Editorial
I wonder if you have noticed anything different about the Newsletter. Yes? No? Maybe? The format and content are the same, but the editor is not. Last month, I took over from Elizabeth Badatto who has decided to relinquish her editorial role. I hope that I can maintain her commitment to accuracy and informativeness. I look forward to hearing from you all. Let me know your opinions and thoughts on indexing and related matters. Please, don’t be shy!

Now, on to other things – in the August issue, Alan Walker and Ian Odgers report on the NSW and Victorian Branch activities, Max McMaster explains how to assess an index and Kingsley Siebel reviews the 1994 Tax Pack. In addition, we have notices of forthcoming activities and a select bibliography for all those avid readers.

Rebecca Smale

ACT Region Meeting
Meet Max McMaster, former President of the AusSI. He will speak about becoming a freelance indexer, and give us news from Melbourne. We will go to dinner after the meeting. All those interested in coming to dinner, please contact Geraldine Triffitt, tel (06) 246 1177.
Date: 20 September 1994.
Meeting venue: Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Room 2, Canberra.
Time: 5 pm.

NSW Branch Meeting
Actual Indexing
The next meeting of the NSW Branch will address what indexers and indexing services actually do (rather than what they say they do). Two researchers will present the results of recent studies.

Ross Todd, from the University of Technology, Sydney, has been studying how indexers think and make decisions, and in particular, how they determine the subjects of documents.
Connie Wilson, of the University of New South Wales, has analysed the subject headings actually assigned by indexing services and has compared the performances of two services indexing librarianship and information science literature.
In addition, Garry Cousins will describe the features of the latest version of Cindex indexing software.
Date: 11 October 1994.
Meeting venue: Jean Garling Room, 1st Floor, Mitchell Wing, State Library of New South Wales, Macquarie Street, Sydney.
Time: refreshments from 6.00 pm, meeting starts at 6.30 pm.
Donation to cover costs: $5.00.
Inquiries: Alan Walker, tel (02) 380 5875.

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

Please send recommendations with bibliographic details, together with a copy of the book, if possible (which will be returned), to:

The Secretary,
Australian Society of Indexers,
GPO Box 1251,
Melbourne, Victoria 3001
as soon as possible, but no later than Friday 16 September, 1994.
Alan Walker, the NSW Branch President, reports on a joint general meeting of the NSW Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers and the Society of Editors (NSW), which was held at the Australian Museum, Sydney, on 5 July 1994. Four panellists, representing indexers, editors and publishers, raised a number of issues concerning indexing in the publishing process.

Fiona Marcar, Editorial Manager at Prentice Hall Australia, described Prentice Hall’s policy and practice in commissioning indexes. Their indexes are done either by the author or by freelance professional indexers. While their standard contract provides that it is the author’s responsibility to produce an index, there are many cases where the author does not have the skill, or knows how hard it is and does not wish to do it. The publisher will often end up commissioning and paying for the index.

When commissioning an index, Prentice Hall uses the AusSI publication, Indexers Available, to identify a suitable indexer, or they use an indexer who has worked for them in the past.

Many of Prentice Hall’s publications are textbooks and they invariably require a “comprehensive index”. Since some books are very long (say 800 pages), on occasions, indexes may be as long as fifty pages. Prentice Hall tells the indexer if any text is to be excluded, (for example, tables), and they also indicate a ceiling figure for the cost of the index.

From the indexer, they expect relevant entries which will be helpful to students using the book, (for example, they would not expect movie names to be indexed in an accounting text), with sensible cross-references and hierarchies. They would like to have the index on disc and greatly appreciate indexers bringing textual errors to their attention.

Indexers present at the meeting were pleased to here that Prentice Hall is currently looking for indexers.

Glenda Browne, an indexer who is trained as a scientist and librarian, described her experience of the standard relations between the editor and the indexer. The editor usually rings the indexer and outlines the brief. The indexer needs to know the space available in the book for the index, when the final page proofs will be ready and when the index is needed.

Published acknowledgment of the indexer’s work is appreciated, as is receipt of a copy of the book as a record of work done.

