ndexers
Newsletter

Syntactica

An 'intelligent text analysing service' that fails the IQ test

Jonathan Jermey

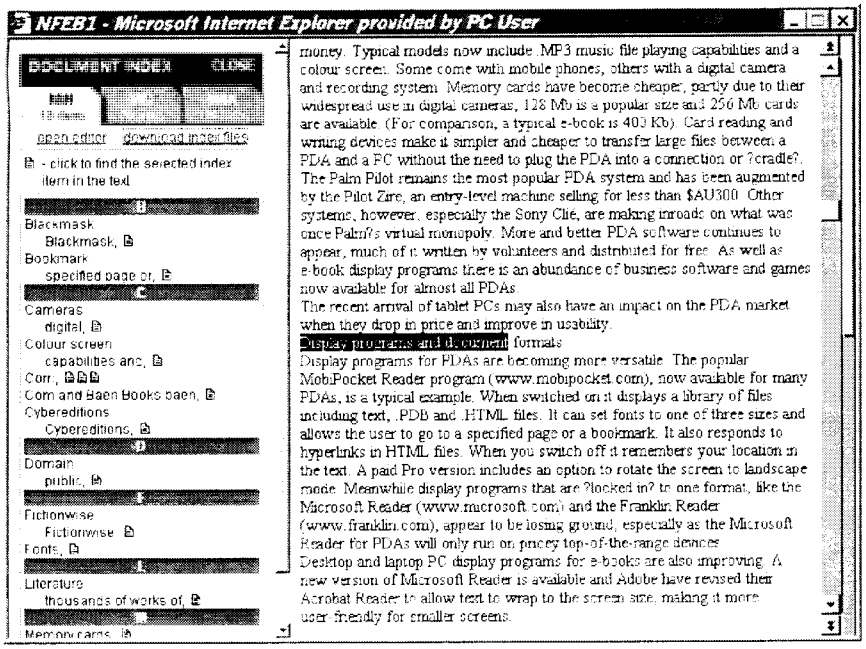
Syntactica (www.syntactica.com) is the latest 'automatic indexing' system for the general public. Unlike Indexicon and other earlier programs, Syntactica is a web-based service (see Glenda Browne's extensive review of automatic indexing in *LASIE* Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 58–65, reproduced at http://www.aussi.org/conferences/papers/browneg.htm). Users pay a subscription fee which entitles them to upload their own documents to the Syntactica site. An opening balance of $US10 is credited to new users, allowing them to try Syntactica out on up to 100 pages of text before a payment is required. A registered user is given their own password-protected workspace in which the 'indexes' are kept and made available. The website uses cookies to keep track of your details, a harmless but unnecessary liberty.

The type of documents that Syntactica will process is limited to text, .RTF and Word files.

Uploaded documents are analysed and the resulting 'indexes' become available for the user to download. Three indexes are available for each document; a short (Min) index with about one term per 100 words, a longer (Mid) one with about four terms per 100 words, and a longer one again (Max) with about one term for every ten words. These ratios appear to decline for longer documents—see the table below for details.

Once the indexes are produced the user can view any of these in a pop-up window alongside a plain text version of the input file, with hyperlinks from the index terms to the text they refer to. The indexes can be edited in another pop-up window by adding or

Continued on page 13



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GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT

Notice

AusSI delegates to ASI and SI conferences

The American Society of Indexers conference will be held in Vancouver Canada from 19–21 June 2003 and the Society of Indexers conference will be held in Glasgow Scotland from 27–29 June 2003. Any member who is interested in being an official Australian Society of Indexers delegate to either of these conferences, please contact the national secretary at shirley.campbell@alianet.alia.org.au

AusSI National Committee Meeting Schedule 2003 Update

16 April
18 June
20 August
15 October
17 December

New South Wales Branch AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the New South Wales Branch will be held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 12 March 2003, at the New Hong Kong Restaurant, 44 Macleay Street, Potts Point. The AGM will be followed by a Chinese banquet, at the subsidised cost of $30 per person, drinks included.

RSVP Alan Walker by 10 March vicepres@aussi.org

For further information see the notice on page 5 of the January/February issue of the *Newsletter*.

Indexing Courses conducted by Max McMaster

Venue: Centre for Business Solutions, 40 Royal Street, East Perth.

