Draft Minutes from the online ICRIS meeting of 12 April 2023

Attendees

AFEPI – apology from Eileen O'Neill

ANZSI – Madeleine Davis, Sherrey Quinn (Secretary ANZSI)

ASAIB – Karin McGuirk, Karien Hutchison (Secretary ASAIB)

ASI – Devon Thomas

CSI – Chunxiang Xue , Xiaoyuan Chen (CSI Member and Librarian at Fudan University Library)

DNI – Jochen Fassbender, Samuel Arnet (DNI member)

ISC/SCI – Margaret de Boer, Jolanta Komornicka (Co-president)

NIN – Caroline Diepeveen, Madelon Nanninga

SI – Ann Kingdom, Nicola King (Chair)

The Indexer – Mary Coe

Updates from societies/networks

ANZSI

ANZSI membership as at March this year was 84. There are 25 Accredited Indexers and 41 listed on the Indexers Available directory.

ANZSI has circulated a Call for Nominations for the ANZSI Indexing Awards and Jon Simkin Medal. Nominations close on 30 June. The awards are open to editors, publishers, booksellers, librarians and any interested persons who can provide nominations. Indexers are encouraged to submit their own work. The awards take place at two-yearly intervals . For the 2021/22 awards (held over due to COVID-19) we received 11 entries.

ANZSI is finally having a Conference this year – 'Making Connections' – 19-21 October at the Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, NSW There will be 2 conference days and 1 day of workshops. The conference will not be streamed, but all sessions will be recorded and will be made available to ANZSI members and any members of other societies/networks if they wish. There may be an opportunity to stream or pre-record a couple of international speakers. Now that face-to-face conferences are back, ANZSI will continue the practice of displaying its library books at the conference, for attendees to browse and take home . ANZSI covers all the cost for library books to be sent and returned.

ANZSI had a very low key National Indexing Day and broadcast the Keynote Speech by Sam Leith (Berlin Conference) on 'Developments in publishing'. A Q&A and quarterly member catch-up discussion was held online afterwards.

Many thanks to ISC/SCI and the coordinators of the Berlin Conference for allowing ANZSI to present several of their conference sessions to our members as part of our ongoing professional development (PD) program. Sessions ANZSI has presented to date include 'Software vendors: Tips and Tricks', 'From Data to Done: insights into managing workflow', Dennis Duncan's session where he talked about his book: *Index, A History of the* and 'In Defense of Marking Up'. ANZSI is hoping to present more sessions from the Berlin Conference in the next couple of months.

It has been absolutely brilliant to be able to offer this to members. ANZSI has had 2 Zoom catch-ups with our members on 30 October last year and 30 March this year – the latter in conjunction with our National Indexing Day.

ASAIB

ASAIB has 78 listed members, with 26 renewing so far, including 4 new members. Early Bird and standard rates are offered for renewal.

Meetings are held online due to members being in different provinces and they try to meet every six weeks.

ASAIB wants to continue with its online 'coffee chats' which were started in the middle of last year. Even though it is for members, invitations are always posted on the ASAIB open platforms – LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter – in order to connect with people from the publishing industry and some of the sciences. The first workshop for the year on basic indexing principles was held in March, but instead of a full day, it was spread over 3 half days, which seemed to have worked well, with increased attendance. Further workshops are planned, depending on the availability of trainers.

ASAIB has also decided to only host its conferences biannually, so its next conference will be held in 2024. It will be the 30th anniversary of ASAIB and it will incorporate a National Indexing Day with this celebration. It will probably be online, but it may be possible to hold a hybrid conference with a pre-conference workshop.

ASI

ASI membership is holding steady in the high 300s. There is a small demographic shift with the baby boomer generation retiring but younger people becoming more interested. In the US, indexing is very white and female. ASI has been working hard on diversity, equity and inclusion via imagery and language and is looking to outreach to historically black universities and other types of institutions. There has been some interest in forming personal indexing columns and diversity in indexing groups, which may bring up different issues. 'No-one sees you when you index'.

The ASI conference is coming up, from 28-29 April, with Early Bird registration ending on 14 April. A workshop for new indexers will also be held. ASI are offering free attendance for official representatives from other Societies/Networks.

