Editorial

In this issue Dwight Walker begins a new series on Web Indexing which includes a Prize, the President George Levick and Lynn Farkas write to the Editor about database indexing rates, and Garry Cousins helps Cindex users with sorting identical page numbers in different type faces. The Indexer has new editors, there is a new workshop on electronic indexing to be held in the ACT in 1996, and the 'Indexers - Partners in Publishing' conference papers are now available. There are also forthcoming events for members, a report from the ACT and a Christmas reflection from the Editor. Merry Xmas everyone!

Ann Philpott
Editor

'Indexers - Partners in Publishing' Conference Papers Now Available

* 248 pages
* members' price:
  Victoria $29.50 ($22.50 plus postage and handling $7.00)
  Outside Victoria $31.50 ($22.50 plus postage and handling $9.00)
* non-members' price:
  Victoria $42.00 ($35.00 plus postage and handling $7.00)
  Outside Victoria $44.00 ($35.00 plus postage and handling $9.00)

* Make cheque payable to:
  Australian Society of Indexers

* Mail to:
  Conference Proceedings,
  Australian Society of Indexers
  GPO Box 1251
  Melbourne, Vic. 3001

Max McMaster

Christmas Function for Victorian Branch

End the indexing year on a social note! Join the Victorian Branch Committee for dinner on Wednesday 6 December at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm at CAFE K, 35 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne. Delicious a la carte menu including pasta, fish, salads, steak and tempting desserts. Only 20 places available, so book early! RSVP to Mary Long on 9286 9125 (w) or 9817 2360 (h) by Wednesday 29 November.

Mary Long

[Indexing in the Electronic Age] Workshop

The ACT Branch in conjunction with the NSW Branch are planning a weekend workshop in the Southern Highlands on Saturday 20 April to Sunday 21 April 1996. The Workshop will be associated with the presentation of the Society's Medal.

The venue is not yet chosen but will be within a two hour drive or train journey from Canberra or Sydney, either Moss Vale, Bowral, Bundanoon or Mittagong.

Some issues to be considered are:

* the role of indexers in electronic publishing;
* preparing indexes for the internet or CD-Rom;
* how indexers can contribute to making information more accessible on the internet?

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The emphasis is on the contribution that indexers can make in an electronic environment, not on how indexers can use computers to index.

Further details about the conference will appear in subsequent issues of the Newsletter. At this stage we are simply looking at obtaining a 'feel' rather than a commitment from those who may be interested in attending the workshop and/or submitting papers.

Interested people are invited to please photocopy the following form and send it to: 'Workshop' Secretary ACT AusSI Branch GPO Box 2069 Canberra ACT 2601 or fax Geraldine Triffitt (06) 249 7310

*****************************************************************************
Please tick the relevant statements:
I would like to attend the entire workshop
I would like to attend for one day only
I would like to stay Fri./Sat. night
I would like to attend the Medal dinner
I am willing to help organise Workshop
I am willing to present a paper entitled:

*****************************************************************************
Name
Address
Phone
Fax
Email

*****************************************************************************
New editors at The Indexer

Mrs Hazel Bell has resigned from The Indexer.
Janet Shuter (UK) is the new Editor and Nancy Mulvany (USA) is the new Associate Editor. Nancy is responsible for full length papers. Janet is responsible for production features and regular items.

Address items of interest for The Indexer to:
postal mail
Janet Schuter, The Old Chapel, Kings Rd, Bembridge, Isle of Wight, UK. PO35 5NB
e-mail Schuter@cix.compulink.co.uk

Max McMaster

Renewal rates for 1996

Subscription and membership rates will be held at current rates for 1996. Renewal notices will be sent out in early 1996.

ACT Branch Meeting and Dinner

A meeting to discuss the future of the Branch will be held at the Billiard Room, Cellar Bar, University House, Acton on Wednesday 22 November at 6.00pm. Dinner is available from the Cellar Bar. All members are urged to attend. If further details are required contact Geraldine Triffitt 06-2461197.

