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Council update

The ANZSI Council meeting of 31 January 2017 confirmed appointments to Council positions:
The 2016-2017 ANZSI Council:

President        Mary Coe
Vice-President    Terri Anne Mackenzie
Secretary         Sherrey Quinn
Treasurer         Michael Wyatt
Council Members:  Shirley Campbell
                  Elisabeth Thomas
                  Denene Cavanagh
                  two vacancies

After stepping down from the secretary’s role, Kerry Anderson had planned to continue as a general council member. This is not now possible and Council thanks Kerry for all her hard work for ANZSI.

ANZSI officials have been confirmed in their positions. Details are at: https://www.anzsi.org/about-us/anzsi-council/.

Regular reports from officials were received.

Discussion on specific topics included:

- The acceptance of a proposal for a weekend symposium, open to all interested ANZSI members (subject to venue limitations), organised by NSW and Canberra Region groups. The symposium will be held in the NSW southern highlands in July or August 2017. [see more under Save the Date in Group events section of this Newsletter. Ed.]

- Discussion of the workload of Council members. Society member, and experienced PA, Denene Cavanagh has joined Council and will be helping Council evaluate its administrative workload.

- Informing and encouraging members to consider submitting papers/panel suggestions for the biennial IPED National Editors Conference, coming up in September this year. [See details under Other events in this Newsletter.]

The next Council meeting is scheduled for 21 March 2017.

Sherrey Quinn and Elisabeth Thomas

Photo: CC0
Indexes behaving badly IV

The cobbler’s children have, once again, lost their shoes

In this fourth article in the series, I return with a less-then-helpful index from another information studies book. In previous articles in this series, I asked why there were so many bad ones, then I found a good one. Unfortunately, we are now back to the former.

The fourth edition of *Looking for Information: A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs, and Behavior* by Donald O Case and Lisa Given (Bingley, UK: Emerald) was published in 2016. While the information contained in the book has presumably been updated with every edition, the index appears to be suffering from abuse and neglect.


with this entry from the fourth edition (2016):


In an earlier article, I mentioned Zipf’s principle of least effort, which states that people will follow the course of action that involves the least amount of work, and I wondered whether that could be an issue for index entries such as this one, with long strings of locators. But, I also wonder about the concept of relevance when I see index entries like this. Case and Given explain that relevance has to do with *aboutness* (in other words, something is relevant if it is ‘on the topic’). Relevance is considered an important part of efficiency in information processing. If we are given too much information, we have a hard time processing it. We are also easily distracted by too much information and may fail to recognise when something is relevant.

Here is the index entry for the concept of relevance in *Looking for Information* (2016):

| Relevance, 17, 38, 58, 72, 98, 110-111, 112, 113, 114, 135, 169, 184, 315, 325, 331, 338, 351 see also Pertinence, Salience |

Assuming that the reader is willing to follow all of these references, they will find that the most extensive discussion of relevance occurs in chapter six from pages 110 to 114 under the heading ‘identifying relevant information’. If the index entry had given the page range (110-114), rather than a list of page numbers (110-111, 112, 113, 114) would that give the reader a clue about which section of the book contained the most relevant information about relevance? Other pages contain
passing mentions of relevance, such as on page 17, where relevance is mentioned as a topic that will be discussed in the sixth chapter. Is this relevant to the reader?

Is it the indexer’s job to help the reader find all information or to find relevant information? The answer to that question may lie in the definition of information, which is problematic. According to Case and Given (p 6), ‘information can be any difference you perceive, in your environment or within yourself. It is any aspect that you notice in your reality. It is something that brings about a change in your take on the world’. This may sound complicated, but if you stop to think about it for a minute, it does make sense. The problem with this definition in the context of books and indexing might relate to the question of whose reality? Or whose perception? Or whose take on the world? As indexers, we have the very difficult task of putting ourselves in other people’s shoes (or heads). Sometimes we get it right and sometimes we don’t; however, I think it is inherently our job to try. Relevance may be the main thing that distinguishes an index from the results of a free-text search function in an e-book. If all you are going to offer the reader is a list of passing mentions or everywhere that a word occurs in a text, then you aren’t making their job of information processing any easier. You might, in fact, be making it harder.

