

Minutes from the online ICRIS meeting of 6 September 2023

Attendees

ANZSI – Madeleine Davis, Sherrey Quinn (Secretary ANZSI)

ASAIB – Karin McGuirk, Deon Schutte

ASI – Devon Thomas

DNI – Jochen Fassbender

ISC/SCI – Margaret de Boer, Alex Peace

NIN – Pierke Bosschieter, Caroline Diepeveen

SI – Ann Kingdom, Nicola King (Chair)

The Indexer – Mary Coe

Apologies: Eileen O’Neill (AFEPI), Chunxiang Xue (CSI)

Updates from societies/networks

ANZSI

ANZSI membership as at 18 August this year was 76 (was 84 in April). There are 24 Accredited Indexers and 39 listed on the Indexers Available directory. Where reasons are given for leaving, it is because of retirement or they are no longer indexing. ANZSI did get 2 new members this year.

The Professional Development programme continued with a rebroadcast of the Indexing Society of Canada (ISC/SCI) conference session on ‘Hacking Yourself: think Like a Hacker to Prevent Cyber Attacks’ held on 27 April and another session held on 25 May ‘Embedded Indexing with Word’ from the Berlin conference. Again, many thanks to those societies.

We have almost finalised our conference programme – ‘Making Connections’ 19–21 October at the Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, NSW. One speaker will give a pre-recorded presentation, two speakers will Zoom in and the remaining sessions will be face-to-face with the audience. We have 13 sessions, two lunchtime Roundtables for Cindex and Sky and one full and one half-day workshop.

We will be having our AGM at the conference which makes a nice change from having only online Council meetings and AGMs. We will also allow Zoom participation for members who cannot attend the conference.

Council has moved from meeting every six weeks and will now meet approximately every eight weeks, with a longer break over the Christmas/New Year period. Any urgent matters can be dealt with by email or by the Executive. This will allow the Secretary, Membership

Secretary, Accounts Officer and Communications Officer more time to prepare their reports/minutes.

ASAIB

ASAIB has 28 members currently, including five new members (four are from the workshop held in March). The National Executive Committee meetings usually take place every six weeks, but they have begun to realise that it is too often for what they need to do. One long-term member of the Committee has left.

Many other long-term members have also left and not having access to that experience is proving challenging, particularly for training purposes. Increasing engagement with members is needed, as is drawing in members of other associated professional organisations. A survey of members has not yielded much in the way of results. ASAIB uses most forms of social media with growing success. However, the overall work is proving overwhelming for the small number of committee members.

Online coffee sessions will continue; however, workshops have been put on hold while they seek more trainers.

A hybrid format conference will be held next year for the 30th anniversary of ASAIB – the first since the COVID-19 lockdown.

ASI

ASI is undertaking a push for current members to refer potential new members and encourage them to join.

Another ASI webinar is coming up on 13 September: 'Using Diacritics in Sky' and later, a three-part online course on art indexing will be held. ASI has also started an 'Indexing Playground', a free-form discussion area with different hosts, modelled on the Canadian Society initiative. Some Chapters and SIGs are meeting. The Pacific Northwest Chapter has started meeting in person again and others may follow. The Digital SIG is meeting regularly online.

Carolyn Weaver has donated her full run of issues of the *Key Words* journal, which have now been digitised on the website. Reminder to other Societies/Networks that the *See also* Newsletter has space to publicise other Society/Network events.

The next ASI conference in 2024 is tentatively being planned as an in-person conference, but they are still determining the place, venue etc.

CSI

Chunxiang Xue sent in the following information to be recorded in the minutes:

'Nothing new has changed since April. But Xiaoyuan Chen is launching a survey on the organisational development of indexing in different regions/countries esp. in the digital context. The survey (and interview if needed) requests will be sent to ICRIS mail list after the

research plan is finalised (est. in two weeks). Your insights will be highly appreciated, and any further research or co-op ideas are welcome.'

DNI

Membership is the same as before with one or two new members and one or two leaving. DNI will drop its annual meeting at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October and will meet online instead, and perhaps only meet at the Fair every second year or so.

Jochen offered a seminar for copy-editors mid-year. Twelve copy editors attended and were very interested. While no new members from this group have joined, Jochen thought the seminar was very useful. Jochen has also continued his involvement with the Dictionary project.

