Conference happenings

The Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers (ASAIB) held its annual conference in Johannesburg on 6 September 2000. Papers presented ranged over a variety of topics, from the documenting of fossil heritage and oral history to the cataloguing of sound archives. One of the highlights was the presentation by Sophia Le Roux on the construction of the IDASA Democracy Thesaurus (described in more detail below). ASAIB held its AGM separately on 10 November at the same location, with a continental breakfast and a presentation entitled ‘Books and Book People’ by Stefan Welz, an expert in art, antiques and rare books.

The Library of Congress Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control for the New Millennium took place 15–17 November 2000. With 125 invited speakers and participants, its purpose was to bring together authorities in the cataloguing and metadata communities to discuss issues related to access to Web resources within the framework of international standards. The conference website, lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/bibcontrol, has a complete description of the conference as well as the full text of the papers, including that by indexing expert Bella Weinberg.

International reciprocal rights

The ratification of the revisions to the International Agreement has brought into effect additional reciprocal membership services. Now the members of any of the Societies party to the agreement may purchase the publications of sibling societies at membership prices and the newsletters will be available to such members at special rates. This is in addition to the already established right to attend conferences and meetings of sibling societies at member rates.

At the Society of Indexers (SI) Cambridge conference last July, the delegates of the indexing societies agreed to making Special Interest Group (SIG) membership open to all members of all societies, whether or not the SIG is formally affiliated with a national society. Both the American Society of Indexers (ASI) and SI have a number of interest groups on such subjects as archaeology, business, gardening, genealogy, cookery and scholarly indexing. No matter where you live and which society you belong to, you are welcome to join any SIG that interests you.

Database indexing accreditation

The Victorian Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI) is working on the protocols for the accreditation of database indexers. The purpose is to assist employers in the selection of suitable indexers, to provide benchmarks for database indexers to evaluate their own indexing skills and competencies, and to provide a measure of competence for the Society in recommending indexers. It will complement the existing back-of-the-book accreditation.

Back-of-the-book indexing explored

ASI’s Pacific Northwest chapter incorporates informal peer review sessions into its regular calendar of events. Each person brings multiple copies of an index to the meeting (if discussion groups consist of three to four members, each person brings that many copies). Preferably, participants bring indexes of their own, but new members bring one in a field of interest. The meeting breaks into discussion groups and participants present their own indexes and review each other’s indexes. This seems a very useful way of acquiring feedback on good indexing techniques and on issues that plague us in the decision-making processes of indexing.

Words, words, words . . .

IDASA Democracy Thesaurus

IDASA, originally known as the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa, did much of its early work underground, but after the unbanning of political organizations, it began to operate in the areas of political mediation and facilitation, training and preparation for elections at local and regional levels. Over the years it accumulated a great deal of information, which eventually formed the collection of the Resource Centre in the Kutlwanoog Democracy Centre in Pretoria. It was decided that a specialized thesaurus would best meet the needs of a collection reflecting a society in transformation and from this decision grew the Democracy Thesaurus. It is now in its second edition, and is considered unique in its attempts to incorporate the latest terminology used by the current government and South African society at large. The intention is to publish the thesaurus in print and on disk early in 2001. You can find information on IDASA at www.idasa.org.za/default.asp

High Level Thesaurus (HILT) Project

HILT is a British project sponsored by the Research Support Libraries Programme and the Joint Information Systems Committee partnered with the Museum Documentation Association, the National Council of Archives, the National Grid for Learning – Scotland, OCLC, the Scottish Library and Information Council, the Scottish University for Industry and UKOLN. It is a one-year project that is focused on determining a set of recommendations to facilitate cross-searching and browsing by subject between various communities, services and initiatives that generally have widely
The Emotional Dictionary/Thesaurus Project

This is an intriguing project being conducted by Connotative Reference Corporation in Vancouver, Canada (the Project Manager is Wayne Chase). The focus is to develop language tools – dictionaries and thesauri – based on word connotations instead of denotations. If you visit their web site at www.writing.ws you can preview those under development and contribute your votes and comments.

New publications


Where to go, 2001

20–23 April: Canberra, Australia – Partnerships for Knowledge (jointly sponsored by AusSI’s ACT Region Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors)

31 May–4 June: Boston, USA – ASI annual conference

16 June: Toronto, Canada – IASC/SCAD annual conference held in conjunction with the Editors Association of Canada

29 June–1 July: Sheffield, England – Indexing at the Cutting Edge (SI annual conference)

Contributors to the column

Thank you to contributors Glenda Browne, Jenny Doke, Margaret Findlay, Jill Halliday, Clare Imholtz, Lori Lathrop and Bella Hass Weinberg. (If you have any research, an interesting indexing project, or curious facts that you would like to publicize, contact me at the address below.)

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