Module A: Sample

Aims and objectives • Contents • Text extract

Training in indexing: 5th edition

Module A

Study guidelines

- This module is a general introduction to indexing. You will find more detailed coverage of all aspects of indexing in the later modules.
- Some of the ideas peculiar to indexing are necessarily described at length. It is important to remember that indexing requires knowledge (general and special), a mixture of common sense and reason, plus an element of imaginative helpfulness – all combining to help the index user.
- While studying the module, examine in detail as many indexes (of different types) as you can. Check whether the entries are accurate and useful; whether there are obvious omissions; whether there are helpful cross-references; in what order the entries are arranged. Have a couple of indexed books beside you while studying the module, so that you can find examples of what you are reading about. You should also practise compiling indexes to anything you read.
- Remember that there are a great many additional resources on the training course website; make full use of them.
- Before sitting the test paper for this module, work through the practice exercises for this module on the training course website to check whether you are ready for formal assessment.

Aims and objectives

Aims

The general aims of this module are to:

- define some basic terms used in indexing
- describe what indexes are for
- identify the main characteristics of indexes
- identify what users want from indexes
- identify what kind of people make good indexers
- describe how indexes are made

- describe the role of authors and other document originators
- describe how various types of document are produced
- describe why human analytical indexing provides a superior tool to full text search or to 'automated indexing'.

Objectives

After studying the module, students should be able to:

- understand the terms used in indexing and publishing
- describe how indexing fits into the document production process
- understand the importance of indexes
- understand the needs of index users
- identify the knowledge and skills that indexers need
- describe how an index is made
- understand the aims and intentions of authors and other originators
- understand how documents are produced
- understand the conventions of bibliographic references
- identify different types of document
- name the basic reference sources used by indexers
- create a short and simple standalone index
- argue the case for human analytical indexing
- argue the case for indexes in eBooks.

Contents

A1

Setting the scene

A1.0 Introduction

Traditionally an index has been constructed as an A–Z list of concepts and topics contained in a document, providing both a map of the text and a retrieval tool for information. Good indexing principles and techniques have been developed over time and these form the basis of current good practice in indexing and make up the main content of the course. The basic principles for producing a well structured index are relevant for both traditional printed indexes and electronic forms of publication, as the analysis of a text needed to provide intelligent access to it is an intellectual process.

The role of the indexer

Indexers use their knowledge of the subject and their skills in providing access to information to create a structured list of named and unnamed (implied) concepts covered in the text, drawing scattered references together and analysing larger topics into their component parts. The indexer will think empathetically about potential alternative approaches to finding information that the user may make (e.g. searching under **synonyms**) and provide appropriate **cross-references** to accommodate these. In addition the indexer will point the reader to other related discussions that may be of interest to the user who has looked up a particular term. These are not decisions that can be made by automated and **semi-automated indexing** programmes, which are based on word-spotting. An intelligently crafted index will be a useful, easily navigable tool for the users, leading them to the information they need by the shortest, quickest route.

The digital revolution in publishing

eBooks are a new delivery format. They are now being produced alongside printed books with the whole publication often '**born digital**', i.e. produced in a digital format from the start, allowing export to a variety of platforms including print and eBook formats. Whilst eBooks also provide for full-text searching as a means of accessing information,

an index based on an intelligent analysis of the text remains a useful tool which can be used on its own or in association with other search facilities.

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A1.1 Human analytical indexing

So what are the advantages of human analytical indexes over indexes produced by automated and semi-automated indexing programs or using a simple text search?

An indexer will:

- provide alternative access to terms for users who search under synonyms by providing ***see* cross-references** (or double entry)
  e.g. pupils *see* students
- recognize relationships with other topics, and provide appropriate ***see also* cross-references** to alert the user to these **related terms** e.g. literacy *see also* reading
- identify implied concepts that are referred to in the text but not identified by name
- distinguish between **homographs** (words that look the same but have different meanings) so that for example, readers interested in the pop star Madonna are not directed to material on religious iconography

  e.g. Madonna (entertainer)
  Madonna (mother of Jesus)
- provide context for references e.g. through **modifiers** or **subheadings** for groups of **locators** and **page ranges**; or by typographical distinction of locators
- distinguish between important information and very minor or irrelevant references
- pick up references to variant word forms, where a simple text search would only return the word variation searched

  e.g. mouse/mice; defences/defensive positions
- highlight visual information contained in images or other graphics.