Geraldine Triffitt

New members

The society welcomes the following new member:
Mrs C. Jones, St Ives, NSW

and the following rejoined member:
Mrs M. Seeker, Biloela, Qld

*****************************************************************************
Next Newsletter deadline:
Tuesday 16 January 1996
Contributions and letters to the Editor are always welcome
Floppy disks will be appreciated where articles are longer than one A4 page. My computer only accepts formatted 3.5" Macintosh Microsoft Word Version 4.00D disks. I do not have easy access to fax or email. Please send all contributions to:
The Editor
Ann Philpott
1/6 Scheele Street
Surrey Hills. Vic. 3127
A Christmas reflection

One way of contemplating the message of the Christmas story can be found in examining our ability to appreciate the extraordinary in the ordinary and, indeed, in putting aside time for contemplation itself.

The daily grind can, if we let it, take away the grace and joy of living and of sharing that grace and joy with others.

I once asked a theology professor, who was lecturing on different belief systems, if God wanted everyone to eventually come to belief in Him (or Her), why did He create or allow many different belief systems to co-exist. Would it not have been more efficient and convenient to have allowed only one belief system to hold sway?

I thought his answer was super. 'God', he replied simply, 'does not seem to value efficiency or convenience as a way for any of us to find faith in any kind of belief system.' It rings true, too.

Are we not more gratefully and lovingly moved by the busy parent, friend and colleague who interrupt their daily grinds to give us their full attention and focus, instead of fobbing us off to a later, more convenient hour?

When we look back on our childhood, is it not the people who were always there for us with a ready ear, a warm smile and a kindly, comforting or encouraging word which we still hold dear in our hearts?

To be fully present with someone in the most ordinary of moments can be a precious, grace-filled, lifetime memory-producing event. But we cannot schedule the extraordinary into our ordinary timetables, try as we might.

Grace-filled moments cannot be forced; they come to us unbidden, undeserved, unearned and with a wondrous transcendent quality about them. Grace often enters the scene where there is love with no strings, service with no sighs and unexpected help offered in unfathomable abundance.

Grace-filled moments help us to care more deeply and feel more thankful for the people, animals, plants, work and simple pleasures that make up our everyday lives. They are the 'mighty stuff' of life, more radiant and enduring, even, than a first love (even if you are still with that person!).

The Christmas story tells of such a moment for humble shepherds and powerful wise men. The nightly grind of the shepherds, who were keeping watch over their flocks, and the dutiful errand of the wise men were interrupted by different compelling heavenly visions - as wondrous and magnificent for the wise men as it was terrifying for the shepherds.

It was their experience of the extraordinary in the ordinary which propelled these two groups of people on - what turned out to be - their faith journeys in life. It was their expectation that they would continue to find the 'mighty stuff' of life, the amazing stuff in the commonplace, which ensured that they would certainly find it.

With common sight, the shepherds and the wise men could have simply seen and enjoyed on face value a beautiful new-born baby Jesus in a manger. However, with the eyes of faith, they experienced all the joy of the above scene plus the feeling of being in the presence of the divine and were transformed by it.

The wise men and the shepherds forgot about themselves and their own schedules and shared in the rapture of seeing and being with the extraordinary in another.

Are you having Christmas dinner with the same old relatives, friends or colleagues this year? Are you secretly looking forward more to Boxing Day than Christmas Day?

Who knows? Maybe this year is your golden opportunity to focus fully on ol' Uncle Bob, expecting to find something extraordinary in him that you have never noticed before: perhaps the way he pokes his tongue out when he is concentrating on prising the cork out of the wine bottle!

May the God of Grace bless you and yours with the 'mighty stuff' of life this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Ann Philpott, Editor

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Dear Editor,

Recommended Rate for Database Indexing and Abstracting

On behalf of the National Committee, I would like to reply to the letter from Lynn Farkas published in the October Newsletter.

First let me say that we have tried to respond to comments that our deliberations were not adequately reported to members. In doing so, we have in this case been remiss in including material in the Newsletter that would best have been left in the Minutes, which among other things are designed to remind Committee members of the background to their decisions.

