This year the American Society of Indexers and the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada/Société canadienne pour l’analyse de documents held a joint annual conference in Vancouver, B.C., Canada on 19–21 June. Madeleine Davis and Tricia Waters were the Australian delegates.

The conference ran over three days. Workshops were held on the first day, followed on the second day by concurrent specialist (breakout) sessions, and on the final day there were general interest (plenary) sessions. It was difficult to choose which of the sixteen breakout sessions to attend because of the great variety of topics covered. Following is a report of some of the sessions that I attended.

The opening keynote speaker, Bill Richardson, a local radio broadcaster, captured the scene eloquently and with humour in his musings on living in Vancouver. He recalled the odd, tangential, memorable moments that occur in his neighbourhood. Bill graduated from Library School in Vancouver. He has a great admiration for libraries as democratic institutions and is impressed by the people who work there: people who are funny, political, radical and deeply committed to the idea of the public library. Bill sees indexing as bringing an order to the universe, as aiding and abetting the perpetuation of the telling of stories and making these stories accessible.

**Excellence in indexing**

In the opening series of breakout sessions, I thought this would be an excellent place to begin. Janet Perlman and Laura Moss Gottlieb discussed the process used by the Wilson Award for Excellence in Indexing Panel to judge indexes, and ways of applying Wilson Award criteria during the indexing process. The criteria can be found at [www.asindexing.org/site/awards.shtml#awcrit](http://www.asindexing.org/site/awards.shtml#awcrit)

Janet Perlman’s benchmarks of a quality index are:

- Provides entries for all significant information in text
- Represents text—not indexer’s ideas or views
- Brings together similar concepts scattered in the text, or expressed in varying terms
- Uses synonyms and cross-references for multiple access
- Uses cross-references appropriately
- Is arranged in a recognisable, searchable order
- Is consistent in form and usage
- Provides accurate page numbers of links
- Provides only five to seven references at a main entry without subentries
- Abbreviations and acronyms are explained in an appropriate manner

Janet and Laura showed examples of award-winning indexes and there

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**What’s inside**

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68 ACT Branch news
69 From the literature

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**Northern Entries**

**Tricia Waters**

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**Special!**

Conference program insert
Victorian Branch Book
Indexing Workshops
23 & 24 September
Are your indexing skills rusty or lacking? The Australian Society of Indexers (Vic Branch) is conducting full-day introductory and intermediate level indexing workshops in Melbourne. Introductory indexing, covering basic indexing principles and techniques, will be held on Tuesday 23 September. Cost $160 AusSI and Society of Editors members; $200 non-members.

Intermediate indexing, where participants fully index a 60-page technical publication using dedicated indexing software, will be held on Wednesday 24 September. Cost $180 AusSI and Society of Editors members; $220 non-members.

Flyers and information from Max McMaster, phone/fax: (03) 9500 8715, email: minxider@optusnet.com.au

indexing principles can be useful for searching databases.


Intranet & CMS events (Brisbane & Sydney)

This one-day seminar provides a vendor-neutral introduction to selecting a content management system (CMS) that is right for your organisation.


This two-day facilitated forum provides a unique opportunity to meet with other hands-on intranet managers working in the public sector.


This one day workshop will explore a range of practical techniques for improving the design and effectiveness of your intranet. Through a mix of presentations, discussions and exercises, you will come away bubbling with ideas about how to tackle your intranet issues.

