A computerized text processing system is used to produce printed and online versions of the bibliographic databases in history, Historical abstracts (HA) and America: history and life (AHL). Abstracts or citations of books, articles, and dissertations are edited, subject-classified, and subject- and author-indexed. The American Bibliographical Center's Subject Profile Index (SPIndex) is a computer-assisted, rotated string index; the vocabulary is a combination of natural language key words and preferred subject headings selected by editor-indexers. The processing system comprises keyboarding, extraction of index terms, expansion of abbreviated index terms to full text, file correction, sorting, and photocomposition of pages. Files of bibliographic entries are sorted for use in one or more databases, and annual index files are merged to produce cumulative indexes.

Introduction

Historical Abstracts (HA) and America: History and life (AHL), the abstracting-indexing services for the field of history, are produced in printed and online versions via a computerized text processing system. The publisher, ABC-Clio, Inc., was one of the first organizations to use computer processing for a database in the humanities. HA and AHL, the first humanities databases publicly available online, were added to Lockheed's DIALOG Information Retrieval Service in 1977. Of the total of 243,000 bibliographic entries in the two databases, about 175,000 are available online and some 30,000 current entries are added annually. Originally covering only periodical literature, the databases now include entries for books and dissertations as well.

Subject Scope

HA, founded in 1954, covers world history of the period 1450 to the present (except the United States and Canada). It is published in two parts: Part A, Modern History Abstracts (1450-1914) and Part B, Twentieth-Century Abstracts (1914-present). The two parts are merged to form a single online file (DIALOG file 39).

AHL covers the history of the United States and Canada, prehistory to the present. The printed version is published in four parts: Part A, Article Abstracts and Citations; Part B, Index to Book Reviews; Part C, American History Bibliography (Books, Articles, and Dissertations); and Part D, Annual Index. The online version is a single file (DIALOG file 38).

HA and AHL concentrate on the literature of the field of history and include all varieties of history from traditional political and diplomatic history to current trends in psychohistory, public history, family history, and popular culture. These publications also include material from the related social sciences and humanities. They are, therefore, basic, comprehensive bibliographies for history and supplemental bibliographies for the social sciences, humanities, and interdisciplinary studies.

Bibliographic Entries

Four kinds of bibliographic entries appear in HA and AHL: abstracts or annotations of articles in periodicals and collections (anthologies, mélanges, festschriften), citations of books, citations of dissertations, and brief descriptions of journals of limited subject matter, especially local history.

Entries for articles constitute the majority of the databases. About 70% of the entries added to HA and AHL in 1980 are article entries, selected from approximately 50 collections per year and 2,000 journals published throughout the world.

Book entries are derived from book reviews in 140 journals representative of the various types of history, geographical regions, and book review journals. In addition to listing books on US and Canadian history and culture, AHL indexes reviews of those books. About 17% of the 1980 entries are book citations.

Dissertation entries are selected from nearly all sections of Dissertations Abstracts International and from a few other sources, and are indexed on the basis of the abstract provided in those sources. Dissertations make up about 11.5% of the entries in 1980 issues of HA and AHL.
Journal profiles, entries for about 300 journals of highly specialized or local subject matter, consist of the journal title, editor, address, frequency, and a brief description of the subject content of the journal. About 1.5% of 1980 entries are journal profiles.

The language of HA and AHL is English but the original, non-English article, book, dissertation, and journal titles are included. Titles of articles, books, and dissertations are translated into English.

The bibliographic entries are produced by an international group of some 500 volunteer abstracters and free-lance bibliographic assistants from the history and library professions. Additional entries are written in-house by American Bibliographical Center (ABC) editors. The ABC library acquires and processes the source journals and the bibliographic entries. A staff of subject-specialist editor-indexers, including four in an adjunct office in Oxford, England, and data processing professionals prepare the entries for printed and online publication.

**Editing**

Each article, book, dissertation, or journal entry is coded for listing in HA, AHL, or both, depending on its subject matter. Entries are edited, classified, and indexed in a single step (‘one-time analysis’).

The American Bibliographical Center’s Subject Profile Index (ABC-SPIndex) is a computer-assisted, rotated string index [1]. Its vocabulary is a combination of natural language keywords and preferred subject headings. ABC-SPIndex terms are selected by editors by three means: (1) Key words or phrases in titles and abstracts are tagged and then extracted during computer processing to become part of the index string; (2) independent terms may be written onto the entry form by editors and keyboarded in full text; (3) abbreviations are selected from a preferred subject heading list of some 1900 terms, written onto the entry form (see figure 1), and keyboarded; the abbreviations are later translated by the computer to full-text words and are joined with terms from the other two sources to form the string of index terms for the individual bibliographic entry.

Any or all of the three methods may be used to denote the index terms for a bibliographic entry. About 50% of the index terms are tagged terms, about 20% are independently added full-text words or phrases, and about 30% are subject headings. The preferred subject headings actually have a higher representation, however, because tagged terms can be identical to those headings and the abstract text can be altered to conform to them. All three types of terms are merged to form the individual index string—the index entry—for each bibliographic entry.

