

Melbourne Indexers Bulletin

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Melbourne Indexers meetings – April and May

Hyperlinking index entries to journal articles

A version of this article was presented by Hugh and Max McMaster at the April meeting of the Melbourne Indexers.

The *Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management* magazine (commonly known as *Landcare*) is an environmental journal aimed predominantly at Landcarers throughout Victoria. Launched in 1996, the magazine now has 65 issues and covers topics such as pest and weed control, land management, wildlife habitat and Indigenous environmental knowledge. There is also a strong focus on the people involved in these projects.

Landcare is indexed in the conventional way, with author/title and subject entries now covering 146 pages. Digital copies of each issue are available to download,¹ but given the need to open and close multiple files, including the index, locating specific content is labour-intensive. As a result, the publishers of *Landcare* – the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning – took a proactive approach and decided to hyperlink each index entry to its corresponding article.

The result was an enhanced index offering quick and easy access to *Landcare*'s vast array of content. All it took was a simple database, programming knowledge and, above all, preparation. This article reveals some of the

traps involved in hyperlinking an index and suggests ways of avoiding them.

aquatic weeds [38.16–17](#), [51.12–13](#)
arrowhead [19.7](#)
dense waterweed [18.14](#)

Locator style

When compiling a cumulative index for digital publication, the style of locator chosen should not appear in any text entry within the index. The reason for this is simple. The conversion software has no understanding of context, so it will convert any text matching a specified pattern into a hyperlink, regardless of whether it is a locator or not.

Taking this into consideration, the index to *Landcare* uses locators in the form issue.page. This simple style is easy for the user to read and avoids confusion. A more complex style could have been used, e.g. year(issue).page, but this was not warranted.

In short, locators should be easy to read, kept as simple as possible and, for hyperlinked indexes, be unique.

URL structure

Although files can be stored anywhere on a publicly accessible web server, it is preferable that they are stored in a logical manner. For example, the server hosting *Landcare* uses the following structure:

<http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/magazine/vlcm/previous-issues/2014/issue-61/all-pages>

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<http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/magazine/vlcm>

<http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/magazine/vlcm/previous-issues/2015/issue-62/all-pages>

As can be seen, these URLs use a logical and consistent directory structure for ease of readability and file management.

It is also important to avoid using spaces in file or directory names. Web browsers represent spaces as %20, making URLs difficult to read. Underscores or hyphens are the preferred option.

Opening an online PDF to a specific page

Opening a PDF file to a specific page in a web browser is surprisingly easy. Simply add #page=page number to the end of your URL. This useful code works on all modern web browsers, but does not work with other file types.

It is important to note that only the first page of a page span is hyperlinked during conversion. Hyperlinking the end page of a page span is unnecessary, as users do not want to start reading from the end of an article.

Typos

When converting index locators into hyperlinks, locators that do not match a specified pattern will be ignored. In almost all cases, this is likely to be due to an unexpected space or character. For example:

alligator weed 51._13 (for clarity, the extra space is shown here as an underscore)

Page mismatches

Missing pages were quite a common occurrence in the early issues of *Landcare*. Full-page advertisements were often removed from the digital edition after print publication, causing a page mismatch between versions. In all cases, print page numbers were used in the index. One solution is to insert generic pages marked "Advertisement" into the correct position in each problematic PDF file.

Another problem causing significant page mismatches was the existence of double-page spreads. These effectively halved the number of pages in the digital version, causing it to open on an incorrect page. This can be resolved by reproducing the problematic PDF files as single pages.

Server speed and Web browser

Surprisingly, these aspects make a big difference! If the *Landcare* web server responds slowly, the PDF version will most likely open on page one, ignoring the specified page in the URL. With a quick server response, the PDF opens on the correct page.

The choice of web browser also seems to make a difference. Mozilla Firefox appears to be unaffected by server speed, but Internet Explorer is more susceptible.