CSI

There has been an increase in membership of 48 since April 2022, mainly from the public and academic libraries, universities and colleges. The CSI conference was held on 26 November last year – Embark on a New Journey for **China Index** – with 6 keynote presentations and 8 lectures on indexing theory and practice. More than 100 scholars and researchers attended the conference. CSI is still developing an indexing standard for the ancient Chinese books. They will report to ICRIS in due course.

DNI

There have been several articles on the Berlin conference including in *The Indexer* and perhaps more will be forthcoming.

Membership numbers are more or less the same – between 45 and 50.

Next month Jochen will give a full day seminar to the Copy Editors Association of Germany where there are some members who are interested in professional indexing. So, chances are that more indexers may join the Network.

There will probably be another meeting of DNI in May.

At the end of last year, the 7th edition of *Grundlagen der Informationswissenschaft* (*The Fundamentals of Information Science*) was published with a contribution by Jochen on modern indexing. It is quite a tome at 1000 pages! It is a multi-authored work – some 70 plus authors. Is there anyone at this meeting or who knows someone who is fluent in German, who may like to review the book? Christine Shuttleworth (SI)? Pierke Bosschieter (NIN)? Perhaps a review could be a future article in The Indexer?

Grundlagen der Informationswissenschaft, edited by Rainer Kuhlen, Dirk Lewandowski, Wolfgang Semar and Christa Womser-Hacker, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Saur, 2023
https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110769043/html

Fassbender, Jochen. "B 7 Register/Indexe", pp.219-232
https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110769043-019/html

ISC/SCI

ISC/SCI has approximately 140 active and honorary members currently – about a 9% increase over last year with 78 members listed on the website and new members joining up.

In May, the Society will have a booth at the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences at York University in Toronto. Previously ISC/SCI has only advertised at the Congress. The Congress is the largest academic gathering in Canada and one of the largest in the world, bringing together 67 academic associations from humanities and social sciences covering literature, history, education, music, sociology, social work and more.

ISC/SCI will also have a booth at the Editors Canada conference in May, which will be hosting approximately 150-200 attendees. It is the premier editing association within Canada. Issues to learn about from editors and proofreaders include inclusivity and plain language developments.

The ISC/SCI pilot lending library program is about to be launched. The next step will be looking at digital versions of books to add to the library. Thank you to ANZSI for all its library documentation to help get the library started.

Other matters include the annual letters to publishers and the conference from 9-10 June in St John's, Newfoundland. An email re official representatives from other societies has been circulated.

The year-long community engagement research project with students from the Kings University in Alberta is coming to a close. It covers midlife career conditions – researching business literature, sociology, and psychology. The students are putting together material to help ISC/SCI as a society, for people in transitions in their careers – where does indexing come in? how do you network within your field? how do you find a sense of community? how do you mentor people as they come into a new career later in life? Resources material from the project will be added to the ISC/SCI website.

NIN

There is a stable membership of around 10. It is a small but active group. A large delegation participated in the Berlin Conference which was very stimulating. NIN still meet once every 3 months online.

NIN is currently working on a marketing plan via social media, aiming to get indexing and indexers better known in the Netherlands. The Discord platform was chosen as being most convenient for working together, user friendliness and being free.

NIN has been looking at what different societies do for National Indexing Day, especially SI, and would like to do something next year for Dutch publishers.

NIN is hopeful that there may be a Dutch edition of the Dennis Duncan book, *Index, A History of the.* There is lots of indexing work available with members circulating each other if they cannot undertake a job.

SI

At the end of 2021/22 there were 298 members. Renewals since then indicate a loss of 45 members, many of whom are now retiring from indexing. However about 12 new indexers have joined since the beginning of the year, so current membership is in the 260s. The Directory lists about 120 professionally qualified members. SI would like to recruit more members so there will be more publicity later this year to encourage more people to undertake its indexing course and who want to become indexers. To this end SI has been enhancing its blog and trying to increase its presence on social media – issues with Twitter could be a problem, but better use of LinkedIn, which is more professional , might be more beneficial long term.

