Indexing and indexes


Indexing from A to Z is a collection of articles of varying length on the processes and problems of indexing, arranged in alphabetical order of the names of the topics. Within each article reference is made to any topic treated in more detail under its own heading.

The book is addressed to 'a broad range of audiences, from people with little or no experience of indexing to professional indexers' (p. xv). The author advises the novice indexer to begin with the section headed 'Indexing: the process and its techniques'. Proceeding through that article and following its references the novice will be guided through the general procedure of indexing a book, with more detailed assistance available under the more specific headings to which the text refers, such as Exhaustivity, Editing, Qualifiers, Personal names, Corporate names, Place names and Cross-references. Since novices may well be indexing their own or a local organization's collection of items, attention is drawn to the articles on Illustrations, Maps, Newspapers, Nonprint materials, and Periodicals. Professional indexers are more likely to seek up-to-date information on such topics as Abbreviations, Chronological order, Compound headings, Contracts, Costing, Equipment, Filing, Numerals, Punctuation and Revision of indexes, although they are also likely to find points of interest—even, possibly, of disagreement—anywhere in the book. Both novice and experienced indexer, being by definition wordsmiths, should be interested in Wellisch's essay on 'Index: the word, its history and meanings', and in his chapter on 'Standards', supported in the bibliography by entries for current American, British and International Standards publications.

Readers of this journal will already have had the opportunity of sampling Indexing from A to Z from which the article on Symbols was reprinted in our last issue (17(4) Oct. 1991, 239–41). That essay concludes the section under S, following Singular or plural?, Societies of indexers, Specificity, Spelling, Standards, and String indexing. The same pattern is followed throughout: definition and examples, practical advice (not forgetting visual aspects of the index), culled from published standards where available and from the author's own experience. Although Wellisch discusses alternative views, he usually ends with a firm directive one way or the other. 'Locators should be given in full to avoid ambiguities caused by the false economy of lopping off digits for hundreds or thousands', he says (p. 183). (He has been less than explicit in saying that BS 3700, 5.4.3.1 does not condone any abbreviation of locators indicating a sequence of pages'. In fact, the British Standard is at fault here, failing to give explicit guidance on how to state inclusive page numbers. It does, however, in accordance with most British style manuals, use abbreviated numbers in examples under 7.2.7.)

Relevant national and international standards are quoted verbatim, paraphrased, or elaborated, as the author deems appropriate. Standard sources are noted at the end of each article. I was surprised to find some very familiar words on pp. 176–7 not attributed to BS 3700—one of very few slips I noticed in this meticulously presented work.

Tables of useful information have been incorporated, such as the equivalence in words in 22 languages of the ampersand, proof correction marks, and the number of index lines per page in common page sizes. The bibliography is extensive and helpful.

The author's style is easy and informal, his carefully researched text enlivened with illustrations from history and personal serendipity. The index, needless to say, is exemplary—although I searched in vain for one entry:

women indexers: male chauvinist attitude towards 37–38.

Mary Piggott
formerly of School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University of London


The title of Lancaster’s latest work is misleading in two respects. First, as stated on page 5, the scope of the
book is restricted to subject indexing and to abstracting. Secondly, as stated on page 59, 'No attempt is made to present detailed instructions on the indexing of individual books. This topic is well covered elsewhere (e.g. Collison [1972]; Knight [1979]; and in ANSI Z39.4–1984).’ To these works we would now add Wellsisch and somebody should also inform Professor Lancaster that many people regard BS3700:1988 as superior to ANSI Z39.4.

Having disposed of the limitations, let it be said that Wilf Lancaster has, in the opinion of this reviewer, given us an outstanding book on indexing and abstracting principles. After a brief introduction on the information-retrieval problem, he takes us through the principles and practice of indexing. One difference between indexing a collection of documents for a library and indexing a book is brought out in the first sentence on page 19: ‘An indexer rarely has the luxury of being able to read a document carefully from cover to cover.’ A book indexer must, of course, read a book from cover to cover!

Later chapters deal with various forms of pre-coordinate index, consistency of indexing and quality of indexing, after which the author moves into abstracting with an examination of types of abstract and writing the abstract. On page 88 he refers to critical abstracts which, as he points out, are really condensed critical reviews. He could usefully have mentioned the Anbar series of abstracts on reviews. He could usefully have mentioned the Anbar series of abstracts on reviews. He could usefully have mentioned the Anbar series of abstracts on reviews. He could usefully have mentioned the Anbar series of abstracts on reviews.

