Book reviews
edited by Philip Bradley


The previous edition of this standard appeared in 1969. Since then new filing rules have been published by the British Library, the ALA and the Library of Congress. All of these appeared in 1980 and were intended to take account of computer filing of library catalogues. The scope of the British Standard recommendations is much broader and covers ‘lists of all kinds, e.g., bibliographies, catalogues, directories and indexes.’ The Society of Indexers was represented on the Technical Committee responsible for the recommendations. The rules follow those set by the British Library and are based on the principle of ‘file-as-is’, emphasizing the way character strings (i.e. entries) look rather than the way they sound or their meaning.

The recommended order of filing characters is:
1—Spaces, dashes, hyphens, diagonal slashes, all of which have equal filing value. Other punctuation marks have no filing value
2—Ampersands
3—Arabic numbers and Roman numbers in numerical order
4—Roman alphabet letters arranged according to the English alphabet
5—Letters from other alphabets arranged in the commonly accepted order within each alphabet

The recommendations permit more options than the British Library rules (which are more directly designed for machine sorting of library catalogues). Options are provided where ‘the nature, purpose or tradition of a list may predetermine the choice of filing method’. Both word-by-word and letter-by-letter arrangement is explained, but word-by-word is recommended ‘when no overriding consideration to the contrary applies’. BS 3700: 1976 (Recommendations for the preparation of indexes to books, periodicals and other publications) took a more neutral attitude, although pointing out that word-by-word sometimes results in a clearer grouping of related items.

Numbers are arranged according to ‘the numerical significance of each separate digit’, interfiling Arabic and Roman numbers. This results in a correct numeric sequence but is not easily achieved by computer sorting, where numbers will usually be stored as textual characters. In such cases, ‘it may be necessary to treat each part of a number separately, separating the component parts by the punctuation marks, fractional or decimal signs, or implicit spaces’, which will generate a sequence such as 0.1, 1, -1, 1/4, 2, 2/9. All four codes agree that numbers should precede the alphabetical sequence and should not be filed as if they were spelt out.

‘Mac’ and its contractions should be filed as given ‘unless the nature, purpose or tradition of a list requires arrangement as if spelt in full.’ Abbreviations such as Dr, Mrs, Mlle, St are filed as given, and acronyms and groups of initials are treated as single words whether or not they contain stops and whether or not they are pronounceable. Thus WHO and W.H.O. are filed together, but W H O would be filed before ‘war.’ Recommendations for the arrangement of personal and corporate names, subjects and titles with the same first element again follow the British Library rules, and adequate examples are given. More detail is given for subject entries than in the BL rules, but it does not deal explicitly with questions such as arrangement of subheadings that start with unimportant words (e.g., an, as, at, for, in). The implication is that if used in a subheading they should be taken into account. An appendix provides a demonstration filing sequence based on the examples used in the main text, with references to relevant paragraph numbering.

It is impossible to compare the relative merits of the four filing codes. The British Standard takes a sensible approach which balances the need to provide an easily intelligible sequence for the user with the necessity of accommodating the requirements of the computer.

ALAN SEAL


As an eightieth birthday tribute, this bulky volume of Saecula spiritualia is devoted entirely to a selection of William Heckscher’s writings published during the 45 years between 1937 and 1982. From the comprehensive bibliography of 93 items listed by the editor, 24 have been chosen (one in German, one in Dutch, two in Latin, the rest in English), each reproduced exactly as originally published, complete with footnotes and black-and-white illustrations, both of which are essential concomitants of the text in everything which Heckscher has written.

Members of the Society of Indexers and its Affiliates will welcome the inclusion of one of the most significant articles that has ever appeared in this journal (The
Unconventional index and its merits—The Indexer 13 (1) Apr. 1982, 7-25), though some may regret the omission of the brilliant essay 'Melancholia (1541)' (reviewed in the same issue, pp. 58-9), with its model of the heights that an unconventional index can achieve when a master-indexer gives rein to his imaginative artistry. Readers will be fascinated, too, by the editor's Introduction. In a mere dozen pages it summarizes the life and work and thought of this unique art-historian, who is not only one of the world's leading experts on some of the more recondite areas of his subject (iconology, emblem books), but at the same time has the breadth of vision and inter-disciplinary perception we associate with Renaissance Man rather than with the scholars of our own times, of whom it is generally true that they know more and more about less and less.

