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IS IT TIME FOR INDEXERS TO GIVE THANKS FOR LINUX?



Indexing & Abstracting
Society of Canada

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pour l'analyse de documents

Bulletin Editor
RACHEL ROSENBERG

Bulletin Associate Production
& Advertising Editor
GILLIAN WATTS

Please send all correspondence to:
The Editor, IASC/SCAD Bulletin
P.O. Box 664, Station P
Toronto, ON CAN M5S 2Y4
E-mail: wordgoddess@sympatico.ca

Web (English)
www.indexingsociety.ca

Web (français)
www.indexingsociety.ca/accueil.html

Webmaster
Ellen Warner

Webmaster Assistant
Cheryl Lemmens

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Officiers de la SCAD

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Membership Report to September 2003

IASC/SCAD would like to welcome the following new member:

Nancy Mucklow of Kingston, ON nmucklow@kingston.net

Please note the following changes to your Fall 2002 Directory:

E-mail address changes:

Karen Griffiths karen@griffiths-indexing.com

M.A. (Peggy) Lipinski mal99@shaw.ca

Margaret Gibbs manuser@aebc.com

New Web site URLs:

Ron Edwards www.focussc.com

Carol Hamill www.island.net/~hamill/

Joining IASC/SCAD – Membership Categories and Fees:

- Individual (\$55)
- Student (\$35)*
- Institution (\$65)

(For members outside Canada, add \$C10).

Student membership is available for full-time students only. Please inform IASC/SCAD of your course name/institution.

Membership Renewal Notice

June renewals are now past due! If you haven't yet responded to the renewal reminders, please fill in the form at the following link: www.indexingsociety.ca/application.html and send it with your cheque to the address on the form. Thanks!

IMPORTANT: Please remember to add the IASC/SCAD membership secretary to your list of people to contact when your details change.

Membership Secretary IASC/SCAD
c/o Christina MacDougall
CanIndex@cogeco.ca

*For information on where to
find the online version of The
Bulletin, please see page 18.*

President's Message

Greetings to IASC/SCAD members across Canada and abroad! This is my first opportunity to address you in our *Bulletin* as president of the organization. Owing to recent personal difficulties (including a total hip replacement in late June) I was unable to make a contribution to the summer issue, and indeed, I am only now getting into the full swing of things. I am doing my best to catch up on chores that should have been taken care of over the last few months, and want to express my thanks for your patience with me and for the support and encouragement I have received from many individual IASC/SCAD members. My special thanks go to Elizabeth Bell, now our past president, who graciously stepped back onto centre stage to help me out, just when she was looking forward to a well-deserved rest! Thanks and congratulations also go to Christine Dudgeon for her efforts on our behalf in the form of a bright new, sunny yellow 2003–04 *Register of Indexers Available*.

I feel as if I have a lot of catching up to do, even with this message, but the *Bulletin*, under Rachel Rosenberg's confident guidance, has covered the most important happenings through the late spring and summer. My thanks to Rachel and to Gillian Watts for their continued excellent work. Indeed, our *Bulletin* staff is growing. Gillian Watts, who does the layout, has now become production editor, and Karen Griffiths has volunteered to take on the job of assistant editor. Her primary responsibilities include distributing each issue—both electronic and hard copy—to the membership.

We've had another change in the executive as well. Early in the summer, our vice-president Pat Buchanan was forced to resign because of a combination of family responsibilities and a new job. Elizabeth Macfie has agreed to stand as vice-president/president elect, and I am indeed happy to welcome her aboard! I am happy to report that we have a strong executive team, and my heartfelt thanks, as always, goes out to them. However, we still have one or two empty chairs waiting to be filled with willing volunteers. If you're interested in playing a more active role in IASC/SCAD, please send me an e-mail or give me a call, and I'll provide up-to-date details.

Looking farther ahead, it's not too early to mark your 2004 calendars. Our annual meeting and conference will be held on June 4 in Calgary. We will be meeting in conjunction with the Editors' Association of Canada, an arrangement that has worked well for us in the past. I know I'm looking forward to another trip west and also to meeting many of our Alberta members. There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved in planning and running this conference, both for members in Calgary and for the rest of us across Canada. You can watch the IASC-L listserv and the *Bulletin* for more details, but if you're really eager, drop me a line and I'll make sure we find a job for you.

Meanwhile, I wish everyone the best as we rumble along through the glorious autumn weather on our way to winter.