Journal indexing

This half-day course is specifically designed for anyone responsible for preparing annual or cumulative indexes for journals, magazines, or newsletters in a library, commercial publisher or community group/society setting. The course will cover: deciding what to index; number of indexes to be included; style of author entries; title entries; anonymous items; and selection of subject terms.

Thursday3 April, 1.30–4.30 Cost: $132 ($110 for members of CAVAL, ALIA & AusSI)

Refresher Back-of-Book indexing

This half-day course is specifically designed for those indexing students who are planning to attend the full-day Intermediate Back-of-Book indexing course, but have forgotten or are unsure of some of the basic indexing elements. Areas to be covered include: selection of headings and sub-headings; formatting of names; cross-references; issues of editing and style; and length of index.

Thursday 3 April, 9.30–12.30 Cost: $132 ($110 for members of CAVAL, ALIA & AusSI)

Intermediate Back-of-Book indexing

This full-day course is designed to provide hands-on indexing practice of a small 60-page technical document using one of the commercial dedicated indexing software packages on the market. No specific subject knowledge is required, but a basic knowledge of indexing principles is assumed. By the end of the day students will have fully indexed the document and will be in a position to move on to real world indexing.

Friday 4 April, 9.30 –4.30 Cost: $220.00 ($198 for members of CAVAL, ALIA & AusSI) includes lunch

For further information please contact Eve Cornish at training@caval.edu.au

Register online at http://www.caval.edu.au/Services/rego_form.html

CAVAL (Cooperative Action by Victorian Academic Libraries) is a Registered Training Organisation

Continued from page 11

Document size and index entries

Document size	Processing time	Min index size (entries)	Mid index size (entries)	Max index size (entries)
1655 words	1 min	13	39	141
4646 words	3 min	22	67	212

removing entries and rewriting index terms. The indexes can be downloaded as text files and marked-up versions of the original documents are made available in Word format for making embedded Word indexes. The actual operation is slick and user-friendly, though I had some minor problems with the pop-up windows; these were possibly due to my own PC set-up.

I uploaded two text files for analysis, one of 1655 words and one of 4646 words. The shorter document took about one minute to analyse and the longer one about three minutes. Syntactica don't reveal their algorithms, but an examination of the results shows that the program is basically looking for noun phrases and inverting these.

The results are as you might expect. Syntactica does almost nothing that an indexer would recognise as analysis. It also makes blunders which any indexer would avoid. The most obvious of these:

- Every index entry is capitalised.
- Sequencing is in ASCII order (all upper-case letters file before lower-case letters); this is partly masked by the capitalisation but is obvious for acronyms.
- It doesn't use index terms that are not in the text.
- It doesn't understand synonymy; *AusSI* and *Australian Society of Indexers* are not combined together.
- It can't distinguish most multi-word descriptions from nouns + verbs: thus *NSW, treasurer of* is treated the same as *NSW, University of*.
- It has trouble with plurals: *Rosella* and *Rosellas*, *Website* and *Websites*, appear separately.
- It has problems with names: *Sylvia Kliener and Margo Neal* appears in the index but not *Kleinert, Sylvia* or *Neale, Margo*.
- Entries are often doubled as their own subheadings, thus: *Fictionwise, Fictionwise*
- It favours two-word phrases: thus we have *Web, Wide* but not *Web, World Wide* or *World Wide Web*.
- Odd capitalisations are imposed on non-standard words: *eBookMan* becomes *EbooKman*.
- It failed to pick up several one-line headings from a text document, e.g. 'Current trends' was a heading but was not indexed. It was no better at picking up headings or underlined words in a formatted Word document.
- Words after full stops are given special emphasis even where this is not appropriate: e.g. 'www.baen.com' is indexed under *Com*.

The sample index shown below will reveal other flaws in this approach. The inadequacy of the algorithm is obvious. But it also appears, from the first two points above, that the designers haven't read even an elementary indexing textbook. The work involved in cleaning up a Syntactica index of any length would be far greater than the work involved in making an index from scratch. Still, when even the blurb on the 'About Us' page contains a misspelling, what can you expect?

Syntactica, Inc. is dedicated to the study and analysis of the linguistic structure of the English language. Syntactica, Inc. designs and produces software that understands the English language. Dedicated to the analysis of long, complex documents, the company has produced software which generates summaries, dictionaries, indices and abstracts to enable the user to quickly understand documents' contents and determing [sic] *their relevance.* ***It is truly a unique company!!***

Alas! would that it were ...

Sample Syntactica MIN index to 1655-word article

Blank lines have been removed, but the index is shown here in its entirety.