It would be presumptuous to comment, in so short a review, on each of the twenty-four essays, and invidious to single out one or two of them at the expense of the others. What is astonishing is that his observations concerning Shakespeare, Goethe, the brothers Grimm, et al do not strike the reader as the fruits of what is commonly regarded as academic research. Rather they remind one of the apparently haphazard thunderbolts of Zeus. This is because they are eruptions (Heckscher modestly calls them petites perceptions) from a mind that is deeply conversant not only with Western art but with almost every aspect of our culture from Greek antiquity right through to our own times. He does not expound but rather explores this or that relationship between art and literature. It is as though he cuts a cross-section of his brain and lets us see the ways in which his mind is working. Thus his readers, whilst learning from his rich store of knowledge and ideas, find themselves impelled also to think for themselves.

Those who seize the opportunity of reading the copy which the author has kindly donated to the Society's library will doubtless appreciate why there is no index. Nothing less than a Heckscherian unconventional index could do justice to these remarkable essays. Who but the author himself could provide this? And how could the editor possibly call upon the recipient of an eightieth birthday tribute to do his own indexing?

J. A. GORDON


The author states: 'The objective of this textbook . . . is to provide a basic knowledge of PRECIS for the beginning indexer student, covering the situations which will be encountered about 90% of the time in actual practice . . . The Primer attempts to put together the basic pieces, step by step, in a way that is straightforward, easy to follow, and perhaps even enjoyable' (p.7).

Maybe the reviewer of this book should have been a 'beginning indexer student' who could comment on the degree of ease and enjoyment found in following the exposition and the exercises prepared for him. However, even if ignorance of indexing is postulated, some general knowledge and a fair linguistic ability are required. Although Mary Dykstra's writing is colloquial and the technical vocabulary is adequately explained, the jargon that PRECIS has generated is quite considerable and unfamiliar.

The author draws on her own experience of teaching PRECIS to present the system coherently, beginning with the simplest conventions and codes. For the most part she follows the same sequence as the Manual, with a few omissions and changes, often using the same examples, and referring to the Manual where the Primer gives only partial coverage. Each chapter is followed by a set of exercises, and sometimes by a summary and a bibliography. Chapter 12 is a useful summary of the whole syntactical side of PRECIS. It is followed by a chapter on coding for computer manipulation and an exposition of the thesaural aspect of PRECIS, in which our old friends Pip, Squeak and Wilfred pop up again—all penguins are birds, some mice are pests.

I do not think it is possible to present PRECIS as a simple system, but I wonder whether this primer might not have been more effective if it had tried to do less and had been less closely tied to the Manual.

MARY PIGGOTT


Is this the one we've all been waiting for? British health sciences librarians have long felt the US National Library of Medicine's Medical subject headings (MeSH) to be inadequate for the UK's approach to health care and social services. The DHSS thesaurus has indeed a wider scope than MeSH: the core areas covered are health and social welfare; other subjects covered to some extent include economics, education, law, management, psychology, sociology, and technology. Much is owed to the Bliss Classification, specifically the DHSS Library's in-house version of the second edition, and Bliss class numbers are provided for preferred terms.

Of particular interest to indexers are pages vii-xvii of the Introduction, which explain the thesaurus in some detail and draw examples from the entries to illustrate specific features and aspects of thesaurus construction—a good "how-to-do-it" handout for library school students.

The terminology throughout is British. It is interesting to note that -ICATION is always preferred to -ATION. The leaning toward natural language gives this work an advantage over MeSH for library subject headings, which will probably be more acceptable to many groups of users. British nurses will be pleased to see the preference of BEDSORES to DECUBITUS ULCER and the inclusion of PATIENT LIFTING. Included are such diverse
terms as BITES AND STINGS, DIRECTIVE LEADERSHIP, GRAZING LAND, MALE MIDWIVES, PRISONERS OF WAR, RELIGIOUS HEALING, SHELF AS INDEX and VALUE ADDED TAX. Recent colloquialisms have been included if appropriate, for example MORNING AFTER PILL. Some chemical terminology is old-fashioned (Tetrachloromethane USE CARBON TETRACHLORIDE), though I suspect that most British users still prefer the older names. Most users will definitely not prefer the DHSS choice of INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF UNITS, as SI UNITS is the term favoured in the literature. I also feel there is a case for allowing MEDICINE as well as health and MEDICINE, HEMAPLEGICS.

It is inevitable that comparisons will be made with MeSH: it must be remembered that MeSH provides an annually updated structured approach to searching biomedical journal literature, whereas the DHSS thesaurus is essentially one library’s working tool tied closely to a classification scheme for monographs. They are by no means mutually exclusive.

Is this the one we’ve all been waiting for? At £38 not every NHS librarian will want to rush out immediately to buy one, but anyone involved with administration, training and community health/social services literature will find it a great help. I wonder whether the DHSS has considered a discount price for subscribers to the various hard-copy offshoots of the DHSS-DATA database?

