News of British Standards

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British Standards Institution has launched a new publication, Standards News, to give information about new and revised British, international and foreign standards. The first issue, April 1989 (8 pp, 30 cm) contained descriptions of 16 new publications and also some news items. The publication is free of charge and appears about every two months.

Together with the French (AFNOR) and German Federal Republic (DIN) national standardizing institutions, BSI has issued a compact disc of bibliographic information on standards—PERINORM—which amalgamates the three existing national databases. It records all current full and draft standards and specifications for all three countries, and also all European and international standards produced by ISO, IEC, CEN/CENELEC, plus technical rules and regulations that are applicable to France and the Federal Republic of Germany, adding up to a total of 87,000 records. PERINORM can be searched in any of the three original languages by names, dates and descriptors. It shows what standards exist and also their scope, origin and relationship with other standards. The PERINORM CD-ROM is produced monthly at a yearly subscription of £995.

The following standards in the field of documentation have recently been promulgated by BSI and are likely to be of interest to indexers. The prices shown are for subscribers and in brackets for non-subscribers.


Part 1 of BS 1000M came out in 1985. The long-awaited index is computer-generated, produced by permutation of terms. No self-respecting human indexer would have left so much to the interpretation of the user. The index fails to distinguish homonyms, fails to qualify terms, treats similar concepts inconsistently, uses synonyms, and has no cross-references. It produces such entries as

Administration 347.471.036
and supervisory services, naval 359.5
military 356
of justice 351.87
of treatment 616-082
Army
as a whole, the 355.311.1
corps 355.311.4

of occupation 355.355
Salvation 267.12
service generally 356
Drums
for 789.1
Laity
etc. 2-05
Origin .001.32
alkaloids of animal 547.947
or destination, documents of particular 087
Paris
plaster of –033.21
de ville (443.611)
Salvation 234
Army 267.12
general vocation to 234.9
Sleep 159.963.2, 591.542, 612.821.7, 613.79
Soft
alkaloids 669.018.26
or nut centres, etc., sweets with 664.144
Sweets 664.14
with soft or nut centres, etc. 664.144

One could go on producing oddities ad infinitum, but they may be discounted when set against the value of having the index available. What human indexer would now be willing to measure out his life in decimal points to produce it?

The index must, of course, be used with care. But, again, no sensible person would attempt to use the UDC or its index without preliminary study. The context of a main term is apparent from the first two or three figures of its decimal number; the status of an auxiliary number from its introductory symbol. Thus the user can turn to the relevant number in the schedules to verify the notation for Sleep under Psychology, Comparative Physiology, Human Physiology or Hygiene, or to the Auxiliary table of places in Modern Europe to check or modify the notation for Paris.

Arrangement of the index is word by word. It has been clearly printed, three columns to a page, by Butler and Tanner Ltd. Now that the index exists in computerized form, updating should be easy.
This edition of the second part of Table 1(e) replaces material published as part of BS 1000: Vol. I, Part 1, 1943, and supersedes BS 1000: Auxiliary table 1(e): Part 2: 1983, which is withdrawn. It incorporates amendments accepted up to August 1987. The index of place names is computer-generated, produced by permutation of terms, with a minimum of intervention. All the abbreviations of ‘Saint’ and its translations have been filed as found.

Recommendations for references to published materials. 22 pp, 30 cm. (BS 1629: 1989.) £15.30 (£30.60).

This publication has been a familiar friend since 1950. Now in its third edition, it has been expanded to include references to component parts of larger works and of serials and has also widened its scope to cover non-book materials such as maps, films and computer files. In consequence, existing standards BS 1629: 1976, BS 5195: Part 1: 1975 and Part 2: 1977 (for maps and charts) and BS 6098: 1981 (for published sound recordings), being superseded, are now withdrawn. An appendix shows 70 examples of all types of material in one alphabetical list of references. They illustrate optional and additional items of information and are not necessarily consistent in their choice of entry word. Appendix B lists recommended abbreviations.


This revision supersedes that of 1981 which has been withdrawn. It gives the text and tables of the international standard in English and French. Section 1 lists entities alphabetically under the short English form of their name, with the Alpha-2 code, Alpha-3 code, Numeric code, and remarks in adjacent columns. Names of countries, dependencies and other areas of geographical interest are intended to reflect current status. A note indicates where a name differs from that used in the previous issue. Section 2 gives the same items in alphabetical order of their names in French. Sections 3 and 4 are indexes to the Alpha-2 and Alpha-3 codes respectively. Section 5 is an index of the numeric codes. Annex A is a conversion table Alpha-2 to numeric codes. Annex B is a conversion matrix for the numerical representation of the Alpha-2 codes.


This edition supersedes the edition of 1965 which has been withdrawn. The standard consists of three tables. Table 1 is arranged in alphabetical order of the two-letter lower-case symbols assigned to each language, derived from the original name of the language, converted into Latin characters if the original is in non-Latin characters, e.g. English is en, Chinese is zh. The name in English, French and the original language is shown against the symbol. Table 2 rearranges the list according to the alphabetical sequence of the names in English. An Annex rearranges the table in families of languages according to the UDC. The two-letter symbol is recommended as a short code for indicating the original language of a document, the language to which a term or particular usage belongs, and so on.


