

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Indexing Day, Thursday 30 March 2023

The Society of Indexers is celebrating National Indexing Day for the seventh successive year on Thursday 30 March 2023.

National Indexing Day was established in March 2017 to commemorate the diamond anniversary of the founding of the Society of Indexers. Since then, celebrations of indexing have taken place at live events, online and in the media. Indexers, authors and publishers have joined in enthusiastically to salute these 'unsung heroes of the publishing world', in Sam Leith's words in *The Guardian*. This year we will be celebrating with an online event for publishers, as well as online across social media.

The date marks the anniversary of the founding of the Society, which was formally constituted at the premises of the National Book League in London on 30 March 1957 by G. Norman Knight and colleagues. The Society of Indexers is the only autonomous professional body for indexers in the United Kingdom and Ireland and is associated with other indexing organisations around the world. Its aims are to promote indexing, the quality of indexes and the profession of indexing. Membership includes specialist indexers across the UK, working for authors and publishers in more than a hundred different subjects, from accountancy to zoology.

A good index is a vital component of a non-fiction book, providing a structured map to its content. Poor or absent book indexes are frustrating for readers, reviewers and students, as regularly remarked upon in book reviews and on social media. Indexes are still important for ebooks in the digital age. Dedicated indexing software can automate certain tasks, but a human indexer is needed for the intellectual work. Computers can't read like a human, so they can't index like one. A Ctrl-F search is not a magic solution. It does not distinguish between significant information and passing mentions, suggest synonymous access points unmentioned in the text, highlight connections between concepts, or show the relative content and coverage of topics. Professional book indexers are trained to address these issues and to look at each text from the readers' perspectives. With newer embedded indexing techniques, index entries can be anchored and linked to their precise location in the text, so that the same index can work across different formats and with reflowable text in ebooks. Today's professional indexers have both the know-how and the technology to achieve this, but it is often underused.

For National Indexing Day 2023, the Society of Indexers is running an online conference for publishing professionals interested in finding out more about indexing. This will be held via Zoom from 12:50 to 16:00 on 30 March. Following a welcome from our honorary president, Sam Leith, a series of presentations will focus on current indexing practices, how to commission and work with indexers, and how to evaluate good and bad indexes; there will be sessions for questions and discussion. The event will provide a useful opportunity for indexers and publishers to learn from each other so that together we can create better indexes and make non-fiction books more valuable and saleable. Tickets costing £10 and a provisional programme are available now at <https://www.indexers.org.uk/events/national-indexing-day-2023/>. We will also be celebrating another successful National Indexing Day 2023 on social media at #indexday.

Further information

For further information, please email publicity@indexers.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @indexers.

The Society of Indexers was established in 1957 to promote improved standards in all forms of indexing. It maintains the online Directory of Professional Indexers, which is searchable by subjects, skills and media. Further information about its training course, conference, local groups and how to commission an indexer can be found on its website: www.indexers.org.uk