HELGA J. PERRY


‘Doonesbury’ is a strip appearing in the Washington Post and a number of other American papers; in the UK it is carried by The Guardian. In the strip Trudeau casts a look, sometimes wryly amused, sometimes bitter, at aspects of American life and current events, from the perspective of an American liberal, a political position with no precise equivalent in the UK. Like all the best strips it has its own cast of characters: Michael Doonesbury, Duke, Zonker Harris, etc.

The index is an impressive performance. Subjects, characters, public figures, and events are all included, and broken down into subheadings and sub-subheadings. A feature is the inclusion of phrases from popular culture and from the dialogue of Trudeau’s characters, listed individually, under subjects and under Quotes. Some of the main subject headings give an idea of the concerns and preoccupations of liberal America: the DRAFT, FEMINISM, FOOTBALL, IRANIAN HOSTAGE CRISIS, TANNING (i.e. suntans), VIETNAM WAR 1961–75, WATERGATE.

Each index entry refers to a strip by a date code, year-month-day, giving the date of the strip’s first appearance. Where a figure is referred to in a strip, rather than appearing in it, the citation is enclosed in square brackets. Some entries have explanatory notes in brackets. Entries are arranged alphabetically word-by-word. Subheadings are arranged under the first significant word. Examples show how the index is constructed, and give some of the flavour of Trudeau’s attitudes and humour:

**REAGAN, RONALD:**
—Mood of administration: [81-01-11] (smugness, jingoism)
—TANNING:
—Alternative to drugs and business school: 81-04-26
—as Career: 80-03-16
—as World view: 77-07-02;80-08-31

This index is often very funny indeed, making me, for one, want to seek out the original strips. Nevertheless, we need to ask for what public it was compiled. Does an essentially ephemeral journalistic form like the comic strip need an index? Well, in the first place Doonesbury enthusiasts may well need it, in the same way as readers of Joyce, Proust or Powell need readers’ handbooks. Secondly, the index provides access to events, opinions and attitudes over more than a decade of American life. The facts of the Iranian hostage crisis are obtainable from many other sources, while American reaction to the crisis is perhaps not.

No indexer could possibly review an index without griping. My gripes are few. I would have welcomed an entry ‘Demonstrations’. References to this are scattered under such headings as ‘Iran-anti-Shah demonstrations’, ‘Vietnam War-opposition-anti-war movement’, ‘Student activism’. Further, I don’t really like subheadings under a supposed ‘most significant word.’ There is no problem-free way of characterizing such words, though I know many indexers and publishers disagree. I end this review with some of Trudeau’s more quotable quotes:

Dressed for failure, I see
The Chair opens up the floor to innuendo and hearsay
It’s a baby woman
The Part of baby Jesus is played by a hidden forty-watt light bulb (one for the editorial blue pencil this)

RICHARD M. WRIGHT

This final volume of *A Milton encyclopedia* consists of forty-three pages of late entries and fifty-two pages of bibliographies as well as seventy-five pages of indexes. Although it is these indexes which form the subject of this review, something must be said about earlier volumes to make clear what follows. First, however, it may be said that the index section itself is comprehensive and well-designed. It consists of three parts—names, biblical citations and subjects. Like the text it is printed two columns to the page, and references are marked *a* or *b* to indicate the column. The section on biblical citations is usefully arranged not alphabetically but by books of the Bible.

A minor defect of the indexes is that the volume numbers are given in the same typeface as page numbers, which makes it rather difficult to consult long entries. In addition to this the name index, no doubt in an attempt to keep costs down, contains long lists of page references without any subdivisions. In the case of *Paradise lost*, for instance, there are sixty-eight lines or about 430 entries, while *Satan* has twenty-four lines. Name indexes in general do tend to have fewer subdivisions than do subject indexes, but *Paradise lost* has quite a large number of entries referring to several consecutive columns of text, and for these sub-entries would be very helpful.

The one serious fault of the index is caused by the use of differing bibliographical methods in the compilation of the first eight volumes. These volumes consist of articles, in alphabetical order, on Milton's work. Some of these articles have a separate bibliography in the last volume, some have references incorporated in the articles themselves and some have no bibliography at all. This arrangement has repercussions in the indexing of the work. Authors listed in the separate bibliographies are not included in the index of names, but those entries which are incorporated in the articles are included. This is normal indexing practice, but a uniform bibliographical method and therefore a more consistent index would have been more useful to the reader. Apart from this the index is a competent piece of work. Its compilation was a major task, and except for a small section at the beginning of the first volume the whole set makes 1982 a convenient date at which to end.