ISC/SCI

ISC/SCI membership is around 125 currently, a slight decrease from a few months earlier.

The Executive meets six times a year – three regular meetings of three hours ; a budget meeting (March); a conference meeting (November); and the AGM.

The conference in June in Newfoundland went very well, with good responses all around and excellent engagement with the activities around the conference, including the pre-conference dinner and the conference banquet. The next conference in 2024 will be virtual, but no date has been set yet. The following conference, in 2025, will be in-person in Toronto.

An interesting presentation from an editor at Palgrave Macmillan highlighted the fact that our idea of books is changing. He sees the future of edited books as the 'journalisation' of books. People may not want to buy a full edited book any more, but will be able to order an article from a book. In terms of indexing does that mean each article will be indexed? He responded by saying that there will still be an index for the whole book together with whichever article may be ordered, which will be partly to entice the reader to buy more articles. So the index will be a good marketing tool for us and the publishers. However, the option for the author to merely send in keywords instead of hiring an indexer seems likely to remain! Certainly, in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) publishing this may be the case, although it was felt that in academic humanities publishing a professional index may still be the preferred option. ISC/SCI is looking to address this issue with publishers and perhaps involving ICRIS could make it an international letter-writing campaign. Targeting the decision-makers in the publishing world, including packagers, will be important, as will further involvement with editors to explain the benefits of a good index. ISC/SCI will draft some ideas and approaches.

Work has been undertaken to upgrade the functionality of the website. ISC/SCI is also considering establishing a new bookkeeper position and incorporation of the organisation.

There is discussion about gathering indexing guidelines from publishers and making these available on the members' area of the website.

The new library programme has had a slow response, but there will be more promotion to members. (ANZSI experience indicates that books taken to in-person events and conferences greatly increases the opportunity for members to browse and borrow.)

The Mentorship Program is going well and the call for more mentors lately has helped fill the latest mentorship needs.

The Outreach Committee is a very busy and hardworking group of indexers. It continues to stay in contact with the bursary winners and those who have received a trial membership. Applications for the 2024 bursary will go out in the new year. A member of the Committee is developing a webinar to introduce academic authors to indexing skills.

Another promotion will be at the Vancouver Readers and Writers Festival to be undertaken by indexers from Vancouver in a couple of weeks.

ISC/SCI had table at two outside conferences this year. The first one was at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences at York University in Toronto, commonly known as the Learned's Conference. It is the largest academic gathering in Canada, and one of the largest in the world. It brings together 67 academic associations from humanities and social sciences disciplines, including literature, history, theatre, film studies, education, music, sociology, geography, social work and more. The second one was at the Editors Canada conference.

NIN

NIN membership is stable, around ten members, the same as at the previous meeting. Two of the younger members will attend the one-day SI conference in September.

The whole NIN network meets every two to three months and has been discussing how to raise the profile of the profession. Indexing in the Netherlands is still very much unknown, but the Network has been posting blog texts on its website to assist with this. So far these are in Dutch only, but there are plans for English translations which will be forwarded to ICRIS.

One issue has been raised by a member around copyright. Some book announcements online have indicated that the indexes have been attributed automatically to the author or the editor of book with multi authors. Issues of legality aside, it was felt it was not right to have the indexes credited to others.

NIN has also been trying to get Dennis Duncan's book translated into Dutch, but without much success to date. It would help raise the profile of the profession if this could be achieved.

SI

SI has between 270 and 280 members. Some people have been retiring although about 40 people are enrolled on the SI training course.

The Society has launched a revised Fellowship pathway. They are also hoping to revamp all the online workshops that have been offered over the years into a new format. Ruth Ellis recently gave a Zoom session on cookery and new online workshops for gardening, biography and law are planned.

Some members and local groups are now meeting in person as well as online.

The conference on 26 September in Leeds will be in person and members are excited about meeting face-to-face after such a long time.

The Society now has a representative on the British Standards Institution's Identifiers and Metadata Committee and the ISO 999 Committee. (ANZSI comment – maybe in the next round, the standard could finally refer to a koala, not a koala bear!)

SI is not having a direct presence at the Chartered Institute of Editors and Proofreaders conference in Glasgow this year, but information will go into the conference packs.