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A1.2 Definitions

Indexers should be familiar with the following terms, which are standard usage in the indexing and publishing world, so that they are able to use them correctly when speaking or writing to publishers and their editors. In practice, there is some variation in usage and precise meanings. The definitions given here are intended only to inform

the student indexer. Fuller discussion of many of these terms will be found in the relevant parts of the training course. Terms in bold are included in this list of definitions. All terms included in this list are also highlighted in **bold** at first mention in the modules.

abridged edition—a shortened version of a **document** (often intended to simplify a text), e.g. an edition of an adult novel for children or, for adults, editions such as Reader's Digest condensed books

abstract—a summary of the information contained in a **document**, e.g. a 100-word precis of a **periodical**/journal article; often collected in journal form, e.g. *Chemical Abstracts*

alphabetization—the process of sorting index **entries** into alphabetical order, according to a set of rules; *see also* **letter-by-letter**; **word-by-word**

antonym—a **term** with the opposite meaning to another term, e.g. 'optimism'/'pessimism'

app—short for application software and most commonly used in relation to small programs used on mobile devices

archives—**documents** no longer used for their original purposes but preserved for research, e.g. historical papers in the National Archives, or redundant institutional records

audiovisual document—a **document** in which the information is presented as images and sounds, e.g. film, video, **CD-ROM**

author—a person or organization responsible for producing all or some of the information content of a **document**

back-of-the-book index—an **index** to the content of a book or similar **document** (pamphlet, brochure, etc.), produced as an integral part of the published document

bibliographic citation/bibliographic reference—a precise description of a **document** or part of a document, providing a unique identification

bibliography—a list of documents having a common characteristic, such as authorship, place of publication, or subject, e.g. a list at the end of a book or **periodical**/journal article, or a complete volume listing all of an author's works, naming all known **editions** and translations

book packager—working for a **publisher** who outsources the work, the packager executes various stages of publishing using their own staff or freelance professionals. A packager will therefore work for more than one publisher

born digital—a **document** created in a digital or electronic form as opposed to being created through scanning or reformatting original printed material

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A2

Index functions and characteristics

A2.0 Introduction

This section introduces you to:

- what indexes are for and why we need them
- the main features of indexes – entries, headings, subheadings, cross-references and locators
- the conventions of index form and layout
- how index entries are compiled.

These topics are covered in more detail in subsequent sections of this and later modules.

A2.1 Function

An **index** provides a way of finding information in a **document**, a set of documents or a list of documents. It is an aid to finding references to major treatments of topics, and to lesser items that may be of interest in another context. It brings together scattered references to different aspects of the same subject and links **related terms** and **synonyms**.

See **Section A1.1**: 'Human analytical indexing' for reasons why indexes are still important in **eBooks** which also provide text searching facilities.

Without an index, the user must either work through the whole document (or set or list) from beginning to end; or dip into it at random, looking for the wanted information; or try to guess (from contents lists, chapter headings, captions, words in **titles** or other indicators) where it might appear.

A contents list at the front of the **text** is valuable as a quick guide, and is always worth studying, but it lists only the principal divisions of the text in the order in which they appear, and gives only a broad indication of the textual material. An index rearranges the information in the whole document, giving access to all of it.

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A2.2 Necessary characteristics

A2.2.0 Introduction

Every index contains **terms** arranged in a sequence of **entries**. An entry may consist of

- a heading (i.e. a **main heading** with or without **subheading**(s)), at least one **locator** and sometimes a ***see also* cross-reference** to at least one related term; or
- a main heading or a subheading with a ***see* cross-reference** to a **preferred term**.

A2.2.1 Main headings and subheadings

Indexes are commonly set out in an alphabetical sequence:

animals
musical instruments
water plants

These are main headings and are aligned at the left-hand side of the **page** or column. There may also be subheadings **indented** (usually by a 1-**em** space) under the main headings. This convention is followed throughout these modules.

animals
  breeding grounds
  feeding habits
musical instruments
  history of development
  manufacture
water plants
  garden ponds
  rivers

Subheadings may be **set out** in a list, as above, or **run on** on the same line and separated by semicolons:

animals: breeding grounds 26–38; feeding habits 39–57

Set-out subheadings are used in eBooks.

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A2.2.2 *See also* cross-references

Sometimes a *see also* cross-reference to a related term is useful or necessary:

musical instruments *see also* dance bands; orchestras

While indexing a general work on musical entertainment, the indexer has helped the user by connecting subjects from different parts of the text. Here the different ways of combining musical instruments are being pointed out by the *see also* reference; the words or phrases that follow it are known as related terms.

