

Partnerships in Knowledge

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Conference

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The Future Of The Knowledge Society

Richard Walsh

We can predict nothing about the future of the knowledge society unless we are prepared to study its history closely. This morning, of course, my focus is specifically on the fortunes of print in Australia, on the three traditional print media—newspapers, magazines and books. And to tell you something about them I can do nothing better than tell their story as though they were characters in a traditional nursery story. So ...

Once upon a time there were three bears who called themselves The Print Family. There was Father Bear, who was large and macho. And Mother Bear, who was very feminine and well turned out. And Baby Bear, who spent most of her waking hours scrounging for food and was known to the rest of the family by the name of Cinderella.

Do you recognise these characters? Indeed, you do.

Father Bear, of course, is the newspaper industry. In Australia he is an introduced species and traces his origins back to the 17th century corantos of Venice and Antwerp and to the enduring traditions of the London Times. In character he is very macho indeed—in newspapers even the women are macho! The traditional newspaper companies that have come down to us from what in Australia passes for antiquity have always been male-dominated—after all it was not until the Short Reign of Michelle the First at the helm of the Canberra Times in this fair city, commencing in 1994, that we experienced our very first Queen of Newspapers. It was an experiment that was not pronounced a success.

The newspaper companies have always been part-time manufacturers—they get their hands dirty by printing their own products—and their symbiotic relationship with the political and financial power structures has made them mildly megalomaniac and not a little arrogant. The really good news is that time has tapped Father Bear on the shoulder and he is now an endangered species.

Mother Bear, of course, is the magazine industry and she's actually a bit of a koala—not really a bear at all and very indigenous.

Mass market magazines, as we recognise this medium today, are the brash newcomers in the print troika. The first such publications in America began only in the late 19th century because their relative cheapness depended on the growth of advertising, which in turn required the development of mass consumption and mass production. The first Australian popular magazine was probably *The Dawn*, produced by Henry Lawson's mum, Louisa, in October 1889, a mere six years after the launch of *The Ladies Home Journal*, which is regarded as America's first magazine. *The Dawn*, incidentally, was produced on a hand press by an all-female crew, much to the consternation of the Typographical Association, which promptly boycotted it.

Of course, there were many literary periodicals before Louisa Lawson's little effort—most notably the Sydney and Melbourne Punches and their ilk—but these were not called magazines in their time and were not magazines as we know them today. *The Bulletin*, which had begun in 1880, called itself a Sydney paper.

The word magazine derives from the French word for a department store, *magasin*; the new medium too had its various departments and was targeted at women. *The Dawn* was a totally new concept—it was a mixture of fiction, poetry, practical advice to the housewife and, in its own memorable words, it was a 'phonograph to wind out audibly the whispers, pleadings and demands of the sisterhood'. And it was cheap. With *The Bulletin* you got eight pages for

sixpence. But *The Dawn* was a mere threepence for 16 pages, and then later 32 pages as its advertising content burgeoned.

Much later, *The Australian Women's Weekly* at the height of its remarkable powers was read by more than 40 per cent of all adult women in this country and was the largest selling magazine in the world on a per capita basis. *The Women's Weekly's* character was uniquely Australian but, unlike newspapers and books, it was affiliated more with the entertainment industry than with the knowledge society, which is why I described magazines as koalas.

In the 20th century the large newspaper companies became the most successful publishers of popular magazines but that did not mean they were particularly good at it—their dominance resulted more from their ownership of the printing presses and of the means of mass distribution than from any talent they displayed as magazine publishers. Magazines were derided by the press boys as what we would call today 'secret women's business'. Because magazines did not have the ferocious deadlines of papers, they were judged as a cinch to produce. They were viewed as though they were prettied-up newspapers produced on a sluggish timetable for women.

The particular skills good magazine publishing demanded were simply not recognised and certainly not respected. *Mother Bear* was held virtually in contempt and, from a business point of view, treated with benign neglect. Failed newspaper executives, or those past their prime, were usually those despatched to take charge of their magazine division. Indeed, magazines were so despised that ultimately the *Herald & Weekly Times* Group and *News Ltd* and John Fairfax divested themselves of most of their magazine interests.

The one large group which always took magazines seriously was Australian Consolidated Press. Because *The Australian Women's Weekly* had been Frank Packer's baby and had proven a goldmine, magazine publishing was always at the forefront of the Packer psyche. In a telling moment, in 1987 Kerry Packer managed to convince the young Warwick Fairfax and his advisers to sell to ACP Fairfax's magazines—including *Woman's Day*, *Dolly*, *People* etc.—for about \$100m. Given their mediocre commercial performance at that time, this seemed fair enough but within a very few years we quadrupled the profitability of those titles, illustrating what could be achieved by dedicated magazine publishers.

In the late 20th century men finally made contact with the feminine side of their souls and began to recognise, somewhat grudgingly, that being visually attractive isn't all that sissy—even newspapers have lately been forced to pick up their game and become more colourful and handsome to look at. The big magazine story of the last decade has been the enormous growth in male readership, not only of the new wave of lads' titles like *Inside Sport* and *Ralph*, but of magazines in general. Good old *Mother Bear* still has lots of life left in her, as we shall see.

And then there is the wee bear called *Cinderella*. In other words, books. Now the truth is that while *Baby Bear* may look like a child, she is in fact a very old bear indeed, now in her second childhood—sans hair, sans teeth, sans respect, sans everything. The real scandal in the Bear household is that this isn't the child of *Mother Bear* and *Father Bear* at all—it's their wizened old grandmother, shriveled up in old age and forced to cadge for food in her dotage. As old as Gutenberg and Caxton themselves, this is a bear with a proud tradition. Until recently it was through books that all of us gained our literacy and it was through them that the wisdom of the ages was passed on to succeeding generations.

How on earth did the book industry come to this pretty pass? We live, brothers and sisters, in materialistic times—in the immortal words of Oscar Wilde, we know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

In saying that *Father Bear* is strong, that *Mother Bear* is weaker but still standing and that *Baby Bear* is enfeebled, please note that I am talking not about the media themselves but about the media companies involved as their publishers. In truth, most people still retain great respect for the book and have little respect for newspapers but the traditional

arrogance of newspaper companies has been based entirely on the great profits they once made in a golden era fast fading. When ACP was floated as a public company in 1992, no one had any idea exactly how much money successful magazine publishers made but when they saw ACP's figures they were duly impressed.

There are no book companies listed on the Australian Stock Exchange but everyone fears, not without reason, that their profit and loss accounts would make pretty embarrassing reading. In the financial year 1997–1998, according to figures compiled by the federal Department of Communications, the revenue that flowed to publishers from the sale of books in Australia was \$1.035 billion. But the cost of producing these books was \$1.133 billion, which would have produced a total loss of almost \$100 million for the industry as a whole. If it were not in fact for government subsidies, PLR, CAL payments and other miscellaneous income, the whole of the book industry would look remarkably similar to Kempsey after the recent catastrophic downpour.

But, as Bob Dylan reassured us in his heyday, the times they are a-changin'. Indeed they are, and their impact upon the Bear Family may well be not merely to change the household pecking order but to re-arrange the family dynamics entirely.

I do not want to dwell for too long on the impact of online technology on newspapers because much of it is obvious and already anticipated by the industry itself. Modern newspapers are a collection of magazines gummed together with an outer coating of reportage and paid for by mainly classified advertising. The Saturday Sydney Morning Herald, for example, is a series of magazines with names like Domain, Icon, News Review, The Good Weekend etc., with a light batter of news on the outside and what remains of the famed golden rivers of advertising to provide sustenance. In exchange for colour technology, which makes their magazine content look suitably pretty, they have been forced to surrender to truly appalling deadlines—it seems that anything, however important, that happens after 11 o'clock at night is quite beyond them.

Immediacy was once the great engine that drove newspaper circulations; but today, for late-breaking news, you turn to the broadcast and online media. Somehow the press boys still manage to con their advertisers into believing their magazine content enjoys the same readership as their news pages but sooner or later their remaining display advertisers will wake up. In the highly profitable categories of classified advertising—cars and houses and jobs—the capacity of computer technology to allow readers to locate what they want quickly and efficiently will raise the arsenic in the rivers of gold to commercially toxic levels.

There can be little doubt that modern online technology threatens the traditional dominance of Father Bear; but it may yet put new finery across the narrow shoulders of Cinderella and send her off to the ball in fine style. The New Technology may in time prove to be the Great Leveller. As the most prosperous print medium, newspapers after all have the most to lose from rapid change; books have nothing to lose and all to gain as we shall see.

Up to a few years ago you could have been forgiven for dismissing the idea that people would give up reading books and magazines printed on paper. After all, experiments by John Gould and his colleagues at IBM in the 1980s had shown that reading from paper was up to 30 per cent faster than reading from computer screens, due largely to the lower resolution of text on a screen. You and I know how awkward and slow and, yes, plain inaccurate it is to read from a standard PC or laptop.

But there have been some important advances recently and there are more in the pipeline. Microsoft's ClearType and Adobe's CoolType, released onto the market about a year ago, have tripled the resolution of type on screen. The nifty little E-book reading device known as the Rocket E-book is portrait-shaped with a higher resolution than most PC screens. More importantly, it dispenses with the irritation of scrolling type and can be read from almost as many angles as paper, so it can be used with equal ease while walking, lying on a sofa, sitting at a desk or on the proverbial loo. Readers turn whole pages at a time with thumb-buttons beside the screen.

Of all the developments rolling down the pipeline of progress I believe the most important is Philips Electronics's E Ink —Electronic Ink technology. Because E Ink contains the same colouring agents as normal ink and paper, it is three to six times brighter than reflective LCDs, the type of display currently used on laptops. It exceeds newspapers in contrast ratio and reads easily in both dim light and full sunlight. Like paper, the E Ink display has a clear image that can be seen at any angle without a change in contrast.

But, beyond readability, E Ink offers portability. It is anticipated that displays utilising this technology will require one-thousandth the power required by a standard notebook computer screen; requiring smaller batteries, it will be less expensive and lighter to carry. Because electronic ink displays read like ink on paper, they should cause less eyestrain than displays that emit or transmit light. Which would be pretty scary stuff if I were addressing a convention of printers or paper-makers this morning but, hey, we're publishing and editing and indexing folk, right?

So where is all this heading?

The most significant feature of the old order was that, so long as publishing required significant investment in printing and paper and the means of distribution then those who provided the necessary capital—the proprietors—were the dominant force. Over time, of course, the balance has begun to tilt away from the old-style Beaverbrook/Hearst/Frank Packer newspaper tyrant; in radio and TV and film for a long time now the performers have been better remunerated than management. Because of online technology, which simultaneously makes publishing less expensive and also destroys the old distribution oligarchies, the time has arrived for the journalists and writers to flex their muscles at last.

Paul Barry is a typical New Age journalist—he is a freelancer who pursues stories that interest him and he is able to sell his output to newspapers or to TV or to a book publisher. In time, there will be lots of Paul Barrys and they will work for a new kind of media company, one with the expertise to publish in whatever print medium is best suited to their output or indeed in whatever medium is required. Such companies will have the capacity to identify budding Paul Barrys and to nurture their talents. By then newspapers themselves will have shrivelled to four or eight pages a day—a series of syndicated columns and exposés available not only printed on paper but also in E-Book form.

In time newspapers will give up even trying to report fast-moving news stories. Online reportage is more likely to become a partnership of the internet with radio than with newspapers because only radio requires 24-hour news gathering and newspapers no longer maintain large teams of reporters, themselves relying more and more on news agencies.

The vice-president in charge of electronic books at Microsoft, Dick Brass, at last year's eBook World Conference in New York reiterated that company's famous prediction that the last print edition of the New York Times will appear in the year 2018. If Microsoft truly believes that there will be nothing called the New York Times in print at that time then I believe the good folk from Seattle are suffering an advanced stage of cyber-hubris. If, however, they are predicting that newspapers in 2018 will look nothing like today's papers they are almost certainly correct.

During the next twenty years, newspaper companies will disappear as great manufacturing enterprises. What will arise in their place, in my view, will be entities more akin to today's syndication agencies. John Fairfax, for example, might be the exclusive managing agent, in all media, for maybe over 200 working journalists—high-profile bylines like Alan Ramsey and Michelle Grattan and Ross Gittins and Deidre Macken and Peter FitzSimons and Roy Masters and for a whole lot of lesser names, whose reputations are under construction. The best-known of these journalists may maintain websites to which people subscribe; here you may be able to read their columns daily on-line or participate in their chat-rooms. The publishing company will manage their output in whatever medium is appropriate to their talents; it will market them and provide the infrastructure they will require—subeditors, researchers, fact checkers, legal vetting etc.

When David Salter and I were forced to close down Australia's first daily on-line newsletter, The Zeitgeist Gazette, of fond memory, in March last year we boldly predicted that it, or something like it, would one day rise again. When we launched the Gazette, in 1999, we flew in the face of conventional wisdom by declaring that there was no way known we could be free of charge and hope to live entirely off advertising income; so we then opted for a subscription-paid model. Time has vindicated us to this extent—no one today any longer believes that quality journalism can be sustained on the net purely from advertising revenue. Salon no longer believes that; The Wall Street Journal no longer believes it. I firmly believe that online newsletters, nourished by a loyal subscription base, will be revived as an important outlet for vigorous journalism in the future.

But for many years yet to come, one of the most effective ways of marketing journalistic heavyweights and generating revenue for them may well be to publish something that looks like an undernourished Bulletin, a selection of their online material in printed form—a kind of Readers Digest for easy reading on the increasingly congested public and private transport systems. These booklets, published maybe daily or less frequently, will have familiar names like the Melbourne Age or indeed the New York Times and will be the last vestiges of the great newspaper tradition. Such is the future of news analysis.

Lifestyle publishers, similarly, will no longer be newspaper companies or magazine companies or book companies. They will be all of the above, and more. In some ways the most significant harbinger of the future in this field of endeavour is Matt Handbury's Murdoch Magazines company, which today itself produces the television show Better Homes & Gardens, as well as the magazine of that name. His company produces the magazines Family Circle and Marie Claire, but also books under those imprints.

As newspapers run out of advertising income, they will no longer be able to afford to provide magazines like Domain or Drive free of charge to their lucky readers, but they may be tempted to develop these titles a little more aggressively and push them out into the marketplace as paid publications. Conversely, some of today's magazine companies will produce some of their output on newsprint so as to give them lower and more attractive cover prices. The new owners of Pacific Magazines, for example, may well be tempted to produce New Idea as an inexpensive colour newspaper—looking more like the Wentworth Courier or Melbourne Weekly than a traditional magazine. The problem for Woman's Day and New Idea in the last few years has been that their cover prices have shot up so dramatically that they have become considered purchases when they should, by rights, be impulse buys. As coloured newspapers they might yet regain their former glories.

Clearly what I am suggesting is that, in the near-future, we will not be defining print companies by the physical appearance of their output but by the subject matter they specialise in. They will become truly multimedia specialists in reportage or news commentary or lifestyle or whatever. And their domain will not merely be print but also broadcasting and online, including datacasting whenever the incoming Beazley Government manages to find a way of allowing this interesting new medium take its rightful place in the pantheon.

Books, of course, will continue to be written by the journalists and writers associated with the kinds of media companies I have already described. And there will be other enterprises which specialise in literature and education, the two great heartlands of the traditional book business. But there's no doubt that the world of book publishing is changing very rapidly, even as we talk about it.

Last year Jason Epstein wrote an influential essay in the New York Review of Books called 'The Rattle of Pebbles', which he subsequently expanded into a book called Book Business: Publishing Past Present and Future. I am sure many of you are aware of these contributions to publishing futurology; if you aren't, I recommend them to you even if I don't agree with all their conclusions. Epstein, of course, is and was a distinguished editor and publisher, having joined Random House in 1958. When I myself began in book publishing I used to visit New York twice a year, in regular forays to secure Australian rights on promising American titles;

when I met Epstein at that time New York publishing was highly prestigious and he was one of its notables.

For an old man Jason Epstein is surprisingly upbeat about the future and about the impact of the net on books. Perhaps his boldest prediction is that ultimately the big-name authors will no longer be published by mainstream publishing houses at all.

With considerable passion, Epstein writes: 'Such name-brand best-selling authors as Tom Clancy, Michael Crichton, Stephen King, Dean Koontz, and John Grisham, whose faithful readers are addicted to their formulaic melodramas, no more need publishers to edit and publicize their books than Nabisco needs Julia Child to improve and publicize Oreos. Name-brand authors need publishers only to print and advertise their books and distribute them to the chains and other mass outlets, routine tasks that all publishers manage equally well.'

Epstein believes that the only factor sustaining the current system is the humungous royalty advances being shelled out by big publishers to these name-brand authors. He writes: 'To retain these powerful authors publishers already forego much of their normal profit, or incur severe losses, by paying royalty guarantees far greater than can be recouped from sales. As a result publishers' profits from books by these best-selling authors, if there are any after the unearned portion of the guarantee has been deducted from revenues, often amount to little more than a modest fee for services. Given the negligible value that publishers add to these assured best sellers in today's brand-driven marketplace, these fees are a fair reward.'

Epstein reminds us that several name-brand film stars, including Leonardo DiCaprio, Kevin Costner, and Robin Williams, have recently left their agents and hired business managers to create their own production companies rather than sign with studios or independent producers on traditional terms. These celluloid superstars, in a mood not dissimilar to that of brand-name authors, feel they don't need anyone to produce them or to direct them or to show them how to act. Epstein predicts a day when the publishing conglomerates tire of overpaying their star performers and these writers opt out of the system, hiring independent contractors as production consultants, publicity agencies, and distribution services.

For the record, I agree with Epstein's prediction. So we are entering a world in which newspapers will have to survive without classified advertising and book publishers will have to survive without Bryce Courtenay or Harry Potter. What a challenge. In truth we are going to see emerge not only a new kind of publisher for journalism but a new kind of publisher for imaginative writing.

Cyberspace is already awash with new books emanating from major publishing houses. But there is also a huge and bewildering range of non-mainstream publishing of new E-book titles going on, ranging from vanity- to self-publishing, i.e. ranging from the author paying someone else to digitise their manuscript and host it on the web to the author foregoing normal royalties and advances, either accepting no royalty whatsoever or being paid a modern-day version of a share of profits, actually just like authors did in the 19th century. One common thread in all this frenetic activity is an overwhelming desire to dispense altogether with publishing editors. Either through authorial hubris or a desire to save money, the text as written by the author is the text that appears on screen. There is, for example, the new joint venture between the Australian Society of Authors and a company called IPR Systems Pty Ltd. This site offers Australian authors the opportunity to throw off their shackles and liberate themselves from those pesky publishers for once and for all. RMIT is involved with Commonground.com.au, which seems to be a semi-commercial venture along the same lines.

Discussing this phenomenon, Jason Epstein writes: 'The World Wide Web offers access to any would-be writer who may or may not have something to say and know how to say it. Several literary websites that have so far emerged are in effect vanity presses, willing to publish anything, regardless of quality, provided the author pays. It is highly improbable that from this clutter works of value will emerge.'

But my own view is rather different to Epstein's. His belief that nothing of lasting worth will emerge from the cacophony of the web makes it sound as though publishers are, and always have been, infallible and totally prescient. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are many notorious examples of great works that have struggled to find a publisher. To mention only one of them: as some of you will remember, the comedic novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, was written by John Kennedy Toole in the early sixties, when he was only 16. He tried unsuccessfully to get his novel published but ultimately, depressed by his failure to do so, he committed suicide in 1969. It was in fact only through the tenacity of his mother—who, like the very best kind of legendary good mum, never wavered in her faith in her son's work—that this book ultimately found its deserved audience. *A Confederacy of Dunces* won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, twelve years after the author's tragic death.

Much rubbish and some really good books will be self-published on the net. But the net in time will come to be little more than a reader's nightmare, even if it is a writer's heaven. Browsing the web will be like visiting the largest and most chaotic bookshop you can imagine—one where the books are piled high but not organised according to any known principle. Something like Bob Gould's Third World Bookshop in Sydney during its heyday. Soon there will arise the need for someone to take readers by the hand and guide them through this forbiddingly lavish literary smorgasbord.

Publishers in the past have been the traditional gatekeepers between all that is written and all that is available to a wider public. That intermediary role may well continue in a new way. In time, in my view, a new kind of book publisher will arise—one who will, free of charge, act as a kind of search engine to this vast inchoate universe of immaculately conceived literary works floating around in cyberspace. Certain publishers will become touchstones for their ability to recommend works, to fossick through this awesome literary garbage mountain and to point their reader-clients in interesting directions. To recompense them for their work in 'discovering' and promoting authors' works that have already been posted on the web, these new-age publishers will obtain an option to publish such works subsequently in print. Such publishers may themselves post on the web excerpts from some of the manuscripts they receive, to test on-line reaction, as a kind of latter-day poison-tasting.

As an example of how the online world may in the future create real opportunities for the world of print, the commentator Steve Ditlea, in an article last July in *Technology Review*, provides an interesting case study. He writes: 'The power of e-books as a promotional medium has probably best been demonstrated by Melisse Shapiro, who writes under the nom de plume M.J. Rose. Her first novel, *Lip Service*, an erotically charged thriller, was rejected by a dozen book publishers for being too steamy for the chain bookstores. She opted to publish from her own Web site, offering digital downloads for \$10 or photocopies of the manuscript for \$20. Even when the password for her e-book was stolen and posted online, resulting in 1,000 pirated downloads, she managed to receive 150 paid orders for e-books and 500 orders for photocopies. She invested in printing 3,000 copies to help create buzz; at one point, it was the 123rd best-selling title on Amazon.com. Following her online blitz, Doubleday Direct picked up *Lip Service* for its mail-order book clubs and soon after, Pocket Books signed up print rights in hardcover and paperback.' The experience of Melisse Shapiro may yet provide a useful paradigm for the future.

