

# Melbourne Indexers Bulletin

No. 21, April 2017

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## UK National Indexing Day

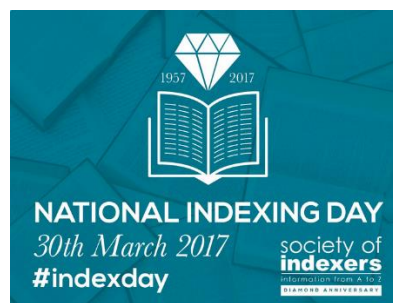
The Society of Indexers celebrated its diamond anniversary with a very special National Indexing Day. It was clearly a success, and UK indexer, Ruth Ellis, did a sterling job of keeping tabs on all the media coverage. She has posted all the stories, as well as the background to the day on Storify.

(<https://storify.com/indexers/national-indexing-day-2017-indexday>)

You can also listen to a podcast of SI President, Sam Leith, in conversation with Oxford University scholar, Dr Dennis Duncan,

who is writing a book about the history of indexers and indexing.

(<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2017/04/books-podcast-joy-indexes/>)



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## April meeting – Updating an index

The aim was to discuss the process of updating an index. Max and I had collected various scenarios and, with contributions from the group, we ended up with quite a variety of situations where you may be updating an index.

We assumed you have or can easily convert the index to the previous edition to a form suitable for your indexing software. IndexConvert, which we demonstrated last year, is useful for this. See report in *Melbourne Indexers Bulletin* for June 2016. (<https://www.anzsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MIB-Jun-2016.pdf>)

## Updating the index you are working on

The text you are working on has been modified. Perhaps additional pages added, chapters rewritten, text moved across pages or sections removed.

- Ask for clear indications as to what has happened. This saves you comparing every page.
- Compare new pages with old pages.
- Do a quick check of pages not mentioned, just to make sure all is as before.
- Place index in page number order and compare.

- Minor changes such as only within a chapter can be corrected by updating the page numbers appropriately.
- Complete page shifts such as whole pages removed or added. Select index entries involved and use the software feature to add or subtract page numbers. Make sure page ranges have been updated accurately.
- Page flow altered with several pages involved. Carefully compare old with new and update the index entries.
- Chunks of text added, removed or updated. Carefully compare old with new and update index appropriately adding or removing entries as required.

### Updating examples

Other examples of when an index needs to be updated can include the following:

1. An update with very similar content such as with an annual report index.
2. New second (or third) revised edition with updated text.
3. New edition as previous text was for different market (e.g. UK version altered for Australia).
4. Based on previous edition with contents reshuffled (e.g. smaller stationery catalogue for school market).
5. Index to publication has been rejected by editor/author and has to be reworked – eek! This sounds more like a new indexing job than an update!
6. The text has been translated, say into French, and perhaps the index to the English edition can be translated, to match the French page numbers.
7. An Australian edition has been resized to American publication size.
8. Template index. A series of technical reports on hazardous chemicals contained the same sections (e.g. human exposure, environmental exposure, human health hazard

assessment, etc.). Although the chemicals were different, many of the headings were the same, so a template was appropriate.

9. An Australian publication has been slightly modified for New Zealand market.

### Who did the previous index?

Should you ask who did the previous index? Resounding no from the floor. There could be a variety of reasons as to why you have been asked to do the index.

### Word of caution

‘The index just needs to be updated’, says the editor, thinking it will be a quick and easy job (and cheap). Don’t be swept up by this and end up with something far more complicated than expected.

‘Revision of an index, if undertaken at all, is a task that demands experience and a thorough acquaintance with the principles and rules of indexing if it is to yield a satisfactory outcome.’

(Wellisch, Hans H 1996 *Indexing from A to Z*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, NY, Wilson, pp. 420-1.)

### Should you use the previous index?

It is essential that you are happy with the previous index. Study the previous index closely. Is it suitable to build on? Would you index it in the same way? You need to feel you will be saving time by using the previous index.

You may decide, even if you don’t like the index, there are lots of technical terms in the text and by starting with the previous index you will save time by not retyping them.

### What do you need?

Perhaps you did the previous index and have the file already. Alternatively, take the Word or PDF file of the index and convert to

indexing software file. IndexConvert is very handy for this.

Do you need a copy of the previous text? I don't generally ask for this for text books as you can work out where differences occur. However, I do find it is useful to have access to the previous annual report, particularly if the organisation has had a restructure.

### Quotes

I usually quote as if I am starting from scratch as a new job. I will add that the quote may be less as I am updating, however I will not know how much less until I have finished. Final cost is usually about 80-100% of doing a new index.

Take care if budget offered sounds far too low compared to the cost of preparing a new index.

### The basics of updating an index

The basics of updating an index include:

- Rename the file to reflect new edition, so you have old file to go back to.
- Use software feature to add 1000 to all the page numbers. The advantage of this is it still keeps the index in page number order.
- Work through the text updating the index and page numbers as you go.
- Examine terms not used to make sure you haven't missed that topic in the text.
- Look at previous index and make sure you are happy with the changes you have made. Be prepared to justify your changes to author/editor if necessary.

### Updating an annual report index

- Rename the file to reflect new edition, so you have old file to go back to.
- Use software feature to add 1000 to all the page numbers.

