The design of indexes

Nan Ridehalgh

This article is based on work for a dissertation on the typography of indexes. The dissertation concluded that
the typescript presented by the indexer is a most important part of the eventual printed design. Practical advice is
given to the indexer faced with typing, or using a micro-computer to produce, an index. The article deals briefly
with the historical development of some of the conventions which lead to the recommendations for index
design, and points to encouraging future trends. Indexers who understand the reasons for layout and
design considerations should find no difficulty in adapting to the use of modern technology. Index
designers, whilst partly influenced by the production methods, must consider chiefly the convenience of the reader.

With increasing use of computerized technology in
printing and publishing, now seems a good time to
consider how this might affect the layout of an index.
The original preparation of the manuscript of an index,
using a computer or a typewriter, will become a more
integrated part of the publishing procedure, and good
layout at the keyboard will be more likely to result in
efficient design at the publishers.

Within publishing houses many book indexes are set
according to a house style, and it is useful to sub-editors
and designers if the typed or computer-produced index is
laid out in a clear and consistent way.

Most publishers, if asked, will inform the indexer
which is their preferred index style. If the indexer con-
<snip>

features which relate to index design. These were:

indention
justification
number of columns
alphabetic division of groups.

All of these have to do with the actual shape of the index,
the extrinsic features. Then it dealt with details of the
intrinsic features of the index:

punctuation
typographic distinction (italic, bold, small caps or
symbols)
treatment of the entry keyword
size of typeface in relation to the text
use of the rule or dash
presentation of figures.

These main features of index design were compared
across the manuals. Examples were taken at random
from books roughly related to the periods of the manuals
to see what was happening in practice. It was hoped that
this knowledge would lead to a greater understanding for
both indexers and designers in considering how to give
the index a layout which increases the usefulness to the reader.

The study concluded that the basis of good index
design today is the typescript submitted by the indexer. If
the index is typed on a typewriter or compiled with the
use of a computer, then attention to details of presenta-
tion will help to ensure that the typographic designer
can translate the design into the most useful and efficient
printed format for that particular index.

The indexer, using the typewriter or computer key-
board, will need to show a clear indentation pattern for the
index, the punctuation, the alphabetic division of
groups, and possibly typographic distinction within the
entries. This article seeks to explore the presentation of
these features in more depth.

Space available for the index

Before the main discussion of layout of indexes, it
might be useful to consider the space available for the
index of a book. Books are assembled normally in
sections of sixteen or thirty-two pages. The space avail-
able for an index is either the number of pages left in a
section once the rest of the book has been printed, or a
section or part of a section added by the publisher to accommodate the index (or both together). Sometimes it may be possible for an extra page or two for the index to be acquired by taking blanks from the preliminary pages and adding these to the end pages. A book estimate is imprecise in the first instance, due to a number of production factors, and it is very difficult to make an accurate assessment of space available for the index. Adding a section to a book may cause quite a significant price difference, so the question of how much space is allowed for the index will always be difficult. However, it should be possible to ask the publisher at page proof stage how many pages are available, if fitting a certain number of entries to the number of pages is going to be a significant factor.

Choice of style for index layout

How does the indexer choose which is the best style to present the typewritten index to the publisher?

(a) Ask the publisher or consult the publisher’s house-style manual which may state the preferred style.

(b) A rough guide for choice might be that indexes falling broadly into scientific/technical categories are often set-out. This may have come about in the first instance because of short entries and more likelihood of sub-sub matter in scientific/technical indexes. Humanities subjects tend to be set in the run-on style. However, the need to fit an index into a few pages at the end of a book may mean that the index style will be run-on regardless of the content. I could find no direct scientific evidence to prove that set-out style is quicker to consult, although some manuals assume that a set-out style gives greater clarity and thus slightly faster speed of retrieval.

If the indexer provides a consistent layout in one or other of the styles it is easy to adjust the index layout to either style if required. Lack of consistency in presentation of the typewritten copy can lead to setting errors or to considerable extra time taken editing out the offending oddities.

