A glossary for indexers V

Some definitions supplied by Anthony Raven:

alphabet: name sometimes given to a suburban semi occupied by a couple called Alfred and Elizabeth; alphabetical order: suburban way of life.

author: an indexer who is not available for work.

book: a form of punishment, as in ‘brought to book’; also ‘throw the book at him’.

cheque: a document received by a house editor at regular intervals. (It is not considered necessary for indexers to be familiar with this expression.)

computer: indexing machine invented by writers of science fiction, currently enjoying a vogue among amateurs of the genre.

deadline: date by which an index must be completed, regardless of when, or whether, any proofs (q.v.) have been received; see also yesterday.

freelance: The condition of being unpaid. (Free (6), ‘not subject to . . . fees’ + Old Scots lankis, languish.)

hourly rate: a way of relieving one’s feelings by abusing author and publisher at regular intervals; see also recommended rate.

house editor: a publisher’s timekeeper.

housewife: a lady who will gladly pay a fee for the privilege of being allowed to compile an index; see also pensioner.

index: a way of showing that publication of the book should have been prohibited.

invoice: a delivery note, of no financial significance; see also statement.

lump sum: sum of money offered by a publisher as remuneration, so called because not liked by indexers.

pensioner: a male housewife (q.v.).

proofs: a demonstration that the index should have been completed.

publication party: (i) a social occasion from which indexers are excluded (ii) an opportunity for the author (q.v.) to discover whether the publisher has provided an index.

publisher: a person who frequents public houses. (Middle English pub-like; perhaps related to Old Norse lush, one who drinks to excess.)

recommended rate: form of words for the hourly rate (q.v.).

reference: (i) commendation accorded to an indexer whose work is liked (ii) commendation needed by an indexer before anyone will give him any work; cross reference: indexer’s opinion of author, editor or publisher.

statement: an invoice (q.v.) sent at any time after delivery.

sub-entries: what the house editor will do to an index.

weekend: period of time within which an index can be completed. (Middle English werk end.)

yesterday: favoured time for deadline (q.v.).

A bibliography for indexers

A useful typescript reading list on indexing has been produced by the Canadian indexer and bibliographer Peter Greig, The Indexer’s Journal Liaison Officer for the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada, and is now available in the Society of Indexers’ library. This is The indexer as entrepreneur: a selective guide for freelance indexing and indexers, an 11-page booklet, which is, as its title implies, intended for indexers working on their own. The author decided to compile it because, as he points out, he himself could find little specific literature to satisfy his own needs on freelance indexing.

The booklet is not entirely a work on how to index. It is an aid intended for existing indexers and those wishing to take up indexing work on a freelance basis. It begins in a very practical way by giving the addresses of the secretaries of the Society of Indexers and its three affiliated societies, and in addition that of the Freelance Editors’ Association of Canada. There follows a list of registers of indexers and membership lists and then journals published by the societies. On indexer education there are references to articles in The Indexer and Scholarly Publishing while on the question of correspondence courses ‘the two best known’ in the countries covered by the affiliated societies are both in England—one is that run by the Rapid Results College in collaboration with the Society of Indexers. Then follows the part of the work dealing with books and articles on indexing itself, consisting of dictionaries, printed standards and various articles under the headings ‘Indexing techniques and practices’ and ‘Freelance work.’ The author has deliberately restricted his field, with some exceptions, to works published since 1979 and has, for reasons which he explains, completely omitted computerized indexing.

P.B.

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