Halfway between E-books and printed books, which are now sometimes referred to as P-books, there is the D-book, the Digital Book. Dbooks.com, for example, is a company located at North Sydney which uses Fuji Xerox digital printers to produce very low print-runs from existing pdf files. D-books are printed both sides of the paper and then perfect-bound as a paperback with a full-colour cover. Printing off just one single copy of a 200-page book may cost you as little as \$15; if the print-run is a modest 200, the price comes down to \$7-odd per copy. At the moment this technique is being used for micro-reprints or to provide publishers with a small number of advance copies of a new book before it comes off the big printing presses. However, the future application of this technology is obvious.

In America machines capable of printing and binding digitized texts are already being deployed by Ingram, the leading American book wholesaler, and are now being placed in the Barnes and Noble distribution centres and in publishers' warehouses. Jason Epstein in his essay foresees a future in which less expensive versions of these machines 'can be housed in public libraries, schools and universities, and perhaps even in post offices and other convenient places . . . where readers can download digitized texts in electronic form or as printed copies, bypassing retail bookstores . . . Though books manufactured in very small quantities or one at a time by these machines will cost more to produce than factory-made books, their ultimate cost to readers will be less, since publishers' distribution costs and retail markups will not figure in their price . . . the convenience of these machines in thousands of locations with access to potentially limitless virtual inventories, catalogued, annotated, and searchable electronically, will profoundly affect current book marketing practice, to say nothing of the effect on readers and writers.'

I do not quite understand why Epstein foresees these developments as 'bypassing retail bookstores'; I suspect, rather, that such new technology will simply transform the traditional bookstore. The capital cost of machines that can spit out instant D-books is certainly declining dramatically. A conference in Melbourne last month on Book Production in Transition was informed that the cost of a high-powered laser colour printer with built-in collating and binding functions capable of producing an entire paperback book in one smooth process has recently dropped from \$750,000 to \$350,000 per machine.

Nonetheless, this is a substantial outlay and sufficiently high to prevent them sprouting like mushrooms on every street corner. What we are more likely to see is a new type of highly attractive retail outlet where you can linger and eat, where you can listen to records or browse through old-fashioned printed books or, if you wish, where you can order from the vast inventory of available digitised texts a D-book or two, which may be produced for you while you wait. This is the bookshop of the future, rather than the bookshop bypassed.

Publishers are well advanced in using the net to promote their books. One of the most dynamic ways of encouraging book sales is by posting excerpts online; Allen & Unwin, for example, is a local publisher doing this very successfully. Steve Ditlea, in his article last year, to which I've already referred, draws attention to the efforts of veteran science-fiction publisher Jim Baen who in September 1999 initiated what he calls eWebScriptions; for \$10 a month, visitors to Baen's website may download quarter-of-a-book-sized instalments of four titles about to appear in print. Even after receiving the full text in HTML, 'more of our subscribers buy the finished book than don't buy it', claims Baen. By March last year one of his earliest eWebScriptions titles, *Ashes of Victory* by David Weber, had turned up on hardcover best-seller lists in America, partly propelled by Baen's online activities.

Once upon a time, as you may remember, all books were published first in hardback and the most popular of them were offered as paperbacks. Today most books appear at first in paperback and only those offering special commercial prospects appear in hardback. But we are probably moving towards a tomorrow when books will mainly appear initially on-line and then the best of them will later appear in print, and maybe—and this would be the ultimate accolade—sometimes even in hardback.

Some books may be trialled on-line; others may be excerpted. There may also, for example, be subscription sites where for a few dollars a week you can get a fresh new poem each morning to inspire you through your day. Short poems are ideally suited to the computer screen. But probably for a long time yet—maybe even forever—the most prestigious way in which an author may dream of being published will be as a printed item. It may even be that the classics of our times will be printed lovingly, using hot-metal type on handmade paper with elaborate end-papers and so on. Once upon a time people only hired videotapes but in the future a library of great films on DVD and favourite books, handsomely printed, may well be the ultimate distinction of a cultured human being.

On the other hand, clearly some categories of books are unlikely ever to be seen in print again. Reference books, for example, are exquisitely well suited to the net. In the past readers were asked to outlay large sums of money for a set of printed encyclopedias, but the text was already out of date on Day One and 90 per cent of the contents would never be read. On-line publishing allows reference books remain up-to-date at all times and the cost to the reader can be better calibrated to usage. MacquarieNet is a local pioneering attempt to achieve this. For a monthly fee subscribers can tap into the whole of the Macquarie Library of books plus other syndicated reference material.

A report in the SMH's I.T. section last month on Random House's new digital imprint, AtRandom.comBooks, noted: 'Many observers think e-books work best as an information medium, not a storytelling one, and statistics indicate that during the next few years, education/reference books will do better in electronic form than fiction and other mainstream genres. In a study released last week by Jupiter Media Metrics, the research firm projected that 6% of college book sales would be in electronic form by 2005, compared with just 1.5% of consumer titles.'

Academics, in particular, see the net as a magnificent opportunity to overcome, in one mighty leap, all those tiresome obstacles that stand between them and publication. No more peer reviews, with their murky machiavellian politics; no more irritating economic realities. The availability to anyone interested of every monograph ever written, of every PhD thesis (however arcane), of every intellectual contribution ever concocted, is a triumph of New Media intellectual democracy. To attempt to edit any of this would be what realtors call over-capitalisation.

On-line publishing really comes into its own with specialised titles, whether scholarly or of other kinds. Steve Ditlea cites an example of an on-line title called A Potter's Geology, which is far too specialised a book for any publisher in a single country. The web allows those interested in such a title, however thinly dispersed over the planet, to access its text.

What Ditlea doesn't mention is an enticing future prospect. Such books have the potential to be published initially in a special kind of basic English that can be instantaneously machine-translated into any one of a number of global languages selected by the prospective reader. Thus a book like A Potter's Geology can be available online not merely to the couple of hundred people in each continent who are interested in its contents but in whichever principal language they prefer to read it. While machine translation is still in its infancy, it can in fact be very accurate if the author and editor work within the discipline of a limited and predictable vocabulary with a simplified, stripped-down syntax. Michael Singh, Professor of Language and Culture at RMIT, has contributed a fascinating chapter on these possibilities in a volume called C-2-C (standing for Creator to Consumer), the proceedings of the Melbourne conference on Australian Book Production in Transition organised by RMIT last month and published instantaneously by their Common Ground operation as a D-book.

Most E-books these days are conceived of as being very text-oriented. Anything too complicated on-line simply takes too long to download, leading to reader impatience. But we should never forget that there is another kind of non-print book entity. Here is the ever-eloquent New Media commentator, Ralph Lombreglia, wallowing in a little nostalgia in his contribution last December to the Atlantic Unbound:

'In the early nineties, my wife and I were hired by a small development company ...

The result was A Jack Kerouac ROMnibus, published by Penguin Electronic in 1995 ... if a more ambitious 'multimedia illuminatio' of a full-length literary text has ever been attempted, I'm not aware of it. Hundreds and hundreds of phrases in Kerouac's text were linked to pop-up annotations in various media: photographs of people, places, memorabilia from the author's estate, and pages from his note-books; audio readings of various texts; clips from films; original interviews videotaped for the project. All these years later, it still looks great. Unfortunately, you can't see it, because it's no longer available. When we started the project, no one had ever heard the word Netscape. When we finished it, the word Netscape was

everywhere, and before long the World Wide Web helped kill the CD-ROM publishing business and in the process set multimedia production back at least five years.' I should add here that I myself was involved peripherally in a similar venture to this all those years ago—an elaborate version of Joseph Banks Journal, published by the State Library of NSW. I think they still have copies available in their bookshop if you were interested in seeing it.

Ralph Lombreglia concludes rather sadly: 'Most readers never saw the electronic books of the 1990s. That's because serious, well-produced CD-ROMs were too far ahead of their time—too far ahead of the software, the hardware, the digital economy itself. The general public may well believe 'e-book' to be a brand-new, twenty-first-century idea ... [but] electronic-multimedia books could indeed become the future of reading, or part of it. Just like they used to be.'

Despite every attempt to provide high-speed access to the internet, the information highway may never be as fast as we wish it to be. Just as when we build motorways in the real world they simply seem to encourage more traffic and so their immediate beneficial effect is dissipated, so it may be that, for all the cables that are frenetically being laid, we may never be able to keep up with digital demand and deliver the download speeds the online spruikers are predicting as just around the corner. For this reason it is not impossible that the CD-ROM, which delivers a succession of still and moving images so rapidly and effortlessly, may yet make a comeback and prove as durable as the printed book.

And so at last we come to a question which may conceivably be of more than passing interest to those of you gathered here on this bright Canberra morning: In all this maelstrom of change, you may well ask, what exactly does the future hold for today's industrious and highly experienced editors and indexers?

Well, there is good news and there is good news.

Firstly, I think all of us have to accept that the new technology offers a sophisticated and timely solution to the two greatest impediments to modern book reading. The two greatest complaints laid against the book by dedicated readers is that books are now too expensive and too unavailable, meaning by the latter that it is simply too difficult to locate a bookstore that stocks any specific title we are after at that particular moment.

These problems are nobody's fault, as we know, but a direct outcome of over-publication. We are spoilt for choice, which is wonderful given that our interests and tastes are so wide-ranging, but this torrent of titles is its own undoing. Print-runs are shorter, therefore cover prices soar; there are so many new and recently old titles that no bookshop, however large, could ever be expected to stock them all or anticipate from which direction the next surge of demand will arise.

Amazon Books and its imitators have made an important early contribution to book availability but ultimately online technology, via either on-screen texts or advanced E-book reader machines or digital printing on demand, will deliver 100 per cent availability of most titles anywhere on the planet at any hour. Apart from being a giant step forward in convenience, consider for a moment the impact of this on world literacy and world enlightenment and rejoice.

The second point to make is that these changes will in time create cheaper books. Today in Australia one of the largest costs publishers have to meet is their writedown of stock; across the whole industry it undoubtedly costs more than \$100m. per year to write off stock that ultimately has to be sold at well below its manufactured cost. This, in accounting terms, represents the size of the risk publishers embrace each time they print copies of any book—across all the titles a large publisher produces in any year this cost alone may represent 10–15 per cent of the recommended retail price.

The new technology lowers the investment publishers have to make in printed stock per book and thus it lowers the interest they have to pay to their banks or shareholders; it lowers the risk they take and thus their writedown costs; it lowers their warehousing costs and their

distribution costs. Because it may lower the cost of a bookseller's inventory it may even lower the discount that is appropriate to the retailer.

In time readers can expect not only to see the price of books come down, in relation to other kinds of goods, but also to experience less agonising doubt in choosing which titles to buy. Today our friends recommend a book to us as a must-read; on the other hand, we may have read some reviews of this particular book which are equivocal—we hesitate in purchasing it because we fear disappointment. Reading an excerpt on the web can be much more reassuring than sneaking a quick squiz in a bookshop.

To be able to buy what we want, when we want, at a more manageable price and with greater certainty of reader satisfaction—this represents a giant step forward in anybody's language. Particularly in a world where newspaper reading is declining and where—in relation to one traditionally important sector of book readership—there is an ever-swelling population of retired people who are going to enjoy good health and good eyesight for many decades to come.

Now, as publishing professionals, you are entitled to feel a little aggrieved that there are going to be plenty of literary and unliterary works flying around cyberspace that have never experienced the gentle and caring touch of a publishing editor. But it doesn't pay for you to get too excited about that. In our personal lives we long ago have had to get used to the fact that our friends—even our writer friends—sometimes send us letters, and these days e-mail, that surprise us with their carelessness and almost illiteracy. All you can do is grit your teeth, shrug your shoulders and get on with your life.

I have mentioned previously a D-book called C-2-C, which was produced last month, reproducing the papers presented at a Melbourne conference on Australian Book Production in Transition. This was published by Common Ground, a publishing endeavour associated with RMIT and specifically its Faculty of Art Design and Communication. Not a bad provenance, you might be forgiven for thinking; and indeed its contents are very stimulating indeed. But as a piece of professional publishing it's a joke. It's in very great need of good subbing and competent proof-reading; its index, no doubt produced by a computer, is almost useless.

The view of the future promoted by the text of C-2-C is superficially seductive for authors—it suggests that, through a reduction in printing and publishing costs, authors may now hope for larger royalties than they have ever previously dreamed of. Of course, the folk from Common Ground are talking about royalty rates—these people seem to be mildly innumerate in not understanding that a professional writer is ultimately more concerned with total income than royalty rates. After all, it's a triumph if authors get a 25 per cent royalty but somewhat of a pyrrhic victory if they only manage to sell 500 copies.

The world we are entering is going to be even more intensely competitive for authors than the world that preceded it. In the past it's been only a minor achievement to write a book; the real achievement has been getting it published. Now we have a situation where getting published is only a minor achievement but to gain wider recognition and a significant readership will certainly take more skill than the mere capacity to digitise text. To be properly edited and professionally indexed and marketed—these are the kinds of cutting-edge advantages few professional writers will want to sacrifice.

In the last decade there has been a marked increase in the activities of literary agents in trade publishing—it is estimated that today 90 per cent of general books issued by major publishers come to them via agents. Clearly, from what I have said, I see the conventional roles of publishers and agents merging. Editors will work for these new entities as they have traditionally done—encouraging authors, assessing new clients, preparing material for publication. Some manuscripts may well at first be test-driven on the internet in an unedited form but, having evoked a positive response there, they may then need to be professionally edited and prepared for their next step up the literary chain, as a D-book or an offset-printed P-book.

Ideas expressed in written words will continue to be the most significant way of analysing and arguing about the great social and political issues of the day. However, the border between writers and editors and polishers and checkers and researchers will over time blur. Material that is published and produced by the famous 'Jo Smith', in whatever medium, may well be the output of six or eight writers or editors, in the same way as daily gossip columns are produced—in the language of Renaissance art, such material may come from the studio of Jo Smith.

Once upon a time ideas expressed in written words were almost exclusively the province of the print media—of Father Bear, Mother Bear and Baby Bear. Give or take a bit of graffiti and some other minor exceptions, there was simply no other way of written words reaching out to people. But we now need a new way of describing even this notion because no longer is it true to say that ideas expressed in written words must of necessity appear as print on paper. The old tripartite separation of the print media—based on three distinctive manufactured products—is clearly no longer sustainable. But whatever new publishing configuration arises, there will always be a continuing vocation for those who can assist writers reach their fullest potential and their widest possible readership.

The new technology brings with it the promise of more reading, not less. Yes, more unedited manuscripts on the web but also, when it matters, more material to be professionally edited and marketed and published than ever before.

As always throughout human history, we cannot fight technological progress, we must instead use our best efforts to harness it to our greatest advantage. But never forget this. For the media the big story of the 20th Century was the creation of film and broadcast media. But to enjoy radio, to enjoy movies, to enjoy TV you did not need to be able to read or write—literacy may at times help you enjoy those media but it is not strictly necessary. However, right at the very end of the 20th Century, along came the internet. It is virtually impossible to use the internet without being able to read or write. Indeed, the popularity of the PC has meant that more people—yes, even men—know their way around a keyboard. The internet is literacy striking back.

As literate folk you should celebrate this remarkable, dramatic and recent change. Somewhere in all this rapid, dazzling and sometimes confusing evolution of mass literacy there is certain to be an exciting role for those who love language and value knowledge, and want to share that love with other readers.

Australian Society of Indexers Volume 26, Number 4, May 2002 Newsletter

An innovative society needs indexers and editors

*Professor Ian Chubb AO,
President of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee*

**Address to the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference
held Canberra 20-23 April 2001**

I know that part of the reason why I was asked to speak here today was because of your desire as a professional association to seek out more information about how to preserve and extend the professional training of indexing and editing through tertiary level study, including university level courses.

This desire is a very admirable one which I would like to encourage and I will do my best to impart some of the little I know about indexing and editing in Australia's universities.

I have a somewhat broader main theme that relates to the wider importance of all professions to the development of Australia as a knowledge-based or innovative society — a theme which has encouraged me to entitle my speech 'An Innovative Society Needs Indexers and Editors'.

But allow me first to address some of the more particular issues of your conference as they relate to universities.

With respect to the theme of your conference 'Partnerships in Knowledge', universities have demonstrated that they are increasingly open to partnerships with professional organisations, whether this be through formal arrangements such as accreditation or more informal arrangements for the provision of continuing education and the provision of internships and work experience for their students.

The teaching of the theory and practice of indexing is incorporated into most information management degrees taught within Schools of

Communication or Schools of Library and Information Studies.

At undergraduate level of course this area is developed in conjunction with broader educational aims. So this is an area in which universities already play a role.

I am not aware of the degree of specific interaction between universities and your two professional societies but I would say that undergraduate courses can only benefit from your greater input.

The situation at postgraduate level is somewhat different. There may be room for specialised courses, say at Graduate Certificate or Masters level.

However, these days it is difficult to secure HECS places for such courses and so their viability depends very much on the capacity to pay fees and obtain reasonable numbers.

Universities might also be interested in the development of specialised short courses in conjunction with your two societies. Having your professional endorsement would certainly be helpful in marketing any such courses.

The teaching of editing at undergraduate level is usually part of broader courses in professional writing.

For example, the University of Canberra has a Bachelor of Arts in

Professional Writing and also a Graduate Diploma in Professional Communication (Professional Writing). Both, I am advised, include the teaching of editing skills. There are more specialised courses at Graduate Diploma level.

I noticed from the web while doing some background for today's event when I was looking for relevant courses being offered by universities that there is quite specific acknowledgment of cooperation between universities and the relevant professional associations and the industry in this area. Macquarie University, for

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example, has a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and MA in Editing and/or publishing and editing. RMIT has a Graduate Diploma in Publishing/Editing. The relevant web sites indicate that both have been designed after input from a planning committee representing the Australian Publishers Association and the Sydney Society of Editors, or in the case of RMIT, the Melbourne Society of Editors.

So professional societies such as your two societies should approach universities who have an interest in your fields. I am sure that any such approach will get a positive response. It is usually best to write to a head of department or a Dean.

It gets back to the point I made earlier that overall universities are keen to establish partnerships with professional bodies and are keen to have input into their courses.

The whole question of indexers and editors moving from what has been a traditionally in-house training approach towards a combination of university or TAFE-based training together with professional experience is part of the wider theme of the critical importance of professional skills to which I would now like to turn. This has been a path taken by all professions at one time or another over the past thousand years, with accountants and journalists — I hope the comparisons are not too invidious — perhaps two of the most recent.

And speaking of journalists and accountants ... I read last week in the Higher Education Supplement of the *Australian* that a survey of student perceptions indicates that, in the minds of students at least, the old 'bean-counter' image of accountants is a thing of the past.

The researcher, Beverley Jackling — a senior lecturer at Deakin university — found that the stereotype of the accountant as — quote — *introverted, cautious, methodical, systematic, antisocial and boring* — unquote — has now been replaced by a sleek new dynamic image of accounting fuelled by new demands from employers for graduates with generic skills in written and oral communication, creative thinking and problem solving.

Forgive me if I'm wrong, but it wouldn't surprise me if just like accountants, indexers and editors had

not sometimes felt piqued by outmoded stereotypes that failed to understand the changing nature of the professional requirements of your skills.

I don't actually intend to spend too much time on pondering the all-important post-modern question of whether indexers and editors, like accountants today, are really cool. Instead I intend to argue that what we do know is that whatever the stereotype, there is no dispute that indexers and editors add critical value to business and government administration.

And I am going to go further and state that in today's world, good indexers and editors are crucial to the realisation of Australia as a genuinely innovative society.

In other words, no matter what outdated and disconnected impressions may linger in popular consciousness about our professional cadre of indexers and editors, or accountants, or lawyers, or managers, teachers, philosophers and others, we all need to understand that the substance of what they do is crucial to our emerging national needs for knowledge-based industries, as surely as our biotechnologists and others are at the leading edge of scientific innovation.

And further, that along with the rest of the intellectual firepower that goes with being an innovative society, Australia will have to find ways to ensure that we have sufficient numbers of them, properly trained, if they are to play their part in realising our national aspirations.

I'd hate to think that we ever gave up thinking about what sort of society we want Australia to be and what we want to bequeath to future generations. In this our centenary year, however, it seems more appropriate than ever.

Dr Helen Irving, the Director of the 1901 Centre at the University of Technology in Sydney, writing in *The Australian* on the eve of the centenary, noted that while our federationist forbears were utilitarians who regarded material benefit for the greatest number as fundamental to what they wanted to achieve, this was not what drove them forward.

More than material benefit, Irving argued, the federationists '*wanted greatness for Australia and Australia's statesmen, international status, power, wealth and the most sublime of democracies*'.

I suspect many of us may now be suspicious of the notion of national *greatness* and of *power* but in a hundred years time, whatever our new formulation, will our great-grandchildren or our great-great grandchildren be able to look back and say that in 2001 we still possessed lofty aspirations — or will they say we were content to accept a mediocre vision or worse, a mediocre outcome and a mediocre future for our country? A frank appraisal of the geo-political outlook suggests a less than cheerful prospect for Australia — unless we are truly good at what we do.

We have few natural allies.

We don't have a population large enough to sustain our quality of life with ease or to sustain our own producers, and so create work.

We are hardly a large enough market to be of critical interest to foreign producers.

And there is no natural reason (by contrast with any possible political reason) for Australia to be a significant part of dynamic international groupings.

If we are to prosper and to provide a quality of life worthy of our citizens we will need to look after ourselves.

And, just as our forbears embraced ambitious goals when they decided it was time the nation should begin to look after itself, so we will have to be unsatisfied with unambitious goals and average performances.

We have heard a lot about Australia as a *Clever Country*, or a *Knowledge Nation* or an *innovative society* — and it is important that we continue to. If I were asked to describe an *intelligent* country (or a knowledge-based society or whatever expression we use) I would argue that it would be one that is prosperous, civilised, culturally rich and socially just.