A few general rules, numerous rules specific to the subject matter, and several authority devices are used to maintain control and consistency in the indexing. The basic rule is to index at the level of specificity of the original document or abstract—to use the most specific term applicable. The authority controls are the see-reference list or list of prohibited terms, the list of preferred subject headings, the previous annual index of the particular publication, and a file of authority cards that record scope notes and decisions about the form of entry for people, events, and subjects that have several possible names.

The index entry thus composed is a string of several (average 3.7) subject, biographic, and geographic descriptors followed by a chronologic descriptor—a date or set of dates identifying the time period as specifically as possible—and the reference number of the bibliographic entry. The entries in the online databases carry these terms in the descriptor field. To our knowledge, ABC-SPIndex was the first index to include chronologic descriptors in every index entry—a feature especially useful in the field of history.

In the printed publications, the string of terms is rotated so that the entire string—the subject profile—of the book, article, dissertation, or journal appears as many times as there are terms. (The chronologic descriptor and the reference number do not rotate but always appear as the last two terms in the string.)


The terms in the index string in the printed index sort alphabetically following the leading term; that is, instead of strictly rotating the terms, the program actually re-sorts them at each appearance so that the second and following terms are in alphabetical order within the string.

An added feature of the indexing online, beginning with 1979 volumes, is a second date term that is in a standard format of decades and centuries. During computer processing the original specific dates of the subject of the entry, that is, the chronologic descriptor supplied by the editor in a wide variety of combinations of numerals, are converted to the standard format. For example, the date originally indexed and input as 1815-32 is translated to 1810D, 1820D, 1830D, 1800H (D means decade, H means hundreds). Similarly, an article on the period 17th-19th centuries is originally indexed as 17c-19c and translated to the standardized format 1600H, 1700H, 1800H.

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Believing that organized religion was a threat to individual freedom, methodists in particular became a favorite target for the acid pen of Henry L. Mencken (1880-1956) from about 1910 through the end of prohibition. At times, the noted editor of The American Mercury (1924-33) included all fundamentalist denominations in his attacks, but he focused largely on the southern Methodist church, which he saw as responsible for the coming of prohibition and even revival of the Ku Klux Klan. Primary and illus., 70 notes.
Believing that organized religion was a threat to individual freedom, Methodists in particular became a favorite target for the acid pen of H. L. Mencken (1880-1956) from about 1910 through the end of prohibition. At times, the noted editor of The American Mercury (1924-33) included all fundamentalist denominations in his attacks, but he focused largely on the southern Methodist church, which he saw as responsible for the coming of prohibition and even the revival of the Ku Klux Klan. Primary and secondary sources; illus., 70 notes.

Figure 2. Proof copy of a bibliographic entry.

Beginning with volume 31 (1980), the HA online file will also list the original language of the article, book, or dissertation.

Processing
The text processing system used to produce HA and AHL for printed publication and online retrieval comprises keyboarding, extraction of index terms from the title and abstract, expansion of abbreviated index terms to full text, file correction, sorting, and photocomposition of camera-ready pages. Edited, classified, and indexed bibliographic entries are keyboarded onto diskettes using stand-alone Compugraphic MDT-400 terminals. Batches of bibliographic entries are transmitted to an Interdata 7/16 minicomputer for storage, program checking, and printing of proof copy (see figure 2). After proofing and file correction, the bibliographic entries for an issue are sorted into their classified sequence and printed for editorial review. The proof copy and the editorial review copy contain all data, including indexing, for each bibliographic entry.
6. 1917-1945
A. General

I7A:41J9. Jervis, Edward D. HENRY L. MENCKEN AND AMERICAN METHODISM. J. of Popular Culture 1978 12(1): 75-87. Believing that organized religion was a threat to individual freedom, Methodists in particular became a favorite target for the acid pen of H. L. Mencken (1880-1956) from about 1910 through the end of prohibition. At times, the noted editor of The American Mercury (1924-33) included all fundamentalist denominations in his attacks, but he focused largely on the southern Methodist church, which he saw as responsible for the coming of prohibition and even the revival of the Ku Klux Klan. Primary and secondary sources; illus., 70 notes. D. G. Nielson

Sample Index Entries


Sample Abstract Entry


Television, interactive cable. City Government. Social Policy. 1960s-70s. 5107

Television, prime-time. Sex. Violence. 1975-78. 5037


Figure 3. A sample printed abstract and sample cuts from six printed index pages where the abstract is indexed.
At the same time, the author index is formed and the rotated subject index is produced by merging the terms expanded from abbreviations, terms extracted from the bibliographic entries, and natural language terms added by the editor. At this point, too, the chronologic descriptors, which are the specific dates stated in a variety of formats, are translated into standard formats of decades and centuries for easier online searching. The standardized chronologic descriptors are present only in the online version of the publications.