Cheers,

Ruth Pincoe, President
ruth.pincoe@sympatico.ca
 416-530-4735

Editor, comments from . . .

Where does the time go?

As you know, Ruth Pincoe has taken over as our new President and is back on her feet ready to tackle our growing association's needs. Ruth is our featured Profile this issue. She is a woman with much wisdom in the world of words. Her writings on indexing, the art and science of, will greatly enhance the renown of IASC/SCAD.

I wouldn't worry so much if it was just me saying this, but everyone seems to be saying the same thing. Is it because we're working harder and becoming more tired that this is so? Given the time of year, I would suggest it's simply spooky how the hours slip away. Could it possibly be inefficient software and operating systems that crash every three minutes? That might be one possibility. So to explore this area we're focusing on this love/hate relationship this month with an alternative look at Linux as an operating system and the plethora of Linux manuals being indexed, deftly or not.

For those out there struggling to keep on top of what IT is doing to the way we run and manage our indexing businesses, I'm sure by now you've noticed that Comdex Canada 2003 has been postponed until mid-March, 2004. (See www.comdex.com/canada2003/). This should give Microsoft time to get the first service pack out for this month's release of MS Office 2003 (<http://office.microsoft.com>). It remains to be seen how much their new LiveMeeting and OneNote products will improve note-taking at editorial/publishing meetings. Anyone out there who tries these products must keep us posted.

The "Office at Work" this month highlights office products to make life easier and points out health issues involving our office rather than featuring an actual office. Those of us who use our eyes for reading as an Olympic event - indexers, editors, writers, actors - should have pause when we read about Mary ("This Hour has 22 Minutes") Walsh's battle with macular degeneration. On this issue at least Microsoft is making good efforts to assist visually-impaired people, which most of us are to some extent. Having just this year invested in eyeglasses specifically for computer and close-up use, I can't tell you what a benefit they have been in reducing eye fatigue. Adjusting your monitor's advanced display settings to a refresh rate of 85 MHz is also another eye health boosting technique.

You will also notice there are changes occurring in the IASC/SCAD Executive. This is yet another reflection of how hectic our lives are becoming and how quickly things change. It isn't easy to make a commit long term to extra projects in this era; "long term" used to mean several years but now seems to be somewhat longer than 10 seconds and shorter than several months. Certainly, the *Bulletin* has increased in size and circulation, requiring more help, which has been gratefully offered by several people to be featured in the end-of-year edition.

Continued on page 7

SOME VIRTUE, MUCH VICE: The Indexes of Six Introductory Linux Books

Toomas Karmo

How good are the indexes of introductory Linux books? *Linux for Dummies* (4th edition), by Dee-Ann LeBlanc, Melanie Hoag, and Evan Blomquist (Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing, 2003), is indexed very well, though not quite impeccably.

Two other such books are indexed to a reasonable standard, with an entertaining mixture of virtue and vice: *Linux Bible*, by Candace Leiden and Terry Collings (New York, Cleveland, Indianapolis: Hungry Minds, 2001), and *Running Linux* (4th edition), by Matt Welsh, Matthias Kalle Dalheimer, Terry Dawson, and Lar Kaufman (Sepastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2003; this review uses the printing of December 2002).

Three other books are indexed rather poorly, with vice greatly outweighing virtue: *Linux Unleashed* (4th edition), by Bill Ball, David Pitts, John Goerzen, et al. (Indianapolis: Sams, 2000; this review uses the printing of October 1999); *Inside Linux*, by Michael J. Tobler (Indianapolis: New Riders, 2001); and *Special Edition Using Linux* (6th edition), by David Bandel and Robert Napier (Indianapolis: Que, 2001).

Comparison of the six selected indexes can usefully begin with a pair of rough and ready quality controls such as might be used by the managing editor with just 20 minutes to appraise an index. It is convenient to speak here of selection problems (the "S test") and copyediting problems (the "C test").

The *Bible* and O'Reilly get full marks on the S test, and *Dummies* rates a strong pass.