K. G. B. BAKEWELL
Professor of Information and Library Management, Liverpool Polytechnic


Many deep-sky objects (clusters, galaxies, nebulae) have popular names—sometimes more than one—as well as perhaps two or three catalogue designations. For example, the Pleiades open cluster in the constellation of Taurus is also known as the Seven Sisters and was catalogued as M45 by the French astronomer, Messier, in the eighteenth century. So it is listed four times in the Deep-sky name index—under M45. Pleiades, Seven Sisters and Taurus. Also given, for use with star atlases, are the right ascension and declination, coordinates on the celestial sphere that fix exactly the object’s position in the sky. (The ‘2000.0’ of the book’s title refers to the start of the year 2000, and is the current standard epoch within which the coordinates are very accurate.)

The author, Hugh Maddocks, is an ASI member, amateur astronomer and technical indexer—and it shows. This simple-to-use, pocket-sized index is designed specifically for practical use—outside, in reduced lighting, with gloved hands. The spiral binding allows it to be opened flat, or folded back and held easily in one hand; pages are sturdy with very clear print (names of constellations in bold, coordinates in italic), there are helpful ‘cont.’ guidelines where needed, and running heads with the letter of the alphabet in large bold type.

The cross-referencing is thorough, and alternative names for an object are listed in brackets in every entry. You can’t fail to know where you are in this index. A brief introduction explains the layout, and includes the Greek alphabet (used for naming the stars in a constellation) and a list of constellation names in both their nominative and genitive form (in star nomenclature, for example, alpha Canis Majoris is the brightest star in the constellation of Canis Major, better known as Sirius, the Dog Star, and can be found under alpha, as well as under Sirius, Dog Star and Nile Star).

Deep-sky name index 2000.0 was published by the author and his wife (see Shoebox, International. The Indexer 17 (4) Oct. 1991, 274), ensuring that quality was maintained throughout. This is a fine index and will be a boon to all deep-sky observers.

JO RUDD
freelance indexer

Thesauri


The National Educational Resources Information Service or NERIS is the curriculum information service for schools, colleges and educational support services throughout the UK. The NERIS database is available online and on CD-ROM. The thesaurus has been designed to help with the preparation of searches of the NERIS database. It may also help with organizing local collections of teaching materials. It contains
nearly 3,000 index terms, and over 400 synonyms, reflecting the changes in terminology brought about by the introduction of the National Curriculum in England and Wales. The thesaurus is adaptable to future developments. Subscribing schools, with the necessary equipment, allow teachers to search the database and pursue enquiries, to discover curriculum resources to meet specific requirements and in a number of cases down-load the material. All the 40,000-plus entries are also on one CD-ROM disc.

Because different words are used to describe the same concepts, a controlled vocabulary is essential to ensure consistent indexing and retrieval. In some cases it will also be necessary to provide a definition of a word to show the context in which it has been used. Similarly, because people make different conceptual links between words it is helpful to provide relationships between words. A thesaurus is a good way of displaying links between large amounts of information, because it groups like with like, displays hierarchies and relationships and guides users to words that will retrieve relevant information or resources. The standard symbols are employed as recommended in British Standard BS 5723/1979 Guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri. Preferred terms used for indexing are in upper-case bold type. Synonymous terms—that not used for indexing—appear in a mixture of lower and upper-case bold type.

The NERIS compilers appreciate that trying to locate information or resources on an online database holding over 40,000 items of information can be like searching for a needle in a haystack, especially if users do not know exactly what they are looking for before beginning their search and the exact terms they may use. Using a thesaurus to plan a search can prevent this. The introduction goes to great pains to instruct users in first mastering the thesaurus before searching on the monitor. The thesaurus is intended primarily as a tool for preparing searches offline. Those wishing to use it to index their own resources are recommended to bear in mind its unequal coverage of subject areas. It may be necessary to develop it further to reflect the contents of a local resource collection. It warns that the guidelines for indexing given under the headings: examining the resource identification of concepts selection of significant concepts selection of indexing terms do not attempt to teach the untrained indexer how to index. It recommends BS6529:1984 Recommendations for examining documents, determining their subjects and selecting indexing terms.

This database has been developed over the last three years and has to be self-supporting.

ELIZABETH WALLIS
Chair, Society of Indexers

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Because the thirty papers gathered together in this book were prepared by acknowledged experts and read to an audience of wide and differing experience, they are highly informative, detailed and critical. Each day of the course was devoted to a particular theme: national and international organizations and the framing and promoting of standards; special materials and problems (serials, audiovisual materials, handling of different scripts); role of national bibliographic agencies: author-title cataloguing (AACR2. International Standard Bibliographic Descriptions, retrospective conversion, cataloguing co-operatives); regional issues (Middle East, South East Asia, Africa, Greece); subject control (thesaurus construction. Library of Congress Subject Headings. DDC. UDC); automation (creation and retrieval of records); automation (transmission of records).

It is useful to have an authoritative account of the genesis and purpose of the different existing standards and of their use, adaptation or rejection in various regions. A serious warning, however, recurs regarding what Alan Gilchrist calls 'the standards jungle'. Dorothy Anderson (former Director of IFLA International Office for UBC) begins her talk by saying 'Since the 1980s with the revolution in information technology, bibliographic uncertainties have changed and multiplied', and Stephen Massil (of the University of London) refers to 'the stultifying effect of the lack of capacity for bibliographic control of non-roman materials in the UK'.

