

EDITORIAL

web indexing starts to mature

In the second year of the AusSI Web indexing prize, entries became more sophisticated (for this year's entries <http://www.zeta.org.au/~aussi/web97winners.html>). Many more were using Web databases to store indexes and relevant information.

The winner for 1997 was Christabel Wescombe, Librarian, Faculty of Education, University of Sydney for her *Internet guide for education*. Christabel's was a hand-crafted, annotated bibliography of world-wide education sites — very handy for an undergraduate student or college professor researching the subject.

The complexity of this area is evolving. Many more people are indexing their own databases of information and displaying them on the Web. Genealogical indexers are displaying databases of surnames; crime journalists are displaying FBI exceptional case file numbers. Information retrieval is going beyond just pointing the reader to a page. On the Web the indexer can give abstracts and synopses. Web indexes have less prepositions and are snappier to read. Information is becoming much more accessible to the public.

online training — Australia meets America

Products based on the immediacy of electronic information transfer are starting to pop up in unexpected places. I am developing online training at WWWalker Web Development (<http://www.wwwalker.com.au>) using interactive chat sessions and Web tutorials. Distance is no longer an obstacle. Australians can train Americans over the internet, removing the problem of distance and time zones which was separating the two. No longer are big corporates the only ones that can manage viable international programs. With the Internet, email, chat sessions and Web sites can be merged into a new online training environment by the savvy Internet developer.

doing business online

This brings me to the next point. Online commerce will overcome one of the final obstacles to international cooperation. With appropriate computer security on the Internet, we will be able to do our work from home for overseas clients and be paid electronically into the bargain. That has possibilities economically hey? You could conduct business in a country town for city clients using an internet connection. Without high city real estate prices your business will be more profitable.

Our Web sites have fostered international communities between our Societies. Australians are speaking at ASI's May conference in Seattle and Americans are contributing to Web indexing software development in Australia. At last we can rub shoulders and not be faced with exorbitant charges!

As John Donne once said, 'No man is an island entire of itself.' Maybe we are getting closer to this than we think!

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NEWS

October 1997 *Indexer* late

We do apologise for the non-appearance until now of the October 1997 *Indexer*. This was entirely my fault, based on a number of things that could not possibly all have happened at the same time. You should receive the next issue (April 1998) in June, and after that we will be back to normal.
— JS

Hans Wellisch receives Hines Award

Our sincere congratulations to Hans Wellisch, a past president of ASI, and author of one of the indexing standard works: *Indexing from A to Z*, on his receipt of the ASI 1997 Hines Award for "continuous dedicated and exceptional service to the membership of ASI". In addition to his many contributions to ASI publications, Hans has also been a frequent contributor to *The Indexer*, and was author of the original series of indexing bibliographies. As ASI representative on the (US) National Information Standards Organization he made an important contribution to the development of ISO 999. We like this quotation from *Indexing from A to Z*: "Indexing does not come naturally, like breathing. It is rather more like playing the fiddle: some learn to do it reasonably well, a few will become virtuosos, but most people will never know how to do it at all."

conferences

ASI and IASC/SCAD, the American and Canadian indexing societies, are holding a joint conference: *New frontiers in indexing* in Seattle from 13 to 16 May 1998. See page 187 for more information.

The Society of Indexers annual conference will be held in Tynemouth from 9 to 11 October. See page 188.

Wheatley Medal entries sought

The Wheatley Medal for an outstanding index is awarded annually in the UK by the Society of Indexers and The Library Association; the winning indexer receives a prize of £200, plus a silver gilt medal. The Wheatley Medal is part of the Library Association Reference Awards and is sponsored by Whitaker Bibliographic Services.

Indexes are judged on clarity, comprehensiveness, choice of terms and headings, use of cross-references, avoidance of strings of undifferentiated page references, layout, presentation, plus overall impact of the index and relevance to the text.

Judging takes place in March of each year for indexes published in the previous two years. Application forms are normally available towards the end of each year. Please ring the Marketing Department of The Library Association on 0171-636 7543 for further information or to register your interest in making a submission. Indexers as well as publishers are encouraged to make submissions.