Layout of the index

The layout styles fall mainly into two distinct types. These are often called by different names and in this article I propose to use the most common terms, run-on style, and set-out style.

Run-on style example—sub-entries run on between semicolons:

Taxation levels, 23; alcohol, 27;
   betting, 29, 34; capital gains,
   17, 36, 39; company profits, 293;
   excess profits, 294; income tax,
   23, 27, 63-9, 322

Set-out style example—sub and sub-sub entries are broken off:

Russia, 33, 55-7
   First World War, 60, 64
   Revolution, 66, 68-82, 100, 104
   reasons for, 66, 79
   leaders of 66, 68-70
   after World War II, 270
   Rutherford, R. (1900-69), 24, 278

Both types of layout are quite recognizable and both are widely used. Run-on indexes take up less space, therefore this method is often favoured where shortage of space is a consideration.

In the past, it seems that many index entries started on a new line. This was the common method until early in the nineteenth century, when the practice of running on the sub-entries of indexes between semi-colons was also very popular. More recently, we often see set-out indented indexes, with much shorter and more concise entries. This may be a result of the growth of scientific and technical subjects since the industrial revolution.

In the run-on style, the entry plus the subentries are shown run-on between semicolons. This can be keyboarded on an A4 sheet of paper to the width of the normal typing line, remembering the need to leave good margins of space each side of the index so that editors and designers can add their particular information for the typesetters. If the entry is longer than one line then the following line is called the 'turnover line' and should be indented by two typewriter spaces with the first letter following on in the third space position. All subsequent turnover lines will also be indented by two typewriter spaces. The new entry will start full out on a new line once again.

Example of a typewritten layout run-on style:
Lloyd George, D. (1863-1945), 1st Earl 1945, vi, 8-13;
   Chancellor of the Exchequer (1908-15), 13, 14-20, 51,
   63; Prime Minister (1916-22), 76, 79-84, 86-91; in
   opposition, 116 etc.

In the set-out style, the usual layout is to type the entry, possibly followed by page numbers, then indent by two spaces for the following subentries. The sub-sub entries might be indented by another two spaces thus making two distinct levels of indentation.

Example of typewritten layout set-out style:

Complementary colours
   experimenting, 65
   overprinting, 80
   using black, 82
   blue and yellow, 85
   Cork handles, 98
The main difficulty occurs when the entry is long and the indexer is faced with a turnover line. The turnover line is the term used to describe words of an entry which will not fit onto the original line. The turnover line should be made to appear attached to the entry line and not to seem to be the subentry. This can be achieved by indenting the turnover lines another two spaces making four spaces in all. This is clear for the eye to follow and makes a strong signal to the typesetter that this is not a subentry but a turnover line.

If sub-sub matter is involved on the typewritten manuscript of the index, then any indented turnover lines must be spaced clearly so that they are not muddled with the general pattern of indent. It would seem that if lines continually make turnovers in the set-out style the index might be better typed as a run-on style. A set-out index seems to work best with short precise entries.

Example of a set-out style showing turnover lines:

MacDonald, J. Ramsay (1866-1937), Sec. of LRC and Labour politician, 7, 53 election, 54 opposition to war, 60-5

McKenna, R. (1863-1943), Liberal politician, 65, 68, 165
Maclay, Joseph, 77

Sub-subentries can be shown in the same way by indenting one more level than the subentry level. Sometimes sub-subentries are run-on between semicolons if the measure has become very narrow or if the index is taking up too much space. The indexer can still plainly show set-out sub- and sub-sub matter on the typewritten manuscript, then the editors or designers can easily indicate any changes in this layout if it is required in the printing. Some articles mention typing the index to a character count of approximately thirty-five characters in the line. This is good if you have been given a number of lines for the length of the index. It approximates to most printed indexes for line length, so the indexer can be accurate in assessing the number of lines for entries and adjust the index if required. This method does use up more paper, but may make a big difference to how the indexer presents the final version of the index. It may mean that the indexer can keep major themes and discard lesser entries in order to fit the required length. If there are approximately fifty lines to a column, with two columns to the printed page, this makes approximately one hundred lines per page. While this is a useful approximation, this amount will vary with the typesize chosen and the format of the book being indexed.

