Editorial

Greetings! This is a jam-packed edition. Jean Turvey from Mackay, North Queensland, gives a very interesting summary of her group's genealogy indexing project. Robert Hyslop writes eloquently on Commissioning an Index from the joint meeting of the ACT/Canberra Society of Editors. Garry Cousins and Michael Wyatt give some useful CINDEX tips. David Mercer writes about the China Society of Indexers. Why not write to David or CSI using the special name cards inside? Jonathan Jermey wades through the Service Providers Action Network (SPAN) forum on the Internet industry to find the indexer's place online. I give a report on the Newsletter and Web site including goals. Roger Hawcroft has given a great suggestion which has exciting possibilities. Finally, the NSW Branch is calling for papers for the 1997 conference. See you next year.

Meetings and Training:

Wednesday 27 Nov 1996 pm, Sydney
Combined Christmas Party / Medal Dinner, BYO
Contact: Garry Cousins (02) 9955 1525

25-27 Nov 1996, Melb, Indexing Course
Times: 9.30 am - 4.45 pm (approx)
Venue: RMIT Building 6
The maximum number is 20 with some vacancies.
Price: $225 AuSI members, $250 non-members.
Contact: Max McMaster, ph/fax (03) 9571 6341, e-mail: mindexer@interconnect.com.au

30 Nov, Deadline for Web indexing prize
Contact: Dwight Walker (02) 9398 6726 see back page

31 Dec, Deadline for Call for Papers 1997
Alan Walker 02-93680174, fax 02-93585593 see p.6

Feb 1997, Brisbane, Book Indexing Course
Julie Forrest, phone (07) 3353 0120 or email J.Forrest@mcauley.acu.edu.au

New Members
Dr S. Eggins, Rose Bay, NSW
Mr T. Harrison, North Coburg, Vic.
Mr R. Hill, Rushcutters Bay, NSW
Mrs M. Huxlin, Kearns, NSW
Mr G. Robertson, Kirrawee, NSW

What's Inside
Mackay Indexing Projects by Mrs Jean Turvey 2
Commissioning an index by Robert Hyslop 3
CINDEX Tip No 18: Backing up and editing 5
Webmaster/Editor's Report by Dwight Walker 7
Serv. Providers Action Network Forum by J. Jermey 8
China Society of Indexers Found by David Mercer 9

Branch News

SA News by Susan Rintoul
The South Australian group was delighted to welcome Max McMaster, Vice President of the Society to Adelaide. While Max was there he led a successful indexing workshop on Sunday 29 September attended by members of the Society and members of the Society of Editors (a few were members of both).

Susan Rintoul spoke first, about basic indexing skills, Bill Phippard then discussed embedded entries and, after a friendly chaty lunch, Max discussed facets of editing and answered many interested questions.

On Tuesday 1 October Max addressed the South Australian group at 7pm and the South Australian branch of the Society of Editors at 7:30pm. About 40 editors were present to hear Max, and again, many questions were asked.

The SA group would like to thank Max, again, for visiting, and providing news, teaching and amusing anecdotes of life as an indexer.

Brisbane Book Indexing Course, 1997
Expressions of interest are sought from Queensland members who would like to attend a three-day Introduction to Book Indexing Course to be held in Brisbane in February 1997, presenter, Max McMaster. Please register your interest ASAP to the NEW Queensland group contact:
Julie Forrest, phone (07) 3353 0120 or email J.Forrest@mcauley.acu.edu.au

Early 1997, Melb, Database Indexing
Contact: Max McMaster, ph/fax (03) 9571 6341, e-mail: mindexer@interconnect.com.au
Genealogy SIG
Mackay Indexing Projects
by Mrs Jean Turvey

It was with great interest that I read that the Australian Society of Indexers wishes to hear from Genealogical Groups with an interest in Indexing. With Genealogical records becoming more accessible, it is becoming apparent that indexes and indexers for these records are needed.

The Genealogical Society in Mackay is fortunate in that we own a microfilming camera and have been for several years filming local records, including baptisms, marriages, death registers and undertakers records. Recently we have commenced filming some police records (sensitive material having been removed). The Police Horse Stud book still smells like the stable.

After filming, the records come to me, the Indexing Officer. The records are assessed and the format of the index is established. We use members' computers and programmes, giving us several to choose from. Currently we are indexing Baptism records for the Uniting, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in the Mackay area. These books were used by several ministers, entries being made in whichever book they chose at the time. They are not in chronological order; in fact if the minister remembered the baptism 12 months later, probably at the baptism of the next child, he would then enter it in a book. It certainly takes patience to find a baptism record in these books.

