However, the Minimum Terms Agreement (MTA) negotiated by the writers' unions after ten years of campaigning provides for the author, who handles his own affairs, to share the cost of indexing equally with the publisher.

This comprehensive directory lists UK publishers, giving the date of their foundation, the type of works published and the number of titles published annually, annual turnover and the name of the managing director. It also lists small presses, packagers, agents, newspapers, magazines, news agencies, radio, TV, theatre and film, and European and US publishers.

An interesting chapter unfortunately called 'Mellor, can you spare a dime?' dealing with Public Lending Right (PLR) and written during David Mellor's brief tenure as Minister for the Arts provides some telling facts about PLR. In operation for nine years, it now pays 1.81 pence per loan. The maximum an author can earn from PLR is £6,000 per annum, a figure reached by 81 authors in 1990-91. Of the remaining 16,783 authors, 11,653 earned less than £1,000 and 3,339 authors received nothing at all. However, the sampling base of PLR is limited to 30 libraries. If more were spent on administration, less would be made in payments to authors. The plea to David Mellor was to provide more money, in order to extend the sampling base and increase the payment per loan. There are many more fascinating nuggets of information to be gleaned—nine pages of advice on tax for the author, 31 pages of literary prizes, 17 pages of professional associations and societies in which the Society of Indexers' entry is admirably accurate and up-to-date. I commend this 760-page book, with its 124 pages of companies and subject indexes, as a valuable source of instruction and information—it is certainly not overpriced.

Elizabeth Wallis
Registrar, the Society of Indexers

The four papers delivered at this seminar include 'The role of the English-language editor internationally' by Michael Robertson, a freelance copy-editor and translator based in Augsburg. He describes the work of the copy-editor, 'often the only person who reads the whole manuscript through in detail before it is typeset', and the special skills and tasks they need for working on the Continent, where 'there is an increasing role for English-language editors, editing books published in English by foreign publishers . . . Most of them are written by non-native English speakers, and the English-language editor's central task is to smooth out the rough edges.' Indexes as selling points for books are considered in the final discussion report.

H. K. Bell

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**Publications received and publications noted**


**CD-ROM directory.** 7th edn. TFPL, 1992. Book version £75.00, disc (two editions annually) £132.00.

Contains 2,600 company profiles, 2,200 CD-ROM titles, multimedia CD titles, hardware, software and topical information on books and journals, conferences and exhibitions worldwide.


Supports use of correct English to convey precise meaning of language. Although the publishers' services include indexing, this book, which would have profited from an index, does not have one.

**Literary theory and criticism:** an anthology, with introduction, notes, comments, bibliography, conclusion and indexes. Compiled by Joseph Magoon. Bournemouth: J. Magoon, 1992. vii, 99 pp. 30 cm. Bibliog., indexes. ISBN 0-9512587-1-0 (pbk): £12.00 (£10.00 for shops, libraries and societies). (Available from J. Magoon, Flat 30, Erinbank Mansions, Manor Road, Bournemouth BH1 3HX.) A privately produced typescript book of extracts by SI member on literary theory from Chaucer's time to the
present day. It includes several items from *The Indexer*. Rather spoilt by poor production.


**SOFTWARE REVIEW**

INDEXER. Produced by American Medical Association; obtainable from National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland, USA.$3500 (excluding MeSH file).

The product provided by the American Medical Association has been difficult to assess for several reasons: it is closely linked to the preparation of that specific association’s journals (although it could be used for other text); it is linked to the actual machine-readable manuscripts, and is built around the exploitation of MeSH subject-headings (although another thesaurus could be used). Furthermore, the demonstration came with one (completed) file for one specific journal: *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA).

The screen layout is good, and most of the commands are entered via the function keys—the purpose for which is displayed at the top and bottom of the screen. Other commands are submitted via the cursor and the enter key. The colour on the main display is an acceptable blue: on other displays red has been excessively used as a background. Help is readily available either in response to doing the wrong thing or via the first function key (the industry norm).

The system requires a fair amount of space, at least 530k of memory, and is the most demanding in terms of configuration that I have encountered (my experience stretches to expert systems). Twenty-nine files need to be accessed concurrently. The system comes up quickly on a 486 machine, but sorting the subject index is annoyingly slow. One suspects that operation on a 286 machine would be painful and 20 mByte of hard disk would be only marginally adequate for the complete system with 4 mByte of MeSH subject headings.

The provision of a controlled vocabulary might be expected to enhance indexer performance, but there is no academic work to support this hypothesis: in fact the contrary is true. The sample material included with the demonstration disk is not well indexed. For instance, an article about health costs in Canada was indexed neither under Canada nor costs. The headings themselves may provide confusion. There is an entry, ‘AIDS see Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome’: this is followed by ‘AIDS, Serodiagnosis’. There is no automatic provision to inhibit the indexer selecting the incorrect term: an article about mumps could still be indexed under measles. The subject headings are frequently cumbersome: for instance, indexing is subsumed under abstracting. Nevertheless, it is possible for the indexer to add new indexing phrases.

The software also enables author-indexes to be created and provides set index entries for certain categories of material such as reviews and debates. Unfortunately, secondary authors are always cross-referred back to the first-named author, thus making reference to authors at the end of the alphabet difficult. Another difficulty is that the software is a database product and this lends to obscure the encapsulated indexing element.

There is no evidence to suggest that the software is not useful within the framework of the American Medical Association, although it is possible to query the extent to which the tool enhances indexer performance (as distinct from productivity within that specific framework). The software is moderately simple to use, and I could get into (and, more importantly, out of) the system without a detailed examination of the accompanying text. Sometimes such indolence is rewarded by having to switch off the machine and hoping that one has escaped from the jaws of the system.

The most negative factor is the price: $3500, not including the MeSH file. Which organizations would be prepared to make such a large financial outlay? They would have to be big, and would probably have to possess a list of subject headings. Presumably, the ideal purchasers would be other medical organizations.

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