

# Melbourne Indexers Bulletin

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## Indexing conundrums

Every indexing job has you puzzling on how to handle something. It might be terminology or what to index or even how best to index a concept. For this new column, we welcome your input on indexing conundrums you have had to work out.

### When do passing mentions become useful?

As most indexers are aware, passing mentions of subjects offer little of significance to the user and are excluded from the index. The dilemma is, if the same very minor subject is referred to on several occasions throughout the text, does it become indexable?

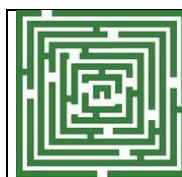
I recently indexed a book on zoo ethics. Early on in the text, the author used the word – elephants – as an example, for a point she was making. There was no additional information about elephants, so I treated it as a passing mention and moved on. Further on in the text, elephants were again used as examples and my approach was the same. Once I had come across the fourth occurrence of elephants, I started to wonder if treating

them all as passing mentions was appropriate. As it so happened, there were six minor mentions of elephants, all as examples, in the text. I decided they needed to be included.

Although each individual occurrence of the minor subject (elephants) could be classed as a passing mention, when grouped as a whole, however, they provided an overall picture, making inclusion of the term worthwhile for the user.

The important question is, was the approach I took sensible, or should I have just treated them all as passing mentions and ignored them? Readers, your comments are very welcome. Also, if you have come across similar situations, let us know.

*Max McMaster*



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

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## Exploring your indexing software

When was the last time you explored other parts of your indexing software you don't usually use? I have set ways I do things with preferred settings and shortcuts I use. I only delve into the software when I find the software doing something odd, or I am asked to prepare my index in a different way.

The offer to preview Sky Index Pro8 for free for a short time (<http://www.sky-software.com/si8/>), gave me the opportunity to explore the software in a different way. I could download the software and explore, before paying for an upgrade and using it for a real index. This is a preview version and features may still change before the formal release. They welcome feedback.

I know many readers don't use SKY Index, so I will spare you the technical details of the changes, however I will give you a broad idea of what I did as chances are the principles will be the same in other software. While these notes relate to exploring a new version of the software, you can also use these suggestions to take a closer look at the version you are using.

- Install into a new directory and name it with version number.
- Create a 'test' index and add random entries.
- Read the 'What's new' section.
- Take time to read the 'Tip of the day' before you turn them off as they often mention shortcuts or alternative ways of doing something.
- Skim the tutorial on how to create an index (hopefully all familiar to you).
- Test some of the shortcut keys you don't usually use.
- Examine the options settings. Play with clicking different settings on or off to see what happens. Read the help screens (or User guide) to help you understand what the options are doing.
- Experiment doing something different. Perhaps using Unicodes or creating hyperlinks. The User Guide may give you hints on what to explore.
- Examine how to modify the output settings. For example, can you increase or modify the indents for subheadings?
- Did you have tasks that caused you to create macros or workarounds? Will these be simpler in the new version?
- Compare with the previous version. If you upgrade, what are the good and bad things about the new version.

I was entertained for a couple of hours and ended up with a very odd looking 'test' index. I confirmed you can teach an old dog new tricks! A couple of shortcuts I discovered were actually not new, but in the version I use. There were also several new features I will be using and am pleased to see added. Will I upgrade when Pro8 is released? Yes, definitely, particularly as I now have a good understanding of the new features.

*Mary Russell*

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## Overseas news

If you're keen to know more about what's happening overseas in the world of indexing, don't forget that you can access a number of newsletters online.

American Society for Indexers has a monthly newsletter called *See also*

<https://www.asindexing.org/category/newsletter/>

Back issues of Newsletters from other indexing societies can be found at

<https://www.anzsi.org/member-area/international-newsletters/>

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## *Indexes through Publishers' Eyes Seminar*

Friday, 1 September 2017

The program for this full day seminar at the CAE in Flinders Lane is coming along nicely, so save the date and watch for updates.

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## Upcoming meetings

### Wednesday 5 April – Updating an index

How do you update an index? What are the tricks to doing it successfully? What software features in Macrex and Sky, for example, can assist with this process?

6 for 6:30pm Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Kew. Followed by a meal at Café La Q at 7:45pm.

### Wednesday 7 June – Financial aspects

Various financial aspects such as:

- The actual cost of doing the index comes in well under your initial quote or the publisher's budget. What do you do?
- You are approached by an author or not-for-profit organisation who are not able to afford to pay the real cost of the index. What do you do?
- Company paid super is offered by some publishers as part of a contract. What is it and are you eligible?

6 for 6:30pm Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Kew. Followed by a meal at Café La Q at 7:45pm.

Contributions to <i>Melbourne Indexers Bulletin</i> are welcome at <a href="mailto:melbourneindexers@gmail.com">melbourneindexers@gmail.com</a>
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