Among the inadequacies of *Inside* and Que, both of which fail the S test, is a mishandling of what in Unix are called command options but might equally well be called adverbs. In general, **foobar -b** entered at the command-line prompt means "System, kindly foobar continuously unto thyself," and **roohar -b**, "System, kindly roohar continuously unto thyself." [see Editor's notes, page 6] There is, in general, no expectation that **-b** has analogous meanings with the two commands. It therefore runs contrary to rational reader expectations for Que to offer as a main heading "**-b** argument" with subheads introducing such unrelated items as **init** (the command **init -b** is useful in emergency booting) and **lpr** (**lpr -b** manipulates the print spooler). It is likewise illogical of *Inside* to give a main heading for **-f** with subheadings introducing such things as **su** (for becoming superuser), **mount** (for mounting file systems), and **tar** (for copying files). (The tar user who is baffled by the meaning of **tar -f**, and who thinks rationally, will look in the index only under **tar**.)

Although these faults are by themselves sufficient to cause Que and *Inside* to fail the S test, other problems appear, too. Que offers the excessively generic "handling high server loads, Apache Web server." No Webmaster will look under the H's when researching the problem of server load. Again,

Que offers the excessively generic "reading," with subheads for such things as "/etc/pam.conf" and "news." Awkwardly, the reading of the Pluggable Authentication Modules configuration file is unrelated to the reading of Usenet news files. Rational index users will look under the P's in the one case and under the U's or N's in the other, and cannot in either of the two cases be expected to search the R's.

The *Inside* index elevates term selection to a still higher pitch of absurdity, inviting the reader to look under the P's for "Please Set Password and Username dialog box (Kmail)."

Perhaps the worst failure in term selection, however, is in Sams, which, apart from sins akin to those just mentioned, has "192.168.42.2, adding to names 192.168.42 file." Here the problem is that the numerical Internet Protocol (IP) address 192.168.42.2 is a mere hypothetical example, no more indexable than "Zaporski" would be indexable if the authors were to write about adding a user account for a hypothetical individual named Bill Zaporski. No reader struggling with IP addressing can be expected to search the index for 192.168.42.2, just as no reader struggling with **useradd** or the more user-friendly **adduser** can be expected to look in the Z's for "Zaporski".

Dummies gets full marks on the C, or copyediting, test.

With the *Inside* book, the *Bible*, and Sams, the scene darkens to the point of indubitable, albeit not catastrophic, with the "C test" failure.

The *Inside* index has both "VMWare for Linux Web site, 720" and "VMWare Web site, 703," ultimately directing the reader to the same URL. The *Bible* makes a similarly meaningless distinction, with "hackers, 500" and "hacking, 500." Sams, while clean overall, does have a string of main entries under the T's for "The"—for instance, "The Yellow Pages (YP)," with no entry under the Y's for "Yellow"—faults that perhaps straddle the boundary between outright term-selection infelicities and copyedit oversights.

O'Reilly makes similar copyediting errors, but on a scale large enough to render its failure catastrophic, with such bloopers as "/dev directory, 531" and "dev directory, 109" referring to one and the same directory, universally called the "slash-dev directory" by Unix workers, and therefore inappropriately typeset if the slash is omitted).

Joining O'Reilly in catastrophic failure is Que, which goes so far as to invent a new acronym not present in the text being indexed: "UCT (Universal Coordinated Time). See GMT." (The accepted international acronym, correctly used by the authors, is, rather, UTC.)

Comparison of the six selected indexes can now usefully proceed into a second, more demanding phase, involving checks for unwarranted scattering of information.

Three scattering tests suggest themselves at once: scatter in audio concepts” (the “A test”—has the indexer resisted the temptation to post some information under “audio” and other information under “sound cards?”); scatter in e-mail concepts (the “E test”—has the indexer resisted the temptation to post some information under “e-mail” or “email” and other information under “mail?”); and scatter in printing concepts (the “P test”—has the indexer resisted the temptation to put some references under “printers” and others under “printing?”).

A fourth scattering test, scatter in X Window concepts, or the “X test,” is a little subtler, presupposing a slight knowledge of Unix-style computing. From the perspective of the neophyte user who will buy an introductory Linux book, X, X11, and XFree86 all refer to the same thing (namely, to the system that manages the overall GUI). Has the indexer, then, avoided the temptation to post some entries under “X Window System,” others under “X11,” and still others under “XR86”?

Dummies and *Que* pass all three of the A, E, and P tests; *Sams* and *Inside* fail on one, and *Bible* and O’Reilly fail on two.

Predictably enough, only two indexes out of the six pass the more demanding X test for information scatter.

Dummies is impeccable, with a single, sensible main heading, “X Window system,” appropriately analyzed with subheadings.