Glenda drew attention to three main problem areas in this process: quoting; meeting strict deadlines; and changes to the text after indexing.

If the indexer quotes on the basis of the page proofs and the quote is too high, the indexer may have to adjust the quote downwards, with a concomitant drop in the quality of the index. Quoting without seeing page proofs is hazardous. The indexer may be able to provide a range of quotes to show the possibilities. Haggling is not fun. There is little feedback, apart from the quote being accepted or rejected, so that an indexer does not know how the quote compares with those from other indexers. Glenda has found enormous variations in what the publishers expect to pay for an index – as much as a threefold variation in fee per page. In any case, it is always helpful if publishers give some indication up front as to what they expect to pay for an index.

All indexing is done at very short notice and can be stressful. An indexer needs realistic warning of when a job might come. The time available for the index to be done has often already been determined by external factors such as the printer being booked and the launch being announced. This often leaves an unrealistically short time for the index to be completed. Glenda made a plea for more realistic publishing schedules.

Changes made to the text after indexing are no fun for the indexer to deal with. The work involved is tedious and painstaking.

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for the indexer and expensive for the publisher.

Glenda emphasised that since indexing in an isolated job, meetings such as this were very important.

David Milliss, a freelance editor and designer, agreed that operations at the end of the publishing process like indexing and printing, were very likely to be squeezed for time, and that planning control was important.

He described two important conversations which should be held between the indexer and the editor. The first should give the brief, establish communication and discuss costing, (preferably, a lump sum should be agreed on). Style and presentation should wait until the second, more important conversation, in which details should be discussed, including design matters such as column measure.

Kingsley Siebel, now an indexer, but formerly a legal editor and publisher, gave an account of how an index is made for the benefit of editors who might not be familiar with the details of the process.

He emphasised the importance of being clear about the reader for whom the index is written, (lawyer, tradesperson, lay person?), since this dictates not the quality but the method of indexing.

Indexers should always use contents lists or some other similar structure to start, and need to construct one if there is not one already provided.

Kingsley described the form and function of the three components of an index: headings and subheadings; locators (page numbers); and cross-references.

He pointed to some of the matters which require the indexer’s special expertise, such as the ability to conflate or differentiate between similar words and phrases, (for example, child, juvenile, infant), and drew attention to the importance of editing in the indexing process, which will take the indexer some time, and which will improve the phraseology and directness of the index.

Alan Walker

Victorian Branch General Meeting:

Pictures & Ephemera – How are they Organised?

*Ian Odgers* reports on the Victorian Branch General Meeting, which was held at the State Library of Victoria on the 15 June 1994.

Fourteen people attended the seminar room of the State Library of Victoria to hear very interesting talks from two of the Library’s staff on the indexing and organisation of non-book materials.

First, Wendy Pryor spoke on the La Trobe Library’s Riley and Ephemera Collection, which was begun in 1970 with a donation by political archivist and unionist Frederick Riley. The collection now occupies 38 linear metres of storage space and comprises material such as posters, flyers, stickers, badges, cards, and leaflets, dating from the end of the last century up to the present. The bias of the collection is generally radical, covering a wide range of political and social topics such as conscription, conservation and abortion.

Wendy described how items are stored – leaflets are housed in acid-free transparent bags in vertical files, and badges are displayed in specially constructed transparent-fronted frames. Valuable items such as anti-conscription leaflets from the First World War are encapsulated in transparent covers.

There is a card index to the collection, comprising 12 drawers of hand-written cards, filed alphabetically. Yes, such things do still have their place! Items are numbered by year and month of acquisition. Library of Congress subject headings are used in conjunction with local terms. As well as subject terms, multiple access points are provided, such as the name of the group producing the material.
On the cards, a heading in upper case indicates that a subject file of that name exists. There are extensive see and see also references. An advantage of the system is that adding further items to a folder requires little additional work. Where there are multiple folders for a heading, they are marked by a date range. A disadvantage is the limited space on a card when many references are needed.

