SI Conference soon

Plans are going well for the SI Conference to be held at Durham 5-7 July, ‘Indexing now’. We hope many indexers will make the journey there, to learn from the speakers and workshop sessions, and to enjoy meeting together.

One hundred years old

Congratulations—belated by our half-yearly publication dates—to the Society of Authors, which celebrated its centenary last year under the presidency of Sir Victor Pritchett. Founded by Sir Walter Besant, with Lord Tennyson as its first president, the society has looked after the interests of authors and their relations with publishers, the government and the public, and plans to go on doing so for the next hundred years. The centenary issue of its journal The Author (summer 1984) carries a history ‘The first hundred years’, by Victor Bonham-Carter, and predictions by various writers on ‘The next hundred years’.

INSPEC news

INSPEC, the Information Division of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (UK) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Inc (USA) have completed the first year of a new and highly successful collaborative arrangement which enables the abstracts and associated data of articles published by the IEEE to be transferred to the INSPEC Database in machine-readable form. Over 20,000 abstracts of journal and periodical articles, standards and specifications, books, and papers presented at IEEE conferences and meetings were supplied during the period January-December 1984.

The machine-readable transfer ensures the completeness and improved currency of the INSPEC Database, making it even more valuable to research workers.

The new arrangement builds on a long-standing collaboration between the Institutions, whereby the IEEE acts as marketing and fulfillment agent for INSPEC in North America.

INSPEC is the leading abstracting and indexing service in electronics, computing, electrical engineering, control engineering and physics. The INSPEC Database currently contains over 2.2 million records available online throughout the world, and is increasing by more than 220,000 each year.

Aslib, the Association for Information Management: some recent developments

Aslib, originally founded in 1924 as the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, has undergone considerable changes in the past couple of years.

The most visible feature of recent developments is the addition of the phrase ‘The Association for Information Management’ to its name. The reason for this is twofold: Aslib regards itself as being a resource to the community at large and no longer representative only of the specialized function associated with the phrase ‘Special Libraries and Information Bureaux’; and ‘Information Management’ has good public relations overtones and will catch the attention of the media and the public at large, whereas ‘Aslib’ does not.

Aslib has 2000 corporate members. A corporate plan has been developed which involves thinking, planning and acting corporately and breaking down Departmental and other blocks to communication and action. A new group, ‘one man bands’ representing some 200 very small information-handling units throughout the UK has been formed.

Aslib is in new premises: Information House, 26/27 Boswell Street, London WC1N 3JZ, since 1 October 1984. There was an appeal for donations of furniture and fittings with the names of benefactors publicly recorded.

Charitable status was applied for, granted and approved at an Extraordinary General Meeting in December 1984.

The Society of Indexers’ Annual General Meeting on 6 December 1984 enjoyed the hospitality of Aslib’s new premises, and an address from its director, Dr Dennis Lewis. He spoke of Aslib’s history and developing functions; its move to new premises and change of name accord with its new concept of the management of information as it flows round organizations. He saw the convergence of librarians, archivists, information technicains, etc., as accelerating; we are all part of a single profession. He considered that we should all take advantage of the new technology as a means. The indexing of information he described as a fundamental art which must be nurtured and developed, and we must create awareness of the fact that indexing is part of the spectrum in which all information managers are concerned. The nature of the book has not yet changed, and its end is not near; but far from dying with the book, indexing has a further great future.
Specialized vocabularies

A new list of French terms accepted as official standard vocabulary of Informatics has been published in Documentaliste 21 (4-5) juil.-oct. 1984, p. 164. English equivalents are shown. Some of the French terms are direct gallicizations of an English word, as ‘déboguer’ = ‘to debug’, ‘spoule’ = ‘spool’; others appear not yet to have an English equivalent, as ‘ludicieux’ (logiciel du jeu). A previous list appeared in Documentaliste 19 (2) mars-april 1982, p. 69.

BS 6528 1984 Glossary of terms for cylindrical screw threads is an illustrated list of basic terms and definitions in English and French relating to cylindrical screw threads having axial profiles based on triangles. It is identical with ISO 5408. A list of Russian equivalents is contained in Annex A. Annexes B and C provide equivalent, but not ISO-sanctioned, terms in German and Italian.

Parts of BS 5551 Fertilizers are being published as work on them is completed. Part 1 Terminology and labelling Section 1.1 Classification is now available. It is identical with ISO 7851.

Three more parts of BS 1000, the full English edition of the UDC, have recently been published. BS 1000 (621.1/.2) 1984 deals with Heat engines in general, steam power, steam engines, boilers, and water power, hydraulic energy. BS 1000 (666) 1984 deals with the glass industry, ceramics, cement and concrete and related materials. BS 1000 (687) 1984 deals with the clothing industry and beauty culture industries.

ICSU AB becomes ICSTI and ANSI Z39 becomes NISO (Z39)

Consequent upon a broadening of interest and activities, the International Council of Scientific Unions Abstracting Board (ICSU AB), at an extraordinary general assembly held in Philadelphia on 20 June 1984, formally changed its name to International Council for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI), and adopted new statutes and by-laws. In addition to the activities currently undertaken by ICSU AB for the improvement of indexing and abstracting, ICSTI’s new technical programme, with an increased budget, will deal with data handling, new information technology, and legal aspects of information transfer. Membership of ICSTI is now open not only to all previous members of ICSU AB but also to all participants in the information transfer chain, whether producers, intermediaries or users. The Council’s officers remain the same. Further details are available from Marthe Orfus, Executive Secretary, 51 boulevard Montmorency, 75016 Paris.