Looking for Information is a very extensive survey of information behaviour research, but the concept of an index doesn’t even rate an entry in the book’s index. Is this because there is no research about how people find information using book indexes? Sadly, that may be true,¹ and what there is either was overlooked by Case and Given or they didn’t think it was relevant for this book. While more research on index usability would be great to have, it would be even better to take that further and consider how theories of information behaviour relate to how people use books as information systems. Hopefully, we will see that in future editions of Looking for Information as well as a better-quality index. I will celebrate the day that I see not only good indexes in information studies books but also the concept of an index in their indexes! 😊


Mary Coe

Annual report season - some observations

ANZSI Canberra Region Group members (and no doubt members of other groups) were busy during the Australian Government annual report 2015–16 indexing season, July to October 2016. Some observations:

- Indexes are mandatory in annual reports produced in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) (as they were under the previous Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997). Guidance for preparing annual reports is now issued by the Department of Finance, not the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

- Annual reports were generally (though not always) shorter due the ‘annual report statement’ approach of the PGPA Act, fully in force from 1 July 2015. Most reports were more succinct, but some were still repetitive.
• There seemed to be no less jargon.
• ‘program’ made a big (but not universal) comeback, now that Prime Ministers Howard and Abbott (who insisted on ‘programme’) are no longer on the scene.
• Deadlines were tight, as usual. Changes of schedule were common.
• Late changes to text seem to be unavoidable in some agencies, but agency staff were often helpful and understanding about confining re-flow to as few pages as possible. On the other hand, some did not understand at all the implications of changes in page breaks during indexing – ‘... but only a little bit of text moved ...’.
• Many reports were indexed without the financial statements being in place (‘they’re not ready yet’); mostly the financial management summary section was indexed with the financial statements referenced as a single span, but one or two agencies insisted that the statements be indexed in detail.
• Pet hates of indexers: stylistic features such as pale grey page numbers or small, fancy fonts for page numbers – both difficult to read; and lost indents in published indexes.


Compiled by Sherrey Quinn

**Talk to Editors NSW**

In September last year, I was invited to address Editors NSW on what editors need to know about indexing.

In my introduction, I talked about what sort of book needs an index; touched on AS/NZS 999; described what an index is and is not; and outlined the way indexers work and how they use computers, stressing that indexing is an intellectual task that cannot be fully automated.

I discussed the appropriate length of an index; and briefly described the various types of index entry and their components.

We touched on authors and editors as indexers. I described in detail *Indexers Available* and ANZSI’s Accreditation scheme.

Next, we looked at costing an index and getting quotes. I spent quite a lot of time discussing in detail how to write an appropriate brief, focusing on length of notice, the time an indexer needs for a job, and specifics such as style and what the indexer needs from the client.

Finally, I described how to evaluate and edit an index.

The questions at the end were interesting:

Q When you get a see reference to something else in the index which only has the one page reference, why that page reference isn’t just repeated?
A  I described double-posting, and suggested that they avoid an indexer who does not understand the process.

Q  If you have a very large book, say a big text book, sometimes there’ll be two terms used for the same concepts, would you just pick one and use a ‘see also’ for the other?

A  I explained how we choose one term and make a ‘see’ reference from synonyms.

Q  If the book hasn’t been edited well, do you get to the point where you say you actually can’t do the index with the text as it is now?

A  I admitted that faced with a badly edited book I just grit my teeth and get on with it.

Q  If you get discrepancies; do you bring those up?

A  Absolutely!

Q  Sometimes an indexer seems to do an index quickly and doesn’t charge very much. Then you find a bunch of quite random and odd entries. If the software does the mechanical part, does that indicate that they’ve probably read it quickly, highlighted entries that they think may go in, and just let the software do the automated part?

A  I explained the functions of indexing software and its limitations.

Q  You say there are lots of different approaches to an indexing job. How do you personally approach it? Do you go from start to finish, in say a very well structured book?

A  I described my methods of working.

Q  I read a biography once where the subject of the biography himself was an index entry. Is that a good practice?

A  I described the principle of the metatopic and the various solutions.

Q  Do you index online – how does that work? How do you bring those methods into online publications? Is indexing a website different process to indexing a book?

A  I explained that the principles are the same.

The full text of the talk was published in the October 2016 issue of Blue Pencil, the newsletter of Editors NSW, a branch of IPEd.