It was decided to print these Baptism entries out and place them into book form with numbered pages. An index of the child's name, date of baptism and page number is being created. Upon completion researchers will be able to read the actual page as written by the minister which contains much more information about the family. It will also give researchers all entries for the family name that they are researching.

When the index entries have been entered a printout is done and the records and the printout then go off to my checking team. As many of these records date back to the 1880's, the handwriting can be difficult to read, hence the checking team to verify my interpretation. (One example was an entry I read as Marben which was in fact Maclean).

After checking, the records are placed in their appropriate order and any errors in the index are corrected. The resulting index is as accurate as we are able to make it. We do not correct records even when we know that there are spelling mistakes; we transcribe these records as they are written.

Working as a group gives members the benefit of seeing the different stages in creating an index and the final result, not to mention that we all enjoy ourselves along the way. As we are only a small group, money, as always, is a problem when undertaking these projects. We are currently awaiting the results of several grant applications which will enable us to complete several large indexes and keep us very busy for the next 6 months.

Contact:
Jean Turvey, Indexing and Special Projects Officer,
Genealogical Society of Queensland – Mackay Branch,
PO Box 882, Mackay Q 4740
(079) 42 6266 (w & h)

Indexing Research Grants

The National Committee has agreed to make available to approved applicants grants of up to $1,000 for indexing research. Application forms are available from:

Michael Ramsden,
104 Lakeview Drive, Lilydale, Vic. 3130
Tel. (03) 9735 4235, Fax (03) 9739 6285

Applications close on 31st March 1997

Sydney Christmas/Medal Dinner
When: Wednesday November 27, 7 for 7.30pm
Where: Malabar Restaurant, BYO
332 Pacific Hwy, Crows Nest
Cost: $27
RSVP: Garry Cousins, 2/27 Whatmore St,
Waverton 2060, fax/ph 02-9955-1525

INDEX
MACREX INDEXING PROGRAM

Don't be left in the dark, join other enlightened MACREX users to become

Master Artisans Creating Refined EXcellence

For details how, contact your Australian, New Zealand and South-East Asian agent

Max McMaster
Master Indexing
Phone/fax +61 (0)3 9571 6341
Email: mindexer@interconnect.com.au

2 Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter, Volume 20 No. 10, November/December 1996
COMMISSIONING AN INDEX by Robert Hyslop

'The pencil, when blue, is mightier and more cruel than the sword', Jules Archibald (1886-1919), in ‘The Genesis of the Bulletin’, Lone Hand, 1 July 1907.

'A publisher who issues a book without an index should be hanged', Thomas Carlyle (attrib.).

On 30 October, 60 attended a joint meeting of the ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors, adjourning for dinner. The meeting began with Geraldine Triffitt giving a brief history of the Australian Society of Indexers. The following panel of three then addressed the subject 'Commissioning an Index'.

Bill Coppell, freelance registered indexer and a visiting fellow at the Australian National University, told how he had come to be an indexer, principally through producing specialised bibliographies about the Cook Islands. Maggie Shapley, Publications Manager for Australian Archives and archivist by profession, illustrated her movement from literary studies to editing and to commissioning indexers. She has produced a broad range of publications, from an edition of a 15th century manuscript to the proceedings of an electronic records conference. Robert Hyslop, freelance editor, registered indexer, and ex-public servant, spoke of his long-term interest in words and indexes. As author-indexer, he has published five books and numerous articles and book reviews mainly on history and public administration. Following is a summary of the general discussion and many questions about the respective roles of editors and indexers.

A. WHAT EDITORS HOPE FOR FROM INDEXERS

Editors understand that an index is part of a publication which provides access to information in the text by listing in a recognisable order topics, names, etc., with their location in the publication. Editors therefore have the following expectations and hopes of indexers.

The indexer aims to assist communication between authors and readers. They achieve this by choosing terms and arranging them so that the user is helped by the index to find in the shortest possible time what is wanted in the text. The indexer sees the index as a menu, a road map, a directory, a gazetteer, a key, all with the object of opening up the text to a wide range of inquiries on subject, place, person, organisation, theme, concept, etc.

As an index is often the first part of a book examined by a reader, it is a work of high quality and is user-friendly.

A good index starts from the diverse needs of the readers, not from the author's or editor's analysis of the work. The indexer approaches the task by asking the questions: who will use the index? what kind of information will they want? what finding words are they likely to use in their search for information? what headings will therefore be useful?