PHILIP BRADLEY

Index to the sessional papers of Hong Kong 1879–1982

The purpose of this work is aptly summed up in the Foreword by James Hayes, President of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. The mass of official literature of the Hong Kong government published since 1879, he says, badly needed to be indexed to make it accessible and to counteract the effect of other influences since it would 'enhance scholarship and journalism in Hong Kong at a time when accurate knowledge of our past is a contribution to the shape of our future and inaccurate reporting a disservice.'

Although Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1841 and official publications were produced from those days, the *Administrative reports* which later became the *Sessional papers* did not begin publication until 1879, the date when this *Index* begins. The work itself starts with a detailed Introduction explaining the layout of the book. The text consists, with some deliberate omissions, of the *Administrative reports* and *Sessional papers* arranged chronologically, followed by a Subject index of twenty-four pages and a Name index of twenty-three pages. Tony Rydings, who is a member of the Society of Indexers, was formerly Librarian of the University of Hong Kong and compiled the first ten-year cumulative index to the *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (see *The Indexer* 8 (4) Oct. 1973, 233) and he is to be congratulated on producing this new work. His recent retirement, together with official talks on the impending reversion of the colony to China, make 1982 a convenient date at which to end.

PHILIP BRADLEY

Reference sources in library and information services: a

This is believed to be the first single guide to provide 'thorough coverage of the vast array of reference publications dealing with library services and issues.' The authors expect it to be of use to practising librarians needing to help their clients to find information about libraries; library and information science educators; library and information science students; and a group which the Americans call 'library collection developers' and the British might call acquisitions librarians or subject librarians. The 1193 entries are presented in two parts: Part one (General Reference Works) contains 668 entries grouped in six chapters (Bibliography; Terminology; Encyclopedias, Yearbooks, Handbooks and Manuals; Biographical and Membership Directories; Directories of Libraries and Archives; and Sources of Library Statistics) and Part two (Subject-Related Reference Works) contains 525 entries on 103 subjects, listed under alphabetically arranged subject headings supported by some cross-references.

Although several British publications are listed—it is, for example, good to see Hunter and Fox's *Examples illustrating AACR2* listed under 'Cataloging and Classification'—there are occasional signs of American bias. For example, only one item (ALA filing rules) is listed under 'Filing Rules'—no mention of *BLAISE filing rules* or BS 1749; Wellisch's *Indexing and abstracting: an international bibliography* is listed under 'Indexing and Abstracting' but not the Society of Indexers' *A
select reading list on indexing; and BS 5408 (Glossary of
documentation terms) is a notable omission from the
section on terminology. A great deal of work has been
done in Britain recently on conservation, but the ten
items listed under this heading are all American.

A work of this nature is inevitably out of date as soon
as it is published. For example, Hans Wellisch’s recent
supplement to his bibliography is not mentioned, and
the first edition of Manual of business library practice,
edited by Malcolm Campbell, is listed as item 799, but
there is now a second edition.

It is stated on page xvi that textbooks and mono-
graphs are excluded, but there is some inconsistency in
the interpretation of this guideline. If Maranjian and
Boss’s Fee-based information services and Warnken’s
The information brokers: how to start and operate your
own fee-based service are listed under ‘Fee-Based
Information Services’, and Nichols’s Local studies
librarianship appears under ‘Local Studies Library
Service’, why not Collison’s Indexes and indexing,
Knight’s Indexing, the art of and Hunnisett’s Indexing
for editors under ‘Indexing and Abstracting’? It is very
surprising that neither BS 3700 nor ANSI (American
National Standards Institute) Z39.4 is listed under
‘Indexing and Abstracting’, since these are quite
essential tools in their respective countries.

There are indexes of authors and titles, as well as a
geographic index which provides access to place of
publication and geographical scope of the titles listed.
The alphabetical arrangement is not too helpful because
the rather old-fashioned method of treating initials
separated by punctuation as separate words is used.
Thus A.L.A. rules for filing catalog cards precedes
Abbreviations . . . but ALA filing rules follows
Aggiunte . . . There is no subject index because ‘all
subject-oriented reference works are listed and cross-
listed by topic.’ (p. xviii). This unsatisfactory reason
overlooks the fact that many items listed in part one
need a subject index entry—for example, acronyms
(201), thesauri (204–8), special libraries (several entries),
archives (several entries).

In spite of the faults which have been mentioned this
guide should certainly be of value to the four groups
mentioned in the Foreword, especially the second
(library and information science educators). I shall
make much use of my copy.