We had no intention of publicly claiming Lynn's association with the specific decision announced. If she has been embarrassed, we unreservedly apologise. (In passing, the same applies to Sherry Quinn, who simply gave her time to assist the Committee in a matter that has been a difficulty for the Society for as long as I can remember.)

In our meeting this month, we have determined new guidelines for reporting on the Minutes in the Newsletter to effect a compromise. It is a pity that our learning experience should have been in a matter of such importance.

That said, let me now turn to the matters of substance that Lynn quite properly raises.

The recommended rate that has been published by the Society over the years refers, as Lynn points out, to the position of a freelance self-supporting professional working on short-term contracts. It is true that this is a position more typical of an indexer of books than of a database indexer. Nonetheless, it is not unknown for database indexing to be contracted on that basis. The position that the Committee adopted as a starting point was simply that there is no reason, on the face of it, that in such a situation a database indexer should expect less or demand more.

Certainly, as one who regularly undertakes both kinds of work, I have not felt it appropriate to do either. No one seeks to deny that an indexer offered other conditions of employment (let's say security or even just continuity of work) may be prepared to negotiate differing rates. We cannot seek to set standards for every possible situation.

The basis for the recommendation has always (and not uncontentiously) been an hourly rate. It so remains. With due respect to Lynn, I thought it was clear enough that the references to complex technical material requiring abstracts was only an example of how an hourly rate might be translated into a piece-work basis in remuneration negotiations.

My experience is that database managers often prefer to negotiate in such terms. It is a 'standard' only that in context represents one end of a spectrum of (for want of a better word) difficulty. For instance, if an abstract is not required, the per-item rate might just about be halved, with allowance for overheads but I would not seek to impose that as a formula.

As a peroration, and this is not addressed specifically to Lynn, I think it is necessary to point out that the Society is not in the position of a Trade Union putting a case to a Commission. All we can do (and as a personal view, all we should do) is to indicate what the experience of those depending on indexing for a living suggests is a reasonable return for our expertise, equipment, time and effort.

A professional 'outplacement consultant' of my acquaintance tells me that in the trade our current rate for a full-time freelance translates as a rule of thumb to a $35,000 annual salary, but without the security. I don't find that either excessive or unduly philanthropic. Let us remember that the very institution of recommended rates was in response to a perception that some indexers were, in real terms, paying to be employed.

Finally, the Committee is, as always, responsive to the idea of active participation from its members in any discussion of matters important to the membership.
Volunteers to constitute a properly constituted subcommittee with branch representation to consider either the whole matter of Society-recommended rates or any specific subset of the matter will be welcomed.

George R.T. Levick  
President  
22 October 1995

Dear Editor,

I have been offered the 'right of response' to George Levick's letter on the Society's 'Recommended rate for database indexing and abstracting'. I would like to accept that offer and make a few additional (and hopefully final) points on this issue.

1. I welcomed George's letter. It clarifies the thinking of the Committee in its deliberations on this issue. I agree with the principle of an hourly rate, and do not have any problem personally with the recommended rate. I do think the Committee was unwise to translate this into a piece rate without taking into account the many variations which occur in database indexing work.

For example, I am sure most AusSI members welcome the recommended rate for book indexing. I wonder how they would feel if the Society qualified that rate by adding: 'A time of 15 hours would thus apply to indexing a technical book of 500 pages'. Surely they would raise similar questions and objections to those I made under the circumstances.

My point is this: if the Society is setting broad guidelines, keep them broad and call them guidelines. It is then up to the database indexer to determine what constitutes a per item rate for various types of indexing, just as it is up to a book indexer to constitute how much time will be required to index various types of books.

If the Society wishes to be more specific, then it should be prepared to consult more widely and to offer a much more specific range of indexing scenarios. And it should be more in tune with the current marketplace.