Kirstie McRobert then spoke on a project to transfer to electronic form the vast Picture Collection held by the La Trobe Library. This Collection contains several hundred thousand images of Victoria – people, places and events – comprising postcards, photographs, paintings, drawings, prints, glass negatives, etc., with an emphasis on the period pre-1920. A Myer Foundation Grant of $309,000 over five years has funded a project which to date has enabled the conversion of 108,000 images to electronic form and the cataloguing of 60,000 of these on a videodisk system. The cataloguing is expected to be completed by the end of next year. The system is expected to be made available to the public by August, and will be accessed via the Library’s on-line public access catalogue.

Dynix is the system used, with the application of non-book and general MARC fields to describe the picture type (engraving, postcard, etc.), form (for example, a bird’s eye view), title (invented if necessary), size, date, collection (in which housed), descriptive contents notes, and subject headings. Modified Library of Congress subject headings are used, usually with a more classified structure. Topical and place headings are added. A subject keyword index is used with string headings, enabling searching on title keywords and/or subject keywords.

It is planned that the database (including pictures) will be searchable on AARNET via the State Library’s catalogue, and it will be possible to obtain a thermal printout of a picture located by a search. The advantages of the system are: reduced wear and tear on the original collections, some of which are very fragile; more access to the contents of some collections which were previously inadequately described, such as glass negative collections; much faster access; and access for remote users.

Finally, Kirstie demonstrated the system, showing how a keyboard search led to a rapid on-screen display of the catalogue data and picture, which could then be enlarged to full screen size.

Ian Odgers

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR INDEXERS

The following select bibliography has been taken from Index-L on the Internet. It may provide some interesting references for readers.

BOOKS ON INDEXING


Wellisch, H., Indexing and Abstracting, an International Bibliography, ABC-Clio, 1980


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How to Assess an Index
by Max McMaster

When preparing a book for publication, the editor must also assess its index. Whether the index has been prepared by the author, or it has been commissioned, the rules for its assessment remain the same.

As a general statement, the index must complement the text. It is not meant to stand alone as some sort of edifice, nor is it meant to be an alternative to the text. The index must serve two different functions. Firstly, it must allow the reader who is not familiar with the contents of the text to determine the subject coverage. Secondly, it must enable the reader who is familiar with the book to find particular pieces of information within the text. These two facets must be borne in mind when evaluating the quality of an index. In addition to these general considerations, a more specific assessment of an index may be made. I have divided this process into four stages.

1. Read the index
Make a complete, sequential reading of the index in order to gain an indication of its comprehensiveness, depth and level of indexing. Consistency in layout, terminology, adherence to any conventions and typographical errors will also become apparent. Similarly, the editor will be able to see whether cross-references have been included to assist the reader.

At this stage, it is also useful to check that the index is proportional in length to that of the text. Assuming that the index is double-columned, the following general percentages should provide a guide: for very light works, the index should be approximately 3% of the number of text pages; for general works (for example, a Penguin paperback), about 5%; for an academic work, 7–8%; and for a specialist work, 12–15%.

The number of page references in undifferentiated strings should also be checked. There should be no more than 7 or 8 (although some of my colleagues set a maximum of 10) before subdivision is essential.

2. Broad appreciation of the text
Particularly for commissioned indexes, it is essential that the indexer has understood

The Society of Editors (Vic) Inc held a workshop on the 7 May 1994 titled "The Forgotten Parts of a Book". Max McMaster provided workshop participants with the means for evaluating the quality of an index. The following is an edited version of his paper.
what the book is about and for whom it has been written. The index should reflect the tone and level of the author's treatment of the subject matter. This should have been brought out in the initial discussions between the editor and the indexer, or at least should have been clarified by a read through of the preface or introductory matter of the book.

3. Sample of the text
By analysing a substantial section of the text, the application of headings to the topics covered may be evaluated. This amounts to a brief indexing task in itself. Open the book several times at random, then, by reading the double-page spread, check that the index accurately reflects the subject matter contained in those pages. Although I mentioned cross-references earlier, at this stage particular care should be taken to check the adequacy of cross-references that are, or seemingly should be, employed.