It is one that will be wisely governed and led; and one that will not let the circumstances of birth be a major obstacle to personal advancement because it will be understood that progress will come from the development and application of the talents of all the citizens.

It will be a nation with a focus on quality, and it will encourage and support high aspirations.

The intelligent country will generate new discoveries, develop its people and support all fields of learning. Some of these fields will, of course,

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Order in the house!

On Tuesday 9 April a group of Victorian members of AusSI spent the night at Parliament House. We had been invited by the Parliamentary Librarian, Bruce Davidson, to view the Victorian Parliamentary Library and the fantastic range of services provided to members of Parliament. Much to our delight, we were also given a tour of this grand building.

Victoria's Parliament House is one of Australia's oldest and most architecturally distinguished public buildings. Its history spans 150 years and some of the most significant moments in Australia's growth as a nation.

The Library was founded on 14 November 1851 when Victoria's newly created Legislative Council appointed the first Library Committee. Since then it has served three legislatures, operated in four locations, had 15 Parliamentary Librarians and offered its services to 1565 Members of Parliament. It has evolved from a gentleman's library to a modern information and research centre, delivering its services using the latest technology.

The Parliamentary Library blends a 19th century interior with 21st century information technology to provide Members and parliamentary officers with a substantial reference collection, access to major computer databases, research services and an environment for Members to work, browse or reflect on the day's business.

Completed in 1861, the Library consists of a central reading room, 12.2 metres square and rising to over 14 metres at its highest point, which is

flanked by two smaller reading and work rooms to the north and south, each 14.8 metres long by 7 metres wide. Two recessed semi-circular staircases at each end lead to the first floor gallery.

The centrepiece of the Library is the central library table—massive, beautifully carved and ten-sided, which sits beneath an ornate brass and crystal chandelier suspended from an ornamental dome that covers the central reading room. The Library's extensive collection of over 70 000 books, periodicals and other items is kept in bookcases recessed into the walls of the ground, first and second floors. Newly designed wooden ladders have replaced the old (unsafe) originals.

In 1989 the Library began to develop its own databases on a variety of software platforms, including TITAN, CDS-ISIS and Inmagic, and nine of these were already running by 1993, the most important being *Hansard*. Internet access followed in 1995, a Parliament of Victoria website was developed by the Library and launched in June 1995, and in 1996 Victoria became the first parliament in Australia to make *Hansard* available to the general public over the Internet. More

recently, the launch of Parlynet—the Parliament of Victoria's intranet—in March 1999, has provided the infrastructure necessary for the Library to develop electronic resources for the use of members and staff, whether they are located in the electorate office, at home or in the chambers.

Attention is therefore now much more closely focussed on providing information resources directly concerned with the Victorian political scene and material that its clients cannot find anywhere else. New opportunities for the Library have also arisen with the growth of the electorate officer clientele, in assisting them with research for members, providing information to answer constituent inquiries, and in training them not only to use the Library's physical and online resources effectively, but also in broader areas of information literacy such as Internet searching or statistical analysis.

Needless to say, our members had a wonderful time doing sample searches on the many and varied databases at our disposal. It was a fantastic tour and we are still in a state of total envy of and admiration for the beautiful surrounds of this 'workplace'. We took Bruce out to dinner at nearby Rumbalara's restaurant where he continued to enthuse about this grand old building and the excellent Library services provided by his staff.

Jenny Restarick
President, Vic Branch

*An innovative society
Continued from previous page*

give rise to invention, innovation and economic wealth. Other fields will lead to yet better understanding of civilisations past and the generation of new literary, artistic and spiritual wealth.

Still others, like indexing and editing, will ensure that we are capable of accessing and properly articulating the product of this intellectual wealth. If this is the kind of society we want to bequeath to our children and to theirs — then we need to ensure that we provide accessible, high quality education, with the right mix of educational opportunities.

This is not a unique call on us.

All nations depend increasingly on three critical elements: new discoveries, highly trained personnel, and expert knowledge.

It is obviously of crucial importance that as a nation we invest and invest strongly in cutting edge research but if we hope to benefit from what this investment may bring, we have to have the people who can exploit the discoveries from our research endeavours — the professional managers and finance analysts; and we need the philosophers and teachers, and the indexers and editors to help articulate and transmit new knowledge. Without knowledge in depth we can never be a knowledge society. A narrowly based

innovative capacity is no capacity at all.

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has made this argument in detail in a major discussion paper *Our Universities: Our Future*. As well as arguing why we need such an approach, the paper explains how we have begun to fall down in our capacity to support an innovative society and the dangers our deteriorating capacity poses for Australia's future prosperity.

To be continued in our next issue

An innovative society needs indexers and editors

Professor Ian Chubb AO,
President of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee

Conclusion of an address to the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference held Canberra 20-23 April 2001

In case the funding crises in our universities are not known to you, let me detail briefly a few of the key facts.

First, participation. In 1983 there were just under 350,000 students in Australia's higher education institutions. In 2000, there were almost exactly 700,000.

However, while participation in education has gone up, national spending on education — public and private — as a proportion of GDP, has been on a steady decline. From a high of around 6.8 per cent in the late 1970s, it has fallen to just above 5 per cent today. Not a good trend for a knowledge-based society.

Since 1996, Commonwealth funding for all education as a percentage of GDP has declined from 2.1 per cent to 1.6 per cent and is set to fall further. A large measure of this decline has been a 6 per cent cut in operating grants to universities.

This has been exacerbated for universities by the lack of any additional funding over three rounds of enterprise bargaining which has meant that universities have had to divert around another 15 per cent of their revenues towards salary increases.

In other words, since 1996, we have had to fund a 20 per cent decline in revenues.

In terms of per student funding, the government contribution has declined steadily since 1983 when it was \$12,507 per student. Today it is less than \$8,905.

Most of the burden created by this diminishing government contribution, has gone onto students who, in HECS, now have one of the highest student financial burdens in any developed nation.

And as such there is no real scope (nor justification — given the estimated balance of public and private benefits from university study) in raising their burden higher.

The amount of average government funding for our universities is now around 50 per cent or lower — for some it is below 30 per cent. In

other words our so-called public universities receive less public funding than our private schools.

Some say that other commercial entities face similar, indeed greater, stringencies — we don't deny this but we do believe that the commercial analogy only suits universities so far.

Universities cannot meet national needs for new skills and, at the same time, improve their product as normal commercial businesses will, if this means cutting staff or lowering salaries so they cannot attract the best.

Australia's inability to retain its brightest minds — the brain drain — is already having a serious impact on our capacity to create and exploit new knowledge.

As for attracting the best from overseas or even our own industries, this has become chronically difficult for universities, and so even imparting new knowledge has become a challenging proposition.

The crucial statistic in the area of quality outcomes is student-staff ratios. These have steadily increased by about 35 per cent over the last decade, moving from an average of 14.5 to 1 to around 19.4 to 1 in the last decade.

This is significant enough but in some areas — some central to our ideas of modern innovation — the situation is horrendous.

The Chair of the AVCC Information Policy Committee, Professor Lauchlan Chipman, explained to a conference last week that industry forecasts of our need for IT&T graduates estimate a shortfall of up to 10,000 over the next five years. The drop in the value of our dollar means we can't buy-in the experts, so naturally we will need to look to universities to train the required numbers.

But if that is so we are going to have to come up with a way of attracting more IT specialists into academia because the staff-student ratio in that key discipline is close to 52 to 1! So

while we have been grateful for the government's funding initiatives in *Backing Australia's Ability* — initiatives that must be seen as a modest first step in re-establishing Australia's research position in the OECD — we must also recognise that this funding addresses only part of our education base.

Let me be quite clear about this, our view is that if we don't significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes in our universities by investing in more and better-paid academics, and cutting-edge learning technologies, so that we can

The amount of government funding for our universities is now 50 per cent or lower — for some it is below 30 per cent.

get our class sizes down and get the best people into academia, then the money that we do invest in cutting-edge research will not lead to sustainable knowledge-based industries.

Our view is one that ties all professional groups, including indexers and editors, directly into Australia's prospects as an innovative society.

Put simply, if we cannot convince the government to improve the teaching and learning outcomes for the professionalism that will support new knowledge-based research industries, then they will be unsustainable.

The drain of our best minds overseas will continue, and we will not

have the money to replace them — our balance of payments will worsen.

We tend to forget it these days, but the last time the US faced an economic downturn it was a far more serious one than the one they are facing now.

In the mid-1980s the US was floundering in an economic quicksand — Japanese and Korean imports seemed unstoppable and US business management was seen as ineffectual in the face of their onslaught.

Our view is one that ties all professional groups, including indexers, directly into Australia's prospects as an innovative society.

At that time, in response to their crisis, the US was fortunate in having some very wise heads who started thinking deeply about where their country's strategic competitive advantage (to use the management economist's term) lay.

The White House Science Council issued a report in 1986 that focused on the partnership between government, universities and industry. In it, these advisers wrote that, 'In this country, we are uniquely dependent upon our universities for both basic research and higher education — perhaps our greatest strength here has been our insistence that the two are inseparable. The heart of the university research system,' the report went on, 'is the parallel education of students ...' Moreover, 'the health of the entire spectrum of American education' — and remember this is the White House Science Council — 'from chemistry to computer science to the classics is important to our national future. The nation can ill afford generations of scientists and engineers unable to appreciate the economic and social consequences of their work or the underpinning values and moral judgments that are the primary focus of the humanist.'

Substitute 'indexers and editors' for 'humanist' in that last sentence and you will get what I am trying to say in the title of my speech today ...

In our discussion paper, the AVCC has argued that a case for around a 20 per cent increase in base grant funding over six years can be sustained.

This is around one-third of the funding announced recently for Defence, and as such we regard it as well within reasonable limits of fiscal responsibility.

Moreover, universities need to have a greater degree of policy and funding stability and predictability.

Too many people in universities already spend too much time responding to changed rules, supplying statistics, adjusting, applying endlessly for the basic funds we need simply to do our jobs, responding to frequent reviews or requests for information ... while all the time, more and more funds are tied or project-driven or supplied in packets.

We are slowly being made average. All Australians will suffer if that continues. Enrolling an average number of students into universities of average quality, supported by government at average levels, would be an appalling outcome.

Finding ourselves in the middle of the OECD expenditure tables on education, on research and on development, on information and communications output, is simply to fail.

Our view moreover is that the time we have available to us to get things right is now short. Other countries have already made the decision about the role of their universities and have started to finance them accordingly.

We know that the pace of change is such that if our universities get too far behind those in other countries, we will not catch up — the cost of catching up, indeed, is going up, to the point where it will be impossible to get there if the gap is too big.

There have been some commentators who have said we should go back to letting only the top 5 per cent of school-leavers into our universities — but I think this profoundly misunderstands the changing nature of society's knowledge requirements.

Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, I don't think this is what most Australians want, or should want, for their children and their country.

I'm sure our constitutional forebears would have recognised and respected our highest aspirations, and it is something we would do well to learn soon if we wish to preserve the material and spiritual wealth of our sublime democracy and lay the foundation for our next hundred years.

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Paper given at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors. Published in *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* 2001, vol. 25, no. 9/10, p. 92-3.

Registration of database indexers

Sandra Henderson

During this conference I've heard some interesting comments to do with registration.

During John Simkin's session on Friday afternoon someone asked 'Has the quality of book indexing improved in Australia since registration of back-of-book indexers has been around?' In the same session Alan Walker noted that in the US there are significant numbers of indexers who wouldn't touch registration with a barge-pole. I've heard several editors express a view that development of a system of accreditation of editors is a path they must go down. Last night Max McMaster said, in accepting his Medal, that there are a number of very competent indexers who are not members of the Society (and who by implication are therefore not eligible to be considered for the medal). Equally, I know of competent database indexers who are not members of the Society. Perhaps the lack of a registration process is one reason these people have for not joining—one of the things they can point to as a failing of the Society when they think 'What's in it for me?'.

What is registration?

So what is it we are trying to achieve and why?

What's registration and what are the benefits? Why do the database indexers want to belong to this secret sub-society of 'registered indexers'? (The issue of web-indexer registration is no doubt just around the corner.) If an indexer is working as a freelance or in-house database indexer, meeting the requirements of their employer in terms of speed, quality and consistency, what does registration offer? Registration in a professional sense can be defined as 'an impartial, third party endorsement of your knowledge and expertise by a respected professional body' (from the South African Board of Personnel Practice). Many other definitions mention the words 'assuring competence'. Being a registered indexer is not necessarily a guarantee for clients that all your indexing is of an excellent standard, but it should guarantee them that your indexing is of an acceptable standard and that you know what you are doing.

Registration is often linked to professionalism. In many jurisdictions it is illegal to practice as a doctor, lawyer, dentist, engineer and so on, if your name does not appear on a state or country register of like professionals, and the registration process is tied up with completion of completion of recognised educational courses, some amount of professional experience, participation in ongoing continuing education, and acceptance of a professional code of conduct or code of ethics. Linked to this is a process by which registration may be withdrawn for unethical or incompetent practice. However, there are also a range of occupations where registration is not mandatory, and some, like indexing, where even the basic educational achievement is not mandated. We are not the only occupation struggling with the issue of registration and how to achieve it. The peak bodies in those occupations wonder if they are indeed a profession, and see a registration process as a step in the direction of recognition as a profession.

Registration may be seen as a process which raises the status of the profession by assuring the client community about qualifications, standards and quality of practice. It is a step towards maintaining and gradually improving standards of practice, and it is to be hoped that the history of registration of book indexers has gradually improved the overall standard of book indexing in this country.

What happens in other societies?

In the UK there is a system of accreditation and registration of back-of-book indexers, with education criteria specified for the accreditation level, and registration as the higher level achievement. There is no accreditation of registration of database indexers, or web indexers—indeed these newer mutant varieties don't seem to be much in evidence in their society.

In the United States, as has been mentioned earlier in the conference, there is no system of accreditation or registration of indexers. As has also been said before at the conference, there is much opposition to the idea of any regulation. However, the issue is not dead, it is raised at the conferences of the American Society of Indexers, and Kate Mertes is writing a paper on the issue for their conference next month (May 2001). She does not sound overly optimistic that anything will be achieved, but supporters of the concept do not want to let it die. The Canadians, similarly, have no system of registration.

Progress

For over twenty years AusSI has been registering back-of-book indexers. In fact the Society's constitution says that a register of indexers will be kept. It is the practice of the Society to recommend only those indexers who are registered. The lack of a process for the registration of database indexers thus places the Society in itself in an awkward position. There are no indexers registered as database indexers (although some registered back-of-book indexers such as Max are equally capable in the field of database indexing). So how can the Society recommend an indexer to an organisation seeking a database indexer (and the clients are generally organisations, not publishers as is the case with back-of-book indexers). Indexers available is made online from the Society's web pages—and database indexers are listed—and people seeking a database indexer do use it as a means of locating possible indexers. If someone is contracted to do indexing because they are listed, and their work is not competent, this reflects badly on the Society despite any declarations that the listing does not imply recommendation for unregistered indexers. Those of us who've been to Marysville, Robertson and Katoomba know that the issue of registration of database indexers has been raised at each of those conferences, at least in informal discussion sessions, with everyone going away muttering that it's all too hard. However, after the most recent Hobart conference where it was discussed yet again, a small working group was convened (electronically) to work on developing a proposal. There were a succession of ideas and refinements passed around by email between the working group members (Garry, Max, Margaret and myself). We're now at the stage of having a proposal which needs the comments of the wider database indexing membership before we proceed any further.

What is being proposed?

The document as it stands starts with a statement of the purpose of registration. These are:

- To assist employers select suitable indexers for database work through a recognised accreditation process
- To provide a benchmark for database indexers to evaluate their own indexing skills and competencies
- To provide a measure of competence for the Society in recommending database indexers.

The more difficult issue, that of the criteria for assessment, has been the subject of much consideration, and will no doubt provoke much debate. The criteria suggested are:

- Education/training course attendance, e.g. appropriate indexing component in an information management course; specialised training in an AusSI database indexing/abstracting course

- Considerable experience in database indexing/abstracting of text/image material. This requires the use of both subject analysis as well as subject indexing. Subject cataloguing alone is not sufficient
- Assessment on sample. This would involve both: subject analysis and assignment of keywords using both thesaurus and non-thesaurus tools; and abstracting

It is suggested that the sample be two batches of ten records, one batch to be indexed using a general thesaurus (such as APAIS) and the other to be indexed using a specialist thesaurus. The applicant would have a choice of specialist thesaurus out of a limited group of options.

NOT ALL OF THE ABOVE CRITERIA WOULD NEED TO BE MET. A very experienced indexer may be exempted from one of the above.

Verification of education/training course attendance and/or database indexing experience would have to be provided, from educational and/or employer institutions.

There are, not unexpectedly, some problems with the criteria. The national committee of AusSI is concerned to keep some degree of parity with the registration for book indexing, and at present registration of book indexers is on a single criterion, although it has recently been expanded somewhat. However, the basis of registration is still the examination of a completed index, and there is no requirement for educational qualifications or substantiation of significant experience.

There is no standard curriculum in educational institutions, and the indexing component of information management courses can vary from brief mentions to intensive practical work. The Society has no role in the accreditation of any courses in database indexing, so is it legitimate to base registration on attendance at a course. It is also the case that at least in the past, many database indexers were subjected to very informal in-house training, based on a single database, by people who had also received no formal training.

There are quite a few more-than-competent database indexers who've spent their whole career indexing for a single database, or working in a very specialised area. Is sample indexing using a generalist thesaurus a useful measure of their indexing skill in this case? Some indexers have worked for years with a database or databases which do not require abstracts—should they be disadvantaged by this?

There is also a proposal for continued professional development and re-registration after ten years. There are no such requirements for book indexers. Whatever the merits of a re-registration process for either book or database indexers, would the Society's limited number of assessors be able to cope with this? The reaction of the national committee was that trying to achieve this for book indexers would be impossible given the limited resources available in terms of assessors. What of the opportunities for continued professional development? This is much easier for an indexer in a large government organisation where training and development are valued and funded, less easy for those in other organisations or freelancing. The nature of some database indexing is also very specialised, limiting the value of many development opportunities.

It is proposed that a panel of three assessors carry out the process. How are these people to be chosen in the first instance? Who assesses the assessors? While there are quite a number of experienced database indexers in Canberra and Melbourne, the same is not true for Sydney or other centres. Does this matter? Would the panel of assessors have to be physically present to administer a sample indexing process, or could this aspect be looked after by a single assessor?

As I thought about this I also wondered about some of the closely related activities undertaken by database indexers. These will include database management without actual indexing, a process of maintaining the database over time at a high level of consistency—not measured by the proposed criteria but a skill most experienced database indexer would be

expected to have. The development and maintenance of thesauri and authority control is also a key component and almost inseparable from the main work of an indexer or database manager. Even those using a thesaurus maintained elsewhere frequently undertake variant forms of thesaurus work—maintaining authority lists of terms used to enhance the thesaurus at a local level or to populate the other fields of a database. Should there be some recognition of this part of a database indexer's work?

As you can see this is not a cut-and-dried subject. What the Database Indexers Registration working group has done is think about the most pressing issues, put forward a proposal, and your comments are welcomed.

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Valuing your services, having your services valued

Pamela Hewitt, Canberra Society of Editors

Editors and indexers, on the whole, are

- highly skilled, combining generalist and specialist knowledge
- highly qualified, usually with a first degree, often with one or more postgraduate qualifications
- highly experienced, often with a track record of ten or twenty years in the industry
- working in industries at the forefront of technological change, at the very heart of the information revolution.

This is looking promising. Surely here we have the cream of the knowledge society, highly prized specialists for the industries of the future. It should go without saying that, as employees, we should command high salaries, a company car and generous executive packages. As freelancers, the sky should be the limit. What wouldn't a corporate client pay for the services of such people?

But wait. There are some other characteristics of the editing and indexing trades that I haven't yet mentioned. Consider these

- a lack of specialised, accredited higher education courses
- a predominantly female, underorganised workforce.

Even more damning

- our work is to do with words.

And, difficult as it is to measure, I would suggest that there is another killer factor at play here. As a rule

- we love our work.

We find it stimulating, fulfilling, varied, creative, engrossing.

When all these factors are combined, it turns out that we have a couple of professions where the work is bound to be grossly underpaid.

This doesn't mean that we should remain underpaid.

The purpose of this paper is to explore our options to see if we can't think of ways that we can ensure that our services are adequately valued. I mean valued in both senses of the word.

There is a range of options that we can explore as individuals and as members of professional societies to improve the standing of the professions in the industry and in society. These include

- professional association or trade union membership and activism
- improving our technological skills
- promoting educational pathways for initial training and ongoing professional development
- showcasing our skills to business, clients and the public through the activities of professional societies, through partnerships with other professionals...

The list could go on. Many of these options are being explored in other forums at this conference, and I hope that they prove fruitful. I hope that in years to come, people will recall this conference as the starting point of many positive professional partnerships.

My focus is a little more inward looking. While the activities that I have just outlined are vital, there is also a place for taking a step back and looking at how we think about ourselves. At the risk of sounding overly self-analytical, I suppose I am talking about the importance of professional self-esteem.

I called this paper 'Valuing your services, having your services valued' in the belief that the first will lead to the second. In order to value ourselves and our services properly, it might be helpful to remind ourselves why our services are valuable.

Why should we value our services?

1. Here is one good reason, to begin with. You are good at what you do. You have to be. We all know that in the commercial world, you are only as good as your last job. If you are getting work, especially repeat work or work that comes via personal recommendation, then by definition you must be offering a valuable service.
2. When we offer our services routinely in the workplace, or in the form of a quote or a tender, editors and indexers offer a great many skills. We bring our knowledge of the trade, of course. In addition, we often bring
 - knowledge of specialist fields (languages, academic disciplines and subject areas, technology)
 - knowledge of the publication process
 - the ability to meet punishing deadlines
 - specific negotiation skills for working with authors, designers, illustrators, printers, typesetters, management or editorial boards...
 - high levels of speed and accuracy
 - many years' experience.