For example, the National Library has just canvassed for indexers for its Australasian

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**CINDEX Tip № 8**

**Sorting identical page numbers in different typefaces**

Plain page references with either bold or italic page references: CINDEX does this sort automatically, placing the italicised or bold page reference after the plain page reference, irrespective of the order in which they have been entered from the page proofs:

- Archimedes, 34, 34
- or Archimedes, 34, 34

Combined bold and italic page references: when both bold and italic references appear together in an entry, CINDEX gives priority to neither, but lists them in order of entry.

If you wish to make, say, the bold reference appear first, simply type a letter after the italicised number, enclosing it within braces to hide it from view. This will force it to sort after the bold page reference, on the old principle that nothing sorts before something. For example, if you type, in ADD or EDIT:

- Archimedes, {i}34{l}1, {b}34{I}
  - it will sort in Draft View as:
  - Archimedes, {b}34{I}, {i}34{l}1
  - which in Formatted View will appear as:
  - Archimedes, 34, 34

To make the italicised reference file first, use the same principle, only type the {a} after the bold page number. But whatever your preference, don't use a number within the braces, because CINDEX will treat it as an extension of the existing number!

If you have a tip for other CINDEX users, or a problem, write to the Newsletter or contact Garry Cousins. Voice/fax (02) 9955 1525
Medical Index (a technical indexing and abstracting job), at a fixed rate of $6.03 per item. Does the Society know the current rates being offered by other major database providers? Do these rates vary in different states? Is the recommended rate set by the Society reasonable and achievable in the real market? The only way to answer these questions is by talking to a broad range of the people involved. My objection to the Society's rate is that this consultation has not taken place either within the Society by involving branches or externally by contacting interested parties.

2. George notes that volunteers to consider the matter of Society recommended rates would be welcomed. Volunteers might have been forthcoming if we had been aware that this issue was on the agenda, and such a call had been made prior to the rate being set. As it is, given that the rates appear to be set, isn't this a bit like closing the gate after the horse has bolted? If the Committee is retracting its rate and having the issue reviewed by a subcommittee, it should do so properly, with an announcement, some terms of reference, and a call for volunteers through both the Newsletter and branches.

3. I am pleased that the Committee will continue to report on its activities through the Newsletter under new guidelines and that it so promptly responded to a member's concerns through the pages of the Newsletter. I have enjoyed keeping in touch with Society activities through this medium, and appreciate the work of the current and recent editors. I hope the Newsletter will continue to be an important communication tool for our elected officials and a forum for the ideas of our members.

Lynn Farkas
30 October 1995

Report from ACT Branch

On 26 September, the Branch was treated to interesting talks on projects undertaken by Canberra indexers.

When Marjorie Gilby joined the Canberra and District Historical Society, she discovered that their journal had never been indexed, despite providing much information about the people of this region.

She rashly offered to index the new series of thirty issues which began in 1978. Starting with cards and slips of paper she progressed to a computer using a Foxpro database. The resulting index comprised 13,000 entries which is kept in the Historical Society's rooms. New journal issues are indexed into a batch file, checked and added to the cumulated index.

The Australian War Memorial is a storehouse of many artefact collections. Beryl Strusz described the treatment of postcards predominantly from the First World War.

Postcards may be collected for their message and become part of a manuscript collection. Alternatively, the graphics may be the important aspect. Beryl showed examples of official printed cards: the Field Service postcard, the Red Cross card or the YMCA card. Some glamorous cards from the Western Front were printed in silk.

Although the message may be a brief assurance that the writer or his mate were well, the postmark might reveal the date and location of fighting units in relation to major battles during the war. These postmarks are of importance to philatelists.

Robert Withycombe was faced with the problem of how to make information on Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific in the Lambeth Palace Library archives available to researchers here. Church records are a valuable resource to social historians, biographers and genealogists as well as church administrators and historians.

Like Marjorie, Robert found that if he wanted to create calendar summaries of the material, he would have to do it himself. His first task was to establish his list of indexing terms, particularly for abstract issues.