Indention

Early recommendations for indention were 'indenting all matter an m-quadrat that makes above one line' (Smith 1755, p.215), so that the problem of indention was not a complex one. The em or m is a printing term referring to roughly the width of the letter 'M' in that particular size of type. Metal spacing pieces were called quadrats. Modern styles still show a printed index using em spaces as the unit of indent spacing. (Occasionally a very long index may use 'en' spaces (half an em) but this is less satisfactory for the eye to follow. A designer may be forced into this situation if the number of pages allowed mean a very tight index in order to get all the entries in.)

An important consideration in index design is how to treat an indent which carries on for several columns, or how to treat a variety of complex sub-matter. These levels must be clear in their separate layout requirements and remain linked to the original entry to inform the reader that the entry is still in operation.

The indexer should make it quite clear on the typescript if an entry goes on page after page, and the designer will try to make sure that 'cont.' (continuation) lines are included in the printed index from recto to verso pages, and that correct indention levels are maintained. The latest typesetting technology makes it more expensive for the publisher to obtain 'cont.' lines from the typesetters, so these are not always included now.

In the past, levels were sometimes indicated by the use of a number of em dashes or rules to indicate repetition of words in the structure (see figure 1). Some people consider that today this is not necessary, as compilation need not go beyond subentries or at the most sub-sub entries, and the em space indent is sufficient to indicate repetition. Others may think that repetition of dashes ensures that there is no ambiguity. A good set of printed examples of indention were those in P. G. Burbidge's Prelims and end-pages (see figure 2) in the series Cambridge authors' and publishers' guides. He writes (p.27-8):

This question of indention is so important that failure to settle it aright can lead to serious confusion which, if not resolved, will impede the index's usefulness.

While the designer and the typesetter will make the final choice of the printed indention pattern, if a typescript is correctly and consistently laid out then the whole job becomes easier.

Indention at the typewriter or computer keyboard means that the indexer must make a choice of how many spaces to indicate the indent. Two spaces, with the first character typed at the third position seems to be the most successful as this approximately equals an em space in printing and also gives the eye a clear clue to the level of indent on the typescript.
Index

Smith, C. M., *Working man's way in the world*, 1853, on compositors' rates, 55
--- on corrections, 113
--- on journeymen's unemployment, 290

Smith, J., *Printer's grammar*, 1755, on copy preparation, 40
--- on imposition schemes, 87
--- on type sizes, 13, 15

Smith, W. H., invents three-dimensional watermarks, 215

Snowdon, G. and J., and shared setting, 168

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--- spaces, typecast, 45-6, fig. 20

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special paper copies, *see* hand press work

special paper issues, distinguished typographically, 315

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specimen page, h.p.p. 40
m.p.p., 293

Speed, J., *Genealogies*, nine impressions of 1631-40, 117

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--- author's, 344-5
--- compositor’s, 348-50
--- analysis of, 350

--- variation in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, 346
--- *see* accidentals

spindle of the wooden hand press, 120-1, figs. 64, 66

spool, Monotype, 279-80, fig. 120 (c)
Springfield paper mill, Kent, fig. 26
'stab' (time) hands, 195, 292
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--- and impression, 314-15
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Stanhope, Earl, invents iron-hand press, 198

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--- flange for flexible moulds, 203-4
--- Glasgow University Printing Office foundry, 191, 205
--- origins of, 201
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--- edition and, 313
--- gangs of, 260
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Sterne, L., publishes *Tristram Shandy*, 185

Stevenson, R. L., royalty on *Treasure Island*, 1883, 299

Figure 1. Page of index to *A new introduction to bibliography* by P. Gaskell (Oxford, 1974)
(1) An index with no subheadings (turnover lines indented one em):

Tacitus, Roman historian, 253
Thales of Miletus, Greek philosopher, 105, 169, 190
Thothmes III, Egyptian king, 112, 439, 480, 673; Plate 14c
Thothmes IV, Egyptian king, 439, 440
Tiglath-pileser I, Assyrian king, 246, 259, 261; Plate 16a
Tutankhamen, 109–25, 138; see also Index of Subjects