B

Blackmask
  Blackmask
Bookmark
  specified page or

C

Cameras
  digital
Colour screen
  capabilities and
Com
Com and Baen Books baen
Cybereditions
  Cybereditions

D

Domain
  public

F

Fictionwise
  Fictionwise
Fonts

L

Literature
  thousands of works of

M

Memory cards
Music file
  Mp3

Dates Diary

Mar 26 Canberra Society of Editors March meeting (speaker Marion Halligan) at Friends Lounge, National Library, 6.00 for 6.30 pm. Contact Kerry MacDermott at kerry.macdermott@ag.gov.au

Apr 1 Society of Editors (NSW) monthly meeting, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney, 6.30 for 7.00 pm. RSVP to 9294 4999 or email brhed@pnc.com.au

Apr 3–4 Indexing Courses by Max McMaster, East Perth—see Noticeboard

Apr 16 AusSI National Committee meeting, Canberra—see back page for contact

Apr TBA AusSI joint meeting with Canberra Society of Indexers

Jun 19–21
ASI conference, Vancouver, Canada

Jun 27–29
SI conference 'A Scots Quair', Strathclyde University, Glasgow, Scotland

July 18–20
National Editors' Conference 2003 Brisbane conference@editorsqld.com

Sep 12–13
AusSI International Conference 'Indexing the World of Information', Sydney—see page 15

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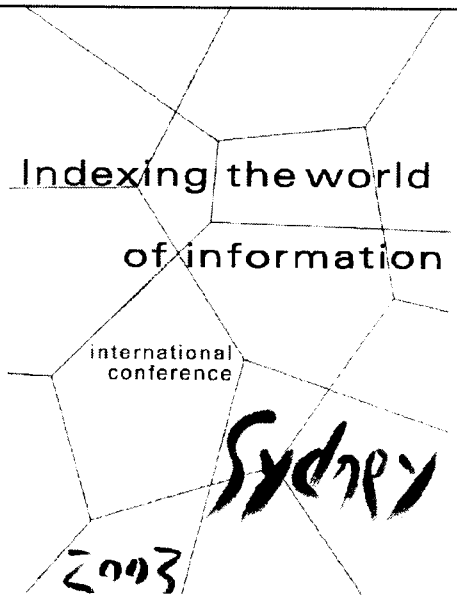

Indexing the World of Information

An international conference hosted by the Australian Society of Indexers

The Australian Society of Indexers will be hosting an international indexing conference in September 2003.

Dates: Friday 12 to Saturday 13 September 2003

Venue: Carlton Crest Hotel, 169–179 Thomas Street, Sydney

Cost: Australian Society of Indexers members AUS$330, non-members AUS$380. Late registration (after 13 July) members AUS$380, non-members AUS$430

The conference program features papers and panels giving an international perspective on indexing names, indexing standards and the teaching of indexing. Also featured are papers and panels that examine how the traditional skills of indexing, thesaurus construction, classification and database management are integrating with the information architecture and content management of the online world.

This conference is packed with interesting topics, challenges and insights.

Who should come? Anyone interested in how the world of information is turning: indexers, editors, information architects, publishers, web publishers, librarians, metadata experts, archivists, web designers, content managers and usability experts.

Contact: Glenda Browne
Email: webindexing@optusnet.com.au
Phone: +61 (0)2 4739 8199

More information: http://www.aussi.org

Annual Report 2002

Our calendar year commenced with the Annual General Meeting and Dinner, held once again in the gracious environment we have here tonight.

The highlight of the year 2002 was the conferring of Life Membership of the Society upon John Simkin for his many years of outstanding service to the indexing profession in general, and in particular for the number of roles he has performed within our Society both in Australia and at international conferences, etc. A celebratory evening was held at Rossini's Restaurant in Malvern on 14 May which numerous friends, colleagues and family attended to see Alan Walker make the presentation to John.

At the end of 2001, the Victorian Branch invited Tasmanian and New Zealand members to join with us at any function they might be able to attend, and throughout the following year their names have been added to our email list for notification of special events, workshops, etc.

Throughout 2002 we have enjoyed many visits and workshops, all designed to enhance our professional knowledge.

On 9 April 2002, the Parliamentary Librarian, Bruce Davidson, gave us a guided tour of this magnificent building followed by a demonstration of the state-of-the-art services provided to all Victorian MPs. As Bruce has recently left this office, we can count ourselves very fortunate to have experienced his unbounded enthusiasm and depth of knowledge when we did.