*Michael Wyatt*
Look us up! Indexers Available

Editors, authors, publishers: save time and money – find someone to make the most of your publication by creating the index!

Indexers Available is a directory compiled by the Society to help editors, publishers and authors find an indexer. The indexers listed are all members of ANZSI and all expect to be available to take commissions. It includes Accredited Indexers, whose competence has been assessed by a committee of the Society, as well as other indexers. Find out more about hiring indexers, as well as the recommended rate for indexing and how indexers quote on indexing jobs.

http://www.anzsi.org/indexers-available/

What’s in The Indexer?

The December issue of The Indexer is available on Ingenta and Lulu.

Some of the articles in this issue:
- Multiple entry points Heather Hodden
- Pan granularism and specificity Fred Leise

THE INDEXER
The International Journal of Indexing

December 2016 issue now out, with articles including:
- Heather Hedden on multiple entry points
- Gale Rhoades on diacritics for indexers
- Pierke Bosschieter on CPD and language learning
- Fred Leise on pan-granularism and specificity
- articles on indexing letters and oral history
- ... plus reviews, indexes reviewed and more.

Subscribe online
ANZSI members 4 issues £40.00 (approx. A$65.00)
(Pay using a credit/debit card or a PayPal account)

http://tinyurl.com/subscribe-online
Email: subscriptions@theindexer.org

Essential reading for anyone interested in promoting the cause of analytical indexing in the digital age

www.theindexer.org
Gallimaufry

@ASIndexing “Human beings are natural classifiers. Indexers understand the type of classifications that readers tend to use. Fred Leise”

@djblduncan “C. K. Ogden’s Basic English wordlist. See if you make say some good: http://ogden.basic-english.org/words.html.

@JISC outlines a new partnership that puts the UK one step closer to a shared digital library collection: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/blog/metadata-the-key-to-collaboration-and-a-national-bibliographic-knowledgebase-16-feb-2017.

@conversiontales “You know that sneaking feeling of not wanting to look inside your new book in case you find something wrong?”
Groups’ news

NSW Indexers

NSW Indexers got together for a great lunch one recent Friday afternoon. Thanks to Tricia’s suggestion and organising, we got together at Kirribilli. We all enjoyed the location and harbour views. A few of us topped it off the afternoon with a walk across the Bridge back to the city.

This was our end-of-year/Christmas meeting (postponed to a quieter time) so we didn’t talk much official business. It was a gathering of the ‘usual suspects’, and we were also pleased to welcome new-ish member Denene.

I suggest we have another meeting in about three months, possibly on an evening or weekend. We can discuss venue and time closer to the date. Alternatively, if you have any ideas, feel free to email suggestions and we can plan other events. Suggestions and planning are open to all members.

We would like to welcome two new members to the NSW Indexers Group. As mentioned, Denene Cavanagh came to our Kirribilli lunch; some of us also met her at the Canberra conference. She is a library studies student on the Central Coast. Juliet Richters was unable to attend the lunch, but some of us have met her at past events. She is an academic returning to freelance indexing and editing. (I hope these brief intros are accurate – please feel free to email another introduction). We look forward to catching up with you both at more events.

Glenda Browne

L-R: Jenny Browne, Jon Jermey, Michael Wyatt, Tricia Waters, Mary Coe, Graham Clayton and Glenda Browne.

Invisible: Elisabeth Thomas (behind the camera), Denene Cavanagh (arrived shortly after).

(Photographs: Elisabeth Thomas, with a little amateur photoshopping in above image)
Reminders

All group conveners were recently reminded of the subsidies available from Council to groups for meeting funding or for approved special projects and events. Members - get in touch with your group convener with your ideas for indexing events and meetings.

ANZSI members are reminded that they are able to join interest or regional groups that are ‘of interest’ to them.
For NSW Indexers, for example, being in the group lets you follow discussions about future events and suggest ideas for where and when we meet.
You do not, however, have to be a member of a group to participate in their events – just get in touch to attend as a guest.

ANZSI events

For full details, follow the link from the title of each event to the website.

Save the date! – Friday 21 – Sunday 23 July 2017
ANZSI Southern Highlands Symposium
Give yourself a gift and come to Christmas in July at Sylvan Glen in Penrose NSW
http://www.sylvanglen.com.au
There will be training sessions on the Friday, with indexing talks, discussions and networking on the Saturday and Sunday.
Organised by the Canberra Region Indexers and NSW Indexers.
Everyone is welcome!
Details to come!