Authors often index their own books and some do it very well. There is however a tendency for the author to fail to perceive a lack of understanding: what is self-evident to the well-informed author is often enough not understood by the user of the index. The statement in the Australian Editing Handbook, AGPS, 1994, that 'It is usual for the author to prepare the index' was questioned by the panel. An index is likely to be better if the indexer has not been involved in producing the book.

Editors need better information from an indexer than they often get at the time of commissioning an index. It is often not sufficient to say the index should be 'simple' or 'comprehensive'. Thus it would be helpful if indexers refined and published their ideas on levels of indexing similar to those about 'levels of edit' published by the Canberra Society of Editors.

The indexer does not simply index words, but indexes concepts, ideas and topics even if not specifically identified in the text; personal, corporate and place names are indexed.

The indexer aims to build an index that will serve the reader, giving attention to the rules of indexing, while abiding with the timetable agreed with the editor. It will conform to the agreed discussed requirements as to the size of the index and the project's financial constraints. Indexers are bound to please their editors, resisting a tendency to put indexing ideals before the practicalities of editors. The indexer also is careful to avoid displeasing the users of the index.

The indexer gives the editor an estimate of the cost of the index, and encloses an invoice with the completed index so that the editor can complete the financial side of the project in good time.

Although knowing the rules of indexing well, the indexer sees them as guides but not masters. Seeing them as accepted standards, the indexer constantly makes decisions on how far to conform.
Branch News

The indexer painstakingly decides what to put in an index and what to leave out, to be in tune with the publication. The indexer does not index trivial mentions of topics in the text, nor try to create an index that gives encyclopaedic information about the publication.

The publication Indexers Available is a guide for editors looking for an indexer.

Editors want the indexer to be experienced in working in collaboration with editors and professionally objective about the publication. The indexer reads the manuscript with fresh eyes, seeing each publication in its uniqueness. The indexer knows that an index is not the proper place for promoting personal views, hostility or partisanship, and always aims to use neutral terminology. This constitutes a special blending of the language of the text with the vocabulary of the expected audience.

Editors are glad when an indexer is keen and cheerful to undertake the time-consuming and tedious task of indexing, and then without fuss, delivers the index on time. Editors understand that indexers are keen from their own point of view to finish the job without delay, if only to avoid the mental confusion that can come from working on more than one index at a time.

The indexer does not edit the manuscript, and unless there are special circumstances, is not asked to proofread it. But the indexer points out to the editor any errors such as ‘typos’ noticed in the text.

The indexer edits the index before sending it to the editor. This editing of the index is an intellectual task, not a mechanical or computer matter. It includes such things as elimination of synonymous or ambiguous headings by combination and cross-referencing to a preferred term. The indexer also corrects having too many references (which indexers call locators). If there are more than seven locators the indexer probably creates sub-headings.

The indexer agrees beforehand about the form in which the index will be provided by the indexer. The indexer is likely to use computer assistance to help sort, merge and alphabetise entries, although a computer cannot create an index.

**B. WHAT INDEXERS HOPE FOR FROM EDITORS**

Indexers acknowledge that an index has to fit in with the totality of the constraints faced by a publisher’s editor, but they need to remind editors constantly that the quality of the published index is dependent on an understanding by editors of the needs of the indexer. Here are some of the more important of these needs.

Page proofs given to the indexer are not be changed in the offing, is helpful if the editor can give the indexer an advance copy of part or all the manuscript to enable the indexer to become familiar with the text so that actual work on the index can begin quickly when final page proofs become available.

The publishing timetable allows realistically for the time the indexer needs and takes account of the fact that as the indexing comes towards the end of the publishing program, the possibility that the program might suffer delay is provided for. It is not allowed to impact unduly on the time available to the indexer and the editor keeps the indexer informed of changes to the timetable.

The editor may edit the index so that its format and design fit the publication, but does not otherwise change the index without consulting the indexer.

Less fundamental, but significant in contributing to a felicitous working relationship between editor and indexer, are the following points.

The editor might be able to indicate the likely readership of the work so that the indexer can use terminology based on a well-informed guess of the types of readers, their levels of technical expertise, their likely needs, and their range of expectations.

Collaboration between an author and an indexer aids the production of a fine index. In any case there is value in an author being available for consultation by the indexer. Authors of course are welcome to give a broad indication of the sort of index they prefer, but indexers dislike authors listing or highlighting words and phrases which they demand be shown in the index. An indexer hopes that editors will help to avoid these problems occurring.

An indexer prefers to proofread the index. It is a matter not only of checking for typing and spelling errors but also for such things as bad breaks and the proper setting of continued lines. [Page layout: Ed.] ‘Bad breaks’ occur in printing when a sub-heading is separated from its heading; correcting this error can itself be hazardous. ‘Continued lines’ require that a heading be repeated at the top of a new column where further sub-headings occur from the previous page.