Nicola reported back on the conference she attended in Oxford where Hazel Bell gave a paper on T.E. Lawrence and what a great opportunity it was for indexing to be discussed in front of an international audience beyond the indexing and editing community.

SI has set up an online member survey on book packagers. The results are currently being analysed and there will be some discussion at the conference. Long term, SI hopes to put together some resources for members about working for packagers and to share this information internationally.

The Indexer

Mary Coe reported on the new contract with Liverpool University Press (LUP) including its move to a new distribution model next year:

- The quarterly issues of the journal are only going to be published online in an electronic version using the regular schedule. A pdf of the whole issue will be available to download as well as individual articles (as happens currently).
- At the end of each year, a printed volume of the four issues will be available as a complete pdf and also as a single print version that will be mailed to subscribers.
- A trial run of a pdf version is expected to be accessible for the next issue in December.

Hopefully this will keep *The Indexer's* costs stable and also allow issues to be available to subscribers as soon as possible. The delay in subscribers receiving print copies is a problem at the moment with many, particularly in Australia, not receiving the latest issues at all.

Canadian subscribers are receiving their issues 'fairly late'. Are members of other Societies/networks having the same problem? Please let Mary know. It was noted that LUP has an arrangement with Oxford University Press re distribution of *The Indexer* and this will facilitate distributing the the end-of-year printed volume in North America.

Mary will send out an announcement about the changes with the link to the September online issue which is due shortly. The September issue will feature articles from the Berlin Conference and next year one issue will feature the recent Canadian conference.

The new model will still offer Societies space to advertise.

International website

Madeleine reported that she has not been able to progress much work on this and it was suggested that she contact Samuel Arnet from DNI, who had expressed interest in assisting with this work at an earlier meeting.

Heading or banner for website

A number of possibilities were discussed:

International Indexing Societies, World of indexing, World of Book Indexing, The Magnificent World of Indexing, Wide/Wild World of Indexing (!!), Indexing around the World, Indexing World – books, websites, databases, Indexing International – books, journals, websites and databases (bearing in mind not to derail searches for The Indexer: The International Journal of Indexing!!)

It was felt that it was important to have the term ‘book’ in the title, so as to differentiate the terms index/indexing from that used in other areas such as financial markets and database programming, in particular. Also, terms like website or database used in the heading are going to be weighed more heavily in Google searches and might be confusing.

Members agreed on **Indexing International – books and journals** as one possibility but agreed to keep considering alternatives and forward them to Madeleine.

Explanatory material beneath the heading or up front on the home page could be added to explain database and website indexing as well.

Domain names

Again, emphasis was put on including the term ‘book’ in any domain name chosen.

- indexers.org will take you to the SI website (in the UK) although it was confirmed that this is still available
- bookindexers.org
- findanindexer.org – used by ASI
- indexingsocieties.org – again does not include the term ‘book’, which is necessary because of the other meanings for index explained above.

There was general agreement to use bookindexing.org

Continuation of online ICRIS meetings

Members discussed this issue in light of the return to in-person conference meetings, which, in the past, included informal ICRIS meetings for any ICRIS representatives who were

attending. Alternatively, will ICRIS hold hybrid meetings in conjunction with in-person conferences rather than two separate online ICRIS meetings per year?

Members felt the two individual online meetings were very useful for reasons of continuity and relationship building, but mainly because these were the only occasions when almost all official representatives could meet as an international group. However, it was also agreed that informal ICRIS gatherings at conference should continue where possible, with notes taken, as happened at the Canadian conference this year.

Do we need to change the language in the International Agreement to include online meetings for the Triennial meeting at which formal decisions are taken? Is three years too long for formal decisions to be taken? If we are going to commit to two online meetings per year, then we need to think about the ramifications for the Triennial meetings. On the other hand, are the online meetings only information and ideas exchanging sessions: what's new, what's happening in the Societies/Networks? Should these meetings only be seen as an addition to the Triennial meetings. These online meetings can also be seen as assisting with implementing Triennial decisions, as is being done with the development of the international indexing website.

There was agreement that it would be preferable to keep the Triennial meetings as face-to-face, or at least hybrid. A decision re the 2025 Triennial meeting is under discussion between ASI and ISC/SCI.

A decision on which Society/Network can host the two online meetings in 2024 (March/April and September/October) can be decided in due course. The date will need to take into account the changes in daylight saving across the countries participating.