Ballaarat Mechanics Institute visit

On 5 May 2016, five Melbourne Indexers travelled to Ballarat to visit the Ballaarat* Mechanics Institute (BMI). Former librarian and indexer Jane Purton – a Ballarat resident and volunteer at the BMI – suggested the visit, and we were keen to oblige. Jane came and saw us before the tour.

During the 19th Century, in the days before government-funded libraries and adult education, Mechanics Institutes provided people with much-needed access to books, newspapers, periodicals, lectures and scientific demonstrations. Their halls also provided local communities with a place for social, cultural and recreational gatherings.

The BMI was no exception and its foundation stone was laid on September 28, 1860, with the building opening in 1861. The Institute initially consisted of a reading room, library, lecture room and two classrooms on the ground floor. A large hall, capable of seating 1200 people, was on the first floor. In 1935 the requirement for more library space and easier access to the library saw the Institute purchase the old 1865 Mining Exchange

located on the west side of the Institute. The Exchange was connected to the main building and the library was reopened in 1936.



Our tour commenced in the subscription library, where we met our guide, who explained the history of the Ballarat Mechanics Institute. We then moved into the archive room and early library, which only houses pre-1950 books and newspapers. The archive room was restored in 2013 back to its 1860s splendour and was truly magnificent. Original tables and chairs were present, as were sloping stands for reading newspapers. The room also housed some novelties, including a calico bag containing the original cuboid, numbered, wooden marbles used when drawing the grand art union prize. The art union prize was used by the BMI for

fundraising as raffles were deemed by the Church to be a form of gambling.

Our tour of the building included a visit to the upstairs hall, which has been restored and redecorated to its original heritage colours of light green and cream. We also visited the very cool (temperature-wise) 'dungeon' in the basement, where very early copies of bound and unbound issues of newspapers were housed. These included the *Ballarat Courier*, *Ballarat Star*, *The Argus*, *Warracknabeal Post* and many others.

An enjoyable day was had by all. We are on the lookout for other regional locations to visit, so suggestions are welcome.

*Some eagle-eyed indexer may say that this is a spelling mistake. According to Wikipedia, the spelling of the name was a source of constant confusion. It originated from two local Aboriginal words, 'balla arat', meaning 'resting place'. The municipality used the spelling 'Ballaarat' as part of its corporate description, but the town itself came to be known as Ballarat.



New indexing books

American Society for Indexing has published two new books *Ten characteristics of quality indexes: confessions of an award-winning indexer* by Margie Towery and *Indexing tactics and tidbits: an A-Z guide* by Janet Perlman.

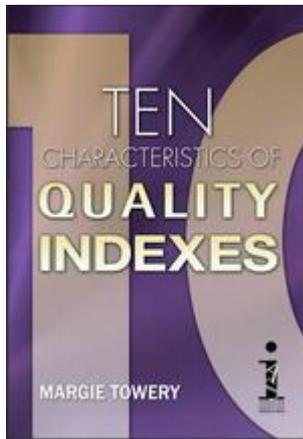
They are available now from Information Today:

<http://books.infotoday.com/books/index.shtml#index>

Hop in fast for preorder price of US\$ 21.60 each, as they both will rise to US\$36 for ANZSI members (we pay ASI members price) or

US\$45 for non-members. Postage will be added to these prices.

As my copies have only just arrived, I haven't had time to read them in detail, but I'll give you a quick overview.



Ten characteristics of a quality index

This book is based on sessions Margie Towery has given at conferences. I heard her at the Canadian conference in 2014 and liked her approach. The ten characteristics are given a chapter each and are:

1. Audiences and accessibility
2. Metatopics and index structure
3. Accuracy
4. Comprehensiveness and conciseness
5. Consistency
6. Clarity
7. Reflexivity
8. Readability
9. Common sense
10. Index evaluation

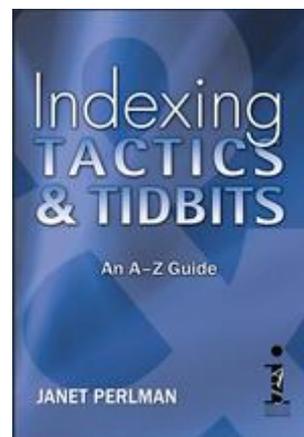
The chapter on common sense caught my eye. Common sense is so important. Here she reminds you to have a common sense approach to your index practice and take breaks and keep a sense of humour. She

discusses breaking the rules and gives tips on how to handle gnarly problems.

