Sub-subentries

Specialized vocabularies

The latest sections of the English full edition of the UDC to be published are BS 1000 [64]: 1984 Home economics and BS 1000 [676]: 1984 Paper industry. The former includes placings for household articles and for hotel keeping, catering and commercial laundering.

BSI has also published some sections of a new glossary of Building and civil engineering terms which combines in a single standard the agreed terminology for both areas of construction work. Parts of BS 6100 so far available are: Pt 0 Introduction; Pt 1 General and miscellaneous Section 1.0 General; Pt 2 Civil engineering Section 2.1 Structural design and elements; Pt 3 Services Section 3.2 Internal communication and Transport Sub-section 3.2.2 Internal transport; Pt 4 Forest products Section 4.5 Cork; Pt 5 Masonry Section 5.2 Stone and Section 5.3 Bricks and blocks; Pt 6 Concrete and Plaster Section 6.1 Binders and 6.3 Aggregates.

Bugs invade the Patent Office

Anyone who has ever searched for a patent will know that the 'bible' to consult is an annual name index printed as a book by the London Patent Office. It used to be based on information taken from the Office's card index, which listed in alphabetical order every patent published during the year.

In 1981 the card index went the way of all paper and was replaced by a computer. Unfortunately the software was bug-ridden. Patents for some companies were listed under T for The 'company' while others for the same company were listed under its real name. Anyone searching for patents filed by The Furukawa Electric Company of Japan, for example, will have to search through T as well as F to find what they are looking for.

Two years ago the Patent Office promised that it would remove the bugs before printing the traditional annual books. But this has proved such a problem that the book index for 1982 has not been printed yet and there is no sight of the 1983 book.

So, to discover details of patents published over the last two years, the bug-ridden computer must be consulted. Old hands know the pitfalls, but occasional visitors to the Patent Office, such as academics and scientists, do not.


I say, I say, therefore I am—page 6

It was the philosopher F. H. Bradley who furnished one of the great high and dry moments of philosophical comedy when his Table of Contents summarized the arguments of Book I (Appearance) Section III of Appearance and reality:

III. RELATION AND QUALITY

I. Qualities without relations are unintelligible. They cannot be found, 26-27. They cannot be got bare legitimately, 27-28, or at all, 28-30.

II. Qualities with relations are unintelligible. They cannot be resolved into relations, 30, and the relations bring internal discrepancies, 31.

III. Relations with, or without, qualities are unintelligible, 32-34.

Bradley's disciple, T. S. Eliot, perpetrated the comic totality of a related footnote:

‘Ultimately, it must be remembered, there are not even relations.’ (T. S. Eliot, Knowledge and experience in the philosophy of F. H. Bradley, (London, 1964), p. 131.)

—Christopher Ricks, ‘Tenebrae and at-one-ment’ in Geoffrey Hill: essays on his work ed. by Peter Robinson (Open University Press, 1984). Can readers supply any great high and dry moments of philosophical comedy from indexes?
Public Lending Right

The first payments under the Public Lending Right Scheme were made to authors at the end of February 1984. Current regulations appear to have been satisfactorily administered, but a number of changes to the scheme have been proposed. These will be considered by the Advisory Committee and circulated for comment. Adequate discussion of proposed amendments will necessitate delay in official changes, but these are promised in time for the 1985/86 payments.

In presenting cheques for the first payments under the scheme to members of the Writers’ Guild, the Minister for the Arts said he was aware that the £2 million set for the fund in 1979 was worth much less now than it was then, but times were hard and it had not been possible to increase the amount for next year. He would fight for more in the next round of negotiations.

Some authors’ reactions to receiving—or not—their first payment under PLR are printed in The Author 95 (1) Spring 1984, 25-26: surprise, qualified gratification, puzzlement, and chagrin at being ineligible through not having been able to trace co-beneficiaries (illustrators) or through having been a painstaking editor of another’s work rather than an ‘original’ adaptor.

Games information seekers play

As a public librarian, I have for a long time hoped to see a television series that demonstrates the skills involved in extracting information quickly and accurately from books, and which provides an incentive for bibliographical dexterity of this sort. Now, at last, one has emerged in a somewhat unusual, but nevertheless most entertaining, format. I refer to ‘Treasure Hunt’, in which contestants’ success is largely determined by their ability to decipher verbal clues, select keywords, search indexes, interpret maps, and manipulate a small specialist library. Add to this the need to be able to pass on clear instructions and advice as a result of the information that has been found, and you have a recipe for a task that many librarians will recognize as their own.

The programme, however, must provide a challenge to bibliographies of all sorts throughout the country, and it would be interesting to know the degree of audience participation that it sparks off. True, few people at home will have access to an array of books that is comparable to that provided in the studio, but it is surprising how many of the clues can be unlocked with the help of, say, a good dictionary, a small encyclopaedia and a well-indexed road atlas. ‘Treasure Hunt’ demonstrates that searching for information can be fun for all the family.