In addition to activity on social media, the SI event for National indexing Day (NID) was two hours online with six short presentations: the case for indexing and human indexers, finding a professional indexer, briefing the indexer, reviewing the index once it is received by an editor, indexing new and updated editions of books, and some further resources and workshops. The link to the Wakelet coverage of NID is at https://wakelet.com/wake/588GuWKDsTzlXzDNOJAdW

Paula Clarke Bain published a cryptic crossword with many indexing clues to coincide with NID – free for anybody to try. Paula's crossword is at https://www.mycrossword.co.uk/cryptic/1077

 There was good feedback on the event and plenty of online coverage of the day itself which was picked up by Lev Parikian onTwitter (19,000 followers). You can see his tweets on the NID Wakelet url above. Hopefully many more people will have seen information about indexing. His newsletter (on Substack) is at: https://substack.com/@levparikian SI is happy to provide the slides that were used for the NID event if other societies would like to use them for their own events.

There have been personal SI presentations by Rachel Gee (training director) – to AFEPI; to the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (CIEP) and to Edinburgh University Press. SI has also been trying to encourage indexers to attend book launches (NB Nicola is going to Buckingham Place for the launch of a book she indexed about dressing Georgian Kings and Queens to be held together with an exhibition).

There will be a one day conference later this year.

Monthly sessions – regular Zoom 'coffee mornings' are being run for about an hour on different, wide ranging themes each time and for members to exchange information about what they are indexing etc. SI local groups are meeting face-to-face or online and some are having outings to places of interest. Dennis Duncan was made an honorary life member of SI in 2021 and will be presenting at the Biographers Club in London together with Tanya Izard (marketing director). Hazel Bell is giving a paper in Oxford about work that she did on T.E. Lawrence. Her paper will be published in a future edition of *The Indexer.*

The Indexer

As a reminder, each Society is entitled to one free advertisement in each issue re conferences etc. Subscriptions to *The Indexer* for indexing society members are still handled by the SI Office. Mary Coe is the contact for updates re contact details, logos etc on the inside back cover of *The Indexer* and on the ICRIS website. Last year, Liverpool University Press (LUP), migrated their journals, including *The Indexer*, to a new online platform. On the distribution front, as soon as there is a digital version, details are posted on the ICRIS list to share with society members. 'Naked' mailing has been trialled for the March issue ie no packaging, envelopes or plastic covers on issues. There has been mixed feedback. LUP has an agreement with Oxford University Press to distribute print copies in North America, so hopefully the wait time will be reduced (starting in 2024). Feedback would be appreciated. SI has signed a new contract with LUP to start in 2024. Further details about the new contract will be given at the next online ICRIS meeting in September. The 2021/22 report from LUP on the journal indicates that the most downloaded article last year was by Jochen Fassbender on the *Multilingual Dictionary of Indexing Terms.* Ann Kingdom has been appointed Assistant Editor of *The Indexer.* Articles on the Berlin Conference are being gathered for the September issue.

International Indexing Website

An extract from the Triennial ICRIS meeting held on 16 October in Berlin concerning the general agreement reached on the development of an international indexing website had been circulated earlier. The main decisions were summarised. ASI and SI have held discussions and are also happy with the 'landing page', simple website outline which makes it easy to update. Additional pages would need to be considered in light of the aim of the website ie which other/related organisations should have links etc. Further suggestions included a page for international standards eg NISO, a link to the *Multilingual Dictionary of Indexing Terms,* a link to ICRIS and translations into major languages – Dutch, French, German, Spanish.

A title for the website and a domain name still needs to be agreed. A distinctive domain name may be useful to differentiate it from the other indexing society urls. A link to the China Society of Indexers from the front page may not impinge on possible Chinese restrictions on participation in international websites, however CSI will be consulted.

Madeleine will go through the list of suggested domain names circulated at the previous meeting and determine which are still available and develop a template for the front page for the next meeting in September.

Indexing in the new era of Artificial Intelligence: an outsider's view

Chunxiang welcomed Xiaoyuan Chen from CSI and a librarian at Fudan University Library who gave the presentation.

The new trends and cases in indexing

1. **ByteDance's efforts to index one of the greatest encyclopedias in ancient Chinese history**.

The Yongle Dadian 'Great statutes of the Yongle reign' is a large encyclopedia compiled on the imperial order of the Emperor Yongle of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yongle_Encyclopedia) Originally vast, less than 4% has survived.