K. G. B. BAKEWELL

The ALA glossary of library and information science/
Heartsill Young, editor. Chicago, Ill: American
Library Association, 1983. xvi, 245pp. 26cm. ISBN
0-8389-0371-1: (cased): $50.00. (Available in UK
from Eurospan.)

This elegantly produced book is printed on excellent
paper in clear Times Roman, bound in regal red linen
cloth, and tooled in black and gold. Clearly it is far
removed from the grey covered, workhorse glossaries
produced by BSI or the old brown covered glossaries
from the American Society for Testing and Materials,
but these latter are working glossaries. The Foreword to
the work under review states that it was first conceived
in 1943. It is relevant to question whether the ALA
membership would have been better served with half a
dozens paper-covered glossaries in the time taken for the
present work to reach fruition.

In addition to the specialized terminology of
librarianship and information science, many terms from
book production, other methods of capturing and
retrieving information (such as audiodiscs) and
computer technology are incorporated. In the main the
definitions are clear and concise, although some are
markedly American in character: for instance ‘copyright
date’ is essentially that under the US Copyright Act.
Amongst terms not found were feature cards (under
‘optical coincidence’ with cross-reference from ‘peek-a-
boo’) and indicator boards; but ‘informatics,’ ‘links,’
‘role operators,’ ‘Bliss,’ and ‘Brown classifications’ are
included. A few very general dictionary words are con-
tained, e.g. ‘process’ and ‘procedure.’ The definition of
‘concept’ is limited to its general sense and has not been
extended to accommodate its many strange manifesta-
tions, some remarkably concrete, from the minds or
pens of information workers. Unfortunately, most
proper names are excluded and one searches in vain for
Zator coding, ORBIT or STAIRS. Nevertheless, these
limitations do not seriously detract from this luxuriously
produced volume.

KEVIN P. JONES

(Available from HMSO.)

This short guide is a summary of the Data Protection
Act prepared by the National Computing Centre and the
British Computer Society with some help from the
Department of Trade and Industry. It is always a
pleasure to see a short work which properly introduces
a large subject, and the author has done a good job in
combining law and computing within 32 pages. The
book serves as a very digestible introduction for the
newcomer.

SIMON DISMORE

The Oxford companion to English literature. 5th edn.,
edited by Margaret Drabble. Oxford: Oxford Univer-
sity Press, 1985. xii, 1155 pp. 24 cm. ISBN
0-19-866130-4 (cased): £15.00.

An admirable Note to the Reader informs us that the
entries are in simple letter-by-letter alphabetical order,
with spaces, hyphens and the definite or indefinite
article ignored. This applies in all languages: but where a
work written in English has a title in a foreign language,
the article conditions its alphabetical ordering:
L’ Allegro and La belle dame sans merci are both listed
under L (the former cross-referenced from Allegro as
the latter is from Belle). Names beginning with Me or M

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are ordered as though they were spelled Mac, St as though Saint, Dr as Doctor, Mr and Mrs are ordered as they are spelled. Would that all indexers set themselves such a clear list of guidelines for their index entries! The

1099 pages of entries thus start with the great virtue of logical and consistent ordering.

Decision making on what to discard and sifting new entries from the wide variety presented must have been an awesome task, especially as the decisions made by the previous editor, the distinguished Sir Paul Harvey, had endured for so long, since 1932 in fact. Margaret Drabble puts her case in the Preface. She has omitted items which may be found in Brewer's dictionary of phrase and fable. The entries on classical authors have also been thoroughly revised. As she has no doubt rightly surmised, few readers have the benefit of a previous editor, the distinguished Sir Paul Harvey, had an awesome task, especially as the decisions made by the
to use only their own words' seem still to manage to write passably, recreating and adding to 'the literary heritage', as writers have usually managed to do. Mr Bagnall makes no mention of film, television and other modern media as carriers and creators of new echoing phrases. Despite the bibliographical references and other academic appurtenances, I cannot feel that he has given us much more than a Sunday-paper essay—stimulating, suggestive, but in no way conclusive.

In his description and classification of clichés, Mr Bagnall is on much surer ground. There is much delight in his quotations from such as Wodehouse (the cliché as plaything), Keith Waterhouse (the cliché as group-identifier and emotional armour), and the modern translators of liturgical tools (the Prayer Book as secretary's report to the board); Myles na gCopaleen ('If a thing is fraught, with what is it fraught? . . . The gravest consequences') castigates the journalistic cliché, and Mr Bagnall claims for it an honourable descent from Homeric diction. Clichés may distort or erode meaning; they may also reassure, give authority, evoke riches of connotation. Some obfuscate, bore or fudge, some are truly vicious (the approaches to Newspeak of irresponsible—or worse—politicians); but the often-used phrase may still be the best to convey meaning, may indeed be on its way into the language as a mature idiom.

