Interestingly given that this is the case, British university websites are rich with citation guidance for students, drawing heavily, and very firmly, on the style guides listed at the beginning of this article, so perhaps that way will lead to a degree of consistency amongst British publishers.

These are interesting differences, and given the increasing globalization of publishing, differences which indexers need to be aware of in order to work across international boundaries.

Conclusion

Indexers are hired by clients on the assumption that they are familiar with publishing standards and competent enough to write a well-organized and complete index using the best practices of indexing. Sadly this is not always the case, and as professionals, it is our responsibility to learn and practice proficiency in indexing depending on the needs of the client and project.

We have all heard indexer 'horror stories' relating a bad experience with a client. Each of these stories has one common theme: that is, mismatched assumptions and expectations of the client and the indexer. Ensuring that you and your client have the same assumptions, expectations, and vision of the indexing project will help you to avoid having any 'horror stories' of your own.

It is a relatively easy task to find out what style guide your client publisher follows, and to then ascertain if the client has any special instructions regarding when and how to index names and author citations. If the client does have specific expectations, you will know it and be able to meet those expectations. Should the client prefer to leave the decisions to your own discretion and judgement, then you will be able to proceed with the project confident that you performing within the parameters of the client's expectations. Either way, you will end up with a happy, and it is hoped, repeat client.

Notes

1. Et al is the abbreviation for the Latin *et alii* (and others), and is used as part of a parenthetical citation to indicate that there are additional authors whose names have not been included as part of the parenthetical citation.
2. The author would like to thank the following individuals for their generous assistance with this article: Philip Aslett, Geraldine Beare, Susan Bobbis, Drusilla Calvert, Caroline Diepeveen, Auriol Griffith-Jones, Maureen MacGlashan, and Linda Sutherland.

Tips for newcomers: Wellington 2013

Compiled by Jane Douglas

Jane Douglas brings together 12 top tips for newcomers to indexing, offered by speakers and participants at the 2013 ANZSI Conference in Wellington, New Zealand.

I am a complete newcomer to indexing. But earlier this year, some indexing friends convinced me that attending a conference would be a valuable experience, even at this early stage. So I made the investment and travelled from Brisbane, Australia to Wellington, New Zealand to attend the 2013 ANZSI conference.

How right my friends were! Wellington is a beautiful city, and Tordis Flath and her team pulled off a slick and entirely glitch-free event. I learned more than I would have imagined possible and made some wonderful new friends and professional contacts. I even found a generous soul willing to act as my mentor as I make my first forays into indexing. I am very glad I made the trip.

As one of the handful of newbies at the conference, I took every opportunity to corner experienced indexers and pump them for information. I asked each the same question: If you were starting out in indexing today, what three things would you most wish to know? What follows is a collection of the wisdom gleaned from those conversations in Wellington and from email correspondence since. Most of the tips come from conference speakers, but I have collected some from relatively new indexers who are in the process of putting this advice into practice. One publisher and one software developer were also kind enough to contribute.

The contributor's initials appear after each tip (a list of contributors appears at the end). Where a tip was offered by more than one contributor, that has been noted.

Tip #1: Learn the fundamentals

- Read all the indexing books you can get your hands on. Build a library of reference works. (TF, SQ)
- Attend training courses and professional development events. Immersion into new techniques with peers gets you up to speed more quickly than learning on your own. (SQ, DS, DR)
- There is not just one way to index 'correctly'. Beyond the 'basic rules', each indexer works differently. Gradually develop your own style of working. Consistency within each index is the primary aim. (DS)

Tip #2: Make use of resources readily available

- There is a lot of material available on the Web that will help newcomers, for example:
  - *Indexing as a business*: www.anzsi.org/site/res-business.asp
  - 'Resources for prospective indexers': www.backwordsindexing.com/Novice/NoviceNotes.html
  - *Newcomers: A selection of article s for those new to indexing*: http://tinyurl.com/indexercollections
  - ANZSI 2013 conference papers: www.anzsi.org/site/2013Confpap.asp (GB)
- The websites of indexing societies are a great source of indexing information and resources. (MR)
- Subscribe to *The Indexer* and read both current and past issues. (Special member society rates apply.) (MR, HE)
- Read indexes, especially the award-winning ones. Indexing societies list these on their websites. Indexes are often viewable on publishers' websites also. (SQ)

Tip #3: Never, ever stop learning

- Invest in continuing education and in face-time with other indexers and content professionals. (KS)
- Stay up to date with developments in indexing, especially linked and embedded indexing for ebooks. This is where our field is heading, and you don't want to be left behind! (DS, MC)
- Keep up with new technology. Accept that there's a learning curve to climb, and climb it. The view is always better from the top. (JJ)
- Consider learning the basics of a page layout program such as Adobe InDesign™. (GB)
- Try embedded indexing in a program such as Microsoft Word™. (GB)
- Begin to get your head around markup languages like XML and XHTML. Codeacademy (www.codecademy.com) is one of many sites that offer free online courses. (GB)
- Develop related skills such as writing, editing, proof-reading and typesetting to help smooth out the peaks and troughs of indexing work. Multiskilling can be key to survival in small business. (SQ, MR, MYC, DS)