Dipping into the other chapters Margie discusses each of the topics with appropriate examples. She often includes cases where she has had to tackle a gnarly problem with a particular text and her solution. For example, in a run-on style for an author after the subheadings she listed his works after the subheading in small capitals (WORKS) to help make it stand out more.

The sub title 'confessions of an award-winning indexer' is appropriate, as this approach is like having Margie offering mentoring guidance.

References are grouped into index-related references, cross-training reference and books with indexes discussed in text. This ties in with Margie belief indexers need to read widely. The first group contains ones I'm familiar with. I'm looking forward to reading some of the references listed in the second and third groups.



Indexing tactics and tidbits: an A-Z guide

This is in A-Z format, which means it is for dipping into. To assist reading, at the front Janet Perlmán has listed the headings under broad groups such as business of indexing, indexing process, technology, technique, etc.

THE INDEXER

The International Journal of Indexing

The June issue is now available on Ingenta to subscribers. Included is:

From librarian to media manager: looking after BBC Scotland's archive. *Jennifer Wilson*

Visiting the BBC Scotland archives. *Bechaela Walker*

Does embedded indexing have a future? *Cheryl Landes*

Jumping on the embedded indexing bandwagon – or should I? *Lucie Haskins*

Continuing professional development (CPD) and the potential of new media. *Pierke Bosschieter*

Planning (and preserving) your indexing legacy. *Frances S. Lennie*

Indexing in the editorial process. *Max McMaster*

Stop words in the filing of subheadings. *Max McMaster*

The joy of managing without. *Maureen MacGlashan*

The Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals. *Marci Hoffman*

A look at classification and indexing practices for elementary school children: who are we really serving? *Valerie Nessel*

The Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals. *Marci Hoffman*

Did you know?

Stewardesses is the longest word typed with only the left hand.

Lollipop is the longest word typed with your right hand.

No word in the English language rhymes with **month**, **orange**, **silver** or **purple**.

Dreamt is the only English word that ends in 'mt'.

Upcoming meetings

Next meeting – Converting Word indexes to Cindex or Macrex or SKY using IndexConvert

If you have you ever had to convert a Word index back into Cindex or Macrex or SKY, you know this can be a time-consuming task. This scenario arises when it is beneficial to use a previous edition of the index, e.g. for an annual report or a text where the changes are relatively minor, rather than reindexing the whole work from scratch. IndexConvert, created by UK indexer Barry Campbell, will be demonstrated, to show how well it works.

Date: Tuesday 31 May

Time: Meeting begins at 2:00 pm, followed by afternoon tea

Venue: Malvern Library, High Street, Malvern

Wednesday 3 August Editing the ANZSI Newsletter index 6 for 6:30 Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Kew 7:45 meal at Café La Q	Twenty years of newsletters, several indexers and what do you get? While it isn't a dog's breakfast, there is quite a lot of editing to be done. Most is obvious. Names need to be checked, typos, entries need to be in the form decided, etc. There is variation in how some types of articles have been indexed. Please come and provide guidance on how things should appear in the index.
Wednesday 5 October What was your most challenging index? 6 for 6:30 Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Kew 7:45 meal at Café La Q	What was your most challenging index? What aspects of the job made it challenging? Perhaps it was your first job, the clients were difficult or the book itself was massive or intellectually challenging. Come and share your experiences. Who knows what will be discussed?
Wednesday 7 December How are books constructed? 6 for 6:30 Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Kew 7:45 meal at Café La Q	Have you ever made your own book? After a brief discussion on the process of how a book is bound there will be a chance to make your own simple booklets from sheets of A4 paper.

Contributions to *Melbourne Indexers Bulletin* are welcome at melbourneindexers@gmail.com