This standard replaces PD 6483: 1978 which has been withdrawn. The foreword notes that names of persons and places, titles of books and technical terms (even from early periods) are normally given in a romanization of modern standard Chinese. The scope of this standard, however, like that of the draft it replaces, is restricted to presenting conversion tables of the two most widely used current transcription systems, Wade-Giles to Pinyin and Pinyin to Wade-Giles, with some preliminary notes on the use and the peculiarities of the two systems. At present it still seems undesirable to offer either system as the standard for the United Kingdom.

Recommendations for storage and exhibition of archival documents. 22 pp, 30 cm. (BS 5454: 1989.) £15.30 (£30.60).

The previous edition of 1977 is now withdrawn. Updating was necessary because of the increased variety in the forms now taken by archives, including photographic and electronic media, and because of changed methods of storage and protection that have been developed. The recommendations are addressed to all who are concerned with building and maintaining repositories and caring for and displaying archives. Appendices, with diagrams, offer guidance on the choice and use of items of equipment. Reference is made throughout to more detailed standards, some 30 of which are listed as being relevant.


The original edition of 1973 is now withdrawn. This edition gives less detailed instruction on procedure and more general guidance on choice of process to be used. The methods recommended are of proven safety in the hands of a trained conservator but a warning is given to observe adequate precautions in their use. Appendices include a bibliography and notes on particular problems and substances.

Part 2 of this standard, Archival binding, has been reconsidered and confirmed. (BS 4971: Part 2: 1980 (1988)). £4.40 (£8.80).

The terms are arranged by a two-digit serial number following the number for the part, e.g. 05.13, designating fog level. Some definitions have examples and/or illustrations. An alphabetical index of terms refers to the relevant serial numbers.


This part of BS 5261 supersedes BS 1219: 1958 and BS 1219M: 1961. The marks specified are, however, compatible with those specified in BS 5261: Part 2. Appendices show marked-up copy and corrected proofs and also a list of characters and symbols so similar in form that they may be confused.


This standard lists, names and describes the numeric tags used in identifying elements used in interloan transactions. An alphabetical index refers from named elements to the tags. Further explanations and examples of use are given.


A biblid is defined as 'a code composed of alphanumeric and special characters displayed in standardized eye-readable form on every contribution in serials and in books containing separate works by different authors. The word is itself used as a code identifier, as, for example, to designate an article in a serial:

BIBLID 0272-1716(1983)3:3p.68-70

That biblid shows the code designation, followed by the ISSN of the serial, year of publication, volume and part number of the serial, and pagination of the designated article.

Recommendations for preparing indexes to books, periodicals and other documents. (BS 3700: 1988) has already been noticed in this journal. (The Indexer 16 (1) 1988, 42-4 and 16 (3) 1989, 217.) It has been adopted as the basis for a forthcoming international standard.

Swift on indexing

In the course of his Letter of Advice to a Young Poet (a satirical essay first published in 1721) Jonathan Swift makes a tongue-in-cheek reference to indexes as a useful short cut to knowledge of the classical writers, which might otherwise cost the aspiring bard much laborious study. Unlike the work quoted by G. Norman Knight in his chapter on 'Humour in Indexing',* this essay appears to be a genuine work of Swift's and certainly demonstrates his capacity for sustained irony. The passage deserves quoting in extenso:

Possibly you may think it a very severe Task, to arrive at a competent Knowledge of so many of the Antients, as excel in their Way; and indeed it would be really so, but for the short and easy Method lately found out of Abstracts, Abridgments, Summaries, &c. which are admirable Expedients for being very learned with little or no Reading: and have the same Use with Burning-Glasses, to collect the diffus'd Rays of Wit and Learning in Authors, and make them point with Warmth and Quickness upon the Reader's Imagination. And to this is nearly related that other modern Device of consulting Indexes, which is to read Books Hebraically, and begin where others usually end; and this is a compendious Way of coming to an acquaintance with Authors: For authors are to be used like Lobsters, you must look for the best meat in the Tails, and lay the Bodies back again in the Dish. Your cunningest Thieves (and what else are Readers who only read to borrow, i.e. to steal) use to cut off the Portmanteau from behind, without staying to dive into the Pockets of the owner. Lastly, you are taught thus much in the very Elements of Philosophy, for one of the first rules in Logick is, Finis est primus in intentione.

The learned World is therefore most highly indebted to a late painful and judicious Editor of the Classicks, who has labour'd in that new Way with exceeding Felicity. Every Author, by his Management, sweats under himself, being over-loaded with his own Index, and carries, like a North-Country Pedlar, all his substance and Furniture upon his Back, and with as great Variety of Trifles. To him let all young Students make their Compliments for so much Time and Pains sav'd in the Pursuit of useful Knowledge; for whoever shortens a Road is a Benefactor to the Publick, and to every particular Person who has Occasion to travel that Way.

What Swift would have thought—and, perhaps even more, what he might have written—about our own Age of Instant Information scarcely bears considering.

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*Knight, G. Norman. Indexing, the art of. Allen & Unwin, 1979. 184, n.3.