Wednesday, 1 February
Melbourne Indexers: Indexers’ Challenge
6:00 – 7:30 pm, Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, 1 Pakington St, Kew VIC
Spend the evening evaluating indexes submitted for the Indexers’ challenge.

Tuesday, 7 February
Canberra Region Indexers: A Summer Lunch
12:30 – 2:00pm, Beyond Q Bookshop, Curtin shops, Curtin ACT
Come along for a pleasant summer lunch in the cool depths of the Beyond Q second-hand bookshop, and enjoy chatting with your fellow indexers about all things indexing!
Cost: To cover your lunch, coffee, or cakes. or second-hand books!
For more information, contact Denise Sutherland.
Tuesday, 21 March
Council Meeting
6:30 – 8:00pm, teleconference

Wednesday, 5 April
Melbourne Indexers: Updating an Index
6:00 – 7:30 pm, Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, 1 Pakington St, Kew VIC
How do you update an index? What are the tricks to doing it successfully? What software features in Macrex and Sky, for example, can assist with this process?

Tuesday, 16 May
Council Meeting
6:30 – 8:00pm, teleconference

Wednesday, 7 June
Melbourne Indexers: Financial Aspects
6:00 – 7:30 pm, Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, 1 Pakington St, Kew VIC
Looking at questions of finance such as:
The actual cost of doing the index comes in well under your initial quote or the publisher’s budget. What do you do?
You are approached by an author or not-for-profit organisation who are not able to afford to pay the real cost of the index. What do you do?
Company paid super is offered by some publishers as part of a contract. What is it and are you eligible?

Other events

8th IPEd National Editors Conference
13-15 September 2017, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Bank, Brisbane, Qld
The theme of the conference is ‘Advancing the Profession’. “This conference will focus on contemporary and emerging aspects of editing and publishing, including, but not limited to: [lots of topics – including indexing!]” [http://iped-conf2017.org.au/](http://iped-conf2017.org.au/).
ANZSI members are encouraged to consider presenting papers or join with colleagues to make up panel/s at this conference with our closest publishing colleagues.
Association of South African Indexers and Bibliographers (ASAIB) Annual Conference
19 May 2017, Centurion, Gauteng, South Africa

The theme of the conference is “Nailing Indexing: perfecting the art”.

2-3 June 2017, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

“Reflect, refresh, and celebrate 40 years of indexing. Come to Montreal to learn from the experts, meet and chat with colleagues, and help us celebrate our 40th year—our Ruby Anniversary!”
http://indexers.ca/annual-conference/.

American Society for Indexing (ASI) Annual Conference
15-17 June 2017, Portland, Maine, USA

Join ASI members in ‘The City by the Sea’. Portland, an up-and-coming destination, hosts a dozen museums and is a highly walkable foodie city.

Society of Indexers (SI) Annual Conference
21 June 2017, Oxford, England, UK

The 2017 conference will celebrate the Society of Indexers 60th anniversary with a one-day conference, immediately prior to the two-day symposium on the book index. More information on the conference programme and how to book will be available in February.

The Book Index
22-23 June 2017, Oxford, England, UK

The Bodleian Centre for the Study of the Book presents a two-day symposium on the history of the index.
https://indexconference.wordpress.com/.
Contact information

General email: info@anzsi.org

ANZSI Council

President: Mary Coe
Vice-President: Terri Anne Mackenzie
Secretary: Sherrey Quinn
Treasurer: Michael Wyatt
Council members: Shirley Campbell, Elisabeth Thomas and Denene Cavanagh.

Branch and regional contacts

Please consult the ANZSI website for details of regional and interest groups, and their contact people.

Newsletter

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The Newsletter is published six times a year, every two months.
Opinions and statements expressed in the Newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the society.
Submissions may be edited for clarity, space and uniformity of style. Selection of content is at the discretion of the Editor / ANZSI Council.

Schedule

The next Newsletter will appear in April 2017.
The contribution deadline is Friday 24 March.
Please send contributions by email to the editor, Elisabeth Thomas, at editor@anzsi.org

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For advertising rates, please visit our website.