In July, Stephen Haby and Nigel Ward outlined to us the indexing of online educational content using a metadata application.

August saw us meeting at the grand old Assembly Rooms in Collins Street, Melbourne, owned by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, where we were taken through the archives and historical collection housed there. We were fortunate in being able to see a wonderful folio of documents recently uncovered in a country bank vault, and to witness how they were being processed for entry into the records.

A full house turned up to the Women's Health Victoria Library in the city to hear a panel of speakers discuss the diverse taxonomies of Victorian thesauri. Our guest speakers—Anna Gifford (ACER), Vicki Court (Royal Historical Society) and Mary Russell (Women's Health Victoria)—provided a stimulating night of their own experiences with the development, maintenance and intended usage of a thesaurus which would be unique to their collections and requirements.

All of these meetings were followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant where the conversations and bonhomie extended far into the night. It is a great pleasure to the Committee that these free workshops attract students, indexers, librarians, editors, archivists—the whole breadth of the information profession and the ensuing dinner party ensures that new faces are welcomed into our Society and hopefully remain with us for some years to come.

We concluded the year with another home-based pre-Christmas get-together.

Max McMaster has been very busy taking his training courses in indexing back-of-the-book, databases, pictorial collections and journals throughout Australia and even as far as New Zealand. Thank you for being such a wonderful ambassador and mentor, Max.

Both Max and John Simkin have provided input to the Society's Education Committee, and John has once again taken on the role of Chair of the judging panel for the Indexers Medal, together with Ann Bentley and Pam Jonas. We thank them all for the time and thought they give to this role.

As I am stepping down from being President of the Victorian Branch at this AGM, I would like to thank sincerely all the Committee members for the constant support and enthusiasm they have given to me in this role. Jennifer Csorba took on the position of Secretary two years ago and has made a wonderful contribution in that role. I have depended upon her good humour and meticulous application in her responsibilities and shall greatly miss her contribution in future.

Margaret Findlay and ACER have once again provided us with 'home and hearth', not only for our Committee meetings but also for some of our workshops and most of our training session. We do appreciate their generosity.

Jenny Restarick
President, 2002
18 February 2003

Standard howler

In Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 999:1999, *Information and Documentation—Guidelines for the Content, Organization and Presentation of Indexes*, clause 7.5.2 states:

> "See also" references should ... follow the locator(s) relating to the heading ... from which they refer ...
> EXAMPLE
> bears ... *see also* ... koala bears ...

News from the Society of Indexers (UK)

New publication

Blake D, Clarke M, McCarthy A and Morrison J: *Indexing the Medical Sciences*, 2nd edition, Sheffield, 2002. 84 pp. ISBN 187 157724 1. £17.50 inc. P&P

The latest publication in the Society's newly redesigned series of Occasional Papers on indexing is now available to purchase by mail order. The text of the previous edition has been extensively rewritten, and advice is given on a wide range of topics including terminology, choice of index headings, journals indexing, the indexing of names and final preparation of the index text. There are new sections on electronic indexing, the ethical aspects of changing language and gene nomenclature. This publication will be an invaluable resource for librarians, archivists, indexers and others wishing to gain insight into the field of medical indexing.

Wheatley Medal 2002

The Wheatley Medal, awarded annually for an outstanding index, was won by Dale H Hoiberg for the index to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2002 revision). The index was prepared by a team of indexers headed by Hoiberg, and was described by David Lee, Chairman of the Wheatley Panel as 'a masterpiece of editing'. The medal, awarded jointly with CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals), was presented during the lavish CILIP Awards Gala Presentation Day on 1 November 2002 at the Landmark Hotel in London. Like the Besterman/McColvin Medal and the Walford Award, the Wheatley Medal is one of the Reference Awards, which were generously sponsored by Nielsen BookData. Jill Halliday's index to the *Oxford Textbook of Orthopaedics and Trauma* (Oxford University Press) was highly commended, and Ann Hudson's index to the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* was commended.

BBC Radio program on indexes

The BBC Radio 4 program *Front Row* of 11 November 2002 featured an interesting discussion on indexes. Participants in the program were the author Julian Barnes, professional indexer (and Society of Indexers member), Hazel Bell, and professor of English Steve Connor. To listen to a recording of the programme online go to `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/FrontRow.htm`

Conference 2003

This year's conference is in Glasgow on 27 to 29 June 2003, at Strathclyde University, near the centre of the city. Called 'A Scots Quair', the conference will cover a wide range of topics related to indexing. (*A quair* is a literary work in Scots language).

