covered. Precise style notes are also given.

Once a hard copy of the index is received we key directly into the master index.

The typesetter places each entry into the existing alphabetical sequence. If a term has already been used a new locater is added. Should an inconsistency arise the matter will be referred to me for resolution.

At the present time our master index is too small to have experienced problems. Our first three titles were fairly diverse

subject which meant very few over lapping references. As future titles are issued and the subjects matter is more closely linked we will need to make further choices with regard to the references to be used.

It is quite possible that we will need to establish a thesaurus alongside the index as a means of controlling the scheme of references.

The Tables of Cases
This is electronically extracted from the text and sorted according to predetermined sorting rules. The Table is then edited to ensure that adequate references are provided from non-preferred terms to terms we have chosen to use.

The use of very precise guidelines for the compilation of the case names used assists the clarity and coherence of this index. Cases are often reported in more than one report series and rules exist for our choice of preferred report series. This is to enable a consistent citation of the same reference in each title and an aid to future electronic publication. It also aids the compilation to the Table of Cases.

In the early stages of the production process each citation of a case and each legislative reference is verified. The end result of the verification process is consistent and accurate citation of all references.

Once the table of cases is extracted, inconsistencies are identified and corrected in the manuscript.

As an additional aid to the user, all popular case names are included in the vereified form of name and when the case table is edited references are made from the popular case name to the actual case name. Examples of such names are:
- *The Tasmanian Dams Case*
- *Gove Land Rights Case*

As many cases have government departments or authorities as parties, case names are sorted to place the department or instrumentality name first, such words as Ministry, Department etc being placed

clarity of the editor's brief to the indexer"

"Costing and estimates are always tricky/hard to predict"

Others made one despair:

"I've never used a professional indexer, believing them to be far too expensive for the budget of most books"

Publishers' views on training
When asked which aspects of the publishing industry they thought indexers needed training in, besides indexing itself, most publishers had clear preferences for proofreading, editing and layout skills, in that order. A minority also thought knowledge of the printing process and marketing should be included in training courses.

Publishers are divided however on just how these skills, along with indexing skills, are best acquired. When asked "Are you in favour of the establishment of a formal academic course for indexers?" 50.52% said 'yes', and 49.48% said 'no'. This is plainly not a resounding endorsement of tertiary qualifications for indexers, but it needs clarification because it can be seen from respondents' comments that some who voted 'no' were actually in favour of indexing training, but not necessarily in the form of a stand-alone academic qualification:

"... thought it largely catered for already in librarianship-type courses"

"... should be included within publishing/editing courses, rather than being treated as a distinct course"

"... best as part of a wider course"

"No need for 'formal academic' courses for our type of indexes, but short courses organised by the Society or the Society of Editors or the ABPA would be useful"

"... best as a component of a journalism or publishing course"

However, it is difficult to see how anything but a stand-alone course could attract professional accreditation. Despite this variety of responses 56% of these same publishers believe that the existence of a formal qualification would be an important factor in their choice of an indexer. And if a formal course did exist, 63% of publishers believe they should have a say in the content of the course.

One respondent who did not favour the introduction of tertiary qualifications for indexers said:

"... as far as I am aware, there are very few opportunities open to full-time indexers. I feel not many people would be willing to do a full-time course in indexing as job prospects are poor ..."

I think this person touched upon an elementary point: that discussion of training and accreditation for indexers must be conducted hand in hand with discussion of job prospects and demand for indexers in the labour market. Courses and course intakes need to take account of market demands for indexers like any other profession ...

Future prospects
... it is fair to say that more consultation is needed between indexers and publishers. Quite apart from questions of indexing training, it is apparent from the first survey that we as indexers need to broaden our knowledge of the publishing process, and make the effort to cultivate those skills which publishers have identified as weak or lacking. In turn, many publishers need to be made more aware not only of the logistics of indexing, but also of the value of an index. I will leave you with the comments of two publishers from the survey which highlight this:

"While an index is often useful, not all our books have indexes it depends on the manuscript length. We generally request an index for a book of around 50,000 words or over"

By my reckoning, this means any book shorter than about 100 pages misses out on an index! And the final word:

"We hardly ever have indexes in our publications ... if we do have an index (perhaps once in five years) we expect the author to do this work"

University of NSW indexing workshop

A indexing workshop covering various facets of indexing has been scheduled for mid November. Further details are as follows;

Introduction to Book Indexing
Date: Mon 15 Nov - Wed 17 Nov
Time: 9am - 5pm
Tutors: Michael Wyatt & Alan Walker
Cost: $295.00

Computer Aided Indexing
Date: Thursday 18 Nov
Time: 9am - 5pm
Tutor: Garry Cousins
Cost: $195.00

Indexing and Abstracting for Databases
Date: Friday 19 Nov
Time: 9am - 5pm
Tutor: Max McMaster
Cost: $195.00

The venue for each workshop will be at The University of NSW, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies.
Contact:
Maureen Henninger   (02) 697-3589

Indexing Technical Publications

Max McMaster will be giving a talk on Indexing Technical Publications at a November meeting of the Australian Society for Technical Communication(Victoria). The details are as follows.

Date: Monday 15 November
Time: 6.30pm - 8.30pm
Venue: Victorian Writers' Centre
       1st Floor
       144-156 George Street, Fitzroy
Cost: $3.00 for non members
       of ASTC(Victoria)
Contact:
       Julie Fisher 370 9069 (AH)

New Members

We welcome the following people into the Australian Society of Indexers:
Ms H. Moorcroft, Darwin, NT
Mr J. Poulos, Burwood East, VIC

Membership Fees

All readers please note that the cost of some subcriptions have increased to incorporate the costs incurred by AusSI for public liability cover which extends to all AusSI meetings.

Rates for Melbourne metropolitan, Sydney metropolitan, ACT Region will rise from $35.00 to $40.00. Rates for New Zealand will remain at $35.00. Rates for the rest of Australia will remain at $30.00. Organisations/Library membership is $30.00.

Annual subscription to *The Indexer* has increased from $25.00 to $ 28.00 due to exchange rate changes.

Are you a real Freelancer?

According to the September issue of *'Blue Pencil'* there's a lot more to freelancers than meets the eye. *'Blue Pencil'* stated "the term 'free lance' was used by Sir Walter Scott back in 1820 in *Ivanhoe* to refer to military adventurers, often knights, who offered their services to belligerent states in the Middle Ages, with a view to plunder! Originally they were called 'free companions' but since they travelled with their weapons (lances) Scott dubbed them 'free lances' "

An Acrostic Puzzle ...The Solution!!!

The solution to last month's acrostic puzzle is:

S	ALE	M
P	ER	I
E	RO	S
L	ILLIPU	T
L	ED	A
I	NNSBRUC	K
N	EPTUN	E
G	OD	S

Next Deadline - November 12, 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).