Paragons like us would do well not to undersell such virtues.

By this stage, I hope you are all feeling worthy of respect and recognition. But of what practical use is this knowledge, you might ask yourself, if the marketplace holds your skills in low regard. In what follows, I propose some ways that we might put this 'professional self-esteem' to use.

Next time you provide a quote, or you find yourself negotiating with a client, think of it also as a platform to demonstrate the calibre of your professional skills. The next time you are working with colleagues, think of these activities as a way of increasing your knowledge of the profession. And if you are pressured to undermine your own worth by selling yourself short, think of the effects on your fellow indexers and editors.

Here are five ways to consider as avenues to augment the value you attribute to your own services.

My first proposal for considering the merit of your own work can be summarised by the word solidarity.

This is a quaint old-fashioned word that I think retains contemporary meaning. If I undercut my colleagues, in the long run I undercut myself. If I sell myself short, I sell my colleagues short. If I don't value my own services, I undervalue the services of my colleagues. I prefer not to do any of these things. I would rather that my colleagues didn't behave this way towards me. Solidarity forever.

A second way of improving your position in the industry at the same time as providing benefits to others is a simple one—networking.

There are advantages to being part of most groups. Networking through professional societies, at conferences such as this one and through more informal groups can increase your professional awareness and increase the real value of your work. How? You might find out about new technological developments. You could hear about professional opportunities. A well connected indexer or editor can direct a client to an appropriate colleague who has specific expertise for a particular job. This might be experience with a certain kind of software, the ability to understand Russian, a background in astrophysics or expertise in literary editing. That colleague could be you, this time or next time. All of these forms of networking can help us to provide better services or add value, to use the management jargon of our age.

Most of us have had the experience of people asking us to help find work or to help find someone with the right skills for a particular job. It helps everyone to put the right team together. As well as letting you know about opportunities, networking can also alert you to problems in your local industry. Networking might let you know about a client who pays late or not at all or about the disadvantages of a new contract under offer. Information like this can stop you from wasting your time and help you to target your services, which is another way of valuing your time and effort.

Our professional societies are networks, as are our personal links with other professionals. In addition, there is room for formal and informal groups of editors and indexers to join together to put forward tenders requiring specific combinations of skills and also to balance better the times of flood and famine that we often experience. No one wants to recommend a client whose work is not up to scratch and the best way to find out the calibre of your colleagues is to work with them.

Third, knowing your own worth is crucial when you are negotiating.

Your services will be valued and you will be taken more seriously if you start any negotiation from a position of strength. By this I mean working out your bottom line and deciding your position in advance. In the negotiating room, don't be tempted to shift from this position unless you are offered some additional element that might make a new deal worthwhile. Put simply, this is another way of valuing your services. It means that in any negotiation you are clear about how far you are prepared to go, and it means that you will never walk out of the negotiating room empty handed. Even if you don't get the contract, you walk out with your professional standards undiminished. You know that you have not undersold yourself (or your colleagues).

This leads me to my fourth area, and it is a vexed issue. People don't talk about it much in my experience, but it doesn't mean that it doesn't happen. Can I be the only person here who has been asked to lower my rates for some special reason? Yes, I'm talking about the dreaded D word, discounting.

I don't think that bakers or mechanics are routinely asked if they will bake bread or fix cars for less than their advertised prices, but I know that editors are. Clients sometimes ask for discounts, we sometimes give them. In fact I am not opposed to discounting under any circumstances (although I know that some editors say they are). What I am opposed to is random discounting. An explicit discount for work you consider to be in a good cause or because the job is intrinsically interesting is very different from a discount because the client is trying it on, or because you feel sorry for the person asking for a discount or because you find it hard to say no. If you make a point of letting clients know that you are providing your services at a discount rate for particular purposes, they shouldn't expect it from you or any other colleague as a matter of course in the future.

If a client genuinely has only so much in the budget for editing, instead of working for less money, it might be possible to negotiate performing a different service that does not involve

underselling your skills. (This can happen when the client is an individual, paying out of their private resources. It might be possible to offer a manuscript assessment or a chapter edit, instead of the full edit originally discussed.)

Finally, quoting. Quoting is a very public way in which we tell the world what we think we are worth, by offering to do a particular set of tasks for a specific sum.

Many of you will be familiar with the following scenario: your quote for a specific job is accepted. When you begin, or part of the way through, you find that the specifications have changed. The job is bigger than the one you quoted on or there are endless meetings that you were not told about or you are asked to incorporate author changes that were not part of the original quotation. Again, bakers are not expected to throw in extra cream buns, much less to double the amount of bread they agreed to bake for a certain price. Mechanics will charge you more if you bring the car back with a new problem. I have known them to charge twice for the same problem! This is not the place for a detailed discussion of quoting protocols. But I would say two things about quotes or tenders if you want others to value your services.

- The first is to make sure your original paperwork is very clear about precisely what your quote covers and what it does not. This can save a lot of heartache. It clarifies your position in the event of any later differences in interpretation of words and phrases in the written quotation such as 'editing' or 'compiling an index'.
- The second is to suggest that you resist client requests to perform extra tasks for no extra payment. It sounds so simple, and yet if all the editors in Australia did this, we would find we were not taken so much for granted and our services were valued a great deal more. Overnight, perhaps.

When clients place us under pressure to lower our rates, or to do extra work for no extra payment (which comes to the same thing) remember that behind an hourly rate lurk many hidden costs. In particular, remember that a freelance editor or indexer is paid by the hour, by the job, by the page, or, the ultimate in piecework, by the word. Time is certainly money, but time is not our only cost. Freelancers are not paid when they are sick, they do not receive superannuation benefits, recreation leave, long service leave, professional development, they are not paid for the time spent in administration, coping with IT problems, preparing quotations, or for the costs of running a car and upgrading equipment. When the government 'reforms' the taxation system so that small businesses collect a new consumption tax on its behalf, it does not pay those businesses for their efforts, even when the number of tax returns increases from one a year to five a year. So when you fail to incorporate those costs in your services, you are giving them away, as well as your time and your skills.

Before I finish, you are entitled to wonder whether I have ever been guilty of any of the practices I have just cautioned you about? I confess that that in preparing this paper, I have dosed myself with the medicine I now dispense.

Much of this paper has concentrated on outlining the problems we face in ensuring that our services are adequately valued.

You might ask 'If it's all so hard and so poorly recognised, why do it? Why not be a baker or a mechanic?'

It has been said that doing the work you want to do is worth \$100,000 a year (a comment attributed to Isaiah Berlin). Add that to whatever you earn, and indexing or editing starts to look pretty attractive.

It's heartening to know that what you do is creative, worthwhile, skilled and absorbing. It's wonderful indeed to find your work satisfying. It's great to be happy with your work.

But you might as well be happy AND valued.

In writing this paper, I tried to get useful data on editors and indexers. As I expected, meaningful information is hard to come by. The terms editor and indexer cover a multitude of sins. They are both at once too specific and too general to collect information about.

This is why I decided to conduct a survey, handing out a questionnaire at the conference. This captive audience seemed too good an opportunity to miss. The survey asks you about your professional priorities, your educational and employment background, your special skills and your current rates. Filling it in is of course completely optional.

Our aim in undertaking such a survey is to provide some useful data for the societies to use in publicising the levels of skill and expertise of indexers and editors, and to gather information that can be a basis for further advocacy work. As well as the issue of rates, the survey briefly covers a few other areas - education and training needs, your ideas on the implications of technology in your field and your views about appropriate roles for professional societies. The organising committee for this conference will undertake to compile the information that comes out of the conference survey. We hope that the professional bodies and future conferences will circulate it through their respective societies and branches, creating a useful national database.

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Web Mounted Indexes

Frances S. Lennie & David K. Ream

Paper delivered at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors.

Indexes found on the Web come in a variety of shapes and sizes, some stand alone and some link to text. In this paper we explore the different approaches that indexers (and their commissioning clients) have taken to provide effective and innovative access to information.

We will primarily be looking at and discussing indexes that have been prepared for a traditional print product and subsequently (in some cases both text and index) mounted on web sites, and one index that is prepared exclusively for web display. (Note: this index was demonstrated in Canberra, but has recently been removed and is not included in the handout content below).

We will not be discussing the indexing of web sites which not only requires a different approach entirely, but also provides active linking to text at the time an entry is made and involves periodic checking to ensure the link remains active.

Some of the indexes that we will demonstrate link to documents on the same web site, but several are regularly updated cumulative indexes which precede the less frequently produced print version. For example, journal indexes can be updated monthly with a print index produced annually.

Logic would seem to insist that there should be little or no difference between print and web-mounted indexes in terms of:

- indexing standards (accuracy, appropriateness, organisational consistency, etc.)
- speed and ease of access, regardless of medium.

David K. Ream

Substantial differences may lie, however, both in the manner in which the index is displayed between print and web-mounted indexes and also in the ease with which one moves from index to text in the following three scenarios:

- print index to print text
- web index to print text
- web index to web index.

For example, multi-volume works with a single index require an additional step (to locate the individual volume) in the print medium whereas the same web index linked to web text does not require the user to take that extra step.

Before looking at technical and presentation concerns when preparing indexes for web display, and subsequent demonstration and discussion of the indexes on the enclosed handout (text attached below), we offer a few thoughts for your consideration:

- Is the potential audience wider with a web index? If it is, should we be adopting different indexing strategies than we currently use for traditional print products?
- Is it now time for a renaissance of the much-maligned, and under- appreciated, introductory note to the index? Now that the user always starts at the beginning of the index (not the case in a print index), just think of the possibilities — perhaps a reminder at the start of each letter group!

- And, finally, with the advent of e-books, particularly in the reference and textbook arena, we will probably see the development of a different kind of index: browseable yet layered, linked to the text and perhaps 'back-linked' from the text to like entries in the index.

The following web page contains a link from which the PowerPoint slides can be downloaded for a comparison of Print vs. Web Index display and creation criteria:
<http://www.levtechinc.com/ProdServ/Presentations.htm> .

The text of the handout is shown below.

Frances S. Lennie is the owner of *Indexing Research*, Rochester, New York, USA (www.indexres.com)

David Ream is the senior consultant at *Leverage Technologies, Inc.*, Cleveland, Ohio, USA (www.levtechinc.com)

At the following locations you will find indexes prepared by CINDEXTM indexing software and 'mounted' for browsing. Some have been processed by HTML/Prep (indicated by *), developed and distributed by Leverage Technologies, Inc. (<http://www.levtechinc.com> / — browse to Products and Services | LevTech Utilities | HTML/Prep).

Newspaper

The Darien News Review and *The Darien Times*
<http://www.darien.lib.ct.us/news/default.htm>

Local History Journal

Rochester History *

<http://mcls.rochester.lib.ny.us/~rochhist/>

Law

Labor Relations Reporter * (Index and Table of Cases)
<http://www.bna.com/lrr/lrrindx.htm>

Government Employee Relations Report * (Index and Table of Cases)
<http://www.bna.com/current/ger/>

Medicine

Psychosomatic Medicine
http://www.psychosomatic.org/journal_index200.html

Fiction

Les Roberts' Milan Jacovich Detective Series *

<http://www.levtechinc.com/Milan/Milan.htm>

Paper given at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors.

Ten Steps To An Edited Ms: The Practice Of Editing

Janet Mackenzie, Victorian Society of Editors

I have worked for almost thirty years as a freelance editor, and in that time I have developed a systematic, streamlined process which I apply to each job. I feel a bit exposed, discussing it here, because I realise I've never talked to anyone about it before. My family don't know what I do when I disappear into my workroom; my colleagues know what I do, they see the results, but they don't care how I do it. Nor have I ever seen this mentioned in editing textbooks—they tell you what to do, but not how.

As any editor knows, every book is different. Therefore it's more efficient to emphasise their similarities, to fit them all into the same framework, to minimise the variables, so you can concentrate on the differences that are significant. This can free you, in the same way that routine can free you to concentrate on the important things—but, like routine, it should not become an end in itself.

I'll mention editing on screen, but I've only been working on screen for a few years, and I'm still refining my processes. I'd welcome any advice and contributions on what you've found to work for on-screen projects.

What I'm presenting here today is not a franchise; it doesn't have to be adopted in every detail. I don't apply it rigidly myself. I don't hesitate to add more steps when I need them for a particular job. I don't often skip steps, though. I generally fit any job I do, from a ten-page magazine article to a 1000-page economics textbook, into this framework of ten steps. But I'm not laying down the law here, I'm trying to promote discussion. I offer my system simply as a workable model, and I hope to provoke you into thinking about your own working methods and how you can make them more streamlined and efficient.

Keeping track

I try to keep paperwork to a minimum, but I keep three kinds of records: a schedule, a diary, and a workplan. At one time I decided to get big and employ several sub-contractors, so I had to develop good systems for keeping track of schedules and work in and out. After a while I gave up employing others, because I really prefer editing to managing, but I have been in charge of as many as eighteen jobs at a time.

The schedule

The schedule is the bane of every freelancer's life. One phonecall to tell you that something is coming—or, more often, isn't coming—can change your whole week, your whole month. I keep my schedule in pencil in the front of my financial year diary. The column 'others' allows you to track work given to sub-contractors. When I receive a schedule for a job, I fill in all the deadlines right through to the proofs. If something doesn't turn up on time, I phone the client or the author and find out what's happening.

Aug

Due in

Working on

Others

Due out

1

EDWARDS 2nd prfs

MACGREGOR edit MS

2

MACGREGOR edit MS

3

VINCENZO idx

MACGREGOR edit MS

MACGREGOR acxn

4

VINCENZO idx

VINCENZO idx

5

EDWARDS 2nd prfs, idx

EDWARDS 2nd prfs

6

7

8

CHAN acxns

CHAN finalise MS

9

10

ABERFOYLE MS

11

ABERFOYLE edit MS

CHAN ed MS

12

ABERFOYLE edit MS

13

14

15

HEINZ MS

ABERFOYLE edit MS

16

17

18

19

20

The diary

In my diary I record work done on each job, identified by the author's name. In educational publishing it's usual to identify jobs by title, but in my experience the title sometimes changes during production, whereas the author's name doesn't. It's useful to write the author's name prominently in your diary at the beginning of each entry so you can look back and find previous entries relating to that job.

I also keep a running total of hours worked on each job, as a circled figure. When I invoice, I mark the total specially, to prevent double billing. This is important when you work on a job in stages and send progressive invoices.

1 August

EDWARDS: ph. LK re non-arrival 2nd prfs. Now due tomorrow.

CHAN: author ph. with queries.

MACGREGOR: 2nd go headings, prelims, pix, 6 hrs. 31

The workplan

The workplan I maintain on screen. I adapted it from a board that I saw in the office of an engineer, and over time I've added a couple of extra columns as I found I needed them. I update it about once a week, more often if I'm busy.

Last updated: 1 August

Publisher

Author & Title

Stage

Last Action

Next Action

* = could start

** = do now

Dead-line

Quote

Hrs not billed

Dodgy Bros

EDWARDS Orchids for Fun and Profit

correcting

1st prfs

sent 1st prfs

5 June

collate 2nd prfs

due 1 Aug

8 Aug

6.5

Camford UP

HEINZ

Sociology of Sociology

waiting

rev MS

ph BM

2 Aug

edit MS

due 15 Aug

23 Sept

2000

3

Bench Press

CHAN

Exploring Computers

MS

waiting acxn

em auth

30 July

incorp acxns

due 8 Aug

12 Aug

1800

22

Ten Steps

The ten steps of the editing process are listed below. They apply only to copy-editing; structural editing requires a completely different approach. The advice given here is for the sort of job that comes with the usual optimistic instruction 'It's just a straight copy edit—shouldn't need much at all.'

Some of you may be shocked to find I go through the text sequentially and in detail only twice. But of course the 'First Go' and the 'Second Go' are notional. In fact, 'First Go Bibliog' may actually mean going through the bibliography three or more times:

- Read each entry completely
- Having noticed a problem with punctuation of authors' names, go through looking only at those
- Having noticed a problem with the capitalisation of titles of books, go through reading only the italic
- Check alphabetical order.

Similarly, you might go through the text entirely as part of the First Go just to check the abbreviations, or at the end of the Second Go to check the paragraphing.

On every job, as I finish, I wish I could go through one more time to make it really good. But the publisher won't thank you for perfection, and in the end the readers won't pay you for it.

Not every book is a Rolls Royce. I seem to spend most of my time working on Commodores—and occasionally I'm asked to produce a Commodore from material that is the textual equivalent of a ride-on mower.

1 Appraisal

What have you got? What haven't you got? What do you need to know?

A great lump of paper arrives on your desk. Where do you start?

First, separate the MS itself from the papers concerning it—the editorial brief, correspondence, reader's report, sample setting, author questionnaire. Look through these papers to get an idea of the project. It's important to find out, for instance, whether this is a book of papers that emerged from a conference, or a biography the author has been working on for twenty years. Take all the papers concerning, and put them in a manila folder. This is the file.

Then identify the prelims, separate them, look through them. List any missing items, such as acknowledgements or list of illustrations. Put the prelims aside. Then find out what else you've got—artwork, captions, appendixes, etc., and again note what's missing.

Now you're ready for the text. Flick through the whole thing, forming an impression of the author's methods—do the headings look okay, are there tables or pix included in the text, are the quotes set down or run on? Read a bit of the introduction or first chapter to see how it begins.

After all that, you finally read a sample of the text. Select thirty or fifty pages, and note the time; then read them, editing in pencil as you go. This will give you an idea of how long the editing will take. For this exercise don't select the first or last chapter, because they're often anomalous, quite different in style from the main part of the text. Chapter seven is a good one—the author's usually well into his stride by then.

On screen, the processes are different, but you arrive at the same result. First, as soon as you insert the disk into your disk-drive, run a virus scan on it. Then copy everything on it to your hard drive, remove the disk and store it in a safe place. This is your original copy and you may need it if disaster strikes. On your hard drive, open every file and check for compatibility problems. Check whether the author has applied styles. Then, just as you would on paper, look through to check the headings and so on, and edit a sample to judge the quality of the writing.

You now have a picture of the job and how much work has to be done. This step should have taken you no more than three hours.

At this point it's usually necessary to clarify the editorial brief. You'll have questions about style and about production methods—how much can be left to the typesetter? You'll have to confirm the schedule. At this time also, ask about any missing copy—acknowledgements, permissions, bibliography. Who is responsible for producing the copy, and is it your job to chase them?

When you've obtained answers to these questions, you're in a position to give a quote. Quoting is a whole workshop in itself, so I'll cover it briefly here. I have a sheet of paper with the ten steps listed, as you have them in front of you, together with subheadings according to the particular job. Against every task I write an estimate of the number of hours it will take. Add them up, and add a 10 per cent fudge factor—you have to allow for unforeseen problems, because it is their nature to be just that, unforeseen. Multiply the total by your hourly rate, and that's your quote. If it looks outrageous, go back and be more hard-headed about the number of hours for each task, but don't be unrealistic.

If you're a freelancer, there is no need to tell your client your hourly rate. Insist on quoting on the actual job. Never give firm quote unless you have the complete job on your desk. If all you have is a sample, give rough estimate instead, and stress that you cannot be held to this

figure. If extra tasks that were not included in the editorial brief become necessary during the editing process—such as writing captions—negotiate extra payment. When I give a quote, I name a figure plus or minus 10 per cent, and I make sure to give the publisher the benefit if I finish in less time than expected, just as I expect to be paid the maximum if the job goes to the limit.

2 Mark-up/Apply styles

Distinguish text from non-text

The traditional method of distinguishing non-text items—quotations, boxed text, tables, questions, exercises, and so on—is colour coding, ruling coloured lines in the left margin. I go through and do this as a separate operation, reading just enough to identify the various elements. At this stage I'm concentrating on the typography rather than the words. In a MS that uses the author-date or Harvard system of referencing, I also use a highlighter on the references in the text, so I can later check them against the list of references. You don't expect to find everything that has to be marked at this stage, but you do all the obvious stuff.

As part of the mark-up I mark the headings, but I don't grade sub-headings at this stage unless the author's scheme is really simple and consistently applied. Instead, I mark a circle next to each sub-heading, to identify it as a heading. Later in a separate operation I come back and grade them as A, B, C etc.

Colour coding is a good job to do when you're not feeling very bright—it's a Friday-afternoon job, if you can manage it. Depending on the MS and the time of day and my mood, I may intersperse mark-up with the next step, the First Go through the text, chapter by chapter.

On screen, the equivalent to mark-up is applying styles. For the headings, I often use the default headings in Word—Heading 1, etc.—to identify them as headings, and come back and refine the system later, using global changes to apply custom headings. This has two advantages: you can use the keyboard to apply the default heading styles, which is quick; and you can use Document Outline to edit the default headings before you change them to custom headings.

When working on screen, it's important to save every few minutes, preferably at the end of every paragraph. Because Word makes a temporary file for each save, it's a good idea to close Word every hour or so to consolidate the temporary files.

If you're using a keyboard, you must guard against RSI. One way to do this is to learn to use the mouse in your left hand. This spreads the repetitious movements more evenly between your two hands. With your left hand on the mouse you can move around the screen, you can select text, and you can move text. Meanwhile your right hand hovers over the punctuation and delete keys. This is a very speedy way of editing. But remember that, all things being equal, the keyboard is quicker than the mouse. You can learn the default keyboard shortcuts, or you can customise them with Tools/ Customise/ Commands/ Keyboard.