Mr Bagnall's publishers have given him a pretty book with generous leading, blank versos before chapter-beginnings, and fine large type for everything, including the notes at the end. They have not found space for an index, so you will have difficulty finding again that lovely extract from A. C. Benson, or discovering whether Oscar Wilde is quoted. As for trying to retrace the line of an argument, you may do what I did: read the book twice, taking notes each time, then give up and settle for a nice anthology of quoted matter and a few stimuli to further thought.

JUDY BATCHELOR


Mr Bagnall apparently believes that the cliché is on the way to extinction, because people don't read books any more; or if they do, they don't read the same books as each other or as their forebears; or if they do read the same books, they aren't the right books. His conclusions may possibly be justified, but his arguments seem to me so confused, so contradictory and so incomplete, that I shall not set out to support or refute them. Wisely, he has avoided any attempt to define a cliché too precisely; he seems to be referring throughout his argument to over-use of metaphor drawn from universal literary models, though his later citations of conversational cliché would not fit this pattern. He quotes many precepts—Ascham, Johnson, modern writers on the teaching of English—but few examples from the work of those who followed such precepts. He has not tried to explore the roots of 'original' writing, nor to explain why successful writers apparently ignore these precepts: even Tacitus doesn't write like Cicero, Shakespeare certainly learned very quickly not to write like Statius; and the very youngest writers, who may be supposed most likely to 'use only their own words' seem still to manage to write passably, recreating and adding to the literary heritage, as writers have usually managed to do. Mr Bagnall makes no mention of film, television and other modern media as carriers and creators of new echoing phrases. Despite the bibliographical references and other academic appurtenances, I cannot feel that he has given us much more than a Sunday-paper essay—stimulating, suggestive, but in no way conclusive.

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JUDY BATCHELOR

$22.95. (Also published as Technical Services Quarterly, 2 (1-2) Fall/Winter 1984.)

The premise of the thirteen papers presented here is that the subject approach potentially represents the most powerful and fruitful means to access library materials, but at present remains woefully undeveloped and under-utilized (Introduction, p. 1). The purpose of the papers is ‘to pinpoint what’s wrong with current subject cataloging, demonstrating why it often doesn’t “work” and sometimes transmits undesirable messages, and then to either suggest construction reforms or report on actual innovations that illustrate how subject cataloging can be at once responsive, sensitive, useful, and exciting.’ Note the horrible split infinitive, which is the editor’s, not mine.

In the first paper, given the admirably apt title ‘Subject Headings, Silly, American—20th Century—Complications and Sequelae—Addresses, Essays, Lectures’, John R. Likins gives several examples of unhelpful (and sometimes downright stupid) subject headings, drawn mainly but not exclusively from the Library of Congress Subject Headings. This is followed by a critique by Ellen Koger of subject headings for children’s fiction and a description by Diane Choquette of the development of a thesaurus to provide improved subject access to the ephemeral files of the New Religious Movements Research Collection at the Graduate Theological Union Library in Berkeley, California.

Shirley A. Smith surveys the development of the Statewide Information Referral (SIR) file set up in West Virginia in 1979 and lists the subject headings used for the system, which is currently being automated, and Lionelle Elsesser briefly considers the subject approach to health information as exemplified in Dewey, Library of Congress, Sears and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH).

Audrey Taylor superbly demonstrates the superiority of PRECIS (Preserved Context Index System) and Paul R. Murdock provides a detailed account of the Jefferson County Public Library’s solution to the problem of multilingual access with its Asian Model Library Cataloging Project, conceived because of the belief that the mere acquisition of Asian materials is not in any way synonymous with making them accessible. Then comes a report of the SAC (Subject Analysis Committee of the American Library Association) Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on Concepts Denoted by the Term ‘Primitive’, which recommends that the use of the term ‘primitive’ in subject analysis be substantially reduced. How specific can you get?

The last five papers are all contributed by the editor, writing in his usual pungent and amusing style. He explains why and how Hennepin County Library changed the headings LEPROSY and SHELTERED WORKSHOPS TO HANSEN’S DISEASE AND WORK CENTER; he demonstrates that the Library of Congress Subject Headings have not yet completely come to terms with the Women’s Movement; he shows that the Library of Congress does not deal adequately or in an unbiased manner with the subject approach to Jewish materials; and he provides a thesaurus of terms relating to teenagers as used in the Hennepin County Library.