Eve magazine

The February 2003 issue of *Eve* magazine, published by BBC Worldwide Ltd, ran a feature entitled 'Earn more, work less', which included 'book indexing' among 'Britain's best paid part-time jobs' and claimed that indexers could earn £30 an hour, thus making £600 for a 20-hour week. As a result, the Society offices were flooded with enquiries from *Eve* readers. A letter was sent to the magazine pointing out that it gave an over-optimistic view of the hourly rates that could be achieved. Also, various factors such as the cost of membership of the Society and the need to spend unpaid time on administrative work had not been taken into account and the cost of the training course was higher than stated in the magazine. The same text was posted on the Society website.

Although it was a pity that the article gave a false impression, perhaps it may have done some good by drawing attention to our website, where the correct facts could be found. We may also have gained some new members as a result of the telephone enquiries to the office.

Contact

Society of Indexers
Blades Enterprise Centre
John Street
Sheffield, S2 4SU
Tel: 0114 292 2350
Email: `admin@indexers.org.uk`
`http://www.indexers.org.uk`

Society of Indexers (UK)

New Training Course

If you want to learn indexing but find it difficult to attend courses, then the new electronic version of the Society of Indexers distance-learning course could be just what you're looking for. It's the next best thing to your own personal tutor and it's available whenever you switch on your computer.

- Text extensively revised and updated
- Interactive exercises to give you lots of practice and feedback as you progress through the four assessed units
- Practical indexing assignments to help prepare you for real-world indexing commissions
- Text also available in traditional printed format in new user-friendly layout
- Based on British and International Standard indexing guidelines
- Each of the four assessed units takes about 45–50 hours of study.

For further information visit `http://www.indexers.org.uk`

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Sinners and the Twelve Steps

A Twelve Step Program for Indexers by Bob Richardson (from Index-L 18 February 2003)

Bob writes: 'The recent (and still ongoing?) thread on the Deadly Sins of Indexing has prompted me to root around through my old Index-L postings in search of my Twelve Step Program for Indexers. Although it was sent almost four years ago, it might have some tangential relevance to the present discussion.

Well, the thread on legal indexing, and the comment that a support group and/or 12-step program might be needed by defrocked lawyers plying the indexing trade, has prodded me out of my lethargy to expand this [semi-serious] suggestion to indexers in general.'

A Twelve-Step Program For Indexers

1 We admitted that we were powerless over clients — that once out of our hands our indexes had become unmanageable.
2 Came to believe that only self-confidence and a Power of Detachment could restore us to sanity.
3 Made a decision to turn our professional lives and reputations over to the practice of our chosen calling as we understand it.
4 Made a searching and fearless review of the organization and style of our indexes, always keeping in mind that there is no One Right Way.
5 Admitted to ourselves and a few trusted colleagues the exact nature of our errors and anxieties.
6 Were entirely ready to remove all these defects of style, accuracy and self-confidence.
7 Humbly asked God to help us make the next deadline.
8 Made a list of all editors and colleagues we had made unkind comments about, recognizing that they probably were stressed to the max and were doing the best they could.
9 Made amends to such editors and colleagues wherever possible, except when to do so simply stirred the pot and exposed us to further hassle.
10 Continued to take inventory of our indexes, and when we were wrong hoped that we could catch the errors in time.
11 Sought, through diligence and chocolate, to improve our speed and accuracy, praying only that when we overcommit we have the will and power to carry it out.
12 Having come to an understanding about how stressful and difficult indexing can be, tried to be supportive to newbies and colleagues who were going through their dark nights of the soul.

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literature

i-TORQUE

i-TORQUE (http://www.i-torque.us) is an electronic subscription-based newsletter focusing on the 'indexing, information delivery, and publishing industries'. It costs US$60 per year (10 issues) or US$9 for a sample of the first three issues, payable through PayPal (which adds the cost to your credit card). It is written by Nancy Mulvany, known to most indexers as the author of *Indexing Books*.

When announced on Index-L, one early response was '$60 for an online newsletter—they've got to be kidding!', countered by comments on the cost of creating and designing content no matter what the delivery method is, and the expected value of the content given the credentials of the author. Hopefully, Nancy can make a commercial success of this as the value of 'content wants to be free' battles with 'you get what you pay for'.