4. Sample of the index
This is the obverse of the previous step, but taking the view of the user rather than of the indexer. It simply consists of looking up in the text the indicated passages from a selection of index entries. The object is to see that the page references are accurate, although obviously, in the course of doing so, the impression of adequacy and appropriateness of the headings themselves may be reinforced.

Once the editor has undergone these four basic steps, s/he is in a good position to give a fair assessment of the quality and suitability of an index. I suppose one final thing I can say about publishing and indexing is that a good book will certainly be enhanced by the addition of a good index, however, a poor or mediocre book will remain poor or mediocre regardless of how good the index might be.

Max McMaster

The Wonderful World of Indexing

Conferences
If you would like to notify AusSI members of any events, send information (including dates, venue, cost, theme and contact) to the Editor.

23 September–29 September 1994
Warana Writers' Week Brisbane
CONTACT: Wendy Mead, Co-ordinator, Warana Writers' Week, PO Box 3611, South Brisbane Qld 4101, Tel (07) 846 2333, Fax (07) 846 1944.

11 October–16 October 1994
Melbourne Writers' Festival
VENUE: Melbourne, Vic.
CONTACT: Julie Morgan, Tel (03) 696 5060, Fax (03) 696 5866.

8 November–10 November 1994
National Electronic Records Management Conference
VENUE: Hyatt Hotel, Canberra, ACT.
CONTACT: Mr Ron Terry, Conference Co-ordinator, Australian Archives, PO Box 34, Dickson ACT 2601, Tel (06) 209 3936, Fax (06) 209 3931.

A request from the US
Anne Leach, from the American Society of Indexers, is interested in hearing from anyone who is planning to be in California on 8 October 1994. She is organising the annual meeting program for the Los Angeles Chapter. Anne's contact details are:

Anne Leach
American Society of Indexers
916 Brantfell Place
Glendora CA 91741, USA
Tel 818 963 1895
Kingsley Siebel reviews this year's Tax Pack, paying special attention to its index.

Every household in Australia would have received this Australian Taxation Office annual which commenced about 4 years ago, because everyone is involved whether they like it or not. The object of the Pack is to assist taxpayers assess the amount of tax they owe to the government or the amount they are due to be refunded. It has to be said that each issue of the publication has been better than the previous one.

There is a definite move from complexity to simplicity. The use of plain English, good design and presentation, colour printing and co-ordination, and skilful typography all combine to make this a commendable public document (in contrast to many we come across). There is also great attention to detail.

The tax return form comprises 4 pages. Pages 1 to 3 concern most individual taxpayers, and page 4 is for business and professional people. The first page is for personal details, and the second and third pages are devoted to details of income and deductions. Each page is neatly set out with coloured boxes which are supported by a similarly coloured but larger corresponding question box. For example, question 1 asks whether the taxpayer received any type of "benefit". To make it easier, a range of benefits are displayed, such as Austudy or Jobsearch, from which the reader may choose. If the reader picks one of the given options, she or he is guided on how to fill in box 1 by reading through the corresponding additional information provided. Naturally, not all questions concern every individual taxpayer and particular questions are applicable to 1 person but not to another. If, for example, you answer question 9, (which is about interest on deposits in banks and building societies), you are directed to question 17.

Information on deductions, (such as car expenses, travel and uniforms), starts at question 21. Although not all of these boxes are applicable to all taxpayers, it is necessary to read each question box, unless you are directed to skip any, so that you do not miss anything of relevance. The Pack includes a checklist on page 85.

There are a number of gaps both in the numbering of blue box questions and following question 42 (exemption from the Medicare levy). The gaps are taken up by light mauve boxes with distinct black print. Perhaps this is because these boxes have special applications to groups of persons who are not in the majority, (for example, question 5, which asks if you received a termination payment, question 6, which asks if you received an annuity, and question 10, which asks about partnerships).

