Editorial

A recent essay in these pages (The Indexer 13 (3) April 1983, 147–51) on the history, meanings and usages of the word ‘index’, by Hans H. Wellisch, drew attention to the great variety of uses of that word. The analysis was semantically enjoyable and useful to those societies calling themselves Societies of Indexers, without qualification of the key word. The publication of British librarianship and information work 1976–1980, edited by L. J. Taylor (London: Library Association, 1983), extends thought in a different direction. Volume 2 contains a chapter, ‘Indexing’, by Eric Hunter and Glyn Rowland, two teachers of librarianship. It is a review of the main trends of work, and main publications in indexing, during five years, and the authors have some difficulty in isolating indexing from cataloguing and classification, information science and even bibliographical work. Computers and networks have their own chapter, but are frequently mentioned in ‘Indexing’ too. The authors find that in their five years ‘nothing exceptionally radical has been conceived in the sphere of indexing theory’, but the traditional ‘back-of-book’ indexer may feel himself (herself) bewildered by the variety of systems mentioned—MOPSI, EPSILON, WADEX, PRECIS, NEPHIS, COIN are just some of those occurring acronymically.

Two thoughts affecting our societies occur to me upon reading this essay. Firstly, it is clear that indexing is not just the preserve of a band of enthusiasts, however expert and experienced. Many groups of people have a need to understand and prepare indexes, and not merely to use them. My other strong thought or feeling is that we similarly must not take a narrow view of our art and technology. The Society of Indexers is praised in Hunter and Rowland’s essay for looking to the future, and we must hope that they are not wrong, and always work towards broadening our interests.

The declared first object of the Society of Indexers is ‘to promote improved standards and techniques of all forms of indexing, whether of books and periodicals and other publications or of other information storage and retrieval systems’.

Whether this journal is enough concerned with all aspects of indexing is for our readers to judge, and if we are found wanting, for them to submit work on all topics not well enough covered, or at least jog our editorial elbows to provide satisfaction. Shoot, indexers, shoot.

J. D. Lee,
Vice Chairman, the Society of Indexers

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Volume index

This issue of The Indexer, the fourth in volume 13, does not include the volume index, as previous fourth issues have. The index will be despatched separately with the first issue of volume 14. An article later in this issue considers the problems of indexing The Indexer.

New information technology abstracts

The first issue of IT focus: information technology update for managers contains 297 selected abstracts arranged under the following headings: General and management aspects; Applications; General systems; Office communications: Office computing. The journal is published monthly by INSPEC and has an annual index. (IT focus. Vol. 1, no. 1, July 1983—ISSN 0264–9152. INSPEC, Institution of Electrical Engineers, Station House, Nightingale Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1RJ. Introductory subscription for 18 monthly issues from July 1983 plus two end-of-year indexes £90.00.)

Forthcoming conferences

The Seventh International Online Information Meeting, organized by Online Review, will be held at the Cunard Hotel, London, 6–8 December 1983. Details from the Organizing Secretary, International Online Information Meeting, Learned Information Ltd, Besselsleigh Road, Abingdon, Oxford OX13 6LG.

The 26th Annual Conference of the National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services (NFAIS) will be held in Arlington, Virginia, 4–7 March 1984. The conference theme is ‘A national information policy: economic implications for information providers’. Details from NFAIS, 112 South 16th Street, 12th floor, Philadelphia, PA 19102 USA.

Apposite consecutive entries in the index to Educating the user by Ian Malley (Library Association, 1978):

- interdisciplinarity 10, 86
- jargon 12, 41.