“YEAR 2000 BUG” SHOULD NOT AFFECT INDEXERS

While we may all have problems as a result of banks, utilities and others having failures on their systems, there seems no reason why indexing software should fail to work on 1 January 2000. In the light of recent pronouncements by journalists and consultants that everyone's computer will be affected, I thought I would do some testing and gather some information. I should assert here and now that The Society of Indexers, as publisher of The Indexer and I personally can take no responsibility for the applicability of the following to your own system, or for anything that happens to you. These are comments, not advice.

1. Will my system still work? — apparently, yes
Two weeks ago, I reset the clock on my oldest (1989) computer (which is used for typesetting The Indexer) to 31 December 1999. The date changed at the right time to 1 January 2000; it now reads January 14 2000; and all my software has worked perfectly ever since. I have now done the same to my newest (1996) computer, with the same result. Even email and web-searching software works perfectly, although I had anticipated date-compatibility problems during online sessions. I have tested with Windows 3.1, Windows for Workgroups 3.11 and Windows NT, but not Windows 95.

2. Will my indexing software work? — yes
Mine did, but just to be sure I emailed four indexing software vendors, and here are their replies (in alphabetical order, of course):

CINDEX — from Frances Lennie
“Year 2000 Compliant” means that CINDEX, when used in accordance with its associated documentation, will (a) start correctly, (b) store, represent, and process dates correctly, and (c) not cause or result in an abnormal termination or ending, when processing data containing dates in the Year 2000 and in any preceding and following years, provided that any data imported from other programs contains correctly specified dates in a compatible form and format.

CINDEX deals with dates only via data provided by the host operating system for date representations. CINDEX makes no change in the date representation made available by the operating system, and stores this internally with full fidelity. Any Year 2000 Compliance issues resulting from the use of CINDEX are therefore necessarily subject to the Year 2000 Compliance of the relevant host operating system (MS-DOS, Windows 95/98 or Windows NT 4.0, or Mac OS).

Indexing Research therefore recommends that you consult the relevant statements of Microsoft Corporation, and Apple Computer, Inc. concerning the Year 2000 Compliance of their operating systems.

HYPERINDEX — from Andre De Tienne
HyperIndex being a program designed to work on Apple computers only, it is not affected by the millennium bug at all and will work in any year with every year."

MACREX — from Drusilla Calvert
MACREX, like all other software, is dependent on the hardware on which it is used. If your hardware is compatible we are not aware of any reason why the running of the program should have any millenium-related problems, although we cannot, any more than can any software vendor, guarantee that something we have not anticipated will affect the program.

On earlier versions of the program, and on the earlier releases of version 6, the dates in the list file (*.LST) and on the ‘default’ title for a printed index move from 1999 to 19100. This has now been corrected. For version 6 users we will supply an updated version on request which will move the date from 1999 to 2000. Alternatively, you may prefer to wait and get an up-to-date version nearer the millennium itself!

SKY INDEX — from Kamm Schreiner
SKY Index will certainly continue to work in the year 2000. If we find that modifications to SKY Index 5.1 are needed to provide desirable date handling, these changes will be provided well in advance of the year 2000 and will be free to registered owners as a download from our web site. SKY Software is committed to providing indexing products of the highest quality.

3. Will I have problems with date-handling in indexes, especially cumulations?
We will cover this in the April 1999 Indexer, with more advice from software vendors.

Bella Hass Weinberg receives 1998 ASI Hines Award

The Award was presented by ASI past president Elinor Lindheimer who said, “No one in the American Society of Indexers has done more to lead indexers to higher levels of scholarship and in so doing, to elevate the profile of the indexing profession.”

Weinberg is a professor at St John’s University, New York, and a prolific writer with articles appearing in library and information science journals, special interest journals, Key Words, and The Indexer. Her major research publications are in the field of linguistics. She served as ASI president in 1988-89, chaired the committee that created the NISO thesaurus standard, and serves as the ASI liaison with the American Society for Information Science (ASIS). Lindheimer concluded, “... the reason why Bella is receiving the Hines Award this year is that she has maintained a commitment to the American Society of Indexers and helped to increase the Society’s visibility in the academic world.”

Elizabeth Wallis receives SI Carey Award

“The Carey Award of the Society of Indexers ... is offered as a tribute to Elizabeth Wallis, Founder Member of the Society; Registrar from the founding of the Register to the present day; honouring her passionate dedication to the Society and her staunch upholding of professional standards while working to meet the needs of members and publishers: Council Member 1968-1997; Assistant Editor of The Indexer 1968-1974; Editorial Board Member 1975-1995; Chair of the Training and Research Board 1989-1997; Chair of the Society 1991-1993.

We admire her absolute integrity; her loyalty to colleagues; her fearlessness and frankness of speech and writing both inside the Society and in public; her spontaneous approach to life and her humorous delight in its absurdities.”

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57