A2.2.3 *See* cross-references

A2.2.3.0 Introduction

Sometimes a heading is rejected in favour of its synonym or usage in another language:

duckweed *see Lemna minuta*

The Latin names of species are set in italics.

Both terms may be used in the text of a book on water gardens, say, but the indexer gradually discovers that the Latin names of plants predominate and so to be consistent prefers the Latin term in the index. 'Duckweed' must be mentioned, as it does occur in the text and some users are likely to look for it, but it is the **non-preferred term**; the *see* cross-reference directs the user to the Latin, which is the preferred term in this particular index.

Note that a see cross-reference is not needed if the preferred term would be adjacent in the index:

personal development plans 4
PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) 192
primary school teaching 192

(no entry needed for Postgraduate Certificate in Education as this would be adjacent).

A2.2.3.1 Double entry

Double entry is often used instead of *see* cross-references if there are only one or two locators, for example:

training, vocational 33, 42–48
university courses 25, 49
validation 64–68
vocational training 33, 42–48

or if the entry does not occupy more space than a cross-reference will. It is also helpful as it prevents the index user from having to turn over many pages of an index to reach a term that is alphabetically a long way from the original heading. For example, instead of:

engineering, mechanical *see* mechanical engineering

use double entry:

engineering, mechanical 272–320
mechanical engineering 272–320

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In eBooks the use of double entry of terms in not constrained by space considerations, unless the text is being published as a print book which is space limited. The index would be embedded, with a print index generated for the printed version and links added to locators for the eBook version.

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A3

Users of documents and indexes

A3.0 Introduction

Indexes are compiled in order to help people find information. In this section we consider:

- why documents are produced
- how documents are used
- how document users vary in terms of skills and other characteristics
- what users need and expect from an index.

Throughout these modules you will constantly be thinking about the needs of the index user.

A3.1 The purpose and use of documents

The term 'document' refers not just to print on paper, but also to **eBooks** and **non-book media** including microform, **audiovisual** materials and electronically generated records. Books and pamphlets are documents, as are magazines (sometimes referred to as **periodicals** or journals), maps, photographs, correspondence, press cuttings, sound recordings, films and DVDs, webpages and eBooks. Objects such as scientific specimens, manufactured products and works of art are also included.

The *purpose* of a document is to contain information collected, arranged and recorded by one or more people in a form that will last for some time. The *user* of the document may be its creator or a different person, and the document may be used many times over a long period of time and for many different purposes. The document can therefore be seen as encapsulating material to be communicated repeatedly by the creator to the users.

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A3.4 Summary: the needs of the index user

In this chapter you have learned that:

- indexes are compiled for a wide variety of documents
- documents are used in many different ways
- documents are normally produced for particular user groups
- the needs and expectations of index users vary according to their background and experience
- the indexer must always anticipate users' needs, compiling an index that is appropriate in terms of style, language, coverage and layout.

Whether you are indexing a child's information book on the care of hamsters or a specialist **monograph** at the cutting edge of nuclear physics, you should ensure that you produce a user-friendly index.

A4

Indexers

A4.0 Introduction

In this section you will learn about:

- where indexes are compiled
- who compiles indexes
- what skills good indexers need
- what reference sources indexers use
- what equipment indexers should expect to have
- how indexers should look after their health and well-being.

A4.1 Situations requiring an indexer

Indexers are involved with all kinds of documents. One familiar task for the freelance indexer is compiling a back-of-the-book index to a text such as an academic or professional book or a general factual book issued by a commercial publisher. But there are many other situations where indexes may be needed. The advent of ePublishing means that experienced indexers with specialist skills can seek new opportunities for indexing.

Periodicals and newspapers

Many general and specialist periodicals require annual indexes to text and illustrations (and may then need cumulative indexes covering a longer period). Now that many journals are publishing online there is a move away from proper indexes, but some are still being produced, particularly in the arts and humanities. You may need to argue the case for human indexing.

Abstracts

Most periodical articles are published with abstracts (brief summaries or precis). Abstracts of articles (and of some books) are produced for regular use by abstracting services, offering the latest information

A5.4 Making the index

A5.4.0 Introduction

For a book being prepared by a commercial publishing house, the indexer's contract (by telephone, email or letter) is usually with the publisher or book packager, in which case a member of the firm's editorial staff liaises with the indexer throughout. Alternatively, an author may take responsibility for the index and contact the indexer direct. In both cases, it is essential to discuss the following:

- timetable
- fee
- index specification (coverage, style, length, format of completed copy and any special requirements).