Indexers like to have their work acknowledged in print, and most have a preference for a by-line such as ‘Index compiled by ...’ at the beginning of the index. This especially applies where the indexer is given the opportunity to proof-read the index.

Indexers generally find their work intellectually stimulating, creative and challenging. The work requires indexers to immerse themselves completely and give an index their total attention. They are grateful when editors show they understand this by giving the indexing task its due of time, consideration and acknowledgment.
Branch News

The indexer needs to be skilled in indexing but does not have to be an expert in the subject matter of the publication. No matter what the subject, indexing is essentially a matter of ingenuity and imagination, analysis and interpretation. Indexing is a matter of selecting the pertinent points and topics to index and this can usually be done in a publication that has been passed as fit for publication. Nevertheless the editor of a highly technical work may find it worthwhile to look for an indexer who has specialised in that subject area.

Each index is unique. Its basic criterion is whether it is likely to serve its users, rather than whether it conforms to any a priori suppositions.

Gazetteer of Australia

The Gazetteer of Australia is compiled by the Committee for Geographical Names in Australia (CGNA) and published and packaged by AUSLIG. It is a 210,000 name database available as 25 files on 5 DOS disks. There are 3 themes: Land, Water and Infrastructure for States, Territories and Navy and cover: name, latitude, longitude, easting, northing, zone (Aust. Map Grid), map number (AUSLIG National Topographic Map).

Contact:
Executive Officer, CGNA, PO Box 2, Belconnen 2617
tel (06) 2014317, fax 06-2014366
e-mail cgna@auslig.gov.au

Genealogy SIG Liaison People

Queensland

Mrs Jean Turvey (AusSI), 16 Dobell Crt, Mt Pleasant 4760, (079) 42 6266 (w & h), GSQ - Mackay
Margaret Shand (AusSI), Gold Coast,
(07) 5532 4922 (w), (07) 5538 1423 (h)
(mshand@sthildas.qld.edu.au)

New South Wales

Gary Luke (Aust. Jewish Gen.), feraltek@zeta.org.au,
Sydney tel/fax (02) 9519 9907
Gregory Long (SAG), gregory.long@tafensw.edu.au,
Sutherland, geographical information systems
Pamela Sheldon (SAG) pamshe@ozemail.com.au,
Sydney, genealogist
Alan Shaw, 'Mariner Research', 74 Lakeshore Dr, Nth Avoca NSW 2251 (Shawa@fastlink.com.au)
Liz Vincent (AusSI), PO Box 111, Picton 2571
tel/fax (046) 772044

Victoria

Russell Stafford (AIGS, Blackburn) PO Box 203,
Glenhuntly 3163
Jo Grant (AusSI), PO Box 58, Tallangatta 3700
tel/fax (060) 712274, (fileworks@albury.net.au)
AIGS = Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies
GSQ = Genealogical Society of Queensland
SAG = Society of Australian Genealogists

CINDEX Tip № 18

Backing up and editing

Quick backups

Any open index can be backed up quickly by issuing the WRITE command. Of course, CINDEX saves any open index automatically at intervals which you can set yourself from the SET GENERAL menu, but for the paranoid indexer like myself it is comforting to have an extra safety net.

The WRITE command creates a separate file in a compact format which will have the same name as the original index, but with a .DAT suffix. If you want to specify a different filename you can give the command WRITE zzz, where zzz is the specified name. The WRITE command saves the index in a standard format which can be read by most databases (and CINDEX, with the command READ). This format puts each record on a single line and separates each field with a tab. Because this format takes up only a fraction of the disk space that an .IDX file does it is useful for storing completed indexes as well.

Don't confuse the WRITE command with PRINT/FILE, which is used to produce files for typesetters (see Tips 13-15, June-August 1996).

Quick editing (this tip from Michael Wyatt)

Frequently I have found an entry as a result of using SHOW (or in some other way have an entry displayed at the top of the screen) that I need to edit. I have set a function key to "edit;" so that I can bring the record into the edit screen with a single keystroke. The semi-colon after the command makes it execute automatically without having to press <Enter>.

Function key is set to "edit plus semicolon, Ed.

