
This book begins (to quote the jacket) 'by dealing with the philosophy of non-fiction publishing as a whole, and goes on to discuss the choice and treatment of subject, the mechanics of writing, illustrations, the choice of publisher and dealings with him, financial aspects, and a large number of other matters'. The author has written at least six books on transport (four of them on railways), and is managing director of David & Charles Ltd. He is therefore well qualified to deal authoritatively and (when it comes to controversial matters such as contracts and payments to authors) fairly with the many aspects of both the profession and the industry. In fact, someone who picked up the book while I was reading it and who is contemplating writing his first book, said, 'it answers all the questions I wanted to ask'.

A book indexer will find this book to be excellent background reading; he will find the chapter on authorship and finance, with its sections on taxation and death duties worth far more than the cost of the book; he may even find Appendix 2 — symbols for correcting proofs (which are extracted from British Standard 1219: 1958 Recommendations for proof correction and copy preparation) useful.

This list of symbols and the preceding seven pages forming Appendix 2 'Authors' alterations cost money and cause delay', are a reprint (even to the use of green ink) of a leaflet produced by the British Federation of Master Printers in collaboration with the Publishers' Association.

Mr. Thomas deals with the 'index' in a page and a half; it is a brief, reliable guide which cannot be faulted — succinct writing characteristic of the whole book.

Elsewhere, in dealing with timetables and proofs he states that 'normally an author will be allowed two or three weeks to correct and read each set of proofs, and be expected to supply an index within a week of returning the page proofs. That will often mean hard, concentrated work, and planning well ahead'. Reading proofs certainly requires concentration, and is mentally fatiguing work. Indexing requires not only concentration but also constant mental alertness and a good memory for subject, or other headings already selected. It requires dexterity with cards or slips, and at an early stage of the work accurate filing of slips and their constant extraction for the entering of additional references. The allowance of half the proof-reading time for the compilation of an index to a factual book is too meagre if an adequate index is to be compiled, particularly if the book has to be read through (as it should be, unless the author is the indexer) before making the entries is begun. This situation is one which is of constant concern to indexers because publishers fail to allow enough time in their publishing schedule.

The index to the book takes three and a quarter pages, and appears to be adequately compiled, but of the three books mentioned by title one is not given the author's name; full entries under the authors' names also would have been desirable; quite apart from the fact that this is more efficient, it should not be assumed that people have a better memory for titles than for authors' names. There are quite a number of see and see also references but these are not quite as numerous as is desirable, e.g. there could usefully be see also cross-references between the inter-related 'subsidiary rights', 'royalties' and 'contracts' headings, the entries of which are mutually exclusive. There are many headings with subheadings but these are 'run-on' instead of being 'set-out' on separate lines; the result is that much more time is taken looking for a particular aspect of a heading than is necessary. If this had been done, only thirty-three more lines would have been taken; this would have been half a column or a quarter of the last three-quarters-empty page of index.

L.M.H.


The first 424 pages of this work contain the final report of the second Cranfield investigations (Factors determining the performance of indexing systems). This report is so well-known and has been so widely reviewed that further comment from me would be superfluous.

Pages 425 to 470 consist of A comparison of some machine-produced indexes by William Mansfield Adams, a report originally published by the University of Hawaii in January 1955 but reprinted here, like the Cranfield report, without acknowledgment. Mr. Adams wished to produce a fifty-year cumulative index to Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America, of which he is editor, and decided to examine a number of machine-produced indexes before deciding on the format of his own. The resulting comparison is an interesting and informative one, and is usefully illustrated by extracts from Chemical Titles, Biological Abstracts Information Dissemination System (BASIC), Journal of the Association of Computing Machinery, Meteorological and Geophysical Titles, U.S. Government Research Reports, Science Citation Index, Index Medicus, and Oceanic Co-ordinate Index. Most of these indexes
use the principles of keyword indexing, but Meteorological and Geophysical Titles is particularly interesting in that it also has a sequence arranged according to the Universal Decimal Classification. After his comparison, the author establishes his own operational definition of relevance, supporting his arguments with the mathematical formulae and graphs considered so essential today in writings on information retrieval, and outlines a search procedure. Using linear programming he considers the relationship between 'keywords-in-title' and 'key-references' of the same article, concluding that in an efficiently produced article there will be more references than keywords in a ratio of approximately three to one. Finally he provides illustrations of the proposed keyword and author sections of his 53-year cumulative index to Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America.