3 First Go text

Identify problems, solve all the easy ones

Your aim at this stage is to keep moving through the text fairly fast. You are trying to identify all the problems, solve everything uncontroversial, and query or note everything else. In the First Go, you do obvious things like correcting the style of dates, spelling out 'per cent', fixing the end punctuation in relation to closing quote marks. You do any bits of mark-up that were missed. You do the easy and obvious language editing, correcting grammatical mistakes and wrongly used words. You can do some of the capitalisation at this stage, especially in the later chapters.

Everything that can't be solved quickly you mark for later attention. So if there's a paragraph of knotty prose that I can't disentangle quickly, I pencil a wavy vertical line in the margin, or if

there's a suspect spelling of a name, I circle it in the text and pencil a question mark in the margin.

All queries are marked in pencil, so they can be removed later. I find it useful to position queries and instructions in a systematic way. Any query that has to be referred to the author, I mark in the left margin of the MS. Anything I think I can solve, I mark in right margin. Similarly I always mark the location of pix and tables in the left margin. When you're looking for these marks, for instance to check that the table numbers are in sequence, you'll find them much faster if you know where to look, instead of having to scan the whole page, and read and dismiss all the irrelevant marks.

On screen, I use the Comments function for queries for the author, and xxx in the text for queries that I must attend to. At this stage, also, it's important to make global changes. As we all know, enthusiastic application of global changes can have unintended consequences; make them early, so you can detect any surprises in a later reading.

4 First Go everything else

You now repeat this process with all the other parts of the MS besides the text. You read fairly fast through the notes and bibliography, identifying all the problems and solving the easy ones. As I said, First Go through the bibliography, for instance, may actually require three or four passes. Then you check the notes against the bibliography and against the text, and note any discrepancies. If you're working with the author-date system, you check the highlighted references in the text against the list of references.

Similarly, you work through the tables—if there are more than two or three, remove them all from the MS, put them together and work on them together to ensure consistency. If there are illustrations, go through the artwork and the captions, compile an artwork list and list of illustrations, and check that permissions have been obtained.

As a separate operation, you go through the headings—all the chapter headings and sub-headings. You edit them for sense and style, grade them, and check them against the contents list. And similarly, you do a First Go through the prelims.

5 Second Go all

Solve all possible queries

You now repeat the whole process for each part of the MS, but this time your aim is to solve everything you possibly can. Now you've removed most of the distractions—misspellings, grammatical mistakes, stray capitals, etc. —you can put yourself in the position of the reader. You can concentrate on the sense of the text, and you can take a broader view. At this stage you pick up inconsistencies and contradictions in the story or argument.

You solve all the queries as you go, though you will usually find a few that are too hard. If a query or a passage of text is really holding you up, leave it. At the end you'll find you have half-dozen or so really difficult ones: being nearly at the end of the job, you can tackle them in a determined frame of mind, and either solve them or decide to refer them to the author or designer.

On screen, don't make any global changes at this stage because this is your last read. You can still do a Search and Replace, where you check every instance before you change it, but any errors introduced by global changes at this stage will not be detected.

6 Compile author queries

The presentation of author queries varies with the production process. The easiest method is to send the author the edited MS with your pencilled queries in the left-hand margin. Of course you solve all your own queries and remove them before you send the MS to the author.

The most time-consuming method of preparing author queries is to type up a list. If you have to do this, don't refer to line numbers. It's quicker to refer to the top, middle and bottom of the page as a, b, c, so 118a signifies a query at the top of p. 118. Be sure to explain to the author that you're using this system.

On screen, use the Comments function. The default style for the Comment reference in the text is very small and hard to see, so you'll probably want to alter the default style to about 14 pt bold to attract the author's attention.

7 Documentation, extra copy

Prepare design brief, fill in forms, prepare copy for running heads, prelims

This step can be delayed, or you may combine part of it with the previous one. You will probably want to send the author the copy you have prepared for the list of abbreviations, for instance. If you're pushed for time, you can send off the author queries and leave most of the documentation until you finalise the MS, at step eight or nine. But it's better to complete the documentation as far as possible just after you have finished step six, while everything is fresh in your mind.

The documentation includes a style sheet listing particular spellings, capitalisation, and so on. for the MS, which I'll discuss in a moment.

You must also prepare a design brief, which is a description of the MS for the designer—how many pages or files, what styles are used, the heading grades, special characters needed, the number and type of illustrations, etc., and any particular points about an awkward table or list, and poetry and other special layout. Remember to explain the colour coding you have used. The design brief may also include a note to the typesetter concerning global changes to be made, or you may fill in a detailed type spec.

The extra copy includes copy for running heads, possibly a list of illustrations for the prelims, a list of abbreviations, a glossary, a blurb.

At this stage also it's wise to reread the editorial brief, just to make sure you have done everything that's asked.

Putting the job aside

Now you have to put the job aside until you hear from the author. You may not look at it again for weeks or even months. Whenever you put a job aside, for this or any other reason, write yourself a to-do list. After some time has gone by, you'll forget that you were going to supply the latest figures in Table 6, or check up on that publication date in the bibliography, or do an extra check on the captions. Make a list of everything that's still to be done, and place the list on top of the MS so you can find it quickly.

8 Incorporate author corrections

The method of incorporating the author's corrections depends on the production process. On paper, you copy them in by hand; on screen you make the changes on the disk.

Incorporating author corrections involves comparing two versions and changing one of them. The same situation arises with proofs: you have to collate all the corrections onto one copy. I find it useful to keep the version I'm changing - the one I will write on—directly in front of me, and turn the pages to the right. The version I'm referring to is to my left, and I turn its pages to the left. This system prevents you from mixing up the pages of the two versions, which can be a very time-consuming mistake.

Similarly, when comparing two versions on screen, I use a split screen; the version I am changing is always the one at the bottom, and the version I'm referring to is always the one at the top. This prevents me from making changes to the wrong version of the document, again a time-consuming mistake.

9 Final check all

Remove all unwanted marks from MS, complete documentation

After you've made all the changes that the author wants, you're almost finished. This stage I call the final check. I go through every page of the MS and all its bits and pieces. I make sure that any instructions and remaining queries are legible and intelligible, that they're circled (meaning 'do not set'), and that they're labelled appropriately for the author or the designer or the typesetter. (Of course, we hope that there won't be any queries for the author at this stage, but occasionally there are one or two points that have to be updated in proof.)

Make sure there are no unwanted marks remaining. Very often you will query, say, the spelling of a name in five places. When the author sends corrections, you correct the two that are wrong, but often you don't remove the query mark against the three that are right. It's important to remove these marks, because they slow down everyone who handles the MS. In traditional production, the designer, the typesetter and the proofreader will all scratch their heads over these marks and think, 'Does this apply to me? Am I supposed to solve it?' Nor do they want to read a dialogue between you and the author about some point that is now resolved. Such marks really slow up the process for everybody all along the line. It's up to the editor to cross out or erase all queries that no longer apply.

On screen, similarly, you check for xxx or whatever you have used to mark queries for yourself, deal with them and erase the query marker. At this stage also, and not before, you do a spellcheck and remove double spaces. It's important to do these two operations last, because you can introduce errors as you incorporate the author corrections.

At this stage also, you check all the documentation and make sure it's complete.

10 Despatch/handover

Now you've reached the last step. You write a covering letter, drawing attention to any remaining problems such as outstanding copy. You prepare the invoice, and package and despatch the edited MS.

Collate 1st proofs

I also have a systematic method for dealing with proofs, particularly for collating first proofs.

First, I transfer the author's corrections to the proofreader's set, so that I have everything on one set of proofs. If an essential author's correction creates problems—for instance, alters the pagination—I make the correction in ink on the proofreader's set and add a mark in pencil to remind me to make compensating changes later.

I then go through the proofreader's set, looking at the proofreader's corrections to make sure they're necessary and desirable and don't raise problems with copyfitting. At the same time I deal with the proofreader's queries. On this pass also I solve the problems raised by the author corrections—in general, I aim to fix every problem except the half-dozen or so that are really too hard.

Then I check the prelims. This is quite a complex task. I'm sure you're familiar with the rule that says 'The larger the type, the easier it is to miss a typo.' A typo on the title page is very embarrassing, believe me. You'll need to check that the page numbers given in the contents list and the list of illustrations are correct by turning to the relevant pages. There are a lot of things that can go wrong in the prelims—pagination, folios, running heads—so check and double check.

Make a separate pass through the text and endmatter to check the headings. For every book, check the running heads. If the book has a complicated scheme of sub-headings, go right through checking nothing but the sub-headings—grading, wording, capitalisation. Depending on the book, you may have to make several separate passes to check the tables, pix and captions.

Then you make another pass to check the typography. Look at each page for widows, orphans, rivers of white space, hyphens at the end of a page. As you do this, ensure all queries are answered and—as with the edited MS—remove all unwanted marks.

Just to be sure, check the prelims one more time. If there are any really serious problems in the proofs, tag them for the designer or production editor, and list them in a covering letter. Then you can invoice, package and despatch.

The desktop

To give you a complete picture of my method, I'll describe the layout of my desk, which I realise is very rigid and systematic. This really reveals me as obsessive-compulsive, but most editors are. My inflexible layout has an advantage: no matter what job I'm working on, I can put my hand on any part of the MS with ease. Naturally, I'm not suggesting you follow my plan in detail; I'm just demonstrating how to apply a system in order to be more efficient.

In the top left-hand corner of my desk is the file, in a manila folder, with the prelims on top of it. Next to them are the chapters yet to be worked on; immediately in front of me is the chapter I'm working on; to the left the chapters I have already read. To my right are my pens, ruler, white-out, and the style sheet and the running sheet, which I'll explain in a moment. Off to the right are the illustrations, captions, appendixes and other bits and pieces. Beyond them the system breaks down and there's a bunch of used coffee cups, personal mail, unpaid bills and other debris which we won't examine.

The word list

A word list or style sheet is kept for every job, detailing the spellings, capitals, hyphens, etc. peculiar to the MS. Traditionally this has been called the style sheet, but since Microsoft Word has hijacked the word 'style', I'm starting to refer to it as the word list to prevent confusion. If you're working on screen you can keep the word list on paper, or you can have it on screen, keeping it open in another window so you can refer to it easily.

On paper, some people rule their word list into twelve or twenty-four boxes; I use six, but you can suit yourself. On the bottom of it I scribble notes about things I have to tell the typesetter—en rules for dashes, curly quotes for straight quotes, etc. Make sure you write the author's name and the title in the top left corner of the word list. In fact, always write the author's name and the title on any documentation or separate part of the MS—nothing is more demoralising than to find a word list, or an index, or a record of a phone conversation, and not know which job it refers to.

The running sheet

The running sheet never had a name until I began to prepare this talk, because I've never mentioned it to anyone. It's just a sheet of paper that I have for every job, and can't manage without. It lists the ten steps, with sub-headings appropriate to the particular job, and the number of hours I expect each task to take. As I've said, I prepare it for the quote, and I keep it by my side during the job to monitor my progress. Thus if I've estimated six hours for 'First Go text' and I find it actually takes ten hours, I know immediately that I have a problem, and I have to renegotiate the job with my client; if I find that I'm lingering too much on the Second Go—enjoying the book too much—I can press on a bit faster, or resign myself to losing money on the job.

I add other information to the running sheet as the job progresses. I scribble on it general points to be raised with the author, with the designer, and with the client. These notes form the basis of the author queries, the design brief, and the covering letter. I also note extra tasks that I see are necessary, such as checking the paragraphing throughout, and adjust the hours to allow for them. And I jot down major, unusual problems—a table that has to be reworked, or renumbering of the pix in chapter 5, all the 'too hard' ones that need special attention. When I'm putting a job aside and need a to-do list, I generally write it on a spare corner of the running sheet, so that I can gain a complete picture of the state of the job from

this one piece of paper. With the running sheet in front of me, I can answer desperate phone calls about missing captions or tasks not done in a calm, professional manner, even if I haven't looked at the job for a month.

Handling the MS

I'll also say a word about the physical handling of paper MSS. Again, I'm obsessive about the shape of my MS. I like it to be a solid block of paper, with the edges as tight as if guillotined. You stack paper like this for the printer and the photocopier, do it for yourself too. It makes the MS much easier to work with.

With the MS in a solid block, I can see the edges of the coloured sheets that I use to separate the chapters. This enables me to find any chapter quickly and see where it begins and ends, which is particularly valuable if the notes are presented at the end of each chapter. With the MS in a solid block, I can riffle the pages with my thumb to find either a particular author query in the left margin, or a query to myself in the right margin. Much of editing consists of checking and cross-checking—was that name spelt that way last time, wasn't it 1993 when the minister resigned, and so on. If you set up your work so that it's easy to cross-check, you're more likely to do it.

Whenever I have to refer to another part of the MS—a previous chapter, a list of captions or whatever—I take my ruler and place it across the chapter I'm working on. Then I open up the other chapter on top of the ruler, to look for the relevant spot. This saves getting pages from the two chapters mixed up, which can be a time-consuming problem, as I've said.

I'll just say a word about the use of tags. Large numbers of tags devalue the currency and become counterproductive. Nothing makes my heart sink like a 300-page set of proofs with 250 tags. As I've said, in collation of proofs you go through every page of the proofs several times, and check every correction and query. It's a complete waste of time for the proofreader to apply all these tags, and in fact it shows ignorance of the production process. Tags should be used to draw attention to particular, serious, unusual problems, not to every routine query and correction.

On screen, I'm still developing my processes for handling MSS. I have a directory for each publisher, and I name all my files by the author's surname, or the first few letters of it, plus standard abbreviations. Thus 'Smith-aqq2' is a second round of author queries on the Smith MS; 'Smith-desbrf' is the design brief, and so on. The actual MS is in a folder of its own, called xSmith, so I know it's the manuscript itself and not papers concerning it. Within that folder I use 'Save As' at the end of each stage, so it will contain files called 'Smith1', 'Smith2' or 'Smith-orig ms', 'Smith-ed ms' or whatever. As far as possible, I prefer to have the whole text of the MS in one file, rather than a separate file for each chapter, because I'm more likely to make global changes and cross-check thoroughly in the file I'm working in. It's tedious to have to open a dozen files every time you want to make a global change or a Search and Replace.

Backing up is a chore, but re-doing a day's work is a worse chore. I use a Zip drive, which is very fast and makes back-up pretty painless. Do a back-up after every session, and at the end of each day do an extra back-up and put the disk in another room. Ideally, every month or so you should do a complete back-up of everything and store it off-site—say, at a friend's house—in case of total disaster.

Paper given at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors. Published in *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* 2001, vol. 25, no. 8, p. 79.

Ethics: the role of societies in maintaining professional integrity

John E Simkin, AusSI

Ethics involves decisions related to a matter in hand. There must be an objective to be reached. Ethics consists of the decisions which are made to reach the objective with the optimum result, ie with the greatest good for the greatest number.

Ethical decisions are based on knowledge; the greater the knowledge of the factors involved the better the decision can be. Thus it follows that there may never be a perfect answer, i.e. one in which everyone involved gains equally or all together. However, greater knowledge and better 'ethical' planning can achieve a better result. By contrast, moral codes, prescribing as they do, rights and wrongs, blacks and whites, thou shalts and thou shalt nots, assume no process of thinking or planning; merely follow the rules and the answer will be 'right'. For knowledge professions like editing and indexing, rules will not do. Ethics must be applied.

To put it another way, morals have codes, ethics have principles. The result of the application of a moral precept is always the same. 'Thou shalt not play sport on the Sabbath' always gives the same answer. The ethical consideration: 'Let's find the best day for our cricket match giving regard to all the factors involved—the weather, the availability of venues, the freedom of participants to attend, may provide a range of answers from which we will take the one which gives the optimum result.

Editors and indexers have at least one common objective in their work: to represent accurately the communications of the author. If an editor or indexer finds that they are too close to the subject in hand or have opinions which will stand in the way of them handling the author's work objectively it would be as well to withdraw from the job. The training of editors and indexers in formal studies and on the job should encourage the development of objectivity in handling the ideas and opinions of others and especially those ideas and opinions which are in the category of the editor's or indexer's pet loves or hates.

The hypotheticals tomorrow will present situations where ethical judgements need to be applied.

As to the role of professional societies in maintaining professional integrity, there are problems. After the event, when the job is done and the work published, it is usually not possible to identify the editor's work while the indexer's, as a separate element, is more visible. Thus the indexer's work can be subject to criticism but the editors may not be. Many indexes are reviewed and the reviews abstracted and published in *The Indexer*. However, since most publishers do not record the indexer as part of the team, it is not easy for the professional societies to take any action where an indexer is seen to be doing the job poorly and 'unethically'. In the case of editors there can be a mechanism for complaints where an author feels his work has been improperly handled by the editor. The professional society might take on itself, for the good of the profession, to assess the situation through the inspection of working documents through the various stages of the work. (Work on line or on disc, does not leave much of a trail in most cases; how to follow the editor's work, good or bad?).

There are two other constraints which need to be taken into consideration when assessing the work of editors or indexers.

1. Limitations of budget or space. To the indexer: We can allow you four pages for the index. Indexer thinks: But this book requires at least a six-page index; but they'll get what they pay for. To the editor: I know the proofs need a further read but the budget won't stand it, the book will have to go to press as is.

2. Bad timing. Different publishers have different practices as to when they bring editors and proofreaders to the job. Indexers are almost always bought on at the last minute and with a deadline of yesterday. In all cases where these professionals are not included in the team from the beginning a publisher is wasting expertise. A good example of this is demonstrated in the book which won this year's Australian Society of Indexers medal. While the indexer (one of the most experienced in Australia) did an excellent job within the constraints of an unusual structure, if he had been engaged at an earlier stage, he would have insisted on producing an index which would have given access to much information which is now hidden within the book.

The difference between 'unethical' work and work which is limited by some arbitrary criteria is apparent. Do professional societies have the time and/or manpower to keep an eye on the work which may enhance or besmirch the profession?

Paper given at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors.

The Sixth Edition Of The Commonwealth's Style Manual

Loma Snooks

I'm delighted to have the chance today, on behalf of the team revising the Commonwealth's Style Manual, to tell you about the forthcoming sixth edition.

First, I'll look at the broad differences between this new edition (due out later this year) and the fifth edition, which was published in 1994. I'll explain the structure of the new manual and make a couple of comments on each chapter and give a brief description of our team's background and responsibilities on the project.

Broad differences

There are some major differences between this sixth edition and its predecessors. The first difference relates to how it is being produced: it's an outsourced contract.

As most of you would know, AGPS—the Australian Government Publishing Service—was the author of previous manuals. Much of the work for earlier editions was done in-house, although specialist authors were contracted to draft various chapters from time to time.

With the closure of AGPS, responsibility for the manual was transferred to AusInfo (now called Info Products) in the Department of Finance and Administration. Because AusInfo no longer had enough publishing expertise in-house to produce a new edition, tenders were invited from external contractors—and our team was fortunate enough to be selected.

You'll see that there are ten of us on the team. (Refer to Attachment 1, Sixth Edition Team .) It includes some of the people who were involved in previous editions and are thus familiar with government publishing, as well as other publishing specialists from industry, education and electronic publishing. But I'll tell you more about the team later.

Apart from the way it is being produced, what else has changed between the fifth and sixth editions? Well, there are many things. To begin with, I'll look at the broad changes. (Refer to Attachment 2, Refocusing the Manual .)

Outsourcing publications

Firstly, we needed to respond to the fairly dramatic changes surrounding publishing activities within the Commonwealth Government over the last few years. During this time, most departments decided to outsource the production of their publications.

As a result, far fewer staff who understand the ins and outs of publishing have been retained in-house. There are also many freelancers who need a broader view of the full publishing process than they may have gained through previous work, in order to undertake these outsourced projects effectively.

More people can publish

With access to the Internet and desktop publishing programs, many more people are able to publish than in the past. As you all know, anything from a brochure or newsletter to a scientific report can be produced pretty readily, without necessarily going through the quality checks that used to be applied as a matter of course by publishing professionals. Very often, these gatekeepers are being ignored or circumvented, as different communication paths are opened up.

Commonwealth needs

Nevertheless, the Commonwealth must still maintain high standards of quality in the information it supplies to the community. These publications must also be clear; they must be consistent; and they must be easily accessible by as many people as possible. Otherwise, government credibility will suffer and its messages will be ignored or misunderstood.

So important elements of our brief for revising the manual were:

- to support the need for proper publishing expertise to continue to be applied to government publications
- to explain what was involved in the full publishing process, from planning through to production.

Primary audience

Our primary readership was therefore agreed to be any government officer who might be asked to manage a publication, and anyone likely to be part of the team needed to produce it.

Some of these publication team members would be in-house but probably more often they would be contractors. They would range from authors to information designers, editors, graphic designers, illustrators, electronic publishing personnel, indexers and printers. We've used the term 'publication team' throughout the manual to reinforce the fact that any publication project will require contributions from various publishing professionals.

With this focus on government needs, this edition also concentrates more on producing information documents than has been the case in the last couple of editions of the manual.

However, in refocusing the manual, we don't believe we've excluded any of the traditional users of the manual. Outsourcing has become a common approach in corporate and commercial publishing as well. So we feel the new manual will remain as relevant as it has ever been—indeed, we hope it will be even more so.

Publishing process

The sixth edition therefore has a lot of new material on planning, on budgeting, and on assembling and briefing a publication team. It attempts to explain what each team member does—to bring some realism to the planning process. In doing so, it also describes general industry practices in each of the different publishing areas. Indeed, the whole manual is built around this process-oriented approach.

Readers' needs

Secondly, there's a greater emphasis on readers. This emphasis is important for all publications, but is crucial for information documents. So we talk about assessing the audience, structuring documents to meet the audience's interests and needs, and using suitably inclusive and effective language.

We also look at access requirements in terms of delivery. Should the publication be presented in print, in electronic format, or both? And what can be done to help readers with a disability?