James Robertson
Step Two Designs Pty Ltd
Knowledge Management / Content Management / Intranets

Thesauri and Taxonomies: an international conference and workshop
http://www.multites.com/conference03.htm

This conference will be held at the British Library in London, on September 29 & 30, 2003. For additional
July 2003

information please visit:
www.multites.com/conference03.htm

Speakers include Denise Bedford (US), James Brooks (UK), Stella Dextre Clarke (UK), Hector Echeverria (US), Alan Gilchrist (UK), Joke Hoogenboom (NL), Adeline Kwok (CAN), Richard Light (UK), Jessica Milstead (US), Bella Weinberg (US), Leonard Will (UK)

Hector Echeverria, President & Founder, www.multites.com

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UC Berkeley basic indexing course
I am developing an on-line distance learning basic indexing course with UC Berkeley. I expect the course to be completed and ready for student registrations by the end of the year. This course will have some unique features including but not limited to:
- Email delivery and return of assignments.
- Students are expected to complete course in six months or less.
- Indexing exercises and assignments will be completed using course provided indexing software versions of Cindex, Macrex, and SKY. The provided software will not include full versions of these software programs but will be sufficient to complete all exercises and indexing assignments.
- Course is designed using a hands-on approach to both BOB (back of the book) and embedded indexing techniques using indexing software.

For more information, and to receive notification when the course development is completed and ready for student enrolment, you can access http://learn.berkeley.edu/indexing/

Sylvia Coates

Software website
Ann Philpott sends the following link which may be of interest to our members. Have a look at http://members.aol.com/Indexers/indexers.html

New members
AusSI warmly welcomes the following five new members:
- Ms Kerrianne Robertson of Coolum Beach Queensland
- Mrs Annette Lewis of Glen Waverley, Vic
- Ms Catherine Tully of Elsternwick Vic.
[I will ask for some brief details from these three members for the next newsletter—Ed.]

Carole Pearce, of Carlton North, Victoria, a freelance editor of tertiary academic work, specifically academic journals, and other similar material, working for non-publishers like UNESCO and UNICEF. Her areas of expertise are the humanities and social sciences. She became very interested in indexing two years ago when she did an index for a UNDP booklet in Zimbabwe. She jumped at the chance to do two courses in Melbourne with AusSI last month and is now eager to practice her new skills.

Glen Turnbull of Riddells Creek, Victoria. Glen comes from an audiovisual/library background and has worked in schools for seventeen years. He has written two books—including their indexes. One, called Fly Like a Falcon, which tells the history of The Knox School in Wantirna South, will be launched on 26 June. He has worked in local history and is currently the Archivist at The Knox School. He would be happy to index local history publications.

New elist aliaCATLIBS
Tony Brooks has just started a new elist called aliaCATLIBS. This list is for all Australian cataloguers, indexers, and any other interested people who are concerned with issues that affect current and developing methods of ensuring consistency and access to information.

Feel free to write in to this list with any topics about seminars, news, initiatives, discussion about DDC, MaRC or subject headings/thesauri terms, jobs or any thing else that you think would be of interest to the people on this list. The URL for subscription is: http://lists.alia.org.au/mailman/listinfo/aliacatlibs

Letter to the Editor
I’m writing in response to the report on the Victorian panel session on indexing as a business. The report was a compact summary of the practical issues that are crucial to indexers. My comment is on Max McMasters’ typical page-per-hour rates. Perhaps these are typical for Max—my typical speeds are closer to half of those. So for any slow indexers out there who are feeling daunted, you’re not alone.

Glenda.Browne
**Dates for your Diary**

8, 20–22 Aug  
Intranet & CMS events, Sydney & Brisbane — see Noticeboard.

28 Aug  
Indexing workshops, Adelaide, satellite events to 10th Asia Pacific Special, Health and Law Librarians — see Noticeboard for registration details.

11–13 Sep  
Indexing the World of Information, AusSI International Conference, Carlton Crest Hotel, Sydney — see Conference Program insert in this issue

23 & 24 Sep  
Victorian Branch Book Indexing Workshops, Max McMaster, ph/fax 03 9500 8715, mindexer@optusnet.com.au

29 & 30 Sep  
London. Thesauri and Taxonomies.  
[www.multites.com/conferenc03.htm](http://www.multites.com/conferenc03.htm)

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Simply the best way to prepare indexes
Who’s Done What!

In this issue we introduce a new column about ‘Who’s Done What!’ So please send along some information about your current projects or anything you feel will interest other indexers—Ed.