If you have a tip for other CINDEX users, or a problem, write to the Newsletter or contact Garry Cousins Phone/fax (02) 9955 1525

Society of Indexers (UK) 
TRAINING IN INDEXING

Open-learning course for indexing books, periodicals, images and other information media. Write to:
Training Administrator, Society of Indexers, Mermaid House, 1 Mermaid Court, London SE1 1HR, UK
Book Review

Wellisch, Hans H. Indexing from A to Z.
US$45. Reviewed by Michael J. Ramsden

As the title implies this book is arranged as a series of essays arranged alphabetically by topic. The topics are of varying extension, ranging from ‘Mac’ at one end of the spectrum to ‘Automatic indexing’ at the other. This approach necessarily scatters related topics throughout the text, and it militates against any development of a broad theme. However, once one accepts the approach, there is a wealth of practical information, advice and example in the text, and it will be an invaluable handbook for practitioners and students.

The book deals not only with the various issues associated with the making of an index, but also with those related to the business side of the work of an indexer: costing, contracts, and so on. There are many helpful examples, and helpful cross references in the text to lead the reader from one topic to other related topics, for example from ‘Indexing languages’ to ‘Thesaurus’.

The book reflects current national and international standards which are cited frequently and helpfully throughout the text. There are also frequent references to related journal articles. It is written in an easy and readable style, and the examples reflect the breadth of the author’s erudition. There are occasional flashes of humour, and some eloquent defence of the intellectual content of an indexer’s work. The essay on ‘Zen and the art of indexing’ has probably been included mainly to justify the title (which would otherwise properly have been Indexing from A to U), but it nevertheless is an entertaining and informative postscript.

Inevitably there are some topics on which more could be said, and in a third edition one would like to see more on the problems associated with the formation of compound headings. The problems of citation order, or combination order, (neither term, oddly enough, included in the index) are more than just a question of to invert or not to invert, or how to handle prepositional phrases.

There is a classified list of ten main topics, new to the second edition, which is intended to bring together related sections. Unfortunately not all related sections are listed under the relevant heading, for example, the list under the main topic ‘Alphanumeric arrangement’ (which is treated as a synonym for Filing) does not include ‘Abbreviations’ or ‘Mac’. ‘Abbreviations’ is listed under ‘Indexing techniques’ and ‘Mac’ under ‘Names’. The problem seems to arise from the fact that, although the relationship between the main headings in the classified list and the subordinate topics is not a hierarchical relationship, and therefore some topics fit under more than one broad heading, each topic is listed under one heading only.

A minor error, on p.239 is that articles in English include ‘an’ as well as ‘a’ and ‘the’.

The book includes an extensive bibliography and, as is only proper and to be expected of Professor Wellisch, an excellent index. This new edition is warmly recommended.

Indexing from A to Z, 2nd ed by Hans H. Wellisch, $89.95 including post and package paid in Australia

Write, fax or ring Writers Bookcase*
Reply Paid 162
Writers Bookcase
PO Box 162, Kippax, ACT 2615
Fax/Phone (06) 259 2835
Cheque/money order payable to Writers Bookcase
For Bankcard/Visa/Mastercard send:
credit card number, name on card, expiry date

* A trading name of Scribbly Gum Publications Pty Ltd
ACN 069868426

AUSTRALIAN INDEXERS’ CONFERENCE 1997
CALL FOR PAPERS

Australian Society of Indexers
(NSW Branch), PO Box R598,
Royal Exchange, Sydney NSW 1225

Following the success of the international conference held at Marysville (Vic.) in 1995 and the Robertson conference organised by the ACT Branch earlier this year, it has become clear that indexers enjoy and benefit greatly from having regular opportunities to meet and discuss matters of continuing interest, and to explore new directions for the profession. As the next step, the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers is planning a two-day conference towards the end of 1997.

We are seeking offers of papers from indexers who have topics which they would like to address at the conference. We would also appreciate suggestions of topics for papers and workshops, and names of speakers, from those who do not wish to present papers themselves.

Please send your suggestions to me at the above address, or contact me at the numbers below. Suggestions will be welcome until the end of the year.

Alan Walker
NSW Branch Conference Committee
Telephone: 02-93680174
Fax: 02-93585593
Webmaster/Editor’s Report
Dwight Walker, Editor of the AusSI Newsletter reports:
The experience of handling the editing, production and distribution of the Newsletter from Sydney has settled into a pattern over the past 3 or 4 months.

I have run several stories through the Newsletter and one in Descent and in Genealogist regarding the establishment of a special interest group for genealogical indexers. So far I have had responses from Picton, NSW, Tallangatta, Vic., Richmond, NSW, Sydney (2), Gold Coast, Glenhuntly, Vic. The New South Wales Branch is planning to hold a joint Branch/genealogical society meeting, probably in March 1997. This could be a good time to kick off the SIG formally. Promoting this cause through the genealogical journals can be rewarding as they have quite large circulation numbers, e.g. Descent has 8,000 copies per issue.