The *Bible* passes the X test but not quite with flying colours. Almost everything is under the main heading “X Window System,” in the spirit of *Dummies*, yet a redundant “XFree86, performance optimization of, 652” recapitulates some of the information under “X Window System,” leading the reader to wonder why, of all the various topics presented for X, optimization had to be singled out for special treatment.

Conspicuous among the four failing indexes is O’Reilly, which goes so far as to split the hair in at least four principal ways, with such main headings as “X Window System,” “X resources,” “X11R6,” and “XFree86.”

Comparison of the six selected indexes can usefully conclude with a check for the use of locators with main headings that themselves possess subheadings (the locators-with-analyzed-headings blemish, or the “L test”). Admittedly, professional indexers themselves are divided over the merits of the practice, but whatever can be said for attaching locators to analyzed main headings in some subject matters, the practice has scant merit in a computing topic such as introductory Linux.

The case of *Inside* is typical, with the main heading “backups”

accompanied not only by a reference to page 628 but also by subheadings such as “importance of, 589–591,” “KDat utility, 629–632,” and “planning considerations, 629.” Readers will be baffled by the special importance thereby imputed to page 628. It cannot be that page 628 is in some sense the “main” or “definitive” discussion of backing up or that on page 628 the discussion is in some metaphysical sense “general,” descending from the world of Platonic forms into the concrete particularity of planning or of Kdat only outside page 628. Why, then, single out page 628? It is true that page 628 in a sense introduces the topic of backup, but even this is not enough to justify special treatment; in the same breath as the author introduces his topic, he makes a quite concrete, particular point (namely, the point that, in a corporate setting, backup can involve not removable media, as on the home workstation, but a mirroring drive in a companion machine).

Perhaps predictably, it is *Dummies*, and *Dummies* alone, that avoids confusion by attaching reference locators only to a heading that itself possesses no subheadings.

To sum up, the sample of six indexes yields one, *Dummies*, that is clearly good (in fact, passing all tests), two that feature a mixture of virtues and vices (passing and failing in roughly equal measure), and three in which the passes are quite eclipsed by the failures. The figure on this page is a tabulation of the predominantly unhappy situation, with 1 for pass, 0 for failures, and a few notes appended to mark particularly mild and particularly severe failures.

Computer books cannot, of course, be easy to index. Even the generally excellent *Dummies* finds itself imposing an arbitrary distinction, with the hard-drive concept overanalyzed into, on the one hand, “hard drive” with subheadings that include “adding,” and on the other hand, “hard drive, partitioning,” with subheadings such as “blocks, checking size.” (It is difficult to add a hard drive without partitioning it.) Indeed, it is essentially correct to say that partitioning is the one and only real headache attendant on adding a hard drive. Conversely, it is not obvious how one can partition a hard drive without being in some sense engaged in adding the drive to the system. A reasonable first step in cleaning up the confusion in *Dummies* would be to delete the post for “adding,” taking it that any reader who is solving the problems attendant on adding a hard drive will be interested in partitioning schemes and that “adding” is too general a term to be uppermost in such a harried reader’s mind. We all have clear vision in hindsight as we read a book in the armchair. The problem is to see the conceptual and logical structures clearly in the heat of late-evening battles at the professional desk, wearily scrutinizing

Book	Selection Problems	Copy-editing Problems	Scatter				Locators-with-Analyzed-Headings Blemish
			Audio Concepts	E-mail Concepts	Printing Concepts	X Window Concepts	
<i>Dummies</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Bible</i>	1	0 *	1	0	0	1	0
O’Reilly	1	0 **	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Sams</i>	0 **	0	1	1	0	0	0
<i>Inside</i>	0 **	0	1	1	0	0	0
<i>Que</i>	0 **	0 **	1	1	1	0	0

* mild ** severe

the publisher's page proofs and doggedly keyboarding the index entries at the close of an eleven-hour day.

How is the unsatisfactory standard of Linux book indexes to be improved?

Since the subject matter cannot be made less challenging, our hope as professional indexers lies in persuading publishers to give us enough time to think. A conceptual conundrum such as the choice between "adding" and "partitioning" in a discussion of hard drives may seem intractable in the heat of battle on a Tuesday evening, yet yield to the calm and steady light of reason the following Monday afternoon—if the publisher's schedule allows for a following Monday.

As book buyers, we can at least avail ourselves of the excellent feedback clause printed on the first page of the O'Reilly index: "We'd like to hear your suggestions for improving our indexes. Send email to index@oreilly.com".