ByteDance (the parent company of TikTok) is working with the National Library to try and record the whole encyclopedia . When you visit the free website (in Chinese) you can see the original image of each page and when you search you can see all the relevant original text. Any publisher, or anyone, no longer has to go to the National Library to find this information but can now browse the pages online. Currently it is not being indexed in a traditional indexing way, rather they are using AI to learn all the text as a natural language. Only ten percent has been covered so far. The encyclopedia is not the only book which ByteDance is working on. They are also working on every available Asian/Chinese rare book to be found in the National Library.

https://yongle.shidianguji.com/introduction?page_from=yongle_home_page

2. **Paintings from the Song Dynasty**
All the ancient paintings have been uploaded onto an online bilingual database. The materials are indexed in a very visual format leveraging on the Unity cross-platform game engine. It is not traditional indexing but shows the possibility of reviewing the paintings, books and written materials in a different format. It is very entertaining and interactive.

https://news.cgtn.com/event/2022/The-Song-Painted/index.html?lang=en

3. **SenseTime – recreating the Summer Palace in its Metaverse**

SenseTime is probably the largest AI company in China but unknown to the Western World because of the language barrier. They have just launched the Chinese version of ChatGPT. For the Summer Palace project they were working with National Museum, National Gallery and National Library. They use AI and AR (Augmented Reality) technology.

https://www.sensetime.com/en/case-detail?categoryId=1621

Members thanked Xiaoyuan for the presentation and agreed that there were definitely relevant connections with indexing in the above visual and interactive formats. Even though much day-to-day indexing work is with print materials, many indexers are fascinated with these kinds of outer edge forms of information access. In China, the possibility of training with and funding from these new kinds of startups might bring about new definitions of indexing. As a thought, Xiaoyuan may be interested in connecting with the Digital Trends Group of ASI and people working in the metadata or database indexing fields – Heather Hedden or John Magee, Director of Metadata Services at Cengage Gale who works with huge data sets (forthcoming speaker at ASI conference on new generation of information tools – 'New A.I. Tools and Indexing: Do We Welcome Our New Robot Overlords')

Indexing as a career in the era of disruptive innovations

Xiaoyuan asked if someone working in coding or computers as in the above three cases, can be categorised as indexers? If you only have strict definitions then that limits other possibilities. With AI technology, showing the contents from a book in a different format can redefine how to index information and publications. Coders in big companies like ByteDance, SenseSime and Tik Tok can contribute by revealing how they index their information on the internet – being an indexer in the future.

All businesses struggle with their collective information and how they access it. How do you maintain institutional memory? How to index large government databases? The use of the Alt text tag in place of an image on a webpage if the image fails to load on a user's screen. We may see more changes for what is considered indexing. A Venn diagram with overlapping fields may now better illustrate the overall picture of what is indexing.

Should indexers working with other media than just print material call themselves metadata specialists? Depends on the audience. Is it tech savvy or book indexing savvy! ie if interacting with new tech publishers it may be useful throw in some tech buzzwords. The forthcoming ASI conference will feature taxonomist Jennifer Parrucci from the *New York Times* who will talk about metadata and accessing vast datasets for content classification from a legacy of print data – 'Metadata at the New York Times: Organizing and Leveraging News Content from 1851-Today'.

How will AI language models like ChatGPT4.0 change the landscape of indexing？

Attempts to use ChatGPT to index material online (by Madeleine) gave poor results. Nevertheless, AI potential should not be underestimated eg the Chinese strategy game of Go or Weiqi (Wei-Chi) was the only traditional game not mastered by computers or AI until 2016 and it was a big shock when an AI program defeated the Go professionals. Maybe book indexing is more complicated than playing Go and more of a challenge to AI? We may laugh at the poor ChatGPT result, but we may not laugh tomorrow. In the last 6 months or so AI seems to have made huge advances in understanding and learning text eg in the *NY Times* contest on which essays were written by ChatGPT and which by young students, it was definitely difficult to decide. On the other hand, there are serious limitations in that ChatGPT currently has limited knowledge of the world and events after 2021 and it

occasionally supplies false information. If the user does not have the ability to interrogate the content, it can get dangerous quickly.