(2) An index with subheadings running on (turnover lines indented one em):

Irrigation, 46, 90; cisterns and wells, 526, 528; dams, 529; water-lifting devices, 523–4, 542.
Ivory work, 663–4, 666–70; colouring, 243, 669–70, 681; furniture, 675–6, 690; panels, 671, 673, 676–7.
Japan, 234, 249, 290, 550; language and writing, 96, 772–4; pottery, 384, 397.
Javelins, 156, 157, 605; and blowing of, 243, 669–70, 681; furniture, 163–6.
Jewellery, 665–9, 700, 788.

(3) An index with subheadings broken off (subheadings indented one em, turnover lines two ems):

Measurement, 63, 99, 178
Mesopotamia
linear, 778, 780, 789, 800
primitive scales of, 110–13, 156, 189, 200–5
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of time, by primitive people, 120, 122–7, 136, 156, 190, 200
Mesopotamia
astronomical observations, 509, 511–18, 550, 555, 578–9
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(4) An index with subheadings broken off and subsubheadings running on (subheadings indented one em, turnover lines two ems):

Fire, 23, 45, 190
Food, 355, 360
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of cereals, 320–5; cultivation of
instruments for making: bow-drill, 224–5, 290; fire-drill, 229, 240;
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of cereals, 320–5; cultivation of
in primitive societies, 534, 540–7, 577, 589, 600–9

(5) An index with subheadings and subsubheadings broken off (subheadings indented one em, subsubheadings two ems, turnover lines three ems):

Metal, Metallurgy
 annealing, 624–5, 630, 639, 645, 690, 704, 800–7
casting and moulding
of bronze, 607–8
cire-perdue process, 610, 620, 624, 639–40, 648–58
engraving, 648–9
Mineralogy
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evolution of techniques, 590, 599, 605–7, 750 (chart)
in Egypt, 205
iron, 568, 573, 579–81, 589, 599–604, 610
tin, 563, 589–90

Figure 2. Page from Prelims and end-pages by P. G. Burbidge (Cambridge, 1963)
Alphabetical division of the index

Where the new alphabet block occurs, an indication is given to alert the reader. Most early examples used a displayed capital letter to signal the change. During the nineteenth century indexes often included the capital letter in a darker type or a larger capital letter or even a large drop capital letter on the first line of the new group. In my example (see figure 3) the reader may like to note the indention as well; the indent follows the length of the keyword of the entry. This practice has since died out.

Today the displayed capital letter is still sometimes used but it is now more usual to show a blank line of space between blocks of alphabetical entries. The designer will make a decision whether or not to use a displayed capital based on the general design of the book itself.

Entry keyword

The keyword is the first word or phrase of the entry. It appears alphabetically and may be distinguished from the text by the use of typographic emphasis such as a capital letter or small capitals or italic or bold.

This feature changed over the period we are considering. In the seventeenth century it was common to put the keyword of the entry in italic with a capital letter at the beginning of the word. Later this changed to roman upper and lower case and in some cases to a darker Clarendon face, a feature frequently retained today in dictionary entries.

A recent index which shows italic for the entry keyword is that in Hugh Williamson’s book Methods of book design (see figure 4). This index works very well and also uses a more unusual form of punctuation. The author is a well known printer who compiled and designed the index to his own book. The reader may note that only proper nouns have capital letters, as is the common practice today. The index to Copy-editing by Judith Butcher of the Cambridge University Press uses capital initials only for proper nouns. (For the index to the original edition, Margaret Anderson was awarded the Wheatley Medal for 1975; The Indexer 10(2), 53.) On the issue of capitalization Judith Butcher writes (p. 141), ‘It is now usual to use lower-case for headings that do not have capitals in the text’. However, the latest edition of The Chicago manual of style uses capital letters for all keywords of entries (p.531) ‘unless you have been asked to use lower case (as in some scientific indexes)’. The house style of the publisher will inevitably take care of the capitalization issue, but most indexes in the UK today seem to favour the Copy-editing model.