Author's Footnote

This is an abridged version of an article under the same title in the "Literary" section of Toomas Karmo's www.metascientia.com, copylefted by IASC/SCAD and Toomas Karmo as open content under the GNU Free Documentation License.

Editor's Notes re "Foobar"

FUBAR is an acronym that originated in the military to stand for "f***ed up beyond all repair." This is often softened to "fouled up beyond all repair" in reference to hardware. The programming and documentation equivalent is "fouled up beyond all recognition." Sometimes the last word is "recovery" or "reconciliation" or "reason."

In a Virtual Address Extension (VAX), the acronym FUBAR has been adapted to mean "failed UniBus address register." Some programmers apparently managed to sneak this by humourless higher-ups, and the term stuck.

F.U.B.A.R. International is the name of a film company founded in 1989 by several businessmen seeking adventure. They went on location to film natural disasters. Some of the disasters were artificially created, especially avalanches, which could be triggered by explosives. Company executives vacation in Vail, Colorado, every year, and have become local celebrities. These days, F.U.B.A.R. International markets clothing and novelty items.

Because "foo," an unrelated term, appears phonetically in FUBAR, programmers have taken to using both "foo" and "bar" as metasyntactic variables when two such variables are needed. For more info, see http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/0,,sid9_gci748437,00.html

Toomas Karmo

www.metascientia.com
karmo@ungrad1.astro.utoronto.ca

Toomas (Tom) Karmo turns his 1996 Toronto computing/physics Honours B.Sc. and 1979 Oxford philosophy D.Phil. to occasional commercial account by supplying a predominantly scientific clientele with editorial and technical services.

Running Microsoft Apps/ Indexing Software in Linux

As a Linux convert, you'll sometimes need to run one of your legacy Microsoft applications within your Linux desktop. Perhaps an associate has sent you a file in Microsoft Word that you elect not to view as mere ASCII text in Antiword, and that you find does not format quite correctly in a Linux word processor such as AbiWord. Perhaps, having embarked on the writing of a book index, you decide you need to use sophisticated Microsoft-based CINDEX, MACREX, or SKY Index—say, as a preliminary to putting embedded index entries into a LaTeX file, destined for Linux typesetting as PostScript, and duly furnished with the preamble line `\makeindex`.

Whatever your situation, you ask, "How many ways are there of getting a Microsoft application to run within the Linux desktop?" Answer: at least three (if we don't count the Wabi emulator, celebrated in the mid-1990s as a solution for running software written for Windows 3.1 and 3.11. The current status of Wabi is unclear. If you need to dig, start with www.caldera.com/support/docs/wabi.1)

(1) Wine (www.winehq.com), which began even before the release of Windows 95, managed to get Office XP running as early as May 2002. Further, Wine, unlike the other two solutions in our Gang of Three, is released under the GNU Lesser General Public License, and consequently requires no licence fee. Also further, and again in contrast with our other two solutions, setting up Wine in Linux does not require a Microsoft licence.

What, you ask, could be better than all that? But there is a problem. Just as GNU itself wittily means "GNU's Not Unix," so Wine means "Wine Is Not an Emulator." The sophistication of the underlying technology means that some Microsoft applications do not run at all, while some others run imperfectly. Awkwardly, I haven't found anyone with deep Wine experience. So IMHO, and FWIW, YMMV.*

(2) VMware (www.vmware.com) plays it safer, actually turning over selected slices of time, many times every second on your CPU, to a running copy of your duly licensed Microsoft operating system. That partial surrender of control to Mr. Gates notwithstanding, you can copy and paste between the Linux desktop window containing your VMware "Virtual Machine" and other windows in your Linux environment. Conveniently, your virtual machine sits on a virtual LAN, allowing you to surf or FTP with Microsoft Internet Explorer in your virtual-machine window, even though your actual Internet connection is under Linux.

I found VMware rather satisfactory in December 2001. Predictably, the CPU time-slicing led to a degradation in speed—exacerbated in my case because I was running a mere 128 MB of RAM, with a consequent severe

overhead for hard-drive swap-partition accesses. My worst moment came with a disastrous crash that forced me to reinstall VMware, Windows 2000 Professional, and Office 2000.

And it was disappointing to find VMware by default creating a virtual hard drive, rather than making user-created data files visible in the ordinary Linux filesystem. I'd sometimes copy my data files onto floppies; at other times, I'd send my files off to the outside world over the Internet. Users slightly more sophisticated than I was had the option of implementing Samba, making the virtual machine capable of sharing files with the real Linux host filesystem over the virtual LAN. Really sophisticated users had the option of overriding an install-time default, putting all their data files, I believe, directly into their Linux filesystem. But I stress that the vendor intended the latter option only for the intrepid engineer.