The American National Standards Institute Committee Z39, formed in 1939, was incorporated in 1983 as a not-for-profit educational organization, and in 1984 became the National Information Standards Organization (Z39). It continues to prepare standards under ANSI procedures for all information-based activities, and to serve as the expert technical advisory group to ANSI on all ISO standards concerning information sciences, documentation and libraries. At present twenty-four NISO committees are working on new standards, among them being a Standard numbering system for computer software and a Common command language for information systems. Standards completed by NISO are submitted to ANSI for approval and publication. Further information is available from Patricia R. Harris, Executive Director, NISO (Z39), National Bureau of Standards, Admin. 101, Library E106, Gaithersburg, MD 20899, USA.

Domesday 1986

1986 will see the 900th anniversary of the completion of the Domesday Book—the record of a survey of the land of England carried out by the commissioners of William the Conqueror in 1086. The British Broadcasting Corporation plans to mark the occasion with a documentary television series, and to produce also a contemporary Domesday Book: a comprehensive image of Britain in the 1980s, on interactive videodisc.

There will be two discs: the first giving information on a local basis, supplied by over 12,000 volunteer schools and other local organizations, each to give a complete survey of land-cover in each kilometre square of their area, with their own slide-photographs and 20 pages of written description; the second containing information from major national data sources, surveys and archives, covering natural resources, transport, population statistics, demographic data, social activities, arts and crafts, education, entertainment, health, flora, fauna, etc. An Editorial Board of professional researchers will select the data, which then must be able to be retrieved, combined, compared, and presented with pictures and text together on screen by the users—many of whom will be children.

The statistics are stunning. The discs will hold in total sufficient data for two million pages of information, plus 20,000 Ordnance Survey maps and nearly 150,000 pictures: the equivalent of two full sets of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Organizing the retrieval of information on such a scale presents indexing problems awesome to contemplate. How gratifying that these should be in the hands of the Chairman of the Society of Indexers! David Lee, Librarian of the BBC Hulton Picture Library from which many of the 40,000 'national' pictures will come, is overseeing the indexing of this truly massive conglomeration of information from an enormous variety of sources.

We hope for a full account of the work when it is completed.

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The £1000 index

Another giant among indexes is already coming among us. The first four volumes of the Index of manuscripts in the British Library have already been published by Chadwyck-Healey; completion of the set of eleven volumes is planned for this year. The whole will total over 1,000,000 entries, consolidating the indexes to more than 30 separate catalogues of the holdings of the BL Department of Manuscripts. 6,000 pages, bound in library buckram, blocked in gold, the set will cost £1,200.

This is the first published comprehensive listing in one sequence of all the Department's collection. The task has taken 20 years—the work of a generation of editors. As well as the simple though vast labour of amalgamation of existing indexes, consistency of description and of place names had to be established, in indexes originally compiled over a period of more than 150 years. Extensive editing and checking were necessary, with examination of more than 15,000 manuscripts ranging from early seals and charters to the records of 20th-century institutions.

An index whose price is rightly around rubies.

Public Lending Right to be extended

The number of people entitled to benefit under the PLR Act has been increased as from 28 December 1984. The Public Lending Right Scheme 1982 (Amendment) Order 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 1847. HMSO £1.30. ISBN 0-11-0-47847-9) widens the definition of Author to include translators, editors and compilers, removes some restrictions on illustrators and joint authors and on nationality and residential requirements, and also does away with the need for a book to have a minimum number of pages. [Should compilers of indexes now put in a claim?]

As there has been no increase in the amount voted by Parliament—£2,000,000—to cover PLR payments and related administrative costs, the amount attributable to each qualifying loan will, from 28 December 1984, be decreased from 1.02 pence to 0.92 pence. (An increase to £2,700,000 has been announced for 1986.) The sample of loans taken is to be widened to produce a more accurate calculation of payments due.

Data Protection Act

Our next issue will include an article on how this Act, which became law in the UK in July 1984, may affect indexers who use computers. A free advice leaflet, Protecting personal data, is available from DTI/Information Technology Division, Room 522, 29 Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DT.

Quiz for indexers

1. In a book on the excavation of the tomb of an ancient Egyptian king, under what main index headings should you seek the following:
   a) bracelets and anklets
   b) bracelets and bangles
   c) cow-headed bed
   d) flotilla of model craft
   e) statues
   Answers
   a) Annex to the Tomb
   b) Mummy of Tutankhamen
   c) Antechamber to the Tomb
   d) Treasury, the
   e) Burial Chamber

2. Explain the principle of order of the following sequence of subheadings:
   slings for hurling stones gloves
   fire-making implements alabaster boat
   implements achondroplasic dwarf
   bracelets and anklets silver vase
   garments bows and arrows, clubs
   alabaster boat and boomerangs
   Answer
   The order of pages on which the items appear (all subheadings under main heading, Annex to the Tomb). It's really much easier to do it this way than to rearrange the subheadings according to some tiresome principle such as alphabetization . . .

3. Does
   Ay, 16. 31, 41, 135, 190, 278–9
   merely endorse the preceding entry?
   Answer
   One must resort to the text to learn what Ay may be.

4. How many undifferentiated page references may follow the first heading?
   Answer: fourteen.

5. What is an acceptable ratio of main entries to total number of lines in the index?
   Answer: 1:3 (62 main headings/174 lines index.)

6. Who compiled this index, anyway?
   Answer: clearly, someone with a passion for pyramids, but no knowledge of the principles of indexing.

Answers based on index to The tomb of Tutankhamen by Howard Carter (Century Publishing, 1938, £8.95, 347 pp.).