Updating

Thirdly, there's the updating task common to any new edition—although the rate of change in publishing seems to be escalating all the time. As with all previous editions, we look at how usage is changing in terms of language, punctuation and capitalisation. What is likely to be acceptable to audiences? And to clients? Often, these are two quite different things.

We look at the impact of electronic publishing; and of course this is something of a moving target. We've therefore concentrated on the broader principles that we feel are less subject to change, and have left the detailed information on software and platform-specific information to Info Products' existing *Guidelines for publications produced in electronic formats* or other government documents likely to be developed in this area.

The approach we've taken is that the principles of good writing apply equally to print and screen. However, we do recognise that readers absorb information differently when using these different media, and this has to be taken into account, particularly when structuring

information. Also, there are the navigation and design issues that apply particularly to electronic documents, as well as the production information everyone on any publication team needs to have some knowledge of. In fact, electronic publishing has some impact on what we have to say in just about every chapter of the manual.

Then there are the changes in printing technology and in desktop publishing, which required us to take a new approach to the design section. In addition to changing the content of this part of the manual, we've taken advantage of the increased formatting and printing abilities now available to give the sixth edition a completely new look, without changing the overall production costs very much.

Now, to look at what the manual covers in more detail. (Refer to Attachment 3, [List of Contents](#).)

You'll see that the manual is divided into five parts that pretty much reflect the process of preparing any publication. Part 1 is entirely new, as is much of Part 5. The other parts are an amalgam of new material and revisions to previous advice.

Each part is bookended by an overview and a list of further reading and resources.

Part 1, Planning the communication

Reflecting our emphasis on process, you can see that the first chapter starts at the very beginning of a publishing project, while Chapter 2 discusses assembling and contracting a publication team.

Chapter 1

The first chapter talks a lot about planning, and working out realistic budgets and timetables. We think that far too many publishing projects founder on unrealistic expectations, much of which can be put down to a lack of proper planning.

There are certainly many things to consider at the outset: from the purpose of the document, assessment of the audience, and deciding on whether to produce it in print or on-screen (or both), through to the resources needed to prepare it. Chapter 1 also talks about getting early input from publishing professionals and the need to develop integrated approaches.

Chapter 2

The second chapter discusses the publication management role, and how to go about finding, assessing, contracting and briefing the team members needed to produce a publication. We've made a point of emphasising the interaction needed between each team member. Too often they are kept in separate boxes, to the detriment of the project.

Part 2, Writing and editing

Now we come to what many traditional users—certainly writers, editors and indexers—have always considered to be the heart of the manual. Some of these chapters you'll recognise, while others are new.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3, for example, is entirely new. It looks at the different ways readers absorb information. It talks about context, attention spans, linear and non-linear structures and screen characteristics affecting reading.

It then considers ways of organising material to respond to readers' needs: everything from patterning, different types of structures, and signposting and illustrating information to 'scannability' for on-screen reading.

Chapter 4

In Chapter 4 we update (and reconsider) the fifth edition discussion of inclusive language, and combine this with other techniques for effective language. This chapter also looks at the characteristics of different registers: formal, standard and informal.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 gathers up many of the issues discussed in the previous edition relating to grammar, and puts them in a framework of frequently asked questions. We've also added an overview here, in response to requests for 'more on grammar'. However, to do justice to the topic would need a manual of its own. We've done our best within the confines of a single chapter.

Chapter 6

This chapter combines the topics of spelling and word punctuation, since they are closely related. In terms of dictionaries, we've maintained the previous recommendations to stick to either the latest Macquarie or the Australian Concise Oxford. However, we've also put the issue of alternative spellings into context by explaining changing trends, and the usages likely to be most acceptable to international audiences.

In fact we've followed this approach throughout the manual: of putting our recommendations within a wider discussion of alternative usages. We've explained why we've settled on one particular choice rather than just mandating it as the only path to righteousness.

In Chapter 6, we also look at problems with apostrophes (the greengrocer's apostrophe) and hyphens, and suggest what to do with 'e' words.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 acknowledges the trend to less punctuation, and recommends how far we think this should be taken.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 recognises a similar trend to using fewer capitals, and makes suggestions on how to deal with this. In my experience, capitals can cause more headaches at copy editing stage than they have any right to do. So we've expanded this section to try to help.

We also look at the growing use of mid-word capitals and what to do with them at the beginning of sentences. For example, what do you do with a trade name such as 'eBook'?

Chapter 9

This chapter, dealing with different facets of textual contrast, is mostly new. While it incorporates earlier advice on using italics, it also gives editorial advice relating to format, such as heading hierarchies and punctuation for bullet points (a tricky question at the best of times).

Chapter 10

A chapter on shortened forms seems fairly innocuous—until you get into it. Should you have full stops after people's initials or not, for example?

Chapter 11

This chapter on numbers and measurements is likely to have only a few changes, but we hope you'll agree with them.

Chapter 12

Methods of Citation brings referencing up to date, particularly in terms of referencing electronic publications. However, we've tried not to change it too much, as it's difficult enough to learn one system. We've responded to requests to provide more on the Vancouver referencing system as well.

Chapter 13

Parts of a Document needed quite a bit of work to cover the standard parts of an electronic publication as well as the more traditional bits and pieces of a printed document.

Chapter 14

This chapter on editing and proofreading is almost entirely new. It details the process of editing, in an attempt to make schedules more realistic. It also indicates what's generally involved in a comprehensive editing job, and what sort of services can be expected from a substantive edit, a copy edit and a proofread. We hope this information will help make clients' expectations about the outcome of an editing job more realistic as well.

However, as with the rest of the manual, this chapter doesn't try to teach professionals how to do their particular jobs; there are plenty of industry manuals that do that. But it does try to remove the mystique and to give general advice.

Chapter 15

Indexes, the last chapter of Part 2, takes a similar approach. It describes what indexers do in a way that the other people working on a publication project will understand. It also explains how to evaluate the quality of an index.

Part 3, Designing and illustrating

Chapter 16

Visual Identification sets the advice about how to use the Australian flag and coat of arms within the much broader context of an organisation's overall visual image. In this way, it has a lot to say about all organisations, not just the Commonwealth. What contributes to an organisation's image? Should it ever be changed? If so, when and why?

Other new material in this chapter includes advice on using the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag. We also show the formally recognised national, state and territory emblems.

Chapter 17

The design and layout chapter takes you through all the elements that make up an effective design in a new and refreshing way. Then it discusses the design aspects of navigation for electronic documents:

- How do you show readers where they are within an on-screen document or site?
- How do you keep them in control of their movements around such a document?

If you want to know about frames, menus, hyperlinks and hypertext, navigation bars, site and image maps, labels and rollovers—it's all here.

Chapter 18

The typography chapter is a great example of several of our main concerns in the manual:

- It explains the whole area of typography in a way that the rest of a publication team can also understand: everything from serifs to anti-aliasing.
- It gives practical advice—for example, about type selection for readability for different types of printed documents and for on-screen reading.
- And it also shows how to evaluate the effectiveness of typographical choices.

Chapter 19

Preparing good tables is a complex undertaking, spanning editing and design. Tables are an integral part of many information documents, and we felt they needed a greater focus than they'd received previously. So they now have their own chapter.

This chapter gives practical advice on how to improve layout and readability. It also discusses what you need to take into account when using tables on screen.

Chapter 20

Forms haven't been dealt with in previous editions of the manual. However, as they are becoming so pervasive, we thought some advice on usability was needed. In putting this chapter together, we had assistance from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Communications Research Institute.

Again, this chapter extends well beyond questions of design. As we point out, there are four common elements in a successful form:

- It has been based on careful research.
- The questions have been clearly considered and expressed.
- It has been designed for ease of use by respondents and administrators.
- It has been thoroughly tested before release.

This chapter gives guidance on how to achieve all this, whether you are producing a printed or an electronic form.

Chapter 21

This chapter describes how to select imagery to describe or clarify concepts, or to establish a mood or point of view. It also talks about the do's and don'ts associated with using diagrams, graphs and maps, as well as line drawings, half-tones, photographs, moving images and sound. And for the more technically minded, it describes the different colour systems for use in print and on screen, and how to deal with digital image files.

Of course, there's a great deal more in this design and illustration part of the manual that I don't have time to touch on today. But I think writers and editors will find it stimulating and enlightening. It certainly isn't directed solely at graphic designers.

Part 4, Legal and compliance issues in publishing

This part of the manual deals with regulations of one sort or another.

Chapter 22

Up-to-date, detailed information on copyright is the main focus of Chapter 22, as copyright needs to be taken into account by many different members of a publication team: writers, editors, designers and publishers. However, other topics are also considered, including:

- the collection and handling of personal information
- defamation, contempt of court and contempt of parliament
- offensive material
- provisions under the Trade Marks, Designs and Trade Practices Acts
- the use of disclaimers (for what they're worth).

Chapter 23

There is practical information here on identification systems such as ISBNs and ISSNs, bar codes and CiP data, as well as new material on metadata and URLs.

There are also guidelines on how to prepare publications in alternative formats that can be accessed by people with vision, hearing or other disabilities.

Other requirements dealt with in this chapter relate to legal deposit and library deposit schemes, and documents for parliamentary tabling.

Part 5, Producing and evaluating the product

Now we come to the final part of the manual dealing with the production end of things.

Chapter 24

On-screen Production tries to demystify this area, which can be somewhat daunting for those of us who don't work with screen-based documents every day. There are various types of electronic publications:

- those that are merely being transmitted electronically for printing out at the other end
- those that need to be converted from existing printed publications
- those that are being created solely for use on screen.

Each requires a different approach. We give advice on these various processes, including technicalities such as mark-up language, graphic file formats and hyperlinking.

We also look at the different searching patterns that users follow and how to respond to these, as well as the ins and outs of search engines. And testing: this is critical for electronic publications, so we talk about the various types of tests that need to be carried out before release.

Chapter 25

You'll recognise some of the material about printing, embellishment and binding in this chapter from the fifth edition. However, it has been pretty dramatically revamped to include digital printing processes.

I know some users of the fifth edition loved the information about papermaking. We've kept some of this, but refocused it into a discussion of how to choose suitable papers for different uses. This fits with our general approach of concentrating on the practical details of publishing rather than going into more esoteric territory of highly specialised knowledge.

Chapter 26

Finally, we emphasise the need to manage a publishing project throughout its life. What sort of monitoring procedures should you be following to check that the final publication will meet those early ideals?

You'll probably have collapsed in a heap or retired to a nearby bar as the publication goes out the door. But that's really not the end of it. You should still think about how to do the next one better, based on what you've learnt through the project. And to find out how successful it really was, you need some feedback from the people for whom it was all produced: the readers.

Revision process

Before I, too, collapse in a heap, there are two final things I need to do:

- First, I'll give you a quick overview of where we are up to, and how we got there.
- And then I'll introduce you to the people who helped put it all together.

Starting with a summary of the process we followed.

The main authors were given responsibility for drafting their chapters to previously agreed guidelines. These drafts were reviewed by relevant team members and debated in lengthy meetings. Authors then revised the drafts to take account of the agreements reached at those meetings. So each chapter reflects the efforts of several team members, who may not only have made numerous suggestions for changes but also contributed various sections.

The team naturally comprises a range of views on just about every issue, which has stimulated some lively debates. However, we work on a consensus basis. If we can't convince the other members of the team of the wisdom of a particular approach, we can't really expect to have it wholeheartedly supported by the manual's users.

Having reached the second draft stage, the draft manual was distributed to Info Products' external review panel. This panel, numbering twelve in all, included Robert Eagleson of Plain English fame; Stephen Hall, who was a consultant on Info Products' Electronic Guidelines; and Judy Hutchison of the Parliamentary Library.

We're now in the process of making final changes in response to these comments, integrating everything, and doing the substantive editing. So the finishing line is well and truly in sight.

Background to the sixth edition team

- INFO PRODUCTS - Julie Hourigan
- SNOOKS & CO. - Loma Snooks
- Chris Pirie
- Pam Peters
- David Whitbread
- Michael Harrington
- Vickie Richardson
- Graham O'Loughlin
- Shirley Purchase
- Julie Hamilton
- Lindsay Mackerras

Now to introduce the team behind it all.

Info Products

First, I'd like to acknowledge Info Products' very supportive approach to this new edition—and particularly to Julie Hourigan, the client representative for the job. Being an old AGPS hand, Julie really understands the project, and can see what needs to be done and why.

Loma Snooks

My leadership of the team is based on twenty years' experience leading large editing and design teams on major publishing projects around Australia, and in Asia and the US. As well as the management aspects, I've written four of the new chapters, and am currently doing a lot of the revision, integrating it all and doing the substantive editing.

Chris Pirie

Chris Pirie is a freelance editor and writer, who has worked on more than sixty volumes of reports to government, as well as numerous commercial titles. She wrote the referencing chapter for the fourth edition of the manual, which was largely unchanged in the fifth edition. She also edited *The little book of style*, which, as many of you are aware, is an alphabetically arranged guide to Commonwealth style, based on the fifth edition.

Chris has drafted four of the chapters for the new manual, and she's currently involved in the revisions. She will also be doing the copy editing and helping with the proofreading.

Pam Peters

Most of you will already know Pam Peters from one or more of her many roles:

- as Associate Professor of Linguistics at Macquarie University
- as the head of Macquarie's Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing
- as a member of the Editorial Committee of the Macquarie Dictionary, and Director of the Dictionary Research Centre

- as the convenor of Style Council conferences
- as the author of the excellent *Cambridge Australian English style guide*
- as the editor of her quarterly bulletin, *Australian style* .

For the fourth edition, Pam wrote the chapter on capitals and contributed to the italics and hyphenation sections. This work remained substantially unchanged for the fifth edition.

For this new edition, Pam has drafted six of the chapters. Her usage research and database of language trends have also been very valuable in ensuring that our recommendations take account of current usage.

David Whitbread

David Whitbread was previously Design Director at AGPS, and subsequently Head of Graphic Design at the University of Canberra. Many of you may also know David from the various design seminars he has presented for government and industry. And more of you are likely to know his work once his new design manual is published next month.

David has a dual role on the manual. He is the art director as well as the author of seven chapters relating to design, illustration and printing.

Michael Harrington

Michael Harrington is another ex-AGPS staffer, with particular expertise in copyright and government publishing requirements. Indeed he has written three books on these topics. In addition, of course, he is an indexer of some renown, and he'll already be well known to all the indexers at this conference as the Chairman of the Australian Society of Indexers Registration Panel.

Michael wrote the indexing chapter for the fifth edition. He's updated that chapter for this new edition, as well as drafting two more chapters on legislation and other government and library standards related to publishing.

Michael also indexed the fourth and fifth editions of the manual, and will be providing the same service for this one.

Vickie Richardson

Vickie Richardson (with her partner Chris Toogood in Netimpact Online Publishing) brings much practical experience in electronic publishing to the team. Netimpact has won industry awards for its work, including a study award to travel and research the latest trends.

Vickie has written the chapter on on-screen production and has contributed to many of the other chapters. Perhaps her most crucial role, however, has been to hassle us continually to ensure we couldn't stay cocooned in our print-focused comfort zone. So Vickie has been instrumental in ensuring that the impact of electronic publishing is taken into account in all the manual's descriptions and recommendations.

Graham O'Loughlin

Graham O'Loughlin originally joined the team to provide contractual and project management advice. However, we subsequently inveigled him into doing a little of the writing as well. He has drawn on his extensive expertise in managing multi-disciplinary teams to draft contributions to our discussions on planning, managing and evaluating publishing projects. He was also the reviewer for the on-screen production chapter.

Shirley Purchase

Shirley Purchase has been a reviewer for many of the chapters in this sixth edition. She has a lifetime's experience in editing. She has worked in-house for the Melbourne and ANU university presses, and as a freelancer for AGPS, the National Gallery, the War Memorial, ATSIC and Oxford and Cambridge university presses, among many others.

With her writing hat on, Shirley also compiled *The Australian writers' and editors' guide* for the Australian National Dictionary Centre, and *The little book of style* for AGPS.

Julie Hamilton

Julie Hamilton is our graphic designer responsible for formatting the manual, and for working with David to prepare the page designs and illustrations. I've worked with Julie for more than twenty years. She is wonderful at presenting information in an intelligent and visually interesting way. She has also reviewed all the design and illustration chapters.

Lindsay Mackerras

And last, but certainly far from least, there's Lindsay Mackerras. Lindsay is widely known and admired for her editorial leadership at AGPS: as Manager of the AGPS Editorial Unit, then as Style Manual Editor from 1995 and finally as Manager of Standards and Style in AGPS's Advice and Education Section.

Among her innovations aimed at educating writers, editors and others in a uniform style for Commonwealth documents were the Lunching with Style sessions, *The little book of style* and *Stylewise* magazine.

Lindsay currently has a more than full-time job as Managing Editor of *RAAF News*. However, she still finds time to keep an eye on the development of the sixth edition, and sallies forth from the sidelines with sage advice when she thinks we may be straying from the path.

Refocusing the manual

Outsourcing Vs In-house Publishing Expertise

- Commonwealth needs
- Primary audience
- Publishing process and industry practices

Emphasis On Readers' Needs

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- Structuring and language
- Delivery formats

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Workshop given by Ronald Briggs of AIATSIS and Jim Stokes from the National Archives of Australia at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors. Published in *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* 2001, vol. 25, no. 8, pp. 75, 80-1.

The National Archives 'Bringing Them Home' Database Project

Jim Stokes

The 'Bringing Them Home' indexing project is part of the Commonwealth Government's response to the Bring Them Home report. The project aims to assist Indigenous people in family and community reunion by indexing hundreds of thousands of occurrences of personal names and other relevant information. The names are compiled in an Access computer database which is used by National Archives of Australia reference staff working with individuals and family link-up organisations.

My first substantial experience of records issues relating to Indigenous people was when I worked on the Australian Law Reform Commission's review of the Commonwealth Archives Act in 1996–98. We looked at a range of problems relating to the accessibility and preservation of records of significance in land claims and family and community reunion, and made series of recommendations which I hope will be gradually implemented.

Matthew Storey of the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, who was one of our honorary consultants, said something, which I think, summarises the whole issue very well:

Aboriginal people, especially ... the Stolen Generations, are surely the most regulated and recorded population in Australian history.

Yet within this there is a paradox. On the one hand, written records relating to Indigenous people often seem at best intrusive and patronising and at worst cruel and misleading. Furthermore, many Indigenous people see the records of the various levels of government as insufficiently accessible to themselves, but in some case too widely accessible to others.

On the other hand, for communities with oral rather than written traditions and subject to fierce external pressures the European records—whatever their failings—often contain vital information.

A further complication is that the records which governments compiled about Indigenous people also tell important stories about European society and the way in which it interacted with the Indigenous population. So they are part of all our stories.

Yet another complication is that records relating to Indigenous people are spread over a wide range of jurisdictions, government and private.

This is illustrated by the fragmented nature even of National Archives' holdings:

Canberra: we hold a mixture of national policy records and old NT administration records. They include records relating to:

- government expeditions
- relations with missions and institutions
- land administration (mining and pastoral leases)
- education
- fishing
- prisons
- social security
- Royal Commission on British Nuclear Tests
- Commonwealth initiatives in Indigenous affairs

Darwin: the records of the pre self-government NT Administration, in particular

- F1 main correspondence files of NT Admin 1915–78 (918 shelf m)
- D4082 NT Welfare Branch case files 1963–72 (6 m)
- E742 Native Affairs Branch staff files 1954–69 (2 m)
- E155 Tennant Creek welfare files 1957– (17 m).

Melbourne: the former colonial/state Aboriginal Affairs records, which were transferred to the Commonwealth in 1975 (following the 1967 referendum)

- Case and correspondence files for the Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines 1869–1968 (B318, B337)
- Name index cards for Aboriginal Welfare Board 1965 (B2016)
- Lake Tyers correspondence files 1865–1968 (B356)
- Lake Tyers population statistics 1922–64 (B2023).

As in many other areas of government administration, the survival of records has been patchy. It is certain that some records were destroyed that should not have been destroyed—some because their value was not appreciated, some perhaps deliberately to bury the past. For example, most of the NT Welfare Branch's so-called half caste files were destroyed in the 1970s.

NAA has addressed this problem by imposing a freeze on the disposal of records which might assist family or community reunion. This was applied to records in NAA custody in 1996 and to records in the custody of all Comm agencies in 2000. It is important to note that it does not apply to all records relating to Indigenous people, but only to those which might reasonably be expected to assist reunion.

However, the problem with disposal freezes is that they are often too late—the damage was done many years ago.

The Bringing Them Home indexing project

Giving effective community access to Commonwealth government records has always been a challenge. Only a few per cent of Commonwealth records survive to be transferred to NAA, but even so we hold around 250 shelf km of records designated for long-term retention. These records were created by hundreds of agencies using a wide range of systems of organisation. We have acquired with them a range of indexes and lists and we have applied our own descriptive standards to them.

Traditionally, it was necessary to approach records from the top down, through administrative histories and series registrations to index cards and transfer lists.

Even then individual file titles are not necessarily an accurate or complete guide to what is actually in the file.

Over the past decade NAA has developed the RecordSearch electronic database (now available though the NAA website) which includes all agency and series registrations and around 3 million individual items. But this is only a small percentage of the total number of items in NAA.

In any case in a complex area like family reunion even a complete list of item titles is of only limited use—a detailed index of the contents of each item is necessary.

As part of the Commonwealth government's response to the HREOC Bringing Them Home report in December 1997 NAA was given \$2 million over four years to index, copy and preserve thousands of files relevant to family and community reunion.

Indexing began in July 1998 and will continue until June 2002.

So far we have examined more than 15,000 files, about half of which proved to be worth indexing. We have searched nearly 550,000 individual folios and made around 170,000 entries on the database (including multiple occurrences of references to the same people).