The first issue is 17 pages long (PDF format) and starts with an article on 'How to make money reading books' (with salary figures on indexing and comparable professions such as technical writing). There is also a Q&A section which addresses questions of multivolume indexes and whether full names have to be included after abbreviations. The software section looked at eFax and Zonealarm (a firewall which keeps intruders out, and also gives you control over the surprising number of connections your own computer tries to make with the Internet without asking you first!).

We all know that Marilyn Monroe was born 'Norma Jean', or do we? Nancy's research on the web confirmed that her birth name was 'Norma Jeane'. I've also used the web to confirm the correct version of names, although it usually just confirms the incredible proportion of mistakes on the web. It's obvious I'm not the only one unsure about 'Dorothea Mackellar' vs 'Dorothea McKellar', for example.

The newsletter also provides links to sites and articles, and has a Legal Beagle section (Work for Hire in this issue).

Sydney Morning Herald

December 28–29 2002

In 'News Review' (page 14) John Huxley writes, 'Funniest book of the year: a dead-heat between *Tragically, I Was an Only Twin: The Complete Peter Cook* and *Brewer's Rogues, Villains and Eccentrics*, by William Donaldson, in whose hands even the index becomes a dangerous weapon. For example, "Magnetic, believing oneself to be. See Edinburgh, Prince Philip, Duke of."'

Robert Dessaix *A Mother's Disgrace*

Angus & Robertson, Pymble, NSW, 1994

L, M, E, A, B, C, D ... and why not? In this autobiographical work—centred on his discovery of his natural mother, but also covering his studies in Russia—Robert Dessaix writes (p. 62): 'The class paper we had to write on Dostoevsky was less "free": it had to be couched in strictly Marxist literary terms and the bibliography had to begin with the letter L for Lenin, then go on to M for Marx, E for Engels and only then to A, B, etc. No one minded or thought it odd. We were just giving unto Caesar. Much the same thing happens today in Australian tertiary institutions, after all, where, if not in the bibliography, at least in the text, we find the obligatory mention of Kristeva, Said, Foucault, Lacan, Irigaray ... We just have a wider range of orthodoxies struggling for dominance here—and the public's indifference to all of them is not concealed, just ignored.'

Dessaix liked Canberra, and wrote of it (p. 155): '... it was almost classless in a Soviet sort of way (that is, rigidly stratified, but not according to who owned what). The people with status in the community seemed to be the intelligentsia—professors and poets and chief librarians, senior civil servants and eminent biologists.'

Ancestor

Vol. 26, No. 4, December 2002

Another discussion of alphabetical order—this time it is the reason given by Linda Groom (p. 21) why Essie Ackland and Dorothy Brunton's portraits have been catalogued, but Gough Whitlam, Googie Withers and Fay Zwicky's are still waiting. Search for portraits of the A to Gs at http://www.nla.gov.au/catalogue/pictures. Work on the others is progressing slowly.

From Index-L

One indexer noted that his website was almost ready for release— to see an indexer's website, with an index, go to http://www.violafair.com.

What would you provide if asked for a Glindex? Jan asked: 'Are you sure it doesn't have something to do with Glinda the good witch? Like just tap your heels three times and you have an index?' Kay replied: 'I have created a Glindex. I used the subentry field to hold the definition, sorted as the first subentry. This definition was in italics. It made for a neat looking index!' (It is a combined Glossary and Index). I think we might soon see the evolution of Windexes—combined indexes and Webliographies, listing URLs featuring late-breaking information that is crucial to the book but arrived too late. I have been thinking about this as I have just indexed a book about digital television, and week by week I see news releases about new developments—although the content can't be added to the book, a link to the URL would help. But, of course, once the index has been completed there will still be late-breaking news that can't be linked to.

Australian Style

Vol. 10, No. 2, December 2002

On page 8, James Lambert, editor of the *Macquarie Book of Slang*, reviewed the *Oxford Dictionary of Rhyming Slang*, ed. John Ayto, OUP, 2002 (which he

points out is not, strictly speaking, a dictionary). He writes: 'For usability's sake, an alphabetical list of every rhyming slang term is included in a 24 ½ page index, which refers the reader to one or more page numbers. Mickey Mouse scores three separate entries (=Scouse, house, and grouse). Unfortunately another 24 ½ pages weren't spent to supply the reverse index. This is a great shame, for if one wants to know how to say pie in rhyming slang you have to go to the 'Food and Drink' section (found either by flicking through the book, or via the contents page), then find the 'In the Bakery' subsection (some 14 pages in), then find the listing for 'Pie'. A bit too much like Captain Kirk, for my liking.'