Edyth Binkowski of the ACT Region Branch has just completed an index for *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy* by Beryl Rawson, Professor Emerita of Classics at the Australian National University. Edyth has been Prof. Rawson’s research assistant for 24 years, and has indexed three previous books edited by Professor Rawson, consisting of papers presented at conferences on aspects of the Roman family. The new book should appear in September 2003, and is published by OUP.

Northern Entries

Continued from page 61

was general discussion about the finer points of indexing such as:

- Subheadings should be succinct, preferably using only one or two words
- Don’t try to put too much information into a subheading — the reader should go to the text
- Include prepositions and linking words for readability

Indexing is both an art and a science. It is a creative process, which will be executed differently by different indexers. The panel evaluates indexes for their accuracy, style and analysis and looks for elegance in indexing. Janet and Laura exhorted us to aim for excellence.

**Developing a style guide**

Deborah Patton and L. Pilar Wyman presented a practical session on developing a style guide.

Continued on page 66

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opining a style sheet which gives the indexer control over the product. Indexers should aim to establish guidelines with the editor before beginning the index so that you are both in agreement over what is required.

Considerations should include:

- Which editorial style guides to use: house, Chicago, MS Manual of Style, etc.
- Which dictionaries and reference guides to be used according to subject specialty
- Which parts of the documents will be indexed: text, illustrations, tables, footnotes, etc.
- Levels of analysis: how many entries per page
- Type of index: subject, author, subject and author combined, keyword, etc.
- Terminology: gerunds, singular vs plural, prepositions (leading or following), etc.
- Names: full names vs initials, punctuation of initials
- Format: run-in vs indented
- Embedded index: placement of index tags (beginning of section, paragraph, sentence or phrase); format of references (sequential page ranges or discrete pages)
- Subheadings: number of levels of entry
- Turnovers or runovers or word wraps
- Alphabetisation; letter-by-letter vs word-by-word, alphabetisation of prepositions and link words
- Cross-references: punctuation and style
- Locators: format, punctuation.

Once you have considered all of these factors, then you can begin indexing. When indexing is finished, offer to proofread the typset index.

Mapping the meanings

Christine Jacobs outlined the principles of back-of-book indexing, focusing on reader’s expectations and what the indexer has to do to create a good index. An index is a map to the meaning and contents of a book, not just an alphabetised list of the keywords in the text. The indexer must analyse the writer’s meaning. Making ‘trees’ of concepts can be useful to see how they relate to each other.

Participants in the workshop were divided into small groups and given a chapter of a book to index. Each person in the group was assigned one section of the text to index, then after fifteen minutes the group combined their entries into one index. Discussions ensued on choice of concepts, their relevance, terms used, cross-references, levels of subheadings, etc. This exercise clearly demonstrated that no two indexers will come up with the same terms. It was helpful to hear how others saw the meaning in the text.

We were then given an example of a poor index and asked to edit it for conceptual and mechanical errors. This was an interesting exercise. It is much easier to tear apart someone else’s index than to create one’s own.

This workshop was a great opportunity to brush up on skills, to think about the multiple layers of meaning, and to discuss the issues with other indexers.

Index comparison project

Cheryl Landes, a technical indexer, and Debra Spidal, a non-technical indexer explored how an indexer’s background can affect the way in which he or she indexes. They both indexed the same book, a software manual, following a basic set of guidelines, but without seeing each other’s work until it was completed. They then compared the results.

The non-technical indexer took 22 hours to complete her index of 787 lines, compared with ten hours for the technical indexer’s index of 1006 lines. While the non-technical indexer indexed one component at a time and then edited the result, the technical indexer typed entries into Macrex while reading the book and edited the index as she went. There was not a great difference in depth of indexing: the non-technical averaged 3.25 entries per page, while the technical averaged 3.5 entries. The non-technical indexer made greater use of typogra phy to differentiate illustrations, keyboard shortcuts and exercises. Being more familiar with the book’s subject and the terms readers would be likely to look up, the technical indexer used many more cross-references, 38 compared to 11 for the non-technical indexer.