Tip #4: Find a mentor or other support

- Find a mentor, someone you can bounce ideas against, someone willing to look over an index you've done and provide feedback. (MC, MD)
- Don't be shy about asking for advice from other indexers. (TF)
- Utilize your network when you face a problem with a project. Don't be afraid to work in collaboration with others. (DR)

Tip #5: Practice

- Practise indexing, perhaps in collaborative or volunteer projects. Learn from your mistakes. (SQ)
- Index, index and index some more. The more you do, the more confident you become in indexing and in using the software. Index anything and everything in order gain experience. (MR)
- Keep working on improving your skills. Ask questions. Indexers are generally very friendly and helpful, happy to share their experiences and help beginners. (DS)
- Read back over your indexing textbooks after you have produced a real index. The books will make a lot more sense then. (DS)
- Know your software, both indexing programs and software for ancillary work like word processing, invoicing and record keeping. (JJ, DR)

Tip #6: Network, network, network!

- Join your national indexing society and then get involved. Don't think you need to wait until you are experienced. Attend meetings, training sessions and conferences. Participate in online forums. Volunteer. Building relationships with other indexers is vital. (MC, HE, FL, TM, SQ, DR, TF, MR, MD, KS, DS)
- Join subject-related special interest groups (SIGs) sponsored by ASI (open to members of all indexing societies). (FL)
- Join related professional associations such as editors' societies. (HE, MD, KS)
- Network with others in the publishing industry – editors, proofreaders, typesetters, graphic artists and so on. (MM)
- Make use of contacts from your previous work experience. (MD)
- Give talks about indexing. (MD)
- Attend non-fiction book launches. Introduce yourself to publishers and authors. (DS)
- Never miss any opportunity to talk about indexing. Let people know you are an indexer. Distribute your business cards. (MC, HE, MR, CD, DS)

Tip #7: Despise not the day of small beginnings

- Be realistic about how long it will take to build a business. It may take several years of perseverance and plain hard work. (KS)
- Build up your indexing skills and experience through volunteer or pro-bono indexing jobs. Clubs and societies where you already have a connection are a good place to start. (MM, TM, MR)
- Be prepared to take on small or low-paying jobs to get initial experience. (MR)
- Start indexing in a field with which you are familiar. You can diversify later. (MM, MYC)

Tip #8: Get yourself noticed – for the right reasons

- Design a professional-looking website you can use to educate clients about indexing and market your services. (JW, MC, HE, FL)
- Your business card is one of the most important marketing tools at your disposal. Design and print them on quality card, carry them with you always, and don't forget to hand them out. (DS)
- Design your business stationery, invoices, and a sample contract before getting your first client. (JW)
- Make sure you have a professional email address. Use an email signature on all outgoing email. Include contact details, of course, but also areas of specialty and memberships. Give the recipient something to remember. (JW, FL)
- Use social media to your advantage – not your detriment. Take care that your personal social media accounts don't detract from your professional reputation. (HE, FL)

Tip #9: You can get that first job

- Be resilient, tenacious, flexible, collaborative and curious. The whole publishing and content industry is in a state of turmoil, but opportunities are there if you look. (KS)
- Cold calling: it's not pleasant but it can be effective. Call and ask to speak to the editor or publisher of a non-fiction list. (MYC)
- Send emails, letters, your business card, and perhaps samples of your work to publishers. When you are starting out, it is probably best to approach small publishing houses rather than big multinationals. (MM, TM, DS)
- Get listed on your national and state freelancers' lists and other databases and directories. Think laterally. Let clients know you are there. (MYC, CD, HE)
- Diversify your indexing skills to include consulting and electronic indexing. Extra skills will give you an edge, and electronic indexing often pays a higher rate than print indexing. (DR)

Tip #10: Quoting is a learned art

- Don't over-quote on your first few jobs. As you will work more slowly than a more experienced indexer, if giving an hourly rate you will need to reduce your rate by around one-quarter or even one-third. (MYC, MM)
- Never provide a quote without first seeing some of the text you are being asked to index. (MM)
- Treat each work agreement as a formal contract. Make it clear what you are being hired to do and what the client can expect to receive. (JJ)
- Remember to factor in the time it will take to edit the index as well as some time to cover quoting, invoicing and record keeping. (SQ)
- In the beginning, number your invoices so it isn't obvious that you are issuing invoice #1. (JW)
- Keep detailed records on each job:
  - title, subject and audience of work
  - number of pages

- publisher's brief
- indexing density
- size of index
- time taken to complete it
- issues faced
- fee charged.