In September 2003, VMware Workstation 4 was downloadable for US\$299.

(3) I don't have personal experience with Win4Lin (www.win4lin.com). But a friend, Toronto-based Linux consultant Herb Richter (herb@linux.ca), reported when I phoned him in September 2003 that every application he had tried had "run perfectly," in some cases actually performing better on Win4Lin-driven Microsoft than on a pure Gatesmobile. He had by that time, as a user with three years' experience, tried—and succeeded—with Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape for Microsoft, Corel WordPerfect 10 for Microsoft, and various pieces of Microsoft-based freeware.

In contrast with VMware as I experienced it, Win4Lin does make the user data files you create immediately visible in your Linux filesystem. My and Herb's one caveat: only the Windows 95/98/ME family was supported when we conferred. In September 2002, NeTraverse Win4Lin 5.0 was downloadable for a mere US\$99.99.

* IMHO, and FWIW, YMMV: "In my humble opinion, and for what it's worth, your mileage may vary."

Toomas Karmo

karmo@ungrad1.astro.utoronto.ca
www.metascientia.com/

Editor, comments from . . .

(Continued from page 3)

We're always interested in receiving ideas for stories if not actual articles themselves so keep those cards and letters pouring in with concepts you would like to see explored, and we're always interested in hearing about our fellow indexers' hobbies, holidays, and plans. So keep us posted.

In the meantime, hoping you've had an enjoyable and restful Thanksgiving, enjoy the rest of the year by preparing for the upcoming holiday season early, and then have a good rest in between indexes and partying!

Rachel Rosenberg, Editor

wordgoddess@sympatico.ca

Call for Bulletin Contributions

We are always looking for contributions to the IASC/SCAD *Bulletin*. If you have any tips, reports, interesting Web sites, or other reference sources, new information, or anything else you'd like to share with your fellow indexers, please contact the Editor, Rachel Rosenberg, by telephone at (416) 236-9311 or by e-mail at wordgoddess@sympatico.ca.

Author Guidelines

Articles of up to 2,500 words may be submitted without contacting the editor concerning publication time or space limitations. Articles exceeding 2,500 words require co-ordination with the editor.

Please submit articles electronically in DOC or RTF format and artwork in PDF format.

Photographs may be provided in TIF or TIFF format.

CREATING YOUR OWN SPACE ON THE WEB: A Primer

Cheryl Lemmens

Marketing a business in the Internet age means more than just the traditional advertising methods of years past; a Web site is now considered almost essential to publicizing your skills and remaining competitive in your field. Putting up that Web site, however, is another matter. For one thing, there's a new language—Hypertext Markup Language, or HTML—with which to become familiar. And there are design conventions to learn, some based on print standards and some unique to the Web. All in all, however, creating a Web site to promote your indexing business should be a user-friendly and enjoyable experience. Keeping it simple is the key.

Web Site Content

Your Web site should provide specific content about you and your indexing business. These topics, both essential and optional, are discussed briefly below:

- *Educational Background, Work Experience, and Professional Memberships*
This information is particularly relevant if you wish to highlight higher education in a specific field or work experience related to indexing (e.g., in library and information science). You should also include information on specialized training (e.g., the USDA Basic Indexing course) and any other skills you bring to your work (e.g., proofreading, fluency in other languages).
- *Personal Interests (optional)*
Although it may seem out of place, information on personal interests such as hobbies is perfectly legitimate. If you list gardening as an indexing subject, great; if you actually grow orchids or are a member of the Canadian Rose Society, even better. Making reference to involvement in a personal interest establishes your expertise in that field and may lead to very rewarding indexing projects.
- *Types of Subjects Indexed*
Of particular importance to potential clients, this content details the subjects you are most familiar with, through education, work, or interest. Your list should be specific; rather than including the general term “English literature,” for example, you would want to indicate a particular genre, period, or author.
- *Books Recently Indexed*
Basically a list of your recent projects. If any indexes you created are shown via Amazon.com's “Look inside this book” feature, you could create a link to each book title.