The goal of this project was not to determine whether one index was better than the other, but to discover whether an indexer’s background affected the way he/she approached indexing a technical document. The results showed that indexing styles did differ and that approaches to the text varied according to the background and experience of the indexer.

Teaching indexing

Ina Fourie looked at a socio-cognitive approach in teaching indexing and abstracting. Indexers and abstractors face a rapidly changing environment. From card-based systems for back-of-book indexers they have moved on to automatic indexing, computer-assisted indexing programs and web-based indexing. There is also increasing demand for relevant information and for ways of avoiding information overload. Indexing, abstracting and information retrieval systems provide the link between the user and information.

Ina looked at how to train indexers and abstractors to create documents which meet users’ ‘desires’ by looking at what users want and recognising what is going on in the minds of the users. People belong to various socio-cultural environments that share a common vocabulary. They use this vocabulary when searching for and using information. Employing the socio-cognitive approach, indexers consider the culture, interests, language and vocabulary used by their target audience and assign terms accordingly. Indexers need to understand their subject literature and information infrastructure and to get to know the vocabulary of the target audience.

There is no guarantee that a socio-cognitive approach will make a difference. It is certainly more time-consuming, but perhaps it will result in happier users and students.

Following Ina’s talk was a panel discussion on the USDA (distance education) indexing course. More information can be found at http://grad.usda.gov

Conclusion

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference, from the funky folders to the seamless presentation of events. The sessions that I attended were all interesting and well presented. I am looking forward to putting some of the ideas into practice. It was stimulating to meet so many people who are passionate about indexing.
Here are three responses to the Indexing Challenge posed in the May issue. It’s interesting to note Tricia Waters’ comments from the comparative indexing done at the ASI/Cana-dian conference (see Northern Waters, this issue) where it seems no two indexers used precisely the same terms. Hazel Bell, who created an unpublished index to Possession, has also sent us the entries related to ‘readings’ from her index—see her note below.

- emotions
- knowledge
- readings
- textual analysis
- dutiful readings
- impersonal readings

knowledge, readings and novelities, rereadings and personal readings readings writings, knowledge of

knowledge, nature of readings see texts, readings of texts, readings of readings: predictive 130; stereotypic 119; true 350; various 470–2; see also metaphors

I was interested to see in the latest AusSI Newsletter the suggestion that readers should index two paragraphs from A. S. Byatt’s novel, Possession. I have actually compiled an index to that full volume, as I have to several other volumes of her fiction—see my articles ‘Indexing fiction: a story of complexity’ in The Indexer, Vol. 17, No. 4, October 1991, 251–256, or online at http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/IFASOC.htm and ‘Should fiction be indexed? The indexability of text’ in The Indexer, Vol. 18, No. 2, October 1992, online at http://www.aidanbell.com/html/hkbell/SFBI.htm

I have checked my own index to Possession to see what entries I made to the passage you quote (which in my edition runs over from p. 471 to 472). I found only one entry for it, a sub-heading:

Best wishes,
Hazel K. Bell

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Hazel K. Bell
This workshop was conducted by Michael Harrington, currently the Chair of the Registration Panel, who formerly worked in the Australian Government Publishing Service, and who indexes many of the annual reports for government departments each year.

Michael took us through a document, ‘Requirements for Annual Reports, for Departments, Executive Agencies and FMA Act Bodies’, produced by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, June 2003, and virtually unchanged from the previous year. FMA Act bodies are agencies created under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997.

The first half of this document sets out the authority for these requirements, sections of the Public Service Act 1999, and what is to be included in them, with key terms highlighted in bold type. Such terms must be indexed, so Michael explained how to search for synonyms if necessary. The second half consists of attachments, elaborations of some sections of the requirements where these are needed.