Finding the available published indexes inadequate, Robert realised he needed to compile his own thesaurus. The Papers covered an expanse of time, differing communities and terminology, and he could only index spasmodically.
Particular issues captured his attention, such as the conflicts between the Home Church standards and the needs of colonial Australia. Must the Anglican Bishop of North Queensland know Latina and Greek? Finally there is the question of the format for the summaries: paper or CD-Rom?

After these varied talks which stimulated much discussion from the small audience we had an enjoyable Thai dinner.

**Web Indexing Prize: Part 1 A simple index**

**The Prize**

I am writing to give you the background to a new Web indexing prize. The prize will be a year's free membership to AusSI. It will be held for twelve months ending in 1996.

This article is to help you get up to speed by creating a Web index of a document or family of documents by the same author. This could be developed later to the stage where it could be mounted onto the AusSI Web site, for example.

The prize is meant to lure some of you, our paper-based indexers, onto the electronic medium. Currently, I think 80% or more of the work being done in our Society is paper-based. There are about 20% doing database indexing which involves computer-based work.

The main tools you will need to construct the final product are:

1) your normal indexing software, for example, Cindex or Macrex;
2) a tool (WEBIX) to convert a standard index into HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), to be created especially for the purposes of the prize;
3) a Web browser such as Netscape or Mosaic to view the Web document.

WEBIX produces documents ready for the Web. No HTML knowledge will be required. Feed in the index and out comes the HTML document ready to go. This will be available from the AusSI Web site or on disk by mail from me at a nominal fee. It should be ready in a month or so.

Later after creating some successful mini Web indexes, we will venture into editing the HTML ourselves and searching the Web for more interesting information on a chosen topic. At this point a more advanced form of Web index will be introduced. It is known as a bibliographic index because of its complexity and is created using bibliographic searches, similar to those used for research projects.

If you have access to the internet, the prize is described on the AusSI Web site under 'the art of indexing the internet'.

**What will a Web index look like?**

A traditional hierarchical index will be made using Cindex, Macrex or other indexing software. Instead of page numbers you will have URLs (Universal Resource Locaters - WWW jargon for addresses of pages). For our purposes, we will be creating links to pages in the one area so we will not have to put in complex addresses as on the Web at large.

For example:

```
P publications publicat.htm
```

subject ^ ^ URL

This will be run through the WEBIX (Index to HTML converter) to create a Web page. In a Web browser like Netscape, choose File | Open File. Punch in the Web page's name and up will come:

```
P publications
```

publications is underlined which means there is hyperlink link to the publicat.htm page. That means if you click on publications you will be transported to the publicat.htm page - akin to turning to the exact page as with thumb tabs on a large text. You can see why the URL is the same as a page number in a traditional index; it tells where in the family of documents the subject lies.

So you would edit the original index in say Cindex, print it to disk, then run it through
WEBIX to produce the HTML. You then have an up-to-date Web index.

Setting up Cindex or Macrex to Produce the Output for WEBIX

WEBIX expects a simple format:

- header URL.htm
- subject level 1 URL.htm - indented 2 spaces
- subject level 2 URL.htm - indented 4 spaces

Check your defaults to make sure the indents are the right number of spaces and that the index is being saved as an ASCII file.

Next month I will go into the advanced form of indexing using full Web URLs.

Best of luck!

Web Bibliography:

Indexing the Internet by Mike Middleton, AusSI 1st International Conference, Mar-Apr 1995:
AusSI Internet Indexing Page:

Dwight Walker

Advertising rates
AusSI Newsletter
Full page: $80
Half page: $40
Quarter page: $20

AusSI Indexers Available
1995/96
Full page: $100

The Indexer (UK)
Full page: 120 pounds sterling
Half page: 80 pounds sterling
Quarter page: 55 pounds sterling
Eighth page: 35 pounds sterling

There is a special order form to be completed when lodging advertisements in The Indexer. For order form and copy deadlines, please contact: Janet Schuter, Hon. Editor, The Old Chapel, Kings Rd, Bembridge, Isle of Wight, UK. PO35 5NB email: Schuter@cix.compulink.co.uk

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