In the final paper, Michael Hill (President of FID), noting that 'the whole world of information, not just that of libraries, is crying out for standardization to reduce the chaos to manageable levels', asks, 'Is there any real hope that it will happen?' He sees some signs of hope in the advantages already visible where common standards have been adopted over certain areas, both geographical and topical, and urges his audience to adapt standards to their own needs, in concert with others, rather than to create merely local systems.

The book lacks an index—a grave disadvantage in use since its 200 pages are packed with detailed information—the camera-ready copy having been prepared (by the Director of the School himself) with the minimum of editing in order to make its contents immediately available.

MARY PIGGOTT
formerly of School of Library, Archive and Information Studies. University of London

The Indexer Vol. 18 No. 1 April 1992

In the eight years that have elapsed since publication of the second edition of Hunter and Bakewell’s Cataloguing much has changed, and the authors’ aim to provide ‘an introductory overview of the current cataloguing scene’ has necessitated much revision and expansion.

Revised standards, particularly the 1988 revision of Anglo-American cataloguing rules and continuing work on the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) have been noted, but the greatest changes have been those dependent upon advances in computer technology. Several well-illustrated chapters are devoted to the use of computers, both in preparing entries and in searching. The advent and various uses of the CD-ROM are recorded. The online public access catalogue (OPAC), ‘an innovation that overshadows all other events in the history of cataloguing during the past decade’ (p. 151), is described in detail, with illustrations of searches being made in particular libraries.

Networks have increased in number and in range of services offered and so also have computer packages. Cooperation, not only through membership of networks, but also between networks, shared cataloguing between copyright libraries, and attempts to produce a single record that can be used throughout the book world—publishers, booksellers, and librarians—have all been described in their present stage of development. Recent changes in the national bibliography are also noted. The final chapter—on book indexing—now includes a reference to MACREX.

The book’s own index follows the rules and is clear and useful.

In short, the book is a practical, clearly written, up-to-date compendium for which all students of cataloguing should be grateful.

MARY PIGGOTT
formerly of School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University of London

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BOOK REVIEWS

Dictionaries


‘Encyclopaedia’ would more appropriately describe this volume than does ‘dictionary’. A wealth of information is contained within over eight hundred articles ranging in length from the concise definition of lingua franca in under a hundred words to a two-page essay on AID (development assistance).

Topics include international organizations, projects, economic systems, personalities, diseases, minerals, crops, and concepts relating to the interaction of sustainable development with the global environment. To the non-specialist the items might appear to have been selected somewhat arbitrarily, notwithstanding their undoubtedly relevant to the processes of development. This is probably inevitable in a single volume making no pretension to comprehensiveness.

Unfortunately, its usefulness as a working reference tool is impaired by difficulty in accessing information. The entries are all in alphabetical order, but insufficient attention has been paid to choice of headwords, and cross-references from possible alternatives are exceptional. For example, if one wishes to investigate ‘waste’ one finds that there is no entry under waste. This might usefully have consisted of a brief catalogue of the various categories together with see also references to DEEP WELL WASTE DISPOSAL, HAZARDOUS WASTE, NUCLEAR WASTE, RADIOACTIVE WASTE, RECYCLING and REPROCESSING under which the user will find a great deal of interest.

The cross-referencing system leaves much to be desired. No reference is made in the article on forests to any of the related topics under DEFORESTATION, RAINFOREST, REFORESTATION, SOCIAL FORESTRY, TROPICAL FOREST ACTION PLAN and TROPICAL TIMBER TRADE, although these entries all acknowledge an entry under FORESTS. Similarly the descriptions of ENERGY and RENEWABLE ENERGY make no reference to SOLAR POWER, WAVE POWER and WIND POWER. A tendency to refer to the specific rather than conversely aggravates an inadequacy of cross-referencing.

In view of the restricted number of alphabetized headwords user-friendliness could have been enhanced by including a prefatory list of headwords, a good end-of-book index, or, ideally, both. The style of the work gives the impression that it has been written to be read at length rather than designed for frequent brief consultations. It provokes thought and clarifies many aspects of environment and development, but its value as a tool for a busy indexer is undoubtedly limited.

J. STEWART BUCHANAN
aquaculturist


Richmal Crompton created the eternally pre-adolescent anti-hero William Brown and his friends Ginger, Douglas and Henry, his brother and sister Robert and Ethel, his dog Jumble and the memorable lisping Violet Elizabeth Bott (‘I’ll thream and threem till I’m thick’). What could be more parochially English? Would anyone connected with the publishing of the books have imagined in the twenties that such an analysis would be undertaken in the nineties? Mary Cadogan, who has also written a biography of Richmal...
tribute to commemorate the centenary of her birth.