Indexing strategies

These are not easy records to index. In the main Commonwealth case management records series (e.g. welfare, Tax, Defence personnel, Veterans Affairs) you would expect to find personal details recorded completely and consistently. You would expect at the very least to have full names and date and place of birth and death recorded. But in many records relating to Indigenous people, particularly in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century, the only identifiable reference may be a single name imposed by Europeans, together with a geographical location. In consequence the same person may have multiple index entries which can not be definitely linked at the time of indexing.

We had to design an indexing standard which could capture whatever information existed in a way that would help researchers to as far as possible link a range of very embryonic references to the same person.

Our indexing sheets (from which data is later entered to the database) provide for surname and given names (including alternative forms), a primary/secondary/tertiary relevance code, birth and death information, sex, an events date range and age of subject at the time of the event and any place names associated with the reference. We also have open and closed comments fields.

Some of the issues we had to consider were:

The database

We are using an Access database and all data entry is done by a single DPO in Canberra. The Access database was adopted a simple solution to get the project up and running. It was intended that within six months the BTH database would be integrated with the RecordSearch database. For various technical and sensitivity reasons this was not done and we have had problems with slow operating speeds as the volume of data increases. We are in the final stages of converting the database to Access 2000 and transferring it to an SQL serve, which should improve its performance considerably. Our next project is to develop more sophisticated search strategies. Another issue, which we need to face, is who can use it.

The database is basically an index to records rather than record itself. Even so it contains information which the subjects and their communities might well consider sensitive, especially in aggregation.

NAA's position is that the database is intended to facilitate family and community reunion, not to be a general guide to records relating to Indigenous people. People generally seek information from the database through the Link Up groups, for whom NAA staff run searches on the database.

Access to the records themselves is granted under the memoranda of Understandings between NAA and Indigenous groups, which were signed in 1997 in the Northern Territory and 2000 in Victoria.

Anyone else seeking access to the records must do so under the normal public access provisions of the Archives Act. The records we index are listed at item level on the RecordSearch database, but members of the public would not be able to access the BTH database as a finding aid. Some of the records would certainly be subject to 33(1)(g) unreasonable disclosure of personal affairs exemptions.

If Indigenous groups were generally agreeable, we would probably incorporate the database into RecordSearch and make it generally available via the Internet. However, it is clear that the Indigenous advisory groups, particularly in the Northern Territory, would not be prepared to accept this at this stage.

Indexing priorities

We are working our way through the relevant records in the NT, Canberra and Melbourne.

We know there are some relevant records in our other offices and we will move into these later this year.

We have not indexed the big Commonwealth personal case file series. Examples of these are armed service personnel records and Commonwealth public service and Australian National Railways staff files. The problem is not only that there are tens of thousands of shelf kilometres of them, but that in many cases it is not possible to reliably identify Indigenous people. We might consider indexing some service personnel files if Indigenous soldiers have been identified through other research.

Accountability

We are very much aware that we were given this money for a specific humanitarian purpose. We made a detailed submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee's inquiry last year into the Bringing Them Home response and we appeared before them. Both from the hearing and the subsequent written report we formed the impression that the Committee was aware of what we are doing and did not have any specific concerns about it. The Committee was obviously concerned about the fragmentation of records between jurisdictions and from their questioning we thought they might be inclined to recommend the development of a single national database, which would certainly be an interesting challenge. However, somewhat to our relief, they did not take this up in the written report.

The committee did strongly urge that there should be more accountability and scrutiny of Bringing Them Home response projects and no doubt we shall be involved in this.

Paper given at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors.

Australian Standards For Editing Practice

Kathie Stove, Society of Editors (SA)

The longer I work in the editing profession, the more I am astounded that anything at all gets published. I look at this little booklet of twenty pages and wonder how it can have taken so much effort, so much vigorous discussion and argument, so much strong feeling, so much bloody hard work.

The big shiny star on the cover says it all. It's the highest praise from the teacher, it's the top of the Christmas tree. But most importantly it's a little glimmer of light in a lonely Leunig night.

And Leunig characters remind me, not necessarily of editors in our work, but of editors in the approach we have not taken towards professionalism. When I first wrote this talk I had down that editors have been fighting, if not a losing battle, then a battle that has seen few ridge tops taken. But I don't think that is right—we haven't been fighting and we've steadily lost ground.

While graphic designers and web techos have been successfully selling themselves as essential, editors have beavered away and ignored the bigger picture; and we've lost our central place in the publishing world in the process.

But with this publication we are taking serious steps towards becoming essential, validated and acknowledged fighting professionals.

I did some work for a hairdresser the other day—an entry in the small business awards—and realised that they are more professional than we have been. They have standards, accreditation, and just about everybody uses one. But let's face it a haircut can be a disaster for a week or so, but the blunder in print stays around for a long, long time.

Good editing is invisible and therefore tends to be undervalued. Until now editors have behaved the same way—invisible and undervalued.

We know how good we are. If anyone asks us we'll tell them. It's just that we usually wait to be asked. We aren't out there like the hairdressers telling the world that we are professionals. With these standards we are making steps to ensure that everybody else knows it too (without asking).

For the first time, new and experienced editors have a comprehensive guide to the knowledge and attributes of the professional editor in both print and electronic media. We also have a powerful tool to promote ourselves and our profession. We can use these standards to help our clients understand what we have to offer them.

Steadily more and more poor quality publications hit the streets in print; more crap gets thrown on to the web. More readers are lost to well meaning publishers and publicists without their knowing why. The reader doesn't know why they find it hard to make sense of the information they are presented with. But the editor knows and can fix it.

Now we have the means to clarify the potential of editing to add value to information. Developing the standards

The inaugural Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE), comprising the presidents of all Australian editors' societies, met in Melbourne in August 1998 and agreed to 'develop a set of national standards for editorial services and investigate models for accreditation'.

The Canadian and British societies have both attempted to develop test-based accreditation procedures for their members. After many years of work, the British system of accreditation remains confined to proofreading only. The initial accreditation proposals developed by the Editors' Association of Canada were not accepted by their members, and they then decided

to establish a set of standards first. And these were overwhelmingly accepted by their membership.

The success of the Canadians with their standards was one reason why the CASE meeting decided to pursue the Canadian approach.

The presidents felt that a standards document would have value in itself whether we addressed accreditation or not. If the societies wished to pursue accreditation in the future, it would be helpful for them to have the standards document to work from.

Also, putting together standards was a more manageable task to start with. Developing a system of accreditation in one go may be something that can't be done by volunteers. Judging by the amount of work that has gone into the 'more manageable' standards, developing an accreditation system will be a huge task and one that requires a lot more planning and resources than went into this little project.

It is also worth remembering that both the British and Canadian societies are national and, I presume, cohesive. Here in Australia we have independent State and Territory based societies. And although CASE, and its standards working group, has contributed enormously to communication between the societies, they are still autonomous bodies working essentially alone. CASE is an informal body that meets infrequently and irregularly.

The standards working group, which has representatives from each Australian society, then began developing the standards using the Canadian standards as a starting point. It was very editor like of us to start with another document and do what we do best as editors—rip it apart and put it back together again.

Although we radically departed from the original document, we are indebted to the Editors' Association of Canada for a document that showed what worked and what didn't, and what dated quickly.

The first working group meeting at Style Council in Melbourne in early 1999, which was attended by only some of the group, allocated sections similar to the Canadian model to different members to develop and each of us went back home, found some willing helpers from within our own societies and prepared a section.

We then tried to reach consensus by email. Now I don't know if you've ever tried to do this — especially with a group of seven strong minded people — but it doesn't work.

One of us came up with the bright idea of funding travel to a central meeting place on a per income of society basis rather than distance travelled. This was particularly helpful to the Western Australian society which had the most expensive airfares but one of the smallest memberships. We added a secretary, with laptop, to our group so that our progress was continually recorded.

At our first Sydney meeting of the whole group in 1999 we toiled away in our harbourside penthouse. Remember how the sun shone in Sydney for most of the Olympic Games? Well it was just like that during that July-August weekend — so much for winter. But we kept our eyes averted from the sailors below and from the glorious harbour scene (except during the lunch breaks on the balcony) — in fact we kept the curtains closed for most of the time.

But the view wasn't the real reason we were struggling; it was the structure.

At this stage we had activities grouped into editing tasks, such as copyediting and proofreading but that caused repetition and overlap of the skills and knowledge in two or three sections.

We decided to turn what we had on its head and look at it not from the point of view of levels of editing, but from the point of view of knowledge areas in editing practice. We allocated each standard to sections reflecting these areas. These sections more or less fell into place as we allocated standards to them. A further step along the road to salvation came when we realised that they had to be expressed as knowledge not as tasks. This was difficult to keep

on track because the expression tended to become very ponderous but at least we were not stuck the way we had been with the previous structure.

Five of us then took one section each, went home and developed it. There was a bit of shuffling between sections but finally we ended up with a document that was in good enough shape to be workshopped by each of the societies.

We met again in October 2000 and tried to rationalise opposing suggestions from workshops, and ourselves, and streamline the document. Then one of us then took the document to finish and the rest of us pretended to let go.

And we still got our two bobs worth in even at the last chance “only comment if you will have to kill yourself if this goes out in this state with your name on it”. I think every one of us still commented — and mostly at length.

What we ended up with is a pretty formidable looking list, but in fact it describes the knowledge that editors routinely use in their work. Each of the standards can apply at a level that is warranted by the job at hand. This is a very important aspect of the standards and one I will return to later.

Vote

In February this year the standards were put to all members of all societies for endorsement by majority vote in a majority of societies. More than 50 per cent of ballots were returned in each society and they gave an overwhelming yes vote of 96 per cent or better in all societies except for NSW where the yes vote was 88 per cent.

That vote included a formal provision for ongoing review at three-year intervals, both to allow for changes in industry practice and technology, and to fix problems that became evident as the standards became known and used. We are aware that this document is not perfect—I don't know that there is such a thing—but the important thing is that it is pretty damn good and it is out there.

Comments

Comments on ballot papers included:

- What a magnificent achievement; I'm bursting with pride to have been even peripherally associated with the Standards.
- Well done, team; thorough and descriptive, clear and coherent explanations.
- Long overdue and excellent, congratulations.
- It's excellent. A nice balance between the general and the particular. The online components are clear and relevant—the requisite skills are described well. Well done!

Reader's Report

One of our group took a step back and prepared a reader's report.

This is a ground-breaking work by an unknown author. Modest in extent, it weaves a richly imagined tapestry out of universal themes: duty, lost innocence, and the struggle for autonomy.

The writing is uneven in quality. Some parts have a grand sweep, breathtaking in their implications, such as D3.2, 'Words and their meanings.' There are gems of polished brevity, such as D1.4, 'The use of punctuation to ensure clarity of meaning and ease of reading.' The relentless accumulation of detail is effective, but at times becomes fussy or even anxious in tone.

The work has some serious flaws. The promising cast of characters introduced in the note to B1.5, 'Members of the publishing team may include ...' is never developed. There are

dramatic possibilities in the implied tension between editor and client that could be explored further. The plot is weak and predictable, and it lacks a denouement.

If published as it stands, with a targeted marketing campaign and aggressive pricing, this book could have a modest success. Or it could be reworked to include humour and perhaps a love interest, in which case blockbuster status and film rights are definite possibilities.

Despite the overwhelming majority vote there was some strenuous opposition to the standards as they are. While I don't agree with this opposition it is good to know that people can get so passionate about such a thing as editing standards and vehemently cry that they think this is wrong.

The criticisms were mainly related to the standards not being 'standards' (people often referred to Standards Australia) and that they were too demanding of the average editor plodding along today.

What is a 'standard'?

We used the Macquarie Dictionary's first and most general definition of the noun 'standard': 'anything taken by general consent as a basis of comparison; an approved model'. We were guided by the experience of the Editors' Association of Canada, whose use of the term had been established and accepted.

Australian Standards produced by the organisation Standards Australia have a very specific definition and purpose which is not the same as ours. Standards Australia holds the copyright for the standards its committees develop, and charges for copies. Buying into this system would run counter to our need to disseminate these standards as widely as possible. Standards Australia has said there is no problem with the societies of editors calling their document 'Australian Standards for Editing Practice'.
Scope of the document

Not all the activities listed are part of an editing project, and some of the items are the province of people with other job titles, but we felt that an editor needed to know something of all these areas. For example, an editor has to have some of the capabilities of a project manager in managing the job and dealing with the other people involved—because there are always other people involved. The points on management apply whether you are running a team of editors on a production as large as the new Style Manual or organising just yourself to deliver quality editing on a twenty-page report on time and on budget to your client.

An editor may not need the design and layout abilities of a desktop publisher, but needs to understand what a desktop publisher can do.

Some editors who commented on the draft last year felt that the scope of the standards was in fact not wide enough, considering the skills needed for working with new and evolving electronic media. Most working editors don't need these skills yet but there will soon come a time when they do.

It goes to show that no matter what we'd done, we would not have pleased everyone.

Thanks

It is so appropriate that this launch is in the International Year of the Volunteer, because this publication is almost entirely voluntary work.

The members of the working group, most of whom are here today, volunteered countless hours and I thank them.

Rhana Pike (NSW), Janet Mackenzie (Victoria), Amanda Curtin (Western Australia), Loma Snooks (Canberra), Cathy Gray (our secretary from NSW) are here. Cathy Bruce (Tasmania) and Jan Whelan (Queensland) are unable to be here, nor is Mary Jane Boost also from Queensland who filled in for Jan when she was unable to get to our first working weekend in Sydney. Each of us has at some time during the two-and-a-half years of the project

shouldered the load. We all continued with our more than full-time editing jobs and at times nothing happened for long periods, but we always got going again, eventually.

Being convenor did not mean that I had more say than anyone else—there was no chance in a group with such strong personalities. Considering the fact that no one was shy about saying what they thought, we worked together remarkably well and made the most of the wealth of experience in the group.

Members of all the editing societies also contributed. In the early days we set up working groups within societies to prepare sections. I thank the members who contributed their valuable time and knowledge at this early stage and those who contributed to the workshops that reviewed the draft standards.

The societies have been very supportive—and rightly so since the profession they serve and all members will benefit from these standards. They understood that the working group had to meet in person and financed the two trips for us to do so. All the societies survive on membership fees to pay for day-to-day running and don't have much in the kitty for extras. But they all managed to find the necessary funds when they were needed.

Paul George of Digital Graffiti in Hobart did the design for a very good price. ARTEGRAFICA printers in Adelaide also offered me a deal I couldn't refuse.

Spicers Paper of South Australia, most generously donated the recycled paper on which the standards are printed and we are extremely grateful to them for doing so.

Now that we have standards that confirm the professional nature of editing for publication it is up to all of us—members, societies, committees of societies and the presidents through CASE—to use them:

- to improve the standard of our work and our service to clients
- to promote editing and its value to the written word in an information overloaded world
- to regain the central role of editors in publishing and the recognition that that is where we rightly belong.

Workshop at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors.

Editing for the corporate client workshop

Ann M. Philpott, Freelance editor, indexer, writer, proofreader

Patricia Hoyle from Patricia Hoyle and Associates led the 'Editing for the corporate client' workshop, where the focus was on marketing editorial services to business and government sectors. Patricia's expertise is enhancing the effectiveness of written communication in the workplace so as to promote efficiency, productivity, quality, and a striking public image for a business or government department. She offers professional consultation in writing, editing, and proofreading, and conducts business writing workshops. She has worked for the health, insurance, finance, manufacturing, retail and maritime industries; trade unions; small businesses and local, state and federal government organisations.

The question 'What is marketing?' was posed by Patricia. It is not about advertising or the 'hard sell'. Hard selling to potential or existing customers can make you look like a pest rather than a help to an organisation. Marketing is about building relationships. This is achieved by networking with people in professional associations and in the workplace. See yourself as a resource and a partner rather than a vendor. Marketing is about defining for yourself and for others what is unique about the services you offer. It is also about explaining to others the importance of and need for the work we do.

Learn how to ask questions of the client about what they really need: 'If your customers were holding this document in their hands, what would you like them to do with it?' These sorts of questions will help you and your client analyse and determine who is the target audience for the document and the proposed use for the document. 'Listen to your client,' stresses Patricia. 'You won't learn anything if you don't stop talking!'

'When you quote on a job, follow up with a phone call after a reasonable period.' A story was told about one consultant whom Patricia thought could be a future, useful resource for her organisation, but who was inappropriate for the current job on offer. When Patricia told the consultant that her initial quote was unsuccessful, the woman responded with such poor grace that Hoyle decided she was not an appropriate resource for future use, after all. The moral of the story: accept 'no' graciously; stay in occasional contact with a potential client, and you may be contracted at a later date.

Patricia also stressed the need for editors to make the pie bigger for everyone. Don't be reticent about cross-networking with 'competitors'. If you don't have the time to do a job, or the job is inappropriate for your skills and knowledge base, help your client by recommending others.

The workshop contained role plays for participants, who played editors, indexers, or clients. The purpose of the role plays was to highlight the sorts of issues that need to be discussed when quoting, and what to do when the client changes the parameters part-way through the job. Body language and the issues of personal contact and trust were also explored in a game and its follow-up discussion.

Among a number of other pieces of advice offered by Patricia were the golden rules of treating people the way you would like to be treated and never underestimating your value or worth.

At the conclusion of the two-hour workshop, Patricia Hoyle gave generously of her time – another hour – to answer participants' questions on a one-to-one basis.

Workshop at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors. Published in *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* 2001, vol. 25, no. 9/10, p. 91.

Database Indexing

Ann Milligan, Science Text Processors Canberra

A workshop entitled 'Database indexing' begs the question: Why index a database? Databases have search facilities built in, don't they? Isn't that the point of them?

It turns out that database indexing is not indexing of databases but indexing for the main public bibliographic databases, such as APAIS, Streamline, NCJRS* and others. In this nicely-paced workshop, Lynn Farkas first introduced her audience of seven librarians, indexers and editors to the concept of database indexing and then showed us where it fits in the knowledge continuum. She outlined the sub-categories of database indexing and the skills or qualities a database indexer needs for effective work.

After a coffee break, we had a go at this business. It had sounded quite easy to do when Lynn explained it earlier. In practice, of course, it wasn't easy at all. Try to summarise the main points of an A4 page magazine article in 1.5 minutes, never having seen the article before! (The time limit reflects the amount of time a working indexer can afford to spend absorbing the article.) Then turn that into an abstract. It's clearly possible in the time, once one has experience at it, and we had some success in capturing the essence of the text at first attempt.

Then Lynn handed out appropriate thesauri and we searched them for keywords that would describe the article. For an editor who has not seen this kind of thesaurus before, this was less straightforward than preparing the abstract. Thesauri have been compiled and published particularly for database indexing, and they focus on special subject areas, such as public affairs, water, criminal justice. The intention is that all indexers will use only particular keywords to describe the information in their sources, and so simplify the subsequent retrieval of that information from the database. However, the keywords we first searched for were generally not in the thesauri, and a flexible brain was required to think of synonyms that might be findable.

I enjoyed this workshop very much and it stimulated me to try out Streamline and other databases, and to want to pick up this skill professionally.

*APAIS is Australian Public Affairs Information Service (now part of APAFT – Australian Public Affairs Full Text), and NCJRS is National Criminal Justice Reference System.

Workshop at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors. Published in *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* 2001, vol. 25, no. 9/10, p. 90.

Editing for Indexers

John Simkin

The Workshop by Claudia Marchesi had ten participants, all of whom had at least a general familiarity with the publishing process. Topics covered were within copy editing and proofreading.

Copy editing

- i. improves the text rather than rewrites it. The author's 'voice' must come through. The editing corrects errors of grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation and ensures that the intention and meaning are clearly expressed;
- ii. ensures that style (house style or style developed for the work in hand) is consistent;
- iii. ensures that references and bibliography are complete and layout and format conform to style;
- iv. oversees proofreading and consequent amendments.

Proofreading

- i. corrects spelling, punctuation and typographical errors;
- ii. ensures that cross-references are complete;
- iii. ensures that style and format are consistently applied.

There was discussion of some examples of usage and style and of some Microsoft Word devices which help editors especially in keeping track of changes when editing on disk or on-line. Probably the most useful part of the workshop was the description of a number of tools which are important for Australian editors and proofreaders. Some of these are listed below. The handouts included a breakdown of copy editing tasks, a sheet of examples of proofreading marks and a brief proofreading aptitude test.

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Indexing for Editors

Alexa McLaughlin

Max McMaster gave a thorough and helpful description of the 'nuts and bolts' of indexing in the Indexing for Editors workshop on the Monday of our conference. A panel of three took us through three software packages in the afternoon, especially relating to sorting and layout. The presentations essentially dealt with lists of 'names' – of people, places and ideas. Whether or not we are now tempted to make an index ourselves, these sessions would help us to assess those provided to us for editing.

I was also hoping for discussion, or at least a reference to follow up, on what I call 'conceptual indexing' – thinking about how to categorise sections of text beyond the actual words used. I can generate some ideas of how to do that, but was keen to not only reinvent the wheel. I didn't get that in the talk, and would welcome any information on this readers could pass on to me.

Just as editors say that nobody should do the final edit on their own work, indexers are adamant that dedicated software should be used for editing. This was convincing for those doing many indexes, but it seems to me that the software is particularly useful for indexing done after a manuscript is completed with only occasional page number changes to follow. For a writer doing an occasional index, the benefits of automatic linking of inserted index tags to page numbers in word processors would be great.

It would have been even better to have the 'how to' workshops on before the conference rather than after, because it would have enriched my understanding of the conference sessions to have had a better understanding of what indexers do.

I am indebted to artsACT for their financial support for me to attend the conference and workshops.

Workshop at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors. Published in *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* 2001, vol. 25, no. 11, p. 106.

Multiple Index Publications: Some Case Studies

Shirley Campbell

This workshop, presented by David K. Ream of Leverage Technologies Inc, Cleveland, Ohio USA, described and compared five different models for gathering data for and generating multiple indexes to publications.

