The problem of the filing order of headings beginning with numerals, featured in the previous issue, has prompted the following contribution from John S. Butler:

‘Quite rightly you suggest [filing] “1984” under “N” but what do you do for “The 007 Restaurant . . .?”’ Mr Butler goes on to list the possibilities as ‘D’ (for ‘double-O’) ‘O’ (for ‘oh oh’) and ‘Z’ (for ‘zero zero’). If an editorial judgement were demanded it would be that the principle involved here is that of spoken form and therefore the heading should file as ‘double-O’. This of course assumes the prevalence of the rendering ‘double oh seven’ as in the filmed James Bond saga. If it were argued that some other rendering is equally common (e.g. ‘oh oh seven’) then a cross-reference or double entry would obviously be indicated. This principle of the most common spoken form would also decide the filing order of ‘2001’ as either ‘two thousand and one’ or ‘twenty oh one’. The fluctuating practice of the London telephone directory affords an interesting comment on the difficulties presented by this problem. The 1985 issue lists all initial numerals before the letter A, whereas an earlier edition listed ‘007 Restaurant’ just before ‘Ooblies’. It has to be noted in passing that British Telecom’s computer filing of numerals at the head of the alphabet means that the entry ‘007’ follows ‘6’ and precedes ‘7’, so it is unavailing to search for it before entries beginning ‘1’! Is there anybody out there who would like to have his (neuter adjective!) say on the filing of initial numerals?

I am indebted to Mr Butler for sending me a further problem concerning the indexing of a US government publication. He writes: ‘It has three sections each starting with a page 1 and going up to about page 200. The total book size is therefore about 650 pages. It has no index and no contents. How does one index a book with three page ones?’. Mr Butler also mentions that mathematical equations are also numbered separately in each section, thus producing instances of the same equation bearing a different number in different sections. Does anybody have a solution other than Mr Butler’s own, which is either to renumber throughout—including the equations—or to add prefixes A, B, and C to each section?

Our editor writes:

‘How to treat a subheading which generates such a profusion of sub-sub-heads that the whole entry under the main heading becomes unwieldy?

‘One method is to relocate the whole subhead as a main entry, losing one level of indentation by doing so. But then, how does one treat the original subhead? Replacing it with a see also diminishes its relevance to the main heading; leaving it in its alphabetical place with see instead of page refs. causes more work for the user. The best compromise seems to be to list only the page refs. with the subhead; but is there then any code for tipping the user that if he actually turns to that topic as a main heading, he will find it helpfully subdivided?’

Translating this into a hypothetical example one might have:

children  
art  
clothing  
delinquency  
games  
play  
hospitals  
infant schools  
nursery schools  
primary schools  
psychology  
religion instruction  
social customs  
social welfare  
World War 2

Is there a problem here? What do you think? (What’s wrong with sub-subheadings anyway? Alternatively what’s wrong with CHILDREN:PLAY see PLAY?—G.D.)

As a parting shot—would anybody care to defend the use of ‘passim’ in any circumstances at all?

Your suggestions and opinions please, as well as any further problems you would like considered, to: Geoffrey Dixon, BA, ALA, 93 Carcluie Crescent, Ayr, KA7 4SZ.

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