As a gently satirical commentary on English society, William’s stereotype middle-class family continues to convince and amuse readers. The books and short stories gathered in 38 volumes spanning over 50 years from 1919 to 1970 were first published by Newnes and reprinted by Macmillan. William did not live only between the covers of books and magazines. Two films were produced, in 1939 and 1948, a radio version in 1945 and television series in 1962 and 1977–8.

Few children’s books can have been subjected to such analytical examination as in this A–Z. William’s characteristics and attitudes, organizations and the institutions he has connections with as well as the wide range of characters are listed and dissected.

References within the A–Z format are to chapters, not page numbers, and are taken directly from the original source material, so whatever edition is possessed, entries can be traced.

The illustrations by Thomas Henry produced over a period of 40 years play a not inconsiderable part in conveying William’s everlasting appeal.

It is one of the fascinating quirks of publishing that books conceived as not very serious reading for children can have such a lasting appeal for all ages. Richmal Crompton’s books have survived long after many more serious and certainly more pretentious literary efforts have disappeared. This tribute is bursting with industry and I for one am extremely grateful to Mary Cadogan for producing such a fun book.

Elizabeth Wallis
Chair, Society of Indexers

Computers and information technology


Dorner’s report shows that authors want to benefit from the labour-saving potential of electronic manuscripts; they want to see a universally acceptable standard system adopted; and they are putting publishers under pressure to move in this direction. The report offers a series of concrete recommendations, including a suggested annual Publishers’ Association/Society of Authors prize for the best book produced from disk.

The copyright aspects of electronic manuscripts are still in many respects unclear. In addition to the chapter on legal issues in the present report, Dorner addressed copyright issues in her article ‘Submitting text on disk—disk envelopes’ (The Author, 102 (2) Summer 1991, 58–9). As a move towards fuller protection of authors’ copyright in electronic manuscripts, she suggests authors should use a sealed ‘disk envelope’ similar to that used by software producers. The envelope would have a ‘Conditions of Use’ statement printed on the outside, and opening it would imply agreement with these conditions on the part of the publisher.

The relationship between editors and authors is also problematic with electronic manuscripts. One author consulted felt that editing on computers gave copy-editors ‘feelings of superiority and arrogance’; another, who had also worked as an editor, felt that wordprocessors made authors careless, illogical, and repetitive in their writing. Since these are the ways authors and editors have always felt towards each other, however, it is not clear that the new technology is to blame.

What is largely absent from the author-editor relationship when electronic manuscripts are used is a widely accepted means of showing the author the changes the copy-editor has made to a text. File comparison programs are available that can do this (one of these, DocuComp, was favourably reviewed in European Science Editing, 42 Jan. 1991, 4–5). Dorner mentions that a facility of this sort is available with the XyWrite wordprocessing program, which forms part of the Text Management System.
System used by Lippincott and HarperCollins. She also mentions a general copy-editing program under development at Edinburgh University’s Department of Cognitive Science.

An unintentional effect of the report is to underline authors’ continuing need for copy-editors and proofreaders. As it is only a technical report, high editorial standards are not to be expected; but a copy-editor would surely have caught ‘The arguments for and against using disks is discussed’ (p. 24), ‘writers and publishers associations’ (without apostrophes, p. 28), ‘ellisions’ (p. 51), and other errors.

An appendix to the report surveys “writing support tools”, such as spelling checkers, thesauri, and style checkers. Dorner warns against some of the traps these involve; even the latest version of Word features a spelling checker that will tell you that ‘agiprop’ is an error for ‘gaiter’, or ‘Brechian’ an error for ‘precaution’. Moreover, some of the authors consulted by Dorner reported fatal disk errors when using spelling checkers. In another article, Dorner listed some of the inanities that style checkers are capable of producing—one program told Jane Austen, for example, to ‘use more positive wording and fewer weak phrases’ (‘A Chequered Style,’ The Author, 101 (1) Spring 1990, 26–7).

While much of this report’s information may be out of date within one or two years, it is nevertheless a valuable reference source on current attitudes to the technological changes taking place in publishing.

MICHAEL ROBERTSON
freelance copy-editor, translator, and indexer


Indexers seeking opportunities in the information market of the next ten years need to consider the topics covered in these two reports. They provide an analysis of the information industry (its current products, technology, and distribution) and a survey of the information policies, developments and activities of five geographical regions. Subjects reported include new information media and expected technical developments, the current information environment, and the problems and needs of the regions. Particular attention is focused on the US and Canada.

Neither report, alas, contains an index. They could otherwise be good reference sources: both contain some useful definitions and descriptions (e.g. ‘jukeboxes’* and ‘GIILS’†).