The focus was on recurring publishing situations involving larger reference works, not on standalone indexes as in back-of-book indexing. These recurring publications can be abstracts, directories, reports, e.g. newsletters, debates, e.g. Hansard and websites of articles. The citations include article titles, article numbers, page numbers and weblinks. The technology to produce these multiple indexes includes database software, SGML, dedicated indexing software such as Cindex, composition software and HTML.

The use of technology has allowed indexers to produce multiple indexes quickly and accurately with an enormous saving of time and person dollars.

The Philosopher's Index is an international index to philosophical periodicals and books and is published quarterly. The index is published in print and now through Silver Platter on CD-ROM. This is a large database and includes a subject index: main heading, citations, abstracts and some see and see also references; an author index: name, citation, and abstract but no cross-referencing; and a book review index not tied to the subject and author indexes and which includes author and citation details and where the book has been reviewed. This index is produced using database software and interestingly does not include page numbers.

The Courts Directory: BNA's Directory of State and Federal Courts, Judges and Clerks is published in print annually and on the web monthly. The indexes produced are a federal courts index, state courts index, geographical federal index, county/city index and a name index. Database software and Cindex indexing software are used to produce this index.

There are various legal and business reports one of which is The Tax Management Weekly Report. This report is published bi-weekly and cumulative indexes are published quarterly in print and monthly on the web. The data files include topics, cases and tax regulations and this index is produced using SGML and Cindex indexing software.

The Hansard Assembly Debates is published at the end of the assembly session and two separate indexes are produced from one database of information: a subject index and a speaker index.

The Case in Point Index is to case studies, reports, and a newsletter, all on consumer and business information. Only the previous year's content is provided on the website but a cumulative file is kept on an intranet.

Workshop at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors.

Software for back-of-book indexing

Edyth Binkowski, Australian Society of Indexers (ACT Branch)

This workshop consisted of presentations of the three computer indexing programs by their promoters, Sky Index (Michael Wyatt), CINDEX (Frances Lennie) and Macrex (Max McMaster).

Michael began with a detailed examination of Sky Index, the most recently developed. He showed us Version 6, which is expected to be available later in the year at a cost of approximately \$A1000. Version 5.1 is the latest currently available, can be ordered online, and a free demonstration version downloaded. Sky is easy to use, can do most indexing tasks and handle most types of material. It has efficient data entry, as you can edit the records as you see them, and they are in the correct index order all the time. One part of the screen shows the alphabetical order and the other is the working area, with entries, up to 3 levels, in 3 columns, being added. Sky has an auto-complete feature, and will try to guess at a heading once a few letters are keyed in. (CINDEX also has this.) It will drag and drop a record (pick it up and move it somewhere else), mark and hide records if required, expand pagination or abbreviations, change cross-references to double-postings, and show the last index done. The main difference between Sky and CININDEX is the data entry/edit interface: Sky uses a spreadsheet-style grid, and CININDEX an index-card metaphor.

I have gone into a lot of detail about Sky, as the other two presenters compared their products to it, and showed the differences and similarities.

Frances spoke on CININDEX, the program her firm, Indexing Research created 15 years ago, which is now produced in several different editions (for Windows and Macintosh platforms) and costs about \$A1000. With CININDEX you can have more than one index on the screen at one time, and drag records or their elements from one to another, which is good for consistency, e.g. in journal indexing. You can file in chronological order, mark records new or altered in the current session, set the number of fields from 2 to 15, and search on keywords. CININDEX has the ability to flip records that Sky has, and uses brackets to affect sorting, if needed. While you're working, CININDEX won't automatically change any errors you introduce but will alert you to possible problems. It will also jump you to the point where you want to add an entry or let you see your most recently entered records in the order you enter them. Its spellcheck dictionaries can be customised to US or UK spelling, and it can produce camera-ready indexes, though the final index is usually emailed to clients.

Please note that the prices for Sky and CININDEX are only approximate, as they are set in US dollars, and the Australian price will vary as the value of the Australian dollar varies.

Max demonstrated the Macrex program, designed for a PC, but able to work on a Macintosh with Windows 95, 98 or 2000. It is a UK package, whereas Sky and CININDEX are US ones, currently up to Version 7, available at \$A725 to members of the Societies of Indexers and Editors, or at \$A250 if upgrading. Macrex is more primitive than either Sky or CININDEX because even though it operates through Windows, it still has the DOS-feel which reflects its origins. The other two were designed as full Windows versions. Although Macrex lacks some of the features of the other two, it has some which the others are only now trying to copy. With it you can select a term from the screen, add it to the bottom working area, and it will file correctly. It has flip functions, but not the preposition feature that Sky has, and its see also references are in a different colour. An introductory screen shows the major features, for instance a search and replace facility. You can do a combined author, title and subject index, separate this into three, identifying each element by code, and the program will drop them in their correct place as you add them. Layout and format can be varied, as well as methods of sorting.

All three programs are extremely useful for indexers, and as Frances Lennie said 'The program you choose depends on the way you prefer to work'.

Workshop at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors. Published in *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* 2001, vol. 25, no. 11, p. 105.

Website indexing with HTML Indexer

Colleen Mock

The workshop, presented by Glenda Browne, consisted of two sections. First, Glenda introduced the principles of indexing in a web environment, highlighting ways in which web indexing is different from print indexing, and citing examples of websites that illustrated web indexing principles. The basic principles of indexing in print were reviewed as they are equally applicable to web indexing. The second section consisted of a demonstration of one Web indexing tool, HTML Indexer, in which workshop participants worked on a trial exercise indexing the December 2000 issue of the AusSI Newsletter. A set of course notes summarised the presentation and demonstration.

The workshop was based on material in the book *Website indexing: enhancing access to information within websites*, by Glenda Browne and Jonathan Jermey. Further [information from the book](#) is available. Additional references cited were ' *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web* ', by Louis Rosenfeld and Peter Morville, and a chapter in ' *Beyond Book Indexing* ', by Seth Maislin.

A number of tools provide access to information on the Web, each with their strengths and limitations. Search engines, metadata, and library-style categorisation and classification of websites are useful for searching the whole web, or for constructing subject gateways, while back-of-book style indexes are best suited to individual websites and documents within websites.

Presented in a familiar book-style format, back-of book style indexes have advantages over other information access tools at a website level because they provide immediate access to selected and specific information through multiple entry points, sub-divisions and cross-references, and are browsable, thereby overcoming problems of misspelling and inexact matches. Their disadvantages are the cost of using skilled indexers, the need for updating and for large sites or groups of sites, for coordination and quality control, as well as the time delay between creation of the resource and its addition to the index.

Basic policies of print indexing apply equally to web indexing. Issues of consistency of usage, user audience, purpose of index, depth of indexing, selection of material, format, filing order, whether multiple indexes or single index, type of entries to include, use of cross-references must all be considered in web indexing. Additional policy issues for web indexes include format in which index will be supplied, responsibility for loading, and updating and archiving schedules and arrangements.

Web indexing has some important differences from print indexing. Using the power of Internet technology, website indexes provide links instead of the page references of print indexes, and those links can be to a wide range of material both internal and external to the website, including documents, periodicals, multimedia collections ([Online & Ondisc Conference '99](#)) and databases.

Decisions need to be made on what level to index to, where the link will point to – top of article, section or paragraph, how much material will download with each link, the use of frames, and whether external links will be included or not, considering the issue of checking their currency.

The Web offers the facility for innovative ways of organising indexes – geographic instead of, or as well as, the traditional alphabetical (e.g. Australian Libraries Gateway). There are also various options available for display which need to be considered in index design.

Features of a good website index were covered. The loss of context in a web index compared with print means that extra sign-posting and navigational features are required. In an alphabetical index, the alphabet bar is always displayed, and major headings may also be displayed in a highly structured index. Fonts, colour and explanatory text should be used to distinguish types of links – whether to a major piece of information, just a passing reference, or to an image. Ideally multiple locators should be avoided. The index should be linked to and from the home page, and to other main areas of the website. Introductory and searching notes are important, and a feedback link useful. For a well-designed index see the AusSI indexes.

A number of web indexing tools are available, including plain HTML, WinHelp-style programs, databases (e.g. www.ca.com), CINDEX plus HTML /Prep, and HTML Indexer .

HTML Indexer automates some aspects of website indexing on IBM-compatible machines. The program creates default index entries for all selected files, and for all named anchors within those files. The defaults can be edited or overwritten, and must be saved if required. The index entries are stored in the source HTML files, so the index can be refreshed when files are added or moved. As the index entries are included in metadata tags they can be found by search engines.

The workshop exercise demonstrated the basic features of HTML Indexer, including selection and viewing of source material, blocking non-content files, building the default index, deleting and editing default entries, adding entries, setting filing order, cutting and pasting text sections from the source file, creating subdivisions and cross references, using Preferences to set style settings, and selecting output browser for output.

Hypothetical scenarios

Taxation

Presented by Madeleine Davis,
AusSI

Devised by Pamela Hewitt, CSE

- 1 Your business has an ABN and is registered for GST. You invoice a client in the normal way but they pay only the amount you charged for your services, not the GST component.
In your BAS, do you list this item as a non-GST item?
Under what circumstances is your client legally justified in not paying you the GST component?
- 2 Your business is currently registered for GST. Around half of your work (indexing and/or editing) is for private clients who are end users and so cannot claim GST inputs. These clients pay 10% less if they use the services of your competitors who do not meet the \$50,000 pa threshold and therefore do not charge GST. The other side of your business is for large government and corporate clients who expect you to be GST registered. In fact they would regard you as a less than serious contender for tenders if you didn't charge GST. Your turnover is close to \$50,000 pa. It would be a simple matter for you to expand or contract your business a little so that you were just over or just under the cut-off point.
What should you do? In making this decision you want to make a good business move and one that is professionally satisfying.
- 3 You have a client who is a Korean national resident in New York. All work is carried out via email correspondence. Should you charge her GST? Under what circumstances is GST payable on exports?

Ethics

Presented by Basil Walby, Society
of Editors, Victoria
Devised by Pamela Hewitt,
Canberra Society of Editors

- 1 You are asked to edit a postgraduate thesis and you establish that this will be done in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the university concerned (acknowledgement of the role of the editor, knowledge and consent of the supervisor). When you begin the task, you realise that there are major conceptual problems with the thesis draft. It is not simply a question of language style and grammar. You have a background in the discipline concerned and know that you could assist the student with more than your copy editing skills.
How do you handle the situation?
- 2 You are asked to revise the index of a publication for a second edition. You did not compile the first index and are concerned about the ethical issues involved. Does the original indexer have intellectual rights over the content of their earlier index? Are you benefiting from their work without acknowledgment (or payment) if you use the first index as a 'shell'?
- 3 You have compiled a book index when the client makes substantial last minute revisions to the final typeset manuscript. Tables are placed on different pages, whole sections are deleted and others inserted. Virtually every page is affected. You advise that the index must be started from scratch. The client is not prepared to pay for the time involved and asks you merely to index the new sections and make whatever changes are possible for a specified cost.
Do you reject these new terms, even if it is made clear to you that refusal means no further work from this client?
- 4 You are asked to edit (or index) a manuscript on a subject in which you have a strong background. In the course of the job, it becomes clear to you that much of the material that is being presented as the original work of the author is in fact plagiarised.
What steps do you take?

Editing for indexers

The workshop by Claudia Marchesi had ten participants, all of whom had at least a general familiarity with the publishing process. Topics covered were within copy editing and proofreading.

Copy editing improves the text rather than rewrites it. The author's 'voice' must come through. The editing corrects errors of grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation and ensures that the intention and meaning are clearly expressed. Copy editing ensures that style (house style or style developed for the work in hand) is consistent; ensures that references and bibliography are complete and layout and format conform to style; and oversees proofreading and consequent amendments.

Proofreading corrects spelling, punctuation and typographical errors; ensures that cross-references are complete; and ensures that style and format are consistently applied.

There was discussion of some examples of usage and style and of some Microsoft Word devices which help editors especially in keeping track of changes when editing on disk or on-line. Probably the most useful part of the workshop was the description of a number of tools which are important for Australian editors and proofreaders. Some of these are listed below. The handouts included a breakdown of copy editing tasks, a sheet of examples of proofreading marks and a brief proofreading aptitude test.

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Analysis of Conference Questionnaire (Indexers)

Pamela Hewitt, Canberra Society of Editors

There were 33 responses from indexers and 49 from editors. This report only deals with the responses from indexers. Analysis of the part of the survey that covered editors is available from the CSE web site. Most survey forms were filled in at the conference, but since then, members of both professions who didn't attend the conference have sent in responses. This is not a large sample, it wasn't a scientifically controlled survey, and there were the usual problems of inconsistent form completion. All the same, the questionnaire results provide a benchmark that can be used as the basis for future investigation. They also give us some clear messages from an active proportion of national membership. All regions except South Australia and the Northern Territory are represented in the survey and there was one international response (New Zealand).

Here are some of the other descriptive findings.

- Indexers are an aging group: no respondents were under 25, and only 1 was in the 26–35 group; 27% were 36–45, 33% 46–55, and 51% over 55. Interestingly, this is not true to nearly the same extent for editors. While both indexers and editors are feminised occupations, the gender imbalance is less pronounced for the indexers who responded to this question, of whom 27% were male and 73% female.
- Indexers are highly qualified: All respondents had an undergraduate degree, and 21% had a masters degree. Over half (54%) of respondents also had another postgraduate qualification, mostly graduate diplomas and also graduate certificates.
- 79% of respondents had also undertaken specialist professional development courses.
- Of the respondents who answered the question on experience, the largest group (42%) had more than 10 years' experience as an indexer (39% had between 1 and 5 years, and 15% had between 6 and 10 years).
- Many reported other relevant professional experience. The most commonly cited prior occupation was librarian (19), followed by editor (6), researcher (4) and writer (3). Other experience included proofreading, project officer, bibliographer, public relations, trainer/manager, research assistant, architect, lexicographer and historian.
- 45% of respondents were part-time indexers; 27% were full time and 7 of the 33 did indexing in addition to other employment.
- 67% of respondents (22) were primarily back-of-the-book indexers; most of the others were database indexers. Also mentioned were periodical indexing, bibliographic work and electronic indexing.
- Most respondents were freelance (67%). Only 15% were employees. Others nominated combinations of employee, freelance, volunteer, database manager and researcher.
- Average hourly rates were just under \$40 (\$39.86), with a high of \$50 and a low of \$30. Costs for some specific services were higher (project management at \$50.00) while others were lower (proofreading \$27.50 and editing \$34). (All reported dollar amounts have been averaged for those responding to this question (22 of 33 respondents).) It is interesting to note the difference between the editors' responses to a similar question. While the rates indexers report that they charge are lower by around \$10 per hour, the variation is much narrower. (The range editors report varies

from \$15 an hour to \$130.) And while the editor respondents charge virtually the same average amount as indexers for indexing (\$41), indexer respondents charge an average of \$16 less per hour than editors when they undertake editing work. Given the significant overlap of services offered by editors and indexers, perhaps there is some scope for the professional societies to discuss together rates for editors who undertake indexing and vice versa.

Other rates were mentioned for consulting (\$65), lecturing (\$92.50), research (\$30), library consultancy for a project fee or by barter, and web indexing was described by one respondent as being at the top of the price range.

Maintaining and extending networks and increasing skills were seen as the greatest challenges (70% and 55%, respectively). Increasing income and finding interesting work were rated in the top three by 82% of respondents. One respondent's work was voluntary, because of the difficulties in establishing oneself as an indexer, others expressed a desire to expand into other fields such as writing and editing, the desire not to be replaced by a computer, and the need for passing on skills and fitting indexing in with other work.

By far the most commonly listed future development on people's minds was increased professional development programs through professional societies. This attracted the greatest number of responses and the greatest number of responses rated 1 (13). It was followed by increased education and training provision in educational institutions and closer coordination with relevant professional societies. One comment was that there are enough courses but they need to be more widely available (meaning on-line). (It is interesting to note that editors, too, overwhelmingly nominated professional development programs through professional societies as their highest priority.)

A wide range of subject areas was indicated, including all those listed on the questionnaire and others written in. The humanities received the largest number of checks (20), followed by environment (13), health (12), science (11) and politics (10). Some commented that indexers can be generalists, and that any and all subjects were welcome. Biography was mentioned by 3 respondents and there were single listings of annual reports, architecture, public administration, the arts, current affairs, history, medicine and maritime affairs, not to mention the very broad 'anything I can get!'.

Other comments included:

- the difficulty in obtaining paid work in history and genealogy;
- the need for AusSI to do more to support new indexers, perhaps a mentoring scheme or certification as step towards registration;
- indexers and editors should join forces as advocates;
- APA and ASA and Media and Arts Alliance should be involved in indexing issues;
- the need for new indexers;
- difficulties in deciphering the conference workshop program.

One respondent took the trouble to attach a separate sheet of comments to the survey form. These comments are summarised below.

Education I believe that indexers need a good general knowledge, a little bit of education specifically about indexing, and a lot of ongoing education about specific aspects of indexing... the courses offered in NSW and Victoria are fine, and adequate to cover the needs of beginning indexers. Unfortunately they are not offered often enough, and are not often available in other states. Online education seems to be a solution to a very small potential student base spread over a large area...

Accreditation I am not in favour of increasing the steps or hurdles to becoming an indexer. We already know that editors pay little attention to registration when selecting an indexer...

communication with editors (as at the conference) about what we currently do is of far greater importance than setting up another level of testing...

I have always liked the fact that indexing is relatively ...accessible... for those who already have skills and experience in other fields... Sometimes it seems that we want things like accreditation because they make us look professional, rather than for the benefits they bring.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the survey, whether at the conference, by mail or email. I thank Jean Norman, who helped analyse the indexers' section and the committee members who trialled the draft survey. I am keenly aware of the shortcomings of this survey, and not merely the formatting. Just the same, it's a start. If there is interest in running an improved survey again, perhaps in two years, I'd be happy to help or to hand on the lessons and data from this one. If anyone would like specific information not covered here, feel free to contact me on emend@cyberone.com.au.

The Canberra Conference

Glenda Browne

One more rewarding conference under the belt for AusSI. Credit this time to the ACT Region Branch, along with the Canberra Society of Editors, for organising a stimulating and enjoyable conference.

This conference was different from the previous three in two main ways. Firstly, as a joint conference, it provided contact with editors, and the chance to share thoughts with people who often work in ways very similar to most of us (that is, freelance from home) but are also the people who contract us to do work. Secondly, there was a lot of emphasis at this conference on action – getting together to discuss strategies for the future of education, accreditation, ethics and entrepreneurialism in our Societies. (Typing 'entrepreneurialism' I was reminded of the girl who said 'I know how to spell 'banana', I just don't know when to stop!')

Both editors and indexers found the shared conference to be valuable and the general feeling seemed to be that back-to-back conferences with some shared content and some independent content would be valuable in future.

I have to admit to not being really engrossed by the 'professional' issues of ethics and accreditation, but I found it interesting listening to the discussions and seeing the move towards consensus. From the conference we also have plans for future developments in education and entrepreneurialism.

I can't think of many sessions from which I 'learnt' something. This is partly because I shared a registration with my husband, and missed some of the meatier talks. In addition, this sort of talk was not a priority on the program. I did enjoy a session about the development of the Austlit Gateway, and moved one step further in my understanding of topic maps, and databases on the web. The quoting hypothetical was very practical, and in the small business one, it was interesting to hear from other indexers and editors about their approach to work.

There were three keynote speakers: in some cases I was as interested in the person as in the speech. Richard Walsh is well-known to me (by repute) from uni days, as he was one of the founders of OZ magazine. He has since gone on

to a successful and innovative career in publishing, and his talk (about The Three Bears of publishing) was interesting and highly entertaining. On Saturday, Kate Lundy, a Senator from the ACT, spoke about social issues related to the Internet. How she fits in being a Senator with parenting two children (and carrying a third) interests me. The third keynote speaker, Professor Ian Chubb from ANU, gave practical advice about the possibilities of setting up new university courses on indexing and editing. His habit of continually reminding us that someone else wrote his speech was a bit distracting. His speech writer should try 'The web contains information on ...' rather than 'When I was browsing the web ...' when the person who will be reading the speech hasn't browsed the web in that case.

The trade display was small (well, big for an indexing conference, but relatively small) but pertinent. Displays included the indexing software packages CINDEK and SKY Index, Metabrowser for web metadata, Term Tree 2000, Seaview Press (for self-publishers) and AusSI (with some SI publications for sale as well). Hats off to the smallish companies and individuals who sponsored the conference in some way, including Lynn Farkas Information Services (reception desk staff) and Shirley Campbell (stationery).

Dinner was very enjoyable, with entertainment including, hot-off-the-press, 'the Ansett is blowing in the wind', from the satirical duo Shortis and Simpson. Max McMaster was presented with the AusSI Indexing Medal (a report is published elsewhere), and Madeleine Davis received a highly commended certificate. I missed the cocktail party, but I gather that CINDEK put on a splendid do.

Following the conference there was a day of workshops which were enthusiastically attended. It was rather odd bumping into indexers at the National Library all day. Once again, congratulations and thank you to all the organisers for a highly successful event.

Dates for your Diary

May 25 Analysing, abstracting and indexing documents for databases, UNSW. See Noticeboard for details

May 30 AusSI National Committee meeting Everyone welcome Contact president@aussi.org if you wish to attend

Jun 5 Society of Editors (NSW) monthly lecture Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm \$12 for members; \$15 non-members RSVP to mmripear@ozemail.com.au

Jun 29-Jul 1 Sheffield (UK): Society of Indexers Conference 2001 'Indexing at the Cutting Edge'

Jul 7 Beyond Grammar Workshop of the Society of Editors (NSW) Details on the Noticeboard