Punctuation

Punctuation has changed greatly since the seventeenth century. Early indexes often had full points between page numbers, and there is evidence to suggest that the semi-colon appeared in a run-on format early in the nineteenth century.

Today it is usual to use the least possible punctuation consistent with good understanding of the entry; no superfluous commas or full points. The run-on style will usually run on between semi-colons, while a heading without page numbers will have a colon. In the set-out style there is little more punctuation needed than commas between page numbers. Some indexes do not have commas between page numbers, as in the Hugh Williamson example cited, but this is considered unusual.

Many older indexes showed a full point at the end of an entry, but this practice also has died out. Some journals that have been printed this way for many years may retain this feature.

The indexer can type the heading followed by a comma before the page numbers or, following some modern practice, an index can have a fixed space following the heading. This could be shown at the typewriter by two or three spaces. If the fixed space format is required, then it is easy for the designer to advise the typesetter to use a fixed em space following an entry for that particular index. There is no special advantage to this design except that it may reduce the commas and give a clearer identification for the entry and sub-entry text before the page numbers.

Today, when every keystroke at the typesetters costs money, a system of the simplest form of punctuation that is not ambiguous seems to be sensible.

Typographic distinction

Early indexes did not show any great variety of distinction beyond the use of roman and italic. Later, printers made use of small caps as well as the Clarendon, a darker typeface in use before the introduction of bold faces as we know them today. Then some of the families of typefaces were extended to bolds and semi-bolds, and now we have endless variety where the typefaces as well as the weights can be varied within the same job. This is useful to show principal entries, differences between page references, or to accentuate particular items within the index.

The main advice offered to indexers or authors is that these differences can be shown at the typewriter keyboard if required, but the designer will seek always to make the distinctions fit with the general design of the particular book. The British Standards on indexes, BS3700:1976 and BS5261: Part 1:1975 and also Part 2:1978 give the indexer a good basis to help with layout decisions. However, the layout of the example index in BS3700 is complex on account of the long reference numbers to the paragraphs. These are much longer than average page numbers and do tend to make the indentation levels difficult to follow.
SUBJECT INDEX

Expression of argument, 28, 42
  of commodity, 50, 55, 38
  of facts, 11, 55, 38
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    in tone, 96, 113
  Graphic design, principles, 64
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    formal, 44, 67, 78, 83, 94
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  Hoardings, 175, 179, 193, 203
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Figure 3. Part of page from index to Poster design by W. G. Raffe (Tonbridge, 1929)
mean line - imaginary line through the top of small roman & italic letters which have no ascenders - 32, example 34

measure - width in which type is composed - 18, narrow preferred 20, in hand-setting 46-7, in line-casting 63, on Monotype 66, & justification 53-4, & dictionaries 147, & reference books 147, & verse 147, & indexes 147, in double-column setting 89, & cast-off 332, & layout 342, & specimens 342-3

mechanical wood pulp - paper-making pulp not chemically treated - 289, & paper deterioration 292-3, & binding 293

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Mergenthaler Linotype Company of New York & Linotype Janson 119, & a Miller face 129, & Cheltenham 139

metal in typefounding 29, in line-casting 62 63 185 215, in Monotype 66 185 215, for stereotyping 219: see also type-metal:
metal typography xi: metallic foil - aluminium, bronze or gold supported on thin film, used for case-blocking in edition binding 314-15 327: metallic ink 245
metric paper sizes - see RAO, crown, large crown, demy, royal - 15-16

MF - see machine-finished

middle space or mid - usually 4 to the em pica - 45 194

Michie press 16

millboard - stout hard hot-rolled mould-made board used in edition binding 309: mineral paper surface & high-quality offset printing 225

minikin - 3-point, smallest of the old type-bodies - 101

minus:ule - see lower-case

mitre - diagonal cut off corner - 311

Modern - also Didone: type faces having horizontal top serifs & vertical stress - 106, & Caslon 121, & roman du roi 123, & Firmin Didot & Bell 126, Bodoni 127, & lining figures 127, Scotch roman 129, Miller & Richard 130, examples 125 127-30