Report no. 2 is concerned with information as a product and a service, and its distribution. It is principally addressed to information providers (such as database publishers), exhorting them to take a proactive role, by generating and marketing new products and services rather than merely reacting to events. As all good indexers know, an information product should be designed to meet the users’ needs. This entails making appropriate choices of content, medium and distribution channel.

The media in current use are categorized as: traditional (paper and microform), popular electronic (magnetic tape, CD-ROM, diskettes) and esoteric (facsimile, electronic mail, optical cards); output formats include text, audiotext and videotext/ISDN‡. Multimedia systems can already integrate a number of media materials, but are described as ‘unstructured and confusing’; indexers should surely be coming to the rescue. Distribution options include selling through online vendors, leasing directly to institutions (e.g. universities, companies) and to individual end-users. Search software and accessibility are important in product development; large full-text databases are valuable, but users must be enabled to search and retrieve with ease (indexers can offer advice and practical indexing in this area).

Networks of authors, publishers, network suppliers, system administrators, users (and, no doubt, indexers) will need to provide guidelines and standards for eventual integrated systems. The nature of electronic publishing raises legal questions concerning copyright and licensing. It also requires decisions on pricing and marketing, as well as customer support in the form of documentation and training (indexers can be involved here, too).

This high technical level of information provision (and therefore of indexing) is not sustained throughout the world. The unevenness is highlighted in Report no. 4, which describes the features of the information policies of five ‘prominent’ regions: the USA (46 pages), Canada (23 pages), Europe (25 pages), the Asia Pacific Region (39 pages) and the Less-developed Countries (23 pages). Information policies can influence the numbers, types and forms of publications issued (and thus the need for indexes), as well as the application of technology. Matters of particular concern which are surveyed for each region include: copyright, standards, licensing, telecommunications, government policies, regional politics and the role of the private sector. For some of the regions (e.g. USA) it is possible to identify a policy which is national. For others, there is a conglomeration of policies, with varying levels of government interest, support and control. In those areas which are economically poor, or in a state of unrest, information policy has a low
priority. Less-developed countries also have external pressures arising from their unequal relationships with the richer countries (who own most of the technology and the intellectual property rights).

It is important to establish good standards and a high degree of indexing competence, irrespective of the level of technology locally available. Wherever information is produced, in whatever medium, and however it is distributed, the intellectual input of aware, up-to-date, competent indexers will be needed. The better informed they are, the more likely they are to be required, not only for index preparation, but for advice, training, and consultancy.

**PAT F. BOOTH**
information consultant and indexer


This book consists of eight essays which consider the relationship between 'information', 'knowledge' and 'communication' and purport to examine the information chain from author/creator to user.

The first contribution is a typically theoretical study of classification by Derek Langridge. This is followed by an examination by Michael Reed of the publishers prefer to call him) on the ever-changing nature of what we know.

All the papers make interesting reading, but I deliberately wrote in my first paragraph that they purport to examine the information chain from author/creator to user. Nowhere is there any consideration of the value of the index in making information available. Meadows considers such authors as Piaget and Darwin but does not mention the importance of indexes in providing access to the contents of their writings. Feather points out that the publisher, large or small, is a key figure in the world of knowledge but gives no attention to the role of the index in the publishing chain. Line and Brittain ignore the fact that good indexes can be very helpful to librarians and information scientists. Lewins gives some attention to the importance of information skills to school pupils and refers to the work of Michael Marland but does not give the attention which he would give to indexes.

The index to the book contains two entries under 'indexing':

- indexing
- subject 357 [although there are only 164 pages in the book!]
- systems 16

There are also references under subject indexing to pages 81 and 82, which further indicates the eccentricities of the index. As well as inaccurate and missing page references, there are some strange entries such as 'marketing and distribution of information scientists'; and the use of 'n' and 'nn' to indicate notes and references should be explained in an introductory note.

**K. G. B. BAKEWELL**
Professor of Information and Library Management, Liverpool Polytechnic

**Libraries and expert systems.** Proceedings of a conference and workshop held at Charles Sturt University, Riverina, Australia, July 1990. Edited by Craig McDonald and John Weckert.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

Information workers, including librarians, may either see expert systems as another media form in which they may have a role to play—perhaps as gatekeepers to knowledge stored in books and journals—or as a means of encapsulating their own expertise. The latter would aim to improve access to 'their own products', such as online retrieval systems and catalogues. It is tempting to consider that the former is the more important role, but unless success can be achieved with the latter there is little evidence to support the hypothesis that information workers have a role to play.

About half of the contributors are educators of librarians. The bulk of the remainder are practising librarians, and the rest appear to have been experts in the design and implementation of expert systems. The educators were transparent in their wish not to be left behind in what they appeared to regard as a threat to their skills.

The proceedings are characterized by a shortage of descriptions of actual working systems. Instead there are descriptions of model systems, of advanced libraries, of electronic mail in libraries, and of the social impact of expert systems. Nevertheless, some of
the model systems, such as the guides to reference books and to book selection, appear potentially useful.