- *Your Rates*
Information on your fees (e.g., per page, per entry, flat rate). Any additional information—e.g., how expenses such as courier costs are handled—should be included.
- *Sample Indexes (optional)*
Some indexers include indexes they've created for books that were published without indexes. This can be done in various ways—by turning a Microsoft Word document into a PDF (Portable Document Format) file, for example, or by creating the sample index in HTML. Every sample index, however, adds pages to your Web site, so this is strictly an option you may want to consider later on.
- *Published Articles and/or Conference Presentations*
Pretty much self-explanatory. Optional, although—like professional memberships—such information shows your involvement in, and contributions to, the indexing profession.
- *Testimonials from Clients/Complimentary Reviews/Awards*
It is very important to show the recognition you have received for your work, both from your day-to-day clients and from your fellow indexers. This information would certainly be appropriate on your home page; if you had won the H.W. Wilson Award, for example, you would want to showcase that at the very first opportunity. Kudos your indexes have received from book reviewers, or complimentary feedback from readers (e.g., on Amazon.com), should also be included on your Web site.
- *Contact Information (discussed below)*

As well, it is recommended that some content be included about the benefits of hiring (i.e., being willing to pay for the services of) a professional indexer. This is particularly important at a time when the profession of indexing is being undermined on several fronts—by clients who think that cheaper is better, for example, or by publishers that provide either poorly written indexes or no indexes at all.

Finally, you may want to make note of any organizations or resources of interest to your clients. The most common of these include indexing societies such as IASC/SCAD and the American Society of Indexers (ASI), as well as related organizations such as the Editors' Association of Canada (EAC). Links to these resources can be included on a separate page.

Your Home Page

As the page that welcomes visitors and potential clients to your business, your home page should make a good first

impression. But it doesn't have to be fancy. In fact, it shouldn't be. As Web usability guru Jakob Nielsen notes in his *Alertbox* column "Homepage Real Estate Allocation" (February 10, 2003), "A homepage really has two *main goals*: to give users information, and to serve as their top-level navigation for information that's inside the site."

Your home page (and, in fact, your Web site) can consist solely of text—a brief statement about yourself and your indexing experience, as well as contact information. The home page will also contain links to all of the other pages on the Web site (the "navigation" portion of the page). And, of course, your name (and the name of your business) will be prominently displayed at the top.

How much contact information you provide depends on your comfort level. If you are reluctant to provide an address, setting up a post office box is a good workaround. Phone and fax numbers are usually provided, but essentially all that's needed is your e-mail address. Publishers who wish to contact you can still view complete contact information in the print *Register of Indexers Available*.

Working with HTML

Once you've organized and ordered your content you're ready to begin creating your Web site. Putting up anything on the Web entails at least a rudimentary knowledge of HTML. Although you can use software to do so without learning any coding, it is highly recommended that you become familiar with the basics of HTML, either by taking an introductory course or by using one of several good books available.

Writing or WYSIWYG?

HTML can be written "from scratch" without software, simply by typing everything—coding and text—into a document in your computer's Notepad feature, saving the file with an ".htm" or ".html" extension, then viewing the document by opening the file in your browser. If you've learned to write HTML from scratch, you can also use software that allows you to enter the code without typing it in manually, and to view the code as you work with it. HomeSite, a developer-friendly software originally produced by Allaire, is now offered by Macromedia.

The most popular forms of HTML software, however, are WYSIWYG ("what you see is what you get") editors such as Macromedia's own Dreamweaver, Microsoft's FrontPage, and Adobe's Go Live. Such software allows you to create a Web page while viewing the result of your coding on screen. The resulting code, however, is far from elegant; WYSIWYG editors add a lot of extraneous (i.e., sloppy and unnecessary) elements that would not appear in a properly hand-coded document. In addition, not all WYSIWYG editors recognize new or non-standard HTML coding; some even eliminate legitimate tags that they don't understand.

Although using a WYSIWYG editor is certainly not the end of civilization as we know it, there is really no substitute for learning the basics of HTML and how to create a Web page with a variety of elements (headers, lists, and a simple table, for starters). Once you have gotten the introductory bit down pat, you'll find that coding can be an enjoyable exercise (really!).

Cascading Style Sheets

HTML was originally intended to be a formatting tool, not a design tool—in other words, to control only the structural parts of a document, such as paragraphs, headings, lists, and tables. Early versions of HTML attempted to accommodate design elements such as font style or colour through the use of specific tags.