The concluding paper, Simultaneous production of catalog cards and computer input by Robert W. Butler and Paula Z. Schofield, describes the cataloguing system for the Documents Section of the Technical Library at Fort Detrick where, using a Friden Flexowriter with an auxiliary punch and auxiliary reader, computer input and 5 by 3 inch catalogue cards are produced simultaneously. The COSATI rules are used as the basis of the descriptive cataloguing and from 3 to 60 cards are produced for each document. As far as I have been able to establish, this paper has not been published previously.

Why these papers have been collected, at least two of them being reprinted without acknowledgment, is not clear. The work is badly produced and the editor, unnamed, but possibly William Mansfield Adams since he contributes a foreword, has missed a golden opportunity to add something to the originals by providing a comprehensive index. Even the index provided to the original Cranfield report has been omitted from this collection, and this is really not good enough in a 500-page book on indexing.

K. G. B. Bakewell.

Your jazz collection, by Derek Langridge (Bingley, 1970.) 162pp. £2.00.

Before commenting on the phenomenon of collecting and the lack of literature on this curious aspect of human fascination, the author, as librarian, probably noticed the insistence of Dewey practitioners on classifying philately within 'Communications Services'; locomotive spotting (feronumerology?) within 'Transport Economics'; cigarette cards within 'Tobacco Manufacture'; and sauce-bottle labels within 'Food Technology'—without any cross-reference to an area common to all thingologists everywhere.

In reviewing his work, I admit a sparse knowledge of jazz, but I know why I own the hundred or so relevant l.p.s that I am currently indexing. Any collector has an urge to index (even if it remains a promise to be fulfilled after retirement), and the craft of indexing sharpens the appreciation of the collection, even where the process is not necessary. It is not surprising to discover the author's previous connection with the Society of Indexers as Assistant Secretary, so this journal is an appropriate place for a review.

The book is quartered into: discussion of collecting; aids to collection; classifying and indexing literature; and classifying and indexing records. The second quarter is the heart of the book; the fourth demands much deeper treatment, and should precede the third; the first is worthy of a separate thesis; but the third causes me some disquiet.

Since the author presents his personal views of collecting, I have struggled with the reaction of my own views. However, since he makes some subjective statements, I question the book's assertive title, preferring possibly 'A handbook for jazz collection' with more of a handbook approach.

If 'with jazz there can be no argument: the record is its only form of preservation' it is puzzling that the author devotes the major portion to secondary bibliography, avoiding explanation of the lack of literal notation, such as scores or manuscripts—particularly with song forms which he includes. If they exist they must have some contribution to make.

Is it true that 'the real jazz lover must be a record collector'? He may be an active participant, requiring nothing more than a well-tempered clarinet and a room big enough for others of related passion.

Is it possible that the average collector, for whom the book is intended, has a library of documents so large that it requires the detailed methodology of chapter 3? Even if he had, the fourteen-page classification schedule is more a useful supplement to the public collection, because the private collector will organise himself around his own points of reference. Even a public collection, although finding these schedules an invaluable guide for expansion, will attempt an approach for such auxiliaries as time, place, method and environment consistent with its dominant schedule. To attach to this personal table, which must be incomplete within the terms of any other specialist book-collector, an eleven-page index seems a waste of space. It would have been more useful to discuss the methodology of subject indexing in highly specialist and personal areas, instead of presenting padding which would find better expression as an appendix, or even as a separate treatise. This chapter also exemplifies the lack of attention paid by the publisher to the typographical problems of presenting indexes, in the sample index of articles (pp. 111-122).