In next year’s conference (September/October in NSW) the SIG plans a session on genealogical indexing. My suggestion for the basic goals for the SIG are:

- to support and assist in indexing genealogical materials
- to provide quality control on genealogy indexing projects
- to provide a focus for indexes in genealogy projects
- to liaise with genealogy groups

Dwight Walker, as Webmaster, reports:
The Web site has grown to the extent where there is a need for more coordination

(i) in updating information as needed, and
(ii) in providing material – articles, etc. – in HTML or some easily convertible form.

In consideration of Indexers Available being mounted on the Web next year it may be a good time to move our site to SunSITE at ANU for speed and more technical power. At the same time I am interested in revamping the site to upgrade its presentation.

Another suggestion worth considering comes from Roger Hawcroft, an AusSI member; it is that we have online indexing tutorials. With password control we could have paying clients of indexing education outside the main centres, e.g. Perth and New Zealand. They could submit work via the Web site and do interactive lessons with results emailed back. Comparable experiments are being mounted by DEETYA with a system called EdNA and on OpenNet on which Monash University has online tutorials and training, free-to-air and charged.

It may be time to set goals for the Web site. I suggest:

(i) to provide information about joining the Society and what the Society provides for its members
(ii) to disseminate articles and photographs
(iii) to provide a calendar of meetings and conferences
(iv) to mount education and training modules (at a price)
(v) to foster Internet indexing with software and tutorials
(vi) to interact with other societies with information of mutual interest
(vii) to foster and help new groups such as Queensland Group and Genealogical SIG
(viii) to notify competition information, e.g. Web competition, Indexing Medal
(ix) to announce medal winners, speakers at conferences, etc.
(x) to sell AusSI publications and materials.

Entries for the Web Indexing Prize are beginning to come in nicely. I have settled on November 30 as the deadline and December 13 as the date for announcement of the winner. After that I shall put all the entries on display on the Web site.

SI Conference 1997, Dublin
The 1997 SI Conference will be held in Dublin at Trinity College on 5-7 September. It is not the major 2-yearly event such as Bristol, but an intermediate conference. It will be celebrating 25 years since the formation of SI in Britain.

Members from the Australian Society of Indexers are of course very welcome. If anyone can combine it with a UK or Europe trip SI would love to see them. (It is worth coming to Dublin just to see Trinity College, especially the library and the Book of Kells.) SI is finalising a program at present, and more details are coming.

Any inquiries are to be sent to Warren Yeates at his email address below.

Warren Yeates
Bookworks Ltd, John’s Terrace, Birr, Co. Offaly, Ireland
Tel: +353 509 21919 Fax: +353 509 21844
Email: wyeates@iol.ie (Warren Yeates)

Obituary of a Cartographer

In 1936 she published the first map of London’s streets. She had the inspiration in 1935 after being misdirected by the only street map then readily available, last updated in 1918. Hiring a draughtsman she researched a completely new London map based on the Ordnance Survey. “I had to get my information by walking,” she said and claimed to have covered 3000 miles (4800km) in all, rising at 5am, and walking daily for 18 hours to list the 23,000 roads. Despite her diligence, the first edition very nearly omitted Trafalgar Square altogether, after an accident with a shoebox which contained the “Tr-” entries. The Australian, September 16, 1996, 13
Internet Industry
Service Providers Action Network
Inc.-Electronic and Online Services
Forum
by Jonathan Jerme

On Friday 26th July, on behalf of AusSI, I attended the inaugural meeting of this forum, set up to discuss policy and other issues relating to the growing Internet service industry. About fifty people were in attendance, representing public and private sector bodies with interests in this area. From scanning the attendees, one thing is certain—whatever dominates the industry in the battles to come, they will almost certainly be represented by a middle-aged man in a suit.

The forum began with a welcome from Peter Webb, Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA), who hosted the forum. Mr. Webb pointed out that the timing of the forum was critical, coming as it did just after the release of both the ABA and the Austel reports on online service regulation, and foreshadowing changes to Federal broadcasting and telecommunications legislation by the new Howard government.

This was followed by an address by the Forum Chairman, Paul Budde, welcoming delegates and laying down an agenda. The primary concern of this first meeting was to reach agreement on policy principles so that the commercial interests involved could speak with a 'single voice' on major issues. Mr. Budde laid down three areas where agreement was necessary: industry self-regulation, overall policy, and end-user education; and proposed that the forum set up a working group on each of these topics.