Berman’s final contribution is an annotated bibliography of ‘tools for tinkering’. In spite of all the work done in Britain on subject cataloguing and subject indexing, every one of the 28 items listed is American, including the thesauri. Thesaurafacet, Root Thesaurus, London Classification of Business Studies, etc., where art thou? This American bias is evident in the bibliographies appended to most of the papers, the outstanding exception being Audrey Taylor’s—it would be difficult to provide a bibliography on PRECIS which did not include some works by Austin, but Ms Taylor manages to avoid most other British writers!

Papers on subject headings must have some relevance to book indexes, but is there anything else? In the index I found


(occupying two lines of type). I consulted the heading to which I had been directed and found

Back-of-the-book indexes 87

On page 87 I found

PRECIS was programmed originally to generate a back-of-the-book index to the classified catalogs of the British National Bibliography

I would not have called the subject index to BNB a conventional ‘back-of-the-book’ index and I concluded that:

1. This was not a very helpful index entry.
2. If the entry was worth making, and I suggest that it was not, the ‘see’ reference should have been replaced by a duplicate entry.
3. What about an entry under ‘book indexes’?

Apart from this, the index seems adequate and it was a good idea to include subject headings reviewed in the various papers (listed in capitals to distinguish them from the other index entries). The rather old-fashioned method of filing initials and acronyms at the beginning of the sequence is used, resulting in some odd sequences like

RLG art libraries 124
RLG/CJK computer terminal 96
RLG Task Force on Subject Headings for Art and Architecture 122
RQ 216
RACE QUESTION (cancelled LC subject heading) 187


The author of this interesting extended essay about the information shift in the 1400s to 1600s aims to enrich historical understanding of the period of scribal manuscript writing and early printing. She sees printing as an agent of change in methods of data collection, storage and retrieval systems and communications networks...
used by learned communities throughout Europe. She strives to show how printing changes related to other aspects of development at that time and feels that study of this early printing period is a neglected dimension of historical change. The book is a shortened version of her earlier monumental work, *The printing press as an agent of change* (Cambridge University Press, 1979; quoted in The Indexer 14(1), April 1984, 58). The general reader might find the present book rather heavy reading.

Her treatment falls into two parts, the first focusing on the shift from script to print in Western Europe, the second dealing with the relationship between the communication shift and other developments conventionally associated with the transformation from cultural and intellectual movements in medieval to early modern times. Interesting information is given about early reorganization of printed texts and reference guides including indexing.

The book fulfills its aims, and calls for more study in this complex area of printing history. The ideas pronounced of the effect on religious and scientific thinking are well documented and interesting. I find this a significant book relevant to the understanding of the general effects of exchange of information. Reading it is difficult, the style 'cloudy' and wordy; I would recommend it only to readers fond of history and prepared for a meaty read.

The selected reading lists are excellent in enabling the reader to explore diverse topics of literacy and social developments as well as of the time of early typography and technology in printing. At £7.95, good value.

NAN RIDEHALGH


An enthusiast urges the blessings of word processing for fellow, non-technically-minded writers, emphasizing the training available for the novitiate, the physical circumstances (darkened room, silent keyboard, footstool, wrist supports, timer to remind you to look regularly away . . .). The chief horror is possible loss of work typed in—said to happen to every author once. 'Word processing was designed to fulfill the bad typist's fantasy', he declares (and indeed 'tis so). Correction, insertion and deletion are swift and invisible; every occurrence of given words can be automatically changed. 'Compared with a typewriter, such machines are the epitome of speed, elegance and utility.' Programs are now available to check spelling (against a limited inbuilt dictionary); transpose commonly mistyped strings of letters; check grammar; seek out cliches; 'idea processing' and 'thought processing' are on their way. The author looks forward to general use of portable computers and telephone links, advises on prices and compares different machines and programs, and suggests that the day of secretarial help for writers as well as of typesetting for printers is approaching technological dusk. Four authors recount their experience of writing on word processors; one claims improvement alike in his speed, confidence, output and quality of production. Further benefits computers can confer on writers are information retrieval and database storage, on which there is an informative chapter; also one on the effect on publishing.

These last are of especial interest to indexers, as are the three pages on index programs. But neither indexes, information, online, research, nor publishers, appear in the 3-page index; nor do art work, editing, expense, mailing facility, portable machines, telecommunications, all of which are fully considered in the text; databases, with a whole, detailed chapter, and subsequent references, have one page-reference only. The index has no subheads; 2-line strings of page references; section headings given with the page on which the heading occurs only; 'Eyestrain', for example, has only page 94 instead of 94-8, 211, 213. But all minor, trivial mentions of proper names are spotted and listed in the index.