Modern Extended, Monotype, series 7, 98 129 134 149

modified (CRT) letter forms 88

modulus - vertical rule ( ) - 158

moiré - obtrusive extraneous pattern which results from screening a half-tone print - 208 251 259 349

Monophoto composition system 71-6, diagram 76 135 184, the 400/8 188, unit system 82, examples of alphabets 38 40, Imprint 122, Fournier 125, Bell 126, Bodoni 128, Scotch Roman 129, Modern Extended (series 7) 130, Old Style 131, Apollo 137, Photina 155: matrices 'A' (small), 'B' (text), 'C' (display) 106

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Monotype Corporation 133-4 137 139, & alternative Granjon italic 117, & Perpetua & Felicity 133, & Ehrhardt 114, & Times New Roman 135, & Monophoto Apollo 137, & Monophoto Bembo 140: Monotype Lasercomp - see Lasercomp, Monotype

Morison, Stanley & Blado (italic of Poliphilus) 113, & Granjon's 16th-century swash italic 117, & Ehrhardt 119-20, & Perpetua & Felicity italic 133, & Monotype Corporation's preference for contrast, & Times 134-5

mortise (of metal letters) - cut into - 32

mould for type-casting in type-founding 29-30, on Linotype caster 67, on Monotype caster 63 66-7, diagram 64: mould for casting stereotype duplicate plates 233: mould for making paper by hand - wooden & brass frame carrying wire or nylon mesh on which pulp is shaken to make sheet of paper - 283-4 307

mount - metal or wooden base to support line or half-tone block, to raise the surface to type-height - 254: mount of card - to back photographic artwork - 260

mull - coarse muslin cloth used for first lining in edition binding - 306 309 317

multiple rule 196

music score printed by offset photo-litho 211

mutton - see em

negative (photography) 208-10 217 221 348: negative assembly 209: negative exposure 208-9, & photolitho 223, & collotype 225, & gravure 249, & colour 249: negative printing down 95 223

net profit - profit remaining after all costs, including overheads, have been met - 339-40

newspapers 73 87 214

nine-alphabet general-purpose fount 65-6, example 38

nipping - lightly pressing paper on Fourdrinier machine to produce a rough, antique finish - 285

Nonesuch Press 125

Figure 4. Page from index to Methods of book design by Hugh Williamson (Yale University Press, 1983)
1/22, n. 1; attends Mosson’s congregation, 1/58, 76, 173, 183; drinks King’s health, 1/58; goes to Ireland, 1/209, 214, 308; social: at dancing school, 1/253; also, 1/21-2, 45, 60, 83, 178, 192, 200, 207; alluded to: 3/299; ~ his father, 1/207, 217; his mother, 1/207
BUTLER, ——: witness against Field, 4/71; also, 4/110
BUTLER, [? the foregoing]: accuses Coventry of selling places, 4/170
BUTLER, Mrs, of Banbury, Oxon: daughter’s proposed match with Tom P, 3/201, 208, 226, 227, 228, 231, 232-3
BUTLERSBURY: sec Bucklersbury
BUTTOLPH’S WHARF: see St Botolph’s Wharf
BUTT(S), [William], merchant, of Bristol, Deb Willct’s uncle: shows Bristol to P, 9/234-6 passim; visits Bath with P and others, 9/238, 239
BYROM, John, poet and teacher of shorthand (d. 1763): vol. i, pp. Ixxii-Ixxiii
BYRON, Lady: see Gordon
CABINET: see Privy Council
CADDEN, Hugh L., physicist and writer on shorthand (d. 1930): transcribes parts of P’s diary, vol. i, pp. xcii-xciii
CALLIGRAPHY: P admires, 1/132-3; 6/339; engraved, 4/270; 5/237
CALTHORPE (Calthrop), Sir James, of Ampton, Suff.: 1/6 & n. 3; ~ his widow, 1/6
CALTHORPE (Calthrop), [Lestrange], barrister: pays debt to Sandwich, 1/4, 5, 6 & n. 3, 24, 36, 37; arbitrator in dispute over Robert P’s will, 3/270, 274; alluded to: 1/38; 3/276; ~ his man, 1/37, 38
CALVIN, John: sermon against, 4/93; praised by Hollier, 4/386
CAMBRIDGE [see also Fairs etc.: Sturbridge; Pepys, Samuel: university]:
visits by P/ep: 1/60, 66-70; 2/135-6, 146-9, 180, 181; 3/217-18; 8/468-9; 9/210, 212-13, 306
BOROUGH: Roger P chosen M.P., 2/36; assizes, 2/145, 146; 8/484 & n. 2; Plague, 7/219 & n. 2; town waits, 8/469, 474; buildings: Bear [Black Bear] inn, 2/181 & n. 2; 3/217, 223; Falcon inn, 1/66 & n. 4, 67, 68, 69; Rose inn, 1/68 & n. 3, 69; 2/136, 145; 9/210, 212, 213; Dryden’s reference to in play, 8/468; St Botolph’s church, 1/68; Three Tuns, 1/67 & n. 4
UNIVERSITY: general: quarrels in at Restoration, 2/146-7 & n.; drunken scholars, 9/210; P defends against Oxford, 9/545; buildings: the schools, 3/217; Regent House, 3/218 & n. 1; degrees: P pays for M.A., 1/222; Monmouth receives honorary M.A., 4/99 & n. 3; officers etc.: tripos, 1/68 &
Future possibilites