Over time this will build up into a valuable resource to help you quote more effectively. (MM, SQ, DS)

Tip #11: Develop excellent business practices

- Keep your business and personal incomes in separate bank accounts. (FL)
- An outside office isn't always necessary but you do need a dedicated space where you can carry out your work. (FL)
- Don't play at being in business. Actively tout for work – even if that is uncomfortable at times. (FL)
- Complete an index as quickly as you are able even when timelines are generous. The longer you spend on projects, the lower your pay rate becomes. (MYC)
- Keep asking yourself, 'How can I make this job faster/better/cheaper/more pleasurable next time?' Use the gaps between jobs to implement those changes. (JJ)
- Have a file backup and archiving strategy in place and test it thoroughly before beginning your first index. (JJ)
- Repeat business depends on your meeting the client's needs. Spend your time giving people what they want, not what you think they ought to want. (JJ, FL)
- Be flexible and connected. Balance workloads by sharing work with other indexers when projects overlap and deadlines change. (SQ)
- If a client asks a question or requests a service you are not sure you can deal with, tell them you will get back to them and utilize your network to develop a response. (DR)
- Invest in tools that allow you to work efficiently such as dedicated indexing software, Adobe Pro™, Adobe InDesign™, or multiple monitors. (KS)
- Each index you complete is a resource for some future one. Keep them handy and learn how to reuse them. (JJ)
- Always make sure you get a copy of your published index and be prepared to show it off. (CD)

Tip #12: Professionalism counts

- An editor or author using your services for the first time is investing a lot of trust in you. Conduct yourself professionally. Keep them abreast of your progress and make sure they can reach you at all times. (FL, MYC)
- Never miss a deadline! Practise professional time management. Take on work only if you are sure you can complete it in the agreed timeframe. (SQ, CD)
- Go one better: Promise to deliver your work earlier than the publisher's deadline and deliver it before you promised to. Punctuality attracts a premium. (JJ)
- Get to know your clients. Build relationships. (DR)
- Discuss your client's workflow with them. The more you know, the more help you can be. Become part of the team, a valuable resource. (DR)

Addendum: A publisher's perspective (FB)

- The index is a vital component of many nonfiction books. It would be unthinkable for a university press not to include an index in most books.
- Publishers need to bear in mind that a good index takes time and give indexers sufficient time, in terms of both schedule and hours, to do the job properly.
- Indexers need to bear in mind that that publishing budgets are being squeezed, and that by the time a book is ready for indexing it is often running late. It is not that publishers don't appreciate the value of a good index, it is just that they really need it to be compiled quickly.
- An index is for use. A hastily compiled index with long number strings and few subdivisions or cross-references can be almost useless. On the other hand, an overly elaborate index can add considerable time and cost without being much more use than a simpler index.
- Sometimes the author knows best, because they know how the field is structured; sometimes the indexer knows best, because they know how to structure information. The publisher/editor has the casting vote.

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Reflections on the Wilson Award judging for 2012

Margie Towery, Wilson Award Committee chair in 2012

As you may have surmised by now, there was no Wilson Award winning index this year. Nonetheless, in my continuing attempt to make the process transparent, I want to share some details about the judging day and reflect a bit on the committee's conclusions.

The Wilson Committee's work is both collegial and collaborative, so it is appropriate that I first thank those who were part of this year's committee. We could not have had a more diverse and experienced group of indexers, and I really appreciate their efforts. I also want to thank Caryl Wenzel who ably took on the registrar's role. My gratitude extends to EBSCO Publishing which has continued and will continue to support the award.

I want to emphasize three points. First, the registrar is the only person who knows who submitted indexes. None of the judges knew before, during, or after judging. That includes me. With no winner, every sealed envelope containing that information went back unopened to the registrar. This is how we maintain anonymity.

Second, this is not a 'Best of Show' award. It is given only if an entry meets the Wilson criteria.

I suspect we would all agree that there is a fair level of subjectivity in indexing. That is, if three indexers indexed the same text, they would produce somewhat different indexes.

But my third point is that the Wilson judging process is not subjective. Each judge uses the same criteria to look at each submitted index, as well as using their specialized indexing knowledge. I argue that this process provides the most objective result possible.

We started the judging about 9 am. The first step is for every judge to evaluate every submission using the Wilson criteria (available on the ASI website). We each found a spot where we were comfortable and set to work at our own pace. There is no discussion of the submissions during this process or at lunch. With every submission that we turned to, each of us hoped to find a Wilson winner.

By mid-afternoon, we gathered together to discuss each submission, with every judge having an opportunity to comment. After discussing each submission, we decided whether it would remain on the table as a possible winner or whether it was out of the running. At the end of the day, there were none left standing, so to speak. We sat and looked at each other as we all realized that there was no winner this year. Disappointment showed on every face. These were by and large OK indexes, but none of them were Wilson-winning quality. Our next step, then, was to summarize the kinds of problems we were seeing. Let me assure you, in the strongest terms, not a single submission was rejected for ticky-tack