- Start at the back and complete appendix and financial statements first.
- Work forward completing sections as you go. Update page number and index content as required.
- Using SKY Index you can tag a section in red, say, and pull out those terms to work on the index to just that section.
- Leave Chief Executive's/CEO's summaries to last and check carefully for any new concepts which have not been identified in the text in case they have been missed.
- On completing the indexing, examine any terms not used (they will still have page numbers in the 1000's) to make sure you haven't missed that topic in the text.
- Compare with previous index to make sure you can justify any significant changes you have made.
- Complete index checks and edit in the usual way.

### References

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- Mulvany, Nancy (2008) *Indexing books*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp. 238–41.
- Rooney, Peter. (2007) How I reused my own index. *Information Wissenschaft & Praxis*, 58(8):394–8. (<http://www.b-i-t-online.de/pdf/iwp/IWP2007-8.pdf>)
- Wellisch, Hans H (1996) *Indexing from A to Z*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, NY, Wilson, pp. 418-21.

*Mary Russell and Max McMaster*

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## Indexing conundrum

### How much extrapolation should you use when indexing?

I was indexing a gardening text recently and the author discussed specific stone fruits – apricots, cherries, nectarines, peaches and plums – so I indexed these accordingly. Another section of the book provided general information about stone fruit, covering planting, spacing, pollination and common pests and diseases. Specific stone fruits were mentioned in passing in this general section, so I indexed the individual fruits and ‘stone fruit’ in general. Later in the text, the author discussed the harvesting of stone fruit, but no specific examples were given. The dilemma for me was one of detail: should I index specific stone fruits (e.g. cherries) to the harvesting page, or was extrapolating from the text going too far?

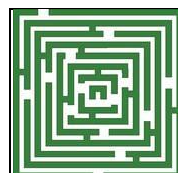
After some deliberation, I decided not to index the specific fruits to the harvesting page. Users looking up cherries and going to

the harvesting page would find no mention of cherries whatsoever and would feel aggrieved. To get around this problem, I used two sets of cross-references: “stone fruit *see also* specific fruits, e.g. cherries”, and “cherries *see also* stone fruit”.

Some members, particularly those with a library background, may argue that cross-references should only go from the broader term (stone fruit) to the more specific term (cherries), but there is nothing wrong with going from the specific term (cherries) to the broader term (stone fruit), when warranted.

Comments from members welcome.

*Max McMaster*



Share your thoughts on this conundrum, or one of your own by emailing [melbourneindexers@gmail.com](mailto:melbourneindexers@gmail.com)

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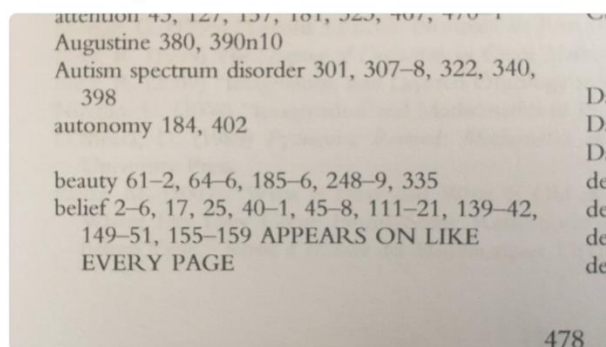
## Surprise indexes: Some academic experiences

↻ Jeff Sparrow retweeted



**Academia Obscura** @AcademiaObscura · 16 Mar. ▾

Never let an overworked grad student write your indexes. | @micahtilman



↶ 16

↻ 592

♥ 1,383





Melbourne Indexers has always been known to have a bit of fun with surprise indexes. It seems that those in the academic Twittersphere enjoy them too! You can find the tweets about these two bloopers at <https://twitter.com/AcademiaObscura/status/842328400215867392>

## Upcoming meetings

### Program for second half of 2017

Month	Session	Details
Wednesday 7 June 10:00am to 12:00pm  Camberwell Library, 340 Camberwell Road, Camberwell	Financial aspects	Various aspects of quotations and charging. Such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging less than quoted or publisher's job budget</li> <li>• Discounts</li> <li>• Company paid super</li> </ul>
August Details TBC	Cited authors	How and when to index cited authors in the index.
Friday 1 September CAE, Flinders Lane	Indexes through publishers' eyes	Full day seminar
October Details TBC	Singular or plural headings	Usual rule is for plural headings. When should headings be singular? For example, apple rather than apples.
December Details TBC	Don't make me think!	Take this very poor index and discuss its faults and how it could be improved.

### Changes to usual meeting venue and time

Due to building works at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, we can expect some changes to our usual meeting venue and time during the second half of the year.

As noted in the program above, the June meeting will be held at Camberwell Library. The library is located approximately 400 metres from Camberwell Junction, and is well serviced by public transport with tram stop no. 43 virtually at the door. For those needing a caffeine fix, you won't need to go far as the library has its very own Ignite Café. The meeting will be held during the day from 10:00am to 12:00pm, so hopefully this is an opportunity for those unable to attend evening meetings.

While things are a bit up in the air at the moment, you will be notified of details of meeting venues and times once they have been confirmed.

Contributions to *Melbourne Indexers Bulletin* are welcome at [melbourneindexers@gmail.com](mailto:melbourneindexers@gmail.com)