There is also a highly interesting description of an automatic indexing system, which might be regarded as a one-person encapsulation of indexing expertise. Perhaps this is the way that expert systems should progress: by individual experts producing their own programs. If this is to happen there is a major challenge to the designers of software. It is doubtful whether any of the existing expert systems shells, let alone the use of PROLOG or LISP as advocated by some of the contributors, are adequate for this task, as such shells require the employment of skilled knowledge engineers. Indeed, one of the strange failings of expert systems software is that there does not appear to be a system which explains the use of such software!

It is difficult to single out individual contributions as there is a total of nearly twenty. Nevertheless, Julie Dow’s paper on expert system shells has been placed far too near the end of the work, where it is liable to be overlooked. As it forms a clear introduction it should have been placed near the beginning. Some of the papers contain horrid English; the ‘literally unbelievable developments in technology’, for instance. The introduction is helpful: the papers are well printed in a standard format; but an index would have been useful, especially as it is difficult to detect a firm overall structure.

Kevin Jones
Malaysian Rubber Producers’ Research Association

Text retrieval: information first.

The proceedings are a model of how machine-readable texts can be converted into a coherent whole by the addition of a short introduction and a brief concluding paper. Unfortunately, the latter also shows that two of the contributions were not submitted, one of which was on hypertext: all hype nae text.

The contributions vary greatly in character. Roger Goacher’s description of how the National Audit Office selected its text-retrieval software has a Biblical character in that details of the requirements were sent to 150 companies, which led to only 13 tenders of which only two met all the criteria established. Goacher’s paper should be significant both to suppliers and to large organizations considering an integrated strategy. Wendy Warr of ICI Pharmaceuticals presents a similar strategic study, but her contribution suffers from being too obviously an abridgment of another paper (it is a pity that this exercise in textual anorexia opens the book).

David Cobham of W. R. Grace shows how the CAIRS package has been used to cope with the burgeoning amount of electronic text in a small subsidiary operation within a large corporation.

Contributions from academics include an excellent and realistic assessment of hypertext by Professor Peter Brown from the University of Kent which does not shrink from mentioning the large human effort required to implement such systems. There is a thorough (and readable) account of spelling checkers by Maggie Cooper of City University, which is possibly the most interesting contribution for indexers.

Other papers include an overview of the large amount of research into text handling which is being sponsored by the Digital Equipment Corporation, and interesting case studies of text retrieval in large corporations, including the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology and Schering Agrochemicals. This last contribution approaches the National Audit Office’s assessment in terms of thoroughness. Jennifer Rowley’s comparison of thesauri appears somewhat lost in this environment.

Kevin Jones
Malaysian Rubber Producers’ Research Association

Tools for knowledge organization and the human interface.
Proceedings 1st International ISKO Conference, Darmstadt, 14–17 August 1990 organized by the International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKOS), edited by Robert Fugmann. Frankfurt/M: Indeks Verlag, 1990. 2 vols. 24 cm. Indexes. ISBN 3-88672-020-9 (vol. 1); ISBN 3-88672-021-7 (vol. 2); ISSN 0938-5495 (cased): DM 56.00 each, DM 106.00 together (DM 79.50 to ISKO members). (Advances in knowledge organization, vols 1, 2.)

The International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKOK) was founded in 1989 ‘to promote research, development and application of all methods for the organization of knowledge in general, and in specific fields, by integrating especially the conceptual approaches of classification research and artificial intelligence’. The development of ISKO has been closely associated with Drs Ingetraut Dahlberg and Robert Fugmann. The latter is one of the sixty contributors, surprisingly the former is not.

The structure of the volumes is unusual. The first volume was available before the conference and contains abstracts of all papers plus those papers which were ready prior to the event. The second contains the remaining papers.

The workshops covered: algorithmic text analysis, terminology, knowledge organization by universal systems, ditto in special systems, thesaurus ‘issues’ (reviewers’ quotes), online retrieval, hypermedia, retrieval from universal systems, retrieval technologies and indexing. Like most such ventures, the characterization is only moderately successful and many papers could have been accommodated in several slots, but delegates have to be fed, which implies four papers per workshop. Most of the papers are in English, but some are in German.
with English abstracts. Some are difficult to understand where English is the author’s second language. There was excellent international representation, although some bias towards German contributions.

The nine plenary papers are virtually indistinguishable from the other contributions. Certainly, the most seminal contributions (both from Eric de Grolier, one of which acts as a summary to the whole conference) were not accorded the plenary accolade. On the other hand, Masanobu Fujikawa’s plenary contribution to concept theory is both challenging and fundamental. Alan Gilchrist’s paper, which attempts to place knowledge organization within its wider economic framework, is realistically pessimistic about progress.