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) were later developed to introduce style elements into HTML. It is now an accepted convention that style sheets should form part of each HTML document. Style sheet tags, which are inserted at the top of the HTML document between the <head> tags, allow you to exert greater control over your Web page by specifying design instructions that apply to either the whole document or selected portions of it. For example, here are some style sheet declarations from this author's own Web site:

```
SPAN.LOGO { font-family: Garamond; font-size: 20pt;
font-style: normal; font-weight: bold; color: #069;
margin-left: 5px }
```

```
SPAN.COPY { text-decoration: none; font-family: Times
Roman; font-size: 12pt; font-style: normal; font-weight:
normal; color: #000 }
```

```
SPAN.TOP A:LINK { text-decoration: underline; font-
family: Arial; font-size: 10pt; font-style: normal; font-
weight: bold; color: #036 }
```

The "SPAN.LOGO" declaration sets up a logo in 20 point Garamond, in "normal" style (as opposed to italics), and in boldface. The colour is a medium blue (#006699, or #069 in CSS). The logo always appears five pixels from the left margin.

"SPAN.COPY" sets up the style for all body text—that is, text outside of the navigation bar: 12 point Times Roman of normal style and weight, in the colour black (#000000, or #000 in CSS).

"SPAN.TOP A:LINK" sets up the style for "Back to Top" links throughout each page. They are underlined, and appear in 10 point boldface Arial, in a darker blue than the logo (#003366).

One thing to keep in mind is that with the advent of style sheets, HTML itself has changed. Tags such as and have been phased out of HTML 4.0. It is highly recommended, therefore, that once you have mastered basic HTML, you add CSS to your skill set. There are several resources available to learn more about CSS, but a good way to get started is to visit the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) *Core Styles* page (www.w3.org/StyleSheets/Core/). Here, you can pick one of eight style sheets to add to your HTML document. Although you cannot view the actual coding, this exercise enables you to see instantly how different styles can transform the same piece of text in very different ways.

Web Design

When it comes to Web design, keeping it clean and simple is the rule: this is no time to get fancy. The information on your Web site should be easy to read, understand, and navigate.

An important concept to keep in mind is that Web pages are viewed, and read, much differently than a print publication

such as a book or newspaper; a 17-inch monitor makes for a reading experience unlike that provided by *Time*. As Jakob Nielsen has pointed out in one of his classic *Alertbox* columns, “How Users Read on the Web” (October 1, 1997), “People rarely read Web pages word by word; instead, they *scan* the page, picking out individual words and sentences.”

Discussed below are principles essential to good Web design.

Clear Separation of Navigation and Content

The navigation portion of each page—i.e., the portion containing links to other pages within the site—should be clearly separated from the body text. Left-hand navigation has

while Verdana, a sans serif font designed for Microsoft in 1994, is also widely used.

Serif fonts are “serious,” providing a formal look, while sans serif fonts are more informal in appearance. Comic Sans MS, which evokes the cartoon-style lettering of comic strips such as *Peanuts*, is a relaxed, almost whimsical choice for Web material, but should be used with caution, and probably avoided on a professional Web site.

Following are samples of some well-known typefaces:

Excelsior Indexing: Subjects Indexed

<p>Home</p> <p>Subjects Indexed</p> <p>Books Indexed</p> <p>Rates</p>	<p>Canadian Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction of Western Canada (particularly Grove, Ostenson, and Salverson) <p>English Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction Before 1832 (particularly Richardson, Fielding, and the Gothic novel) <p>Back to Top</p>
---	---

been fairly well established as a Web convention, probably because most world cultures read left to right, although some indexers place their links at the top or bottom of each page.

A navigation column can easily be set up by creating a simple HTML table on each page. Shown below is an approximation of how part of a “Subjects Indexed” page might look. A two-column table provides left-hand navigation and a substantial right-hand area for content. Note that the navigation bar provides links to all other pages on the site *except* the one currently being visited.

Legibility

Users should be able to read your page easily, without having to squint, blink, or lean close to the screen. The following issues affect legibility:

- **Font Style**

A good choice of font (typeface) is essential—but again, Web conventions need to be approached differently from those of print. Serif fonts are considered easier to read in print than sans serif fonts, but sans serif fonts to be more readable on screen. Times Roman, a serif font developed by Stanley Morison in 1931, is considered the most successful and perhaps most readable typeface ever created. On the Web, however, the sans serif font Arial has become the typeface of choice for many designers,

- **Serif**

Bookman Old Style 10 point
 Century Schoolbook 10 point
 Garamond 11 