Michael gave us the following guidelines:

- Use the text of the document for indexing terms.
- Index names of organisations, but not personal names, unless people are the subject of a paragraph, such as donors or sponsors.
- Some sections need only be indexed to title, such as contracts, tables, appendixes.
- Such items as “letter of transmittal”, “aids to access” are essential parts of the report, but being preliminary matter do not need indexing.
- A “compliance index” is no longer necessary.

Michael then worked systematically through the document, page 5 of which sets out the six items essential in an annual report.

**Review by departmental secretary or chief executive officer (CEO).** The contents of this will determine whether or not it should be indexed.

**Departmental overview.** This includes terms such as “machinery of government”, “administrative arrangements (orders)”, “structure and organisation”, “role and functions”. (Michael prefers “functions”.) It also includes “outcomes” and “outputs”.

**Report on performance.** This is the body of the report. Looking at “outcomes” and “outputs” will assist with the indexing. There may be tabular presentations which need to be indexed in detail. Look for phrases such as “performance standards”, “performance indicators”, “effectiveness”, “quality”, “quantity”.

“Outcomes” include “purchaser/provider arrangements”, usually in an appendix. Don’t index to individual arrangements. Look for other key words, for instance, in the dot points on p.7, such as “evaluations” (reviews, audits), “service charters” (client/customer service charters), “social justice and equity” which relates to the status of women, indigenous peoples, people with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse peoples.

**Management and accountability.** The key phrase here is ‘corporate governance’, which includes the roles of senior executives (names not indexable), the corporate plans (strategic plans), the risk management plans, as well as ethics, the Australian Public Service values and code of conduct, and remuneration for senior executive staff, though this may be in the financial section. What used to be called internal scrutiny is now internal audit or review, but there is still external scrutiny from outside the institution. This also includes “human resources” (employees, staff, personnel), their training and development, their workplace agreements (workplace relations, industrial relations), and their productivity. They may be referred to as permanent, non-ongoing and casual.

**Financial statements.** These may be called “financial performance”, “financial results” or similar terms. They are always in a separate section, with their own contents list, and usually only the phrase and the covering page numbers need to be indexed. If the institution had dealings with other similar bodies, their names may need to be indexed.

**Other mandatory information.** Some items may be included either in the financial statements or in the section on management and accountability. These include remuneration, performance pay, revenue and expenditure, purchasing, procuring, tendering and contracting (eg, outsourcing), consultancy services (usually a long table), and net savings (financial performance). There may be relevant legislation, environmental issues, advertising, consultations with clients and/or shareholders, information on discretionary grants. There may also be a correction of the record if wrong information was given in a previous annual report. This must be indexed.

Much of our work in August-September in the ACT is the indexing of annual reports, so all this information, explained very clearly and precisely, was extremely useful to all those who attended the workshop. Michael also showed us his standard quote letter for the indexing of annual report, and his standard tax invoice. We are grateful to him for sharing his expertise with us.

_Edyth Binkowski_  
Secretary, AusSI ACT Region Branch.
The film Possession (2002) was adapted from the 1990 Booker Prize-winning novel by A.S. Byatt.

'A telling portrayal of indexing occurs in a scene in which put-upon American research assistant Roland Michell (Aaron Eckhart) must answer obscure inquiries about one of the Victorian authors. In a (presumably musty) back room stacked high with shoebox-like files, he is faced with the question of how many jars of gooseberry jam the author’s wife preserved in a certain summer. He ponders briefly, says, “Cooking!” and wheels his chair over to a box of index cards (presumably under the C’s). As he starts flipping through them, we fade to another scene, never learning whether he found the answer through a series of well-chosen cross-references.'
This newsletter is sent free to all members of the Australian Society of Indexers. It is published 11 times a year, with a combined membership and advertising charges of $25 per page. Please contact us if you have any questions about suitable formats for publication. If greater than one A4 page, please send files on a disk or via email in Rich Text Format, Word for Windows, or plain text (ASCII). Do not embed footnotes in Word files.

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