Indexing our Heritage

Reuben Musiker (ed) 2000, ASAIB, Johannesburg

This 54 page B5 booklet contains eight papers read at the ASAIB (Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers) conference held in Johannesburg in 2000.

It is interesting that the Southern African indexers share a society with bibliographers; the Canadians join with abstractors; and AusSI members in two states without branches meet with editors.

Keynote address by Tom Lodge, pp. 1-3. Tom Lodge, a political science academic, spoke about utilitarian approaches to teaching information access without emphasising information analysis. He said: 'Bibliographers and indexers are indispensable allies in the new world of information, in helping us select and discriminate between what is helpful and what is useless – and more importantly in building bridges between increasingly arcane specialisms.' He felt that there was a need for bibliography oriented to the needs of the country (in his field, emphasising transnational comparative studies and avoiding the heavy US emphasis), for more resources about the rest of Africa (to his knowledge no library in South Africa subscribed to any daily African newspaper except those published in neighbouring states), and for more attention to rendering accessible and usable the knowledge resources they have. For example, he knows of no index to a single run of any South African newspaper, neither does any library have files of the student press – crucial for understanding political changes in the country. (In some ways indexers select what is helpful – e.g. by avoiding passing mentions and only indexing substantive information in books – but in other ways I believe our unbiased approach to information perhaps does not always serve our users as well as it could. In information stores such as intranets, where 80 per cent of use might be of just a few sections indexing methods that highlight key sections may be more important than those that give democratic access to every single bit of information on the intranet.)

Other papers in this publication discussed the role of indexers and bibliographers in 'democratising palaeontology' and the important role of oral history in documenting 'African and other neglected experiences'. A paper on the Anglo–Boer South African War (*See* reference needed from *Boer War*) discusses the importance of items in private collections, along with the difficulties of accessing them, and the important role of the Internet, and the use of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) to make index finding aids generally usable. The development of the IDASA Democracy Thesaurus (based on the ILO and ERIC thesauruses) is discussed by one of the consultants who worked on indexing materials for the Kutlwanong Resource Centre of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa. They used the Dewey Classification scheme, although many librarians, critical of the cultural bias it shows, have devised their own classification schemes.

Newswrite

The NSW Writers' Centre Magazine

Issue 123, February 2003

In 'Literary time bomb' (pp. 3, 16), Jennifer Nisbet discusses artistic interpretations of the plays of Samuel Beckett, after strong protests by his nephew (also executor of his estate) about the use of music in the recent Sydney Theatre Company production of *Endgame*. She quotes Damien O'Donnell, director of *What, Where* talking about his choice of set. He couldn't change the text, but said: 'there's no set in the original play, but I argued that the whole project was about power and the abuse of power and how information is power, so we used the library as a metaphor for somebody who has all the power and all the information.' (But as someone said: 'If information is power, why don't librarians rule the world?')

aliaINFSPEC mailing list

30 January 20/03

Also on the power of information, Alan Bundy asked whether anyone knew the source of the quotation 'Information is the currency of democracy', attributed to Thomas Jefferson (the prize for an answer were copies of the two bestselling books from Auslib Press – one of which is *Website indexing*!). Elizabeth Swan replied that this quote is in the list of 'unconfirmed quotes' of Thomas Jefferson at `http://www.monticello.org/library/quotes.html`, the site for the library at Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello. You can also search the Thomas Jefferson papers in the Library of Congress at `http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mtjquery.html`.

Elizabeth Swan also noted that National Geographic is now offering a free index from 1888 onwards at `http://www.nationalgeographic.com/publications/explore.html`. No fulltext is included, however.

Key Words

Vol. 10, No. 6, November/December 2002

The Key Words Table of Contents is available online at `http://www.asindexing.org/site/keycont.shtml#to`. The journal itself is only available to members, although a small selection of fulltext articles is available at `http://www.asindexing.org/site/keypast.shtml`.