But all newsletter readers will no doubt be wanting to know whether the Tax Pack has an index. The immediate answer is an indefinite "yes and no". There is a note on page 4 headed in bold red type, "Read this!" and below it in bold black type is written "Need to find something in Tax Pack? The contents page is now on page 94'. Page 94 is also headed in bold red type, "Where do you find ... " This is probably designed to serve the dual purpose of the Contents/Index, so I tested it. "Primary production income" begins on page 47 and spreads over to page 48, but the locator is page 47, indicating that this is a list of contents. There are, however, some entries with subs - "Child: definition: dependent " etc. with different locators against each, indicating that the list is an index, but "isolated children" who are entitled to a special allowance, is missing. I looked for "imputation credit" and the 2 locators sent me to 2 different pages of text which merely mentioned the phrase but did not leave me wiser. "Donations" to cultural organisations is included with page 27 as the locator, but this is also the locator for "gifts". Other subjects which comprise gifts are omitted and no mention is made of "charities". At the end of the Contents/Index is a list of questions, highlighted in blue and arranged according to their numbered sequence rather than alphabetically, again indicating that this is a contents page. Even this does not lead me to an explanation of "imputation credits" -
perhaps it is taken for granted that those who are concerned already know all about it!

It is strange that in this year's Tax Pack, which pleased me no end, the Australian Taxation Office has abandoned a regular contents page at the front, and has not paid sufficient attention to its "Where do you find ..." listing. Otherwise, it is an excellent publication.

Kingsley Siebel

Letters

Peter E. Greig, from Canada, provides his comments about Paul Michell's article on "Local History Indexing: The Northcote Experience" (vol. 8, no. 4, May 1994).

As a regular reader of the AusSI's newsletter for a number of years, now I invariably find items of interest in each and every issue. The May issue, with Paul Michell's "hands on" description of the trials and rewards of indexing a local history collection at the Northcote Library, was no exception.

At the same time, I was struck by the problem of definition (pamphlet/leaflet/brochure) mentioned by Michell in his article. Having faced this issue in another context I had referred to the late L. M. Harrod's The Librarian's Glossary and Reference Book (4th edn, London: Andre Deutsch, 1977) – there is a more recent edition, but not, unfortunately, within my own personal collection – which provides a useful definition of each offending term. Two related terms, also in Harrod, but not mentioned by Michell, (though likely part of the collection indexed), are "broadsheet" and "broadside". Utilising the definitions provided, which I have attempted to summarise below, I would suggest that Michell and his co-workers should have settled on definitions with which they feel most comfortable and provided these as part of the descriptive guide in the introduction. Readers/users may invariably ignore such crutches, but they do so to their own peril when researching!

- **broadsheet**: long, narrow advertising leaflet [q.v.]; usually the long quarto of the sheet from which it is cut. May be printed on both sides. Sometimes used synonymously with broadside [q.v.] (Harrod, p. 148).

Harrod appears to be suggesting a "small" pamphlet but the distinction may be helpful in comparison with a leaflet.

- **brochure**: literally "a stitched work"; a short printed work of a few leaves, merely stitched together, and not otherwise bound; a pamphlet [q.v.] (Harrod, p. 149).

- **leaflet**: a small sheet of paper folded once and printed on to make two or four pages following in the same sequence as in a book, but not stitched or bound. Often used to indicate a small, thin pamphlet [q.v.] (Harrod, p. 481).

This seems somewhat simplistic to me given the present day preference for all manner of folded glossy leaflets, as purveyed by the political party of your choice, and which are often done by holding the sheet so that the longer portion is horizontal and by making two folds across the longer portion to make a six page leaflet which would not fit Harrod’s definition; my suggestion would be to stay with the folded sheet versus a stitched or bound arrangement and to ignore the two to four pages. Essentially then, both leaflet and brochure would become small pamphlets, the one folded, the other bound.

- **pamphlet**: a non-periodical publication of at least five but not more than 48 pages, exclusive of...
the cover pages (General Conference of Unesco, 1964). See also book. It usually has an independent entity, not being a serial [q.v.], but it may be one of a series of publications having a similarity of format or subject matter (Harrod, p. 619).

I have not thought it necessary to delve into what Harrod has to say on the subject of either books or serials, and of course the use of the word "pamphlet" is frequently interpreted in a more generous sense. Still, for that very reason, I find the Unesco definition most helpful in setting some parameters. In terms of printed pages and binding/imposition complexity the natural sequencing in ascending order would be: broadsheet/side; leaflet; brochure; and pamphlet.