The index is edited for errors or inconsistencies, and corrections are transferred to the bibliographic entries so that the integrity of the database is maintained for use in other publications and online searching. Any change in the classification of an entry requires resorting the file of bibliographic entries and formation of a new index. The final files of bibliographic entries and indexes are sent to the typesetter on magnetic tape for photocomposition (see figure 3).

Issue indexes are merged to produce the annual index for a volume. The individual index terms, rather than the fully rotated strings, are first merged and printed as a 'leading-term' listing for editorial review and correction. Inconsistencies and variations among the individual issues are noted and resolved on this leading-term listing.

Cross-references are inserted by a combination of computer processing and manual editing. The subject heading file, which includes see-also references, is used to print a see-also control list, a list of all terms to which a see-also reference could be generated by the system. The editors compare the control list against the index leading term list and delete from the control list those terms not present in the index. The computer system then eliminates all see-also references to those terms, and merges the remaining see-also references with the rotated index strings. The separate file of see-references is also merged with the index. The final index listing is checked and corrected, and the annual index tape is produced for photocomposition. Future five-year indexes will be compiled in a similar manner by merging volume indexes, then editing them.

Processing also includes sorting the entries for use in one or more databases. For example, AHL is published in four interrelated parts and is a single file online. AHL Part A, Article Abstracts and Citations contains abstracts and annotated entries for periodical literature, together with subject and author indexes. The bibliographic citations from Part A—that is, the basic bibliographic data without the annotations—are transferred to another file for later use in AHL Part C, American History Bibliography. An entirely separate work stream produces AHL Part B, Index to Book Reviews, which is organized alphabetically by book author, and includes author, title, and publication data for the book followed by review data: journal title, volume, data, page numbers, and reviewer name. The book review index file is re-sorted, creating a new file of bibliographic entries for books (without review data). This time the file is sorted by classification code and thus is arranged according to the same subject classification scheme as Part A. This books-by-classification file is then merged with the Part A file of bibliographic citations of articles and a file of dissertation entries to form AHL Part C, American History Bibliography—a bibliography of books, articles, and dissertations (with no annotations or other added data). (See figure 4 for a flow chart and figure 5 for sample entries.)

The A, B, and C files are used to create a cumulative index to all three parts, called Part D, Annual Index. It includes the subject index (ABC-SPIndex) (see figure 6), author index, book title index, book reviewer index, and a list of periodicals.

The Part A files are further used as the source for bibliographies of abstracts on special topics in United States and Canadian history published as separate volumes in the Clio Bibliography Series. An editor selects the abstracts, receives a printout of them, complete with the indexing terms, and marks 'corrections'. Corrections constitute revision of the indexing and re-classification of the abstracts according to the new classification scheme designed for the special topic. These selected abstracts with revised indexing and classification form a new file used to produce camera-ready pages for publication. Printed volumes and machine-readable files have been produced on such topics as women in American history and the American and Canadian West.

ABC-SPIndex has also been used for the production of cumulative indexes to earlier volumes of HA and AHL. First, volumes 6-10 of AHL and then, volumes 16-20 of HA, originally indexed via a computer-assisted but more traditional hierarchical indexing system, were entirely re-indexed according to ABC-SPIndex. The new, improved indexing of the bibliographic entries in these volumes will be added to the entries in the online file.

HA and AHL are still labour-intensive publications. Computerization of some of the processes has added expense without decreasing labour costs, but has made possible the production of a variety of publications from the databases and a highly specific, informative index that could not have been produced without the aid of the computer.

Reference

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Figure 4. Outline of production: several publications from the America: History and Life database (after editing, keyboarding, and initial processing).
Part A, Article Abstracts and Citations - sample entries from three issues

16A:2545. Taylor, Morris F. SPRUCE MC COY BAIRD: FROM TEXAS AGENT TO NEW MEXICO OFFICIAL, 1848-1860. New Mexico Hist. Rev. 1978 53(3): 39-58. The state of Texas claimed all territory up to the Rio Grande River. Many people living in the territory opposed becoming a part of Texas. A small group of Texans arrived in Santa Fe on the evening of 10 November 1848. Included in the group was red-headed Spruce McCoy Baird, Kentucky-born and 34 years old. Baird believed that slavery was not a matter of great concern to most New Mexicans. 67 notes. J. H. Krenkel


16A:8095. Swadesh, Frances Leon. ARCHAEOLOGY, ETHNOHISTORY AND THE FIRST PLAZA OF CARNUEL. Ethnohistory 1978 23(1): 31-44. Combining the archaeological techniques of excavation and analysis of material remains with the ethnohistorical techniques of collecting and analyzing archival and oral records is strategic for understanding historic sites, but demands caution because of the fragmentary nature of data. Problems inherent in the combined strategy appear in attempts to refer data from a site east of Albuquerque, New Mexico to the archival and oral data on the Carnuel settlement.

Part B, Index to Book Reviews - sample entries from two issues


Part C, American History Bibliography (Books, Articles and Dissertations) - sample entries


Figure 5. Bibliographic citations from AHL Part A and Part B are merged with dissertation entries to form Part C, American History Bibliography.