The criteria for the Wilson Award (the US version of our Indexing Medal) are listed on p.149. They include:

- an introductory note, if index features need explanation
- usable and pleasing format, typography and style, and appropriate number of pages
- bringing together of similar concepts; inclusion of all significant items; representation of concepts by precise and unambiguous consistent headings
- a searchable order; locators should tally with the text (I guess it needs saying!); strings of undifferentiated locators should generally be avoided; cross-references should

be adequate; abbreviations should be explained.

The list is a useful way of communicating standards to indexers and publishers who submit entries.

ASI is writing press releases about useful indexes as a way of educating the public about the value of indexes (p.150). Indexers can send information to ASI, which writes the press release and submits it to recommended publications.

'Classification schemes and information architecture' (pp.152–156) is an article by Bella Hass Weinberg on a new course she has developed which places information architecture firmly on a basis of traditional classification theory.

Offpress

Newsletter of the Society of Editors, Queensland

November 2002

'Creator to Consumer (C-2-C): what a world lies in between!' is a report by Helena Bond on the 'creator to consumer in the digital age' (C-2-C) project organised by Common Ground Publishing. C-2-C is a supply chain study of the book publishing industry, focussing on technology, markets and skills.

Publishing statistics in 2001 suggest that most publishing in Australia is in the education sector, and about 50 per cent is done by organisations for which publishing is not a core business. This has relevance to marketing and broadening our client base. It also showed book sales down 19 per cent. I have seen this figure elsewhere, with the drop attributed to the introduction of the GST, but it is hard to believe a 10 per cent GST can be solely responsible for a 19 per cent drop. Only 20 out of 208 Australian publishers were making a profit.

Digital rights management (DRM) will be largely handled by electronic content management systems using digital object identifiers (DOIs) to specify intellectual property rights for every chunk of information that might be distributed independently. DOIs link metadata with content, and allow for parent–child relationships, and chunks of various sizes. CAL (Copyright Agency Limited) will administer DOIs in Australia.

This brief summary continues with ideas on eBooks, new skills, and training. It also notes that there is $20 million from the EPICS (Enhanced Printing Industry Competitiveness Scheme) fund available for distribution in the next 18 months. I'm not sure how closely indexing fits into this, but if you have ideas for cost-reduction or future-oriented strategies in the publishing field it might be worth making a suggestion.

For more information see `http://www.c-2-cProject.com` and `http://www.doi.org`.

Bibliography: Dead Duck or Useful Tool?

Proceedings of a Conference Held in Johannesburg on 26 June 2002

Jacqueline A. Kalley (ed), ASIAB, Johannesburg

This publication includes five papers on bibliography, including the history of the South African Bibliography, types of bibliography, the research value of bibliography, bibliographical services to postgraduate students at UNISA, and the Digital Imaging Project of South Africa (DISA) as a digital bibliography.

Piet E. Westra (pp. 3–14) describes the first South African bibliography (SABIB), which initially had no subject or title index, so these were added retrospectively—a harder job, as the books were no longer to hand, although cataloguer's annotations were found to be useful. This job took the best part of seven years. The bibliographer, lacking most indexers' ability to talk on our subject ad infinitum, thought there was nothing much to say about it except: 'She had started with the first entry in volume 1 of the bibliography and assigned it a subject and then the second and third entry, until she arrived at the end of the first volume. And then she had started with the second,' and so on.

Christie Theron (pp. 15–24) lists disciplines related to bibliography (librarianship, bibliology, information science, and textual scholarship) and types of bibliographies by form and purpose.

The DISA project (pp. 41–49) can be seen at www.africabib.org, along with other bibliographies, particularly about African women. It has been a labour of love over the last 25 years, and is worth a look.

History of indexing societies

The seven parts of Hazel Bell's history of indexing societies that appeared in *The Indexer*, 1997–2000, are now accessible online on her website. The URLs are:

- Part I: SI – the first ten years 20.3.160–4 (1997) `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/History1.htm`
- Part II: Three affiliations 20.4.212–15 `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/History2.htm`
- Part III: SI – 1973–1977 21.1.33–6 (1998): `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/History3.htm`
- Part IV: 1978–82 21.2.70–2 `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/History4.htm`
- Part V: 1938–1987 21.3.134–5 (1999) `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/History5.htm`
- Part VI: 1988–91 22.1.35–8 (2000) `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/History6.htm`
- Part VII: 1992–95 22.2.81–3 (2000) `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/History7.htm`

The URL for her sample list of published articles, that includes them all, is `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/samplearticles.htm`

Hazel's email address is `hkbell@dial.pipex.com` and her website URL is `http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell.htm`

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