'It is easy for the writer to use a computer program to prepare an index', Ray Hammond claims, and he must surely have used one for this index. It has all the hallmarks we have come to associate with novices' computer-assisted indexes; punctilious listing of every proper name, relevant or not; ignoring of extended treatment of important topics. The message about use of microcomputers by the inexperienced comes through clearly again: marvellous to use—result, deplorable.

On the evidence of this book, indexers could certainly benefit from using word processors (a micro rather than a 'dedicated' word processor is advocated) for painlessly and perfectly typing their personally-prepared indexes, for information retrieval and database storage; but for no further help with index compilation.

HAZEL BELL

Following Mary Piggott's review of Dr Ingetraut Dahlberg's *International classification and indexing bibliography. Vol. 2: Reference tools and conferences in classification and indexing* (The Indexer 14 (3) April 1985, 218), Dr Dahlberg writes:

In *The Indexer* 14, No. 3 a review appeared of the above stated book in which it is said that 'only the first of Aslib's series of conferences on informatics has been included'.

Please, check and see that this statement is incorrect, as all of the proceedings volumes up to Vol. 5 have been included under the serial numbers as follows:

- 1366 No. 1, 1973
- 1344 No. 2, 1975
- 1728 No. 3, 1976
- 2240 No. 4, 1977 (unnumbered)
- 2700 No. 5, 1979

Please, see it to that this statement is corrected in the following issue. Perhaps you could add that the pro-
ceedings volumes have been entered with all of their relevant papers cited and according to the dates at which their conferences took place.

Our reviewer writes:

My statement was indeed incorrect and I apologize. The conferences are listed and analysed. I was misled by the Index! There are five indexes: two Personal Author indexes, one for the first author and another for the second and further authors, and a Corporate Author index, all described as 'referring to the serial number of all the entries' (p.ix); a Systematic index, arranged according to the Classification Literature Classification (CLC), covering 'only the conference papers, excluding even the subjects contained in the conference titles'; and a Name and Subject index, referring to the whole volume, some entries referring directly to the bibliographic entry number, others (denoting the subject of conference papers) referring to the CLC notation.

In the Corporate Author index I found 'Aslib' and 'Aslib Library' but no further subheadings. However, lower down the page I found 'Coordinate Indexing Group' and one reference—to abstract no. 1366, which cited the first Informatics conference in 1973.

I should not, of course, have stopped there. The Name and Subject index would have given me

Aslib Coordinate Indexing Group,
1974 conference 1544 1728

which would have added two more, since the numbered abstracts referred to the second and third Informatics conferences. The same index also gave

Informatics Conferences
1—1973 1366-1385
2—1974 1544-1558
3—1975 1728-1739
4—1979 2700-2729

which would almost have given the complete sequence for a single looking-up. The fourth conference was not a full Informatics conference but a one-day Colloquium entitled 'About Aboutness', and it was reported only in summary form. The reference to that summary appeared in the Name and Subject index as,

Aboutness, colloquy 1977 2240

From all of the foregoing I draw a number of conclusions.

1. I should have suspected that in such a thorough piece of work as Dahlberg's bibliography an important sequence of conference reports would not have been omitted, and I should have searched the text under the appropriate year headings for the sought citations.

2. An incomplete index entry under a specific heading is more misleading than no entry at all under that heading, since in the latter case the searcher is forced to think of alternative leads.

3. A multiplicity of indexes is, generally speaking, to be avoided. The five indexes to this one volume would have been less confusing had the two Personal Author indexes been amalgamated and the Corporate Author index been interfiled with the Name and Subject index, which, inspection reveals, partially duplicates it.

MARY PIGGOTT

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Publications received and publications noted

Booksellers Association list of members 1985, editor M. J. Bedford. London: Booksellers Association of Great Britain and Ireland, 1985. 116 pp. 21 cm. Index. ISBN 0-901690-97-X, issn 0068-0249 (pbk): gratis. This is a list of booksellers arranged by location with an index by name of bookshop. Next year's issue is to be a computerized file giving more detail.


Data protection guidelines for library, information and related services, prepared by the Joint Consultative Committee Working Party on Data Protection. This work, due for publication in January, 1986, was prepared under the chairmanship of J. E. Davies, and is intended to assist in the registration of books. It is available from the Bibliographic and Information Technology Department of the LA.


Idioms and phrases index . . ., Laurence Urdang, editor in chief, Frank R. Abate, managing editor. Detroit,