Rob Badger, from the Information Technology Branch of the Department of Communications and the Arts (DCA), pointed out the importance of industry input into policy-making for a rapidly growing and changing market, and outlined the new government's approach as broadly deregulatory and market-based, with the flexibility to adapt to unforeseeable changes. The Minister's view was that online services were not in need of special legislation but could be covered under existing Acts—undercutting the approach taken by NSW and Victoria in this area. At the same time, attention needed to be given to the possibility of anti-competitive practices by larger carriers and providers. The Government endorsed self-regulation within a broad regulatory framework, particularly the recent developments in Web self-regulation by the development of PICS and other self-rating systems.

Brian Perkins, from the Internet Service Providers' Action Group, pointed out that the telecommunications industry is traditionally competitive, rather than cooperative, and dominated by large corporations, particularly Telstra. To prevent these large players from undercutting others by cross-subsidising and restrictive practices, regulation and Codes of Practice were necessary to ensure equal access to bandwidth.

Patrick Fair, from the Internet Industry Association, discussed the problems inherent in defining what the 'on-line service industry' was composed of—carriers, service providers, content providers or all three? The Association was working on a Code of Practice for service providers which would incorporate a Web page tagging system designed for Australian users. Other issues included the protection of copyrighted material and the security of electronic commerce. In the ease of disputes and suspected breaches of the law, service providers had a legal obligation to act, but the current means of dispute resolution were complex and expensive, discouraging them from taking action.

Sam Seabury, of the Telephone Service Providers' Association (0055 and 1800 numbers), pointed out that his industry had gone through the same traumas regarding regulation and intervention as the Internet industry was now. There was now an industry self-regulatory Code of Practice in force, and a dispute resolution structure to deal with complaints. He added that the code could, however, be overridden by Telstra, which was now entering the industry as a provider, leading to major conflicts of interest and restrictive practices.

Philip Argy from the Australian Computer Society, put forward the view that material provided over the Internet and other services was not inherently different to other material and should be subject to the same standards and regulations. Specifically, he supported complete privacy for one-to-one e-mail, and a legal status for service providers as 'distributors', not 'publishers'—there was no more reason why a provider should be prosecuted for unknowingly transmitting offensive e-mail than Australia Post should be for unknowingly carrying obscene magazines. To build electronic commerce, users would need to be comfortable with the established standards of privacy and legal liability. He pointed out the need for education to ease community fears and make known the real level of risks associated with Internet use. He added that the United Nations has already promulgated conditions for electronic commerce across borders: these represent a 'default condition' to which individual countries can add their own safeguards.

Kaarne Kooman from ABA spoke about the ABA Report (available through the Web - http://www.dca.gov.au/aba/olsrprt.htm) and in particular the educational value of Internet access. Parents and teachers must take responsibility for understanding technology if they want to control children's access to objectionable material. Parents need to be educated and informed, both about the use of the services and about the legal and regulatory status of online material. 'Tagging' of Web pages was supported, alongside the configuring of browsers to screen out unwanted material.
Internet Industry

Mark McDonnell, from the Federation of Australian Narrowband Subscription Services, also raised definitional questions: how can ‘broadcasting’ and ‘narrowcasting’ be distinguished? Is there a continuum from ‘private’ to ‘public’ communications? There were already several different regulatory bodies at Federal government level; these needed to be restructured into a single body before consistent regulation could be achieved. He added that the creation of Codes of Practice could be a long drawn-out process, especially the preparation of compliance procedures.

What about indexers?

Do indexers have a role to play in the development of the Internet industry? In so far as our job is to organise material created and supplied by other people, then we clearly have a vested interest in seeing that this material is both abundant and widely available. On that basis it appears to me that we should at least be pressing for minimal regulation and maximum access.

While not necessarily taking sides in the struggle between an Australian giant in the form of Telstra and the smaller Australian providers, we should be trying to make sure that information generated in Australia is indexed in Australia and not passed offshore for indexing in the way that many ‘Australian’ books are now passed offshore for printing. This can only be done by maintaining a strong Internet presence ourselves and by monitoring activities and trends elsewhere.

One interesting feature of Internet access is the way in which ordinary users’ awareness of information-retrieval skills are rapidly rising with the use of Web search engines like Alta Vista and Yahoo. With thousands of false drops a commonplace event, people are beginning to realise that finding a needle in a haystack is not just a matter of typing in ‘sharp’. Perhaps the time is ripe for indexers to publicise their own talents a little more – and to do so in mainstream media that Web users are likely to be reading.