The programme also shows that using books is a skill that can be performed with varying degrees of success, and that those who know how to use them properly are more likely to win in the end. This simply reflects one of the challenges of everyday life; in our complex, modern society, everyone needs access to information, and those who are practised in finding out what they want to know are at an advantage. Neatly and entertainingly, Treasure Hunt points up this basic truth.

—Norman Parker, Chief Librarian, Bolton Metropolitan Council, in See 4 No. 6, Spring 1984.

Indexing and the meaning of life

Indexing is the key to human survival and happiness on earth, made into a neighbourhood by the advance of science. Either we will use what we know, to blow each other and most life off the earth, or we will gain mutual respect by sharing understanding of our actions and of all human actions, so that we will each of us always act with understanding to help. The key to so doing is indexing. What is known has to be arranged so that each individual can find exactly the information wanted at the moment it is wanted. This is do-able by means of indexes, and only by means of indexes. It takes two kinds of indexes to do it. In the first kind what is known is sorted into its most important actions. The assumption in this is that the meaning of anything is expressed in the actions done by that thing. Then these actions are indexed to connect each action to its roots in human nature. Ten root habits, at the root of all human actions, are indicated by ten simple numbers, from 1 to 9 and 0, for 10. Movement, for example, is indicated by 2. Information reception is indicated by 4, comparison to learn is indicated by 5, and individual control of surroundings by 6. Indexing is thus an activity which at its roots involves root habits 654, a team of root habits everyone uses all day long, even to sit down nicely on the seat of a chair and not miss it to hit the floor. Indexers thus are engaged in using root habits everyone uses all day long. Professional indexers simply refine the steps in using these root habits to help people get precise information from clumps of information messed together.

If this scientist were in charge of the universe, he’d have everyone making and using indexes. For this seems, to a man trained in a dozen sciences, the only way man can now survive, and be happy, on this earth. So to my fellow indexers of every description, say for me, good work! May you and your scientific labours flourish, for every indexer helps to share understanding, like every scientist. (A scientist is indicated by 64540. The 0 represents equal action, as inf. equally true everywhere.)

—Robert H. Morey (1972)
**Videotex abroad**

The overseas use of Videotex, first developed in England in 1971 as the Prestel viewdata system and now available as a two-way, interactive, public international service through British Telecom, is reported in two articles in *Information retrieval and library automation*, 19 (12) and 20 (1) 1984.

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**Tall Order**

Wanted: Computer buff with Himalayan knowledge and eight months to spare.

Mission: To compile a computer-based index of information on Himalayan climbing. The huge growth in Himalayan climbing with several hundred expeditions each year has meant that it has become increasingly difficult to keep pace with developments and the relevant literature. It is hoped that the index will become part-operational in 1986 and will make it much easier for a climber to pick his route and peak by providing immediate references to ascents or attempts on a particular peak or references to particular expeditions passing through a particular valley. The initial plan is to concentrate on peaks of 5,500 metres and above in Nepal, Pakistan and India.

Initially information would be gathered from English-language journals and reports and, language permitting, leading Japanese journals. Coverage would eventually be extended to all the major foreign publications relevant to the Himalayas. Applications to the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, London W1Y 5FF.


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**Index defined**

**index**: One of Peirce’s three categories of sign. An index is a sign that is connected to its object, either casually or existentially—it appears to be a part of that to which it refers. Thus smoke is an index of fire, spots an index of measles, or a snarl that of anger. Monaco (1977) suggests that indexes (or indices—both forms of the plural are found) are used in film metonymically; he gives the example of a roll of banknotes left on a sleeping woman’s pillow as an index of prostitution. Cartoonists typically use metonymical indexes—Churchill’s cigar, Ted Heath’s nose and teeth, Hitler’s moustache. There is also a more symbolic form of index, as in a cartoon of a fat employer berating his thin employees—the fat belly is an index of his prosperity and, by extension, of the fat profits squeezed out of the indexically thin employees.

*See icon, metonym, symbol*

—from *Key concepts in communication* by Tim O’Sullivan *et al* (Methuen, 1983).

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**Monstrous entry**

The editors of the new Macmillan *Guide to Britain’s Nature Reserves* do realize the mammoth is extinct, even though it appears in the book’s index. An over-zealous computer, working through the text, seized upon a sentence beginning: ‘This guide is a mammoth work . . .’


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**Play your cards right**

But how do you actually begin? Well, I always try to work through my subject’s life chronologically . . . And honestly the card-index is the best method. We all know that old gibe about the file-cards in the shoebox, and it’s important not to write a book which shows the pains-taking way in which it’s been assembled. But really I know no better way of storing information. The big patterns, the motifs which dominate all good biographies, can only be discovered and put together by the study of minute details, and if you use any other method than file-cards you’re almost certain to get in a frightful muddle trying to locate and reorganize your research notes when you come to write the book. The beauty of cards is that they can be shuffled and reshuffled into completely new patterns when the writing begins; you can experiment with the arrangements of facts until you find the shape that exactly fits your requirements. It’s like a kind of hand-driven computer. (And no, I don’t use a word processor . . .)