Peter E. Greig

In response to the June newsletter's article by Kingsley Siebel on professional indexers, Janet Hine contributes her thoughts on the issue.

It was with some alarm that I realised Kingsley Siebel's "Professional Indexers" is too humourless to be a spoof. Now, in spite of much preoccupation with work (indexing), I am writing to say, as mildly as I can, that not all indexers want "recognition" or to be fussed with "qualifications" and medals.

We are, after all, a subordinate and subservient profession (or sub-profession) and typically, we'd rather concentrate on producing unobtrusive but as-nearly-perfect-as-possible indexes, than on getting credit. There are book users, (readers, we used to call them), who seem to think that an index will grow spontaneously at the end of a book if it is placed in a warm, dark place over-night, so it does not harm to explain to them that human intervention is required and the creation of a decent index can take some time. On the other hand, I guess we all strive for the organic effect, a product that looks as though it's an integral rather than an artificial superimposition; it's a matter of patiently teasing it from the entrails of the text.

I love explaining to the uninformed what indexing is all about. They're always interested and sympathetic, especially when, carried away by enthusiasm, I can flourish an example for them to see for themselves. The better informed, who may know about indexes but nevertheless express curiosity about what indexers need to do, sometimes even show signs of wanting to become one when they hear what fun it is. I'm glad to affirm that they can, of course, if they really want to.

Indeed, the only qualification needed is the desire to help users find what they want in the book (or serial). If we go about that honestly and earnestly we can discover everything we need to know as we go along. Some beginners, notably those without a background in library work or serious library use, do need to be shown the mechanics of see and see also references and be given hints about handling near-synonyms. But that's it. The material being indexed tells us all we need to know about the subject, and its vocabulary supplies the right words to use as entry points. Examination of successful indexes can help with things like style.

So, who wants "qualifications" or "accreditation"? It's enough to be able to make indexes that accord with the wishes of publishers, editors and authors, and be cunning enough to smuggle in the features we know (from our own experiences) will help users.

We must not bring ridicule upon ourselves by our pretensions. In practice, I shouldn't think outsiders are likely to notice any campaign for qualifications etc. – unless a nasty publisher cares to use the news as an excuse for deciding it's a ploy for pricing ourselves out of the market. And surely, it's bad for business to let ourselves sound pathetic for want of appreciation?

I'm not rubbishing courses that purport to teach indexing, since they are evidently quite helpful with such problems as filing conventions and avoidance, equipment, evaluation of software, plausible remuneration, negotiations with clients, contacts and how to run self-employment as a business. But there's only the obvious to state about indexing itself: motivation is all and there's no room for mystique.
Let's grant that we can be qualified to make an index without bought "qualifications", and, proficient indexing being its own reward, we can also do without rewards or prizes beyond our earnings.

Janet D Hine

A new indexing book!

Handbook of Indexing Techniques by Linda Fetters.

This book has six chapters aimed at three groups of people:

- occasional indexers who may be called on to index their own work;
- anyone interested in becoming a professional indexer who is looking for concrete examples to use in learning how to index;
- librarians who need a review of techniques.

The chapters are headed "Learning to index", "Starting an index", "Writing the index", "References", and "Finishing touches and indexing special formats".

The author is a respected and well known indexer and was formerly President of the American Society of Indexers.

A limited number of copies are on order and should be available about the end of September. The price is normally $27.00 including postage, but for AusSI members, there is an all-inclusive discount price of $22.50.

Send your orders to Serendip Publications Pty Ltd, 11/22 Frederick St, Hornsby NSW 2077. For inquiries ring (02) 477 3149.

New Members
The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr R Durey, Bullsbrook East, WA
Ms S Jackson, Dulwich Hill, NSW
Mr W Phippard, Henley Beach, SA
Mrs J Whisker, Kanwal, NSW

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Laurel Tunks
Robert Hyslop
Barbara Dickens

Next Deadline - Friday 2 September 1994

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).