There is assuredly money to be made from online information access – the presence of all those men in suits attests to that. It would be nice if some of it was to come our way.

Letters to the Editor

The China Society of Indexers Found by David Mercer

Some months ago, assisted by Garry Cousins in Sydney, I wrote to the Chinese Library Association in Beijing and, on August 23, I received the following reply. A letter from CSI follows.

Mr. Dà Wěi, Greetings.

I received your letter and, through many enquiries, I have found the address for The China Society of Indexers that you requested. The address is as follows:

The China Society of Indexers,
Yifu Library,
East China Normal University
3663 Zhongshan Rd. (North)
Shanghai,
The People’s Republic of China. 200062.

Sincerely,
for the Secretary of The Chinese Library Association,
1996.7.25
Ph: Int. +86-21-6257-7577 x 2317
Fax: Int. +86-21-6257-9196.

Mr. Dà Wěi, Greetings.

I received your letter and am sending you some information about our Society for your reference.

The China Society of Indexers was founded in December 1991, in Shanghai, under the aegis of The State Press and Publications Administration. We have members throughout China and we indeed welcome relationships with societies internationally. We consider the Australian Society of Indexers to be our Comrade.

We hope to remain in touch with you, particularly with regard to the exchange of information. Also, I have included my name card.

My very best wishes,
Signed: [Professor] Ge Yong Qing. 96.10.3
Vice-Director and Secretary General of The China Society of Indexers
Editor in Chief of the Index Research Series;
Senior Editor, Encyclopedia of China; and
a Member of The International Society for Knowledge.

Ge Yong Qing’s name card - use with address above
David Mercer, peripatetic, 1996.10.14
Foreign Language Dept.,
Kunming University of Science & Technology
Kunming, Yunnan Province
The People’s Republic of China. 650093.

The People’s Republic of China.

David Mercer’s name card - photocopy and use this if writing to him, otherwise mail can disappear. When writing to Prof. Ge he suggests using the services of a Chinese/Australian Librarian for technical matters.
AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS

NATIONAL/VICTORIAN BRANCH
GPO Box 1251
Melbourne Vic. 3001
Phone: (03) 9571 6341
Email: mindexer@interconnect.com.au

World Wide Web URL:
Webmaster Email: aussi@zeta.org.au

President: John Simkin (03) 9429 8817
Vice Pres: Max McMaster (03) 9571 6341
Secretary: Ian Odgers (03) 9398 4988
Email: iog@interconnect.com.au
Minutes Secretary: Sandra Whitbourn
Treasurer: Joyce Gillespie (03) 9654 8527 or
Phone/Fax: (03) 9710 1270

Editor: Dwight Walker
2/2 Nelson Street, Randwick NSW 2031
Phone: (02) 9398 6726, Fax: (02) 96623037

Committee Members:
M. Findlay, G. Levick, J. McGovern,
A. Philpott, M. Ramsden

NSW BRANCH
PO Box R598, Royal Exchange NSW 2000
Email: dwight@zip.com.au

President: Kingsley Siebel (02) 9477 3149
Fax: (02) 9476 4378
Secretary: Madeleine Davis (02) 9438 5354
Treasurer: Pam Johnstone (02) 9477 3149

Committee Members:
C. Colton, G. Cousins, L. Doyle, N. Toward,
C. Jones, A. Walker, D. Walker, M. Wyatt

ACT REGION BRANCH
GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601
President: Geraldine Triffitt (06) 246 1177
Fax: (06) 249 7310, Email: gtr@aiatsis.gov.au
Secretary: Shirley Campbell (06) 234 2225
Fax: (06) 234 2227
Email: Shirley.Campbell@Radford.act.edu.au
Treasurer: Laurelle Tunks (06) 234 1139
Email: rodtunks@netinfo.com.au

Committee Members: R. Hyslop, J. Jensen, L. Farkas,
S. MacDougall, R. Withycombe

QUEENSLAND GROUP with Soc. of Editors (Qld)
Contact: Julie Forrest (07) 3353 0120
email: J.Forrest@mcauley.acu.edu.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GROUP with Soc. Ed. (SA)
Contact: Susan Rintoul (08) 8235 1535, fax 8353 3410
email: S.Rintoul@adelaide.edu.au

Indexing Rates

The 1996 recommended rate for freelance back-of-book
indexers has been kept at $35.00 per hour in line with
rates for freelance editors. Although the Society
recommends this rate, individual indexers are at liberty
to charge above or below this rate as they deem appro-
priate.

Database indexing rates are more variable, and are
usually charged on a per record basis, so rates will vary
depending on the complexity of the indexing required.