Inevitably some of the papers are disappointing. There is an excessive amount on Ranganathan: although Brian Vickery was a speaker, none of Ranganathan’s acolytes appear to have noted Vickery’s strictures on the five primary categories. One paper noted the unsuitability of the UDC for handling Indian thought—a scarcely surprising omission: far more serious is the failure of UDC to present a clear, modern structure for polymers—a now mature area for study.

The indexes which accompany the proceedings are limited to a name and ‘basic’ subject indexes. A highly comprehensive index is to be published separately, but a sample is included. It is debatable whether some of Fugmann’s innovations will be welcomed: for instance an index heading in the form

HistorY
implies that further information may be found under other headings.

ISKO is an interesting idea, and Dahlberg and Fugmann should be congratulated for establishing such a venture. Nevertheless, one fears that unless a sponsor can be found to fund the attendance of key speakers progress will be restricted.

Even after thirty years, the Proceedings of the International Conference on Scientific Information demonstrate what can be achieved with adequate funding. If ISKO is to prosper then funding must be found.

KEVIN JONES
Malaysian Rubber Producers’ Research Association

Reference

Editing, publishing, writing

Basic editing: a practical course.

The excellence and clarity of these volumes must be welcomed by all indexers, because they can only lead to the raising of editors’ skills. It will follow that skilled editors must become more sympathetic to the work of indexers and what an index is trying to achieve. The intention of this course is to offer structured practice for all the elements of competence identified in Units 1–4 of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) requirements for a copy-editor. My experience in helping the Society of Indexers produce its own open learning units for training in indexing heightens my awareness of the skills employed by Nicola Harris in producing this excellent course.

Basic editing is an apt title, as its intention is just that—an introduction to the art and skill of editing across a varied range of subject matter, related to general, educational and academic publishing of both books and journals. Each exercise addresses a specific skill (while also giving practice in skills already learned), step by step, building up confidence. The aim (as the author puts it) is to impart sound techniques, instil sensible habits, tune your antennae to editorial concerns, and so lay the basis for further practical experience that will make you a first-class editor. The course may be taken in class or by self-tuition.

The thirty-two units cover all the expected areas of knowledge that a competent copy-editor should have, including eight pages devoted to editing the index. A note of caution is wisely sounded at the beginning of this unit, stating that there is no attempt to teach how to compile an index: although it is sometimes tackled by the editor, indexing is a quite separate skill. With this tactful and modest disclaimer in mind, the unit looks at techniques for checking and marking up an index compiled either by a professional indexer or by the author.

The first matter dealt with is layout—set-out or run-on style, the reasons for choosing one or the other and their capitalization and punctuation. The editor is warned to check the index against the proofs, as indexers have often to work from an uncorrected set of page proofs, and further warned that inconsistencies within the index with regard to capitalization and spelling may result from lurking inconsistency within the book.

In looking for accuracy and consistency on all levels, the copy-editor is warned to take care not to blur intentional and useful distinctions. Because it is not easy to grasp the shape of a normal-sized index, it is advised to tackle the task in the following stages: read through, correcting spelling, ensuring consistency of punctuation, elision of numbers; double-check the order and elision of page numbers within each entry or sub-entry; check the alphabetical order of main entries; ‘read back’ and check the order of sub-entries as necessary; ensure that the index is logically organized, that headwords are sensible and do not overlap. Clarify or adjust where necessary. If changing...
wording remember to recheck the alphabetical order; finally, check the cross-references for accuracy of wording and general usefulness. This has to be the last job because entries may have been reworded.

This brief summary of but one of the 32 units in the book will give some idea of the thoroughness and common sense with which Nicola Harris has constructed this excellent course. I recommend it to all indexers.

ELIZABETH WALLIS
Registrar, the Society of Indexers

LOGOS: the Professional Journal for the Book World. Editor Gordon Graham. London: Whurr Publishers Ltd. Published quarterly. ISSN 0957-9656. Annual subscription £30.00 ($50.00) (individual and corporate rate); £45.00 ($75.00) (institutional rate). First issue published 1990.

Logos is published quarterly by Colin Whurr (who lists himself in the Frankfurt Book Fair catalogue as a publisher ‘in communication disorders and other areas of medicine’), and edited by Gordon Graham in collaboration with an International Advisory Board consisting of executive publishers and booksellers and directors of national libraries. The journal states its aims as being to reflect ‘admiration for the quality of speeches and articles written by people in the book and journal world.’ and, more ambitiously, to affirm and defend the ‘constructive role of the book in society’ (1 (1) 1990, 4–5). Expensively produced in a two-column A4 format, it largely features autobiographical and commercial reminiscences of executive publishers and booksellers and directors of national libraries.