The details should be agreed, preferably in writing, and usually by email, before the indexer starts work. If any problems arise during index preparation, causing uncertainty or delay, the indexer should notify the client quickly so that the necessary action can be taken. For example, 10 pages of proof sheets from which the indexer is working may have inadvertently been repeated in the text by the typesetters but with continuing page numbers; or the original time schedule and fee may have to be adjusted owing to the extra density of concepts in a certain part of the text.

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A5.5 Computers in indexing

A5.5.0 Introduction

Indexers usually use computers to perform, or speed up, the *non-intellectual* elements of their work. Indexing programs can greatly reduce the time spent in manipulating headings, sorting entries into alphabetical (or other) order, some editing processes and printing out or making electronic copies of the final index. But you, the indexer, remain responsible for the major *intellectual* input: identifying indexable concepts, choosing suitable terms to represent them, and providing links between related terms.

It is important to make clear to clients the difference between indexing software as used by a professional indexer to speed up the physical process of creating the index, and automated indexing, where computer programs are used to record and index instances of words or phrases. The latter involves no analysis of more complex content, or of the context, and the result will be a poor, unstructured and unhelpful index.

There are various semi-automated indexing programs providing this type of basic index which an author or indexer can then use to create a more professional product.

A5.5.1 Indexing software

A dedicated indexing program such as Macrex, Cindex or Sky Index sorts, merges, styles and arranges the entries that have been inputted by the indexer, producing from them a correctly laid-out index in digital format according to the specification required for a particular job. Digital copies can be transferred to most word-processing formats and text-formatting systems, enabling the indexes to be easily incorporated into clients' own systems. Also, indexers working in co-operation with one another can exchange data by email or fileshare. Using the tools provided by indexing software greatly enhances the efficiency of the editing and checking stages of index production, which are essential to producing a good index.

You can see how an indexing program works by downloading a demo version from the supplier's website and using it to compile a short index. Trial versions of some embedded indexing software are also available. Information on indexing software packages is available in the Resource Centre of the SI training course website.

With an embedded indexing system, the indexer views the text to be indexed on screen, and uses specialist indexing tools to mark the entry with a temporary locator which is then copied to the entry in their indexing software; using a special process these entries are then transferred to the document file and embedded at the correct location in the text. This allows an index to be generated automatically by the document software. The index is placed within the same document, usually at the end; there is no separate index file.

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A5.6 Summary: compiling the index

In this chapter you have learned that:

- the index should normally cover the whole of a document
- index length is determined by various factors, including users' needs, and is not simply related to the size of the document
- index layout and format may vary, but all indexes should include certain features as standard and should be consistently laid out. eBooks may require a different layout to traditional indexes
- in certain circumstances, multiple indexes may be preferable to a single index sequence
- the indexer should agree the details of index specification, fee and schedule with the client before starting work and should renegotiate in the event of unforeseen problems
- there is no one right way to set about compiling an index, but the typical sequence of operations can be summarized as: reading the text; selecting and recording terms and locators; editing and checking the index
- computers have revolutionized the mechanical aspects of indexing, but the intellectual content remains the indexer's responsibility
- before using a dedicated indexing program it is essential to have a basic understanding of indexing principles.

A7.3 Summary: document production and description

In this section you have learned that:

- many people are involved in processing a document before it is finally published, all trying to ensure that the author's intentions are effectively and accurately communicated to the intended user group
- documents are normally identified by a standard set of information
- documents may be described using standard systems of bibliographic citation
- indexes may sometimes be compiled long after a document's first creation
- new editions of documents are likely to need new indexes
- indexes are needed for documents in a wide range of formats and in which text is arranged in various different ways
- abstracts guide document users to the information they need through indicative or informative summaries of document content
- an index should be suitable in terms of style, layout, language, etc. for the user group for which the document has been created
- indexes are normally needed for factual documents but some fictional works are also indexed, often at a much later date
- indexing needs may vary according to whether documents are in current use or are for archival purposes.

You have now come to the end of the sample extracts from Module A.

If you purchase Module A and decide to take the SI training course you should work from the full version of the module as these extracts are not sufficient to give you a thorough introduction to the principles of indexing needed to pass the first test.