Soon we may see the original manuscript recorded on a computer disk which will be edited at the publishers on that same disk. This then may be indexed, again using the disk. Layout considerations will become an important part of this procedure. The index may be recorded with all the entries starting at the beginning of a new line. The index would then have recorded codes to indicate the various levels of sub- and sub-sub-entries. This would be both simple to do and easily corrected if required. The next few years should see increasing use of computerized production procedures in the publishing world. Many more people will experience the pleasure of using word processing and indexing programs on a computer which will bring fast, flexible and efficient progress to indexing. If we can bring intelligent decisions to bear on our understanding of layout requirements, this will make the job of presentation of both typewritten and computer-produced indexes very much easier. This procedure should cheapen the whole production process so that more indexes may be included in the publication of books.

Conclusion

All the features mentioned are easily indicated at the typewritten or computer-produced stage of the index.

The main recommendation is to keep all the indexes as typographically simple as possible so that the information is easily retrieved by the reader. This does not mean that complex indexes are to be avoided. The designer, the indexer and author can agree a layout at the outset and this may with luck be as successful as the index to The diary of Samuel Pepys (1983) (see figure 5). This example shows how complex entries can be presented well for the reader's use; a variety of distinction of elements has been used.

We have looked briefly at the conventions used in the design of indexes. This should give indexers a greater understanding of how these features have come to be used. If the indexer has a full understanding of the design features of the index, he or she will be able to submit the typewritten index in the required style so that the translation to the printed version is a smooth and efficient process.

References


Nil carborundum . . .

There was once an Indexer (who chooses to remain anonymous). And he made himself known to a Publisher (whose privacy deserves respect). And the Publisher asked the Indexer, a month in advance, to Reserve a Fortnight for the purpose of indexing a Forthcoming Book.

And the Indexer said he would. And he did. In fact, he declined two other invitations to compile indexes, because their dates would have impinged on his Reserved Fortnight.

And when the first day of the R.F. dawned, the Indexer telephoned the Publisher to ask What Gave. And the Publisher told him that the Printer was All Behind.

So the Indexer champed and fumed for a week until he was lucky enough to get another little job. And he wrote to the nameless Publisher and told him What had Happened, pointing out politely that he had lost a week's money, perhaps £100, which he thought the Publisher Ought to Pay.

And the Indexer expected a Dusty Answer—or none at all. But sometimes the Gods are kind, and Lo! a cheque arrived, for the full £100, with an Apology to boot.

Moral: Not all Publishers are as black as some Indexers paint them.