Of 47 article authors published in the journal’s first five issues, 21 are members of its 45-member International Advisory Board, which thus seems to be at least as participatory as it is advisory. Of the 45 members of the Advisory Board, only two are women; of the 46 articles published, only one is by a woman. The interested reader can share the experiences of these executives in the course of their global careers. Some interesting material on publishing in Africa, South America and India appears alongside more familiar stories of publishing, bookselling, and library life in Britain, continental Europe, the USA, and Australia. The article on ‘The author/editor interview: a publisher’s notebook’ (1 (4) 1990, 30–3), by Per Saugman of Blackwell Scientific, provides useful guidelines for acquisitions editors on how best to manipulate authors.

The content of the reminiscences presented resembles the interview and autobiographical material published in The Author and The Bookseller, but there is (in the first five issues, at least) a lack of any accompanying news, reviews, or wider context to accompany this material.

MICHAEL ROBERTSON
freelance copy-editor, translator, and indexer


‘The essential guide for all those involved in the business of writing.’ How far can this claim be justified for The writer’s handbook, now in its fifth year? It does indeed contain more information than ever before: there are expanded sections on small presses, literature festivals, film, TV and video companies, and a new guide to European publishers; also lists of literary agents, grants, library facilities, picture libraries, prizes and scholarships, professional associations and societies (including the Society of Indexers)—all containing up-to-date names, addresses and telephone numbers, with background information and names of contacts or key personnel in most cases.

The book is clearly divided into sections with introductory articles that are well-informed about latest developments, and often amusingly written. Advice is given on tax and Public Lending Right, how best to present your work, and the type of material currently being sought; there is also a guide to fees and royalties.

There are two substantial indexes: a companies index of 34 pages, which is really a name index; and a subject index of 72 pages, with alphabetical lists under subjects plus subheadings. The arrangement of the second could benefit from some explanation at the beginning.

But what about indexing itself? Admittedly the greater proportion of published works—fiction, articles in magazines, etc.—do not require an index: but surely a work claiming to be ‘the essential guide for all my italics] those involved in the business of writing’ should include some advice on when an index is desirable or necessary, on who should compile an index, how much it is likely to cost, how much time needs to be allowed, and how to go about doing one or getting one done. Hopefully, the next edition of The writer’s handbook will include such material.

JOYCE LINE
freelance indexer


Do we have a better command of the complexities of the English language than we realize? Have we, as Monsieur Jourdain claims, been speaking prose all our lives? The author of English our English thinks we have and by using this ingrained knowledge we can develop a facility for writing in clear, expressive English. Good English should sing. Bad writing sounds flat. Waterhouse demonstrates how to tune a flat sentence and, by listening to what one is writing, to spot grammatical errors even if one knows hardly any grammar.

Grammar is not, however, neglected and the functions of sentences, verbs, nouns and adjectives are briefly and clearly explained. Punctuation is
also dealt with painlessly and amusingly. The description of the uses of
the semicolon is the clearest I have seen.

The heart of the book is the last seventy pages which show us how to
use our ears to monitor what is going down on paper and to infuse it with
life, rhythm, harmony and style. Numerous examples are given. There are
also useful chapters on getting organized for writing and ‘seven
deadly sins’ to avoid. Needless to say this nicely produced little book is
beautifully written and can be read for pleasure as well as instruction. An
index would have made it perfect.

Tom Norton
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

A concise dictionary of slang and unconventional English (see 17(3)

A dictionary of names and nick-
names. Laurence Urdang. Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1991. viii,
326 pp. 20 cm. Index. ISBN 0-19-
282857-6 (pbk): £5.99. (A revised
dition of Names and nicknames of
places and things. G. K. Hall.
1987.)

Directory of Booksellers Association
411 pp. 24 cm. Indexes. ISBN 0-
907972-41-1: ISSN 0068-1666
(pbks).

Indexing biographies and other sto-
ries of human lives. Hazel K. Bell.
Society of Indexers Occasional
Papers on Indexing No. 1. London:
£5.00 ($12.00). (To be reviewed
later.)

Information policies: a sourcebook.
Ian Rowlands and Sandra Vogel.
London and Los Angeles, CA: Taylor
Graham. Published three times a year, ISSN 0961-2882.
Annual subscription £49.00
($95.00). First issue published

What is all this NVQ business? The
system simply explained. London:
27 pp. 30 cm. Answers 12 headline
questions on an initiative which
affects every publishing company.

Who was who: a cumulated index
ISBN 0-7136-3336-0 (cased): £50.00. (To
be reviewed later.)

The complete guide to working
from home. Sue Read. London:
ix, 306 pp. 22 cm. (cased); 20 cm.
Offers plentiful guidance, with
copious lists of relevant organiza-
tions, addresses and publications,
on all the problems that beset those
working from home: employment
status; conduct of one’s own busi-
ness; tax, insurance and pensions;
contracts and delays in payment;
concomitantly running a home;
families and domestic crises; inter-
ruptions; isolation.

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