Incidentally, although it may be assumed that any disciple of the author will compile his entries on
separate cards, no advice to this effect can be found before seven pages from the end of the book, nor any satisfactory comment at all on the most advisable physical formats for such a difficult subject—beyond the references for further reading at the end of Chapter 3, and a later statement that it has been adequately dealt with in other publications. Possibly those with tape recorders, jazz fiends to a man, might welcome advice on integrated visual and aural indexing of a record collection. The challenge of indexing sound by sound is fascinating. I question the policy of referring readers to other sources without at least encapsulating some of the better advice, and there can be no practical value in recommending that those in need try elsewhere—particularly if the publisher’s blurb is to be believed, that ‘armed with this handbook the jazz enthusiast should easily be able to bring order and method to his interest . . . ’

So, following what I feel as forty wasted pages of bibliographic tables, is found a mere twenty-four pages covering the arrangement and indexing of records, which I hoped, together with the valuable second chapter, would be the purpose of the book.

If the strength of jazz is its genesis, and the pleasure of its collection the representation of its sound, then the detail of the literature classification schedules should have been applied to discs. Discs imply finite collection (apart from new discoveries of old performances) and it should be possible to classify very precisely indeed—but only four pages are tabulated, compared with fourteen for the infinite area of documentation. (As an aside, if ZS is ‘Popular Music’, what is A to ZR?)

Prior to the suggestions for record classification, it is stated that ‘Further detail can be added, if and where required, by using further letters for subdivision: and a completely different notation can be used if anyone wishes to incorporate this outline in a classification for a collection of wider scope. Who can argue? But, why was this not indicated at the start of Chapter 3, and all those documentation schedules nicely curtailed?

Detailed guidance is too much directed at the organisation of literature, and I can only repeat dismay at the supplementary treatment of recordings. Out of 150 or so pages, only seven are devoted to indexing records, and these are the last pages of text—rather like a punch-line to a shaggy-dog story.

These final pages would have been invaluable if advice or more detail had been devoted to indexing economics and time-consumption in proportion to size of collection; discussion of word-by-word, letter-by-letter, or potential hybrids to handle idiomatic titles; thematic indexing; early selection policies for performers and relevance of detailed ‘composer’ index (i.e. how comprehensive should an index be?); handling of inadequate jacket scholarship when not supported by a wealth of discographies; whether discographies can lessen the need for detail in personal indexes; or the advisability of indexing an intermediary medium in preference to the item itself (particularly the potential use of tape-recording).

With my own personal indexing dilemma, I expected much more help from these final pages, which merely indicated some of those problems that I have already met, without offering a practical philosophy.

Two final quibbles. The Esquire publication has a greater longevity than 1944-47 suggested, although it has not always been issued as a Yearbook. The current edition has been in print for the last couple of years (published in England by Arthur Barker) and its title-page verso shows an edition pedigree from 1934. Since it carries a selective lp. discography, it enables any collector to be qualitative outside his more quantitative specialisation.

Secondly, the main index excludes all the authors and titles of the reading lists, but no bibliographic index is provided to concord these exclusions. This is a regrettable oversight by a librarian and it reduces the ‘handbook’ value, although I sense that he has had his obvious expertise and its capable expression somewhat subjected to publisher’s constraint. If I am right, I sympathise with Mr. Langridge. If I am wrong, I apologise to Clive Bingley Ltd.

In summary, I feel that The Gap still exists, but Your jazz collection will certainly stimulate improvement in an ignored area of collectorship.

R. D. Gee.

Have you read the announcements and requests on the lower portion of page two of the cover?

Following the Annual General Meeting to be held at ASLIB, 3 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1, at 6 p.m. on 18th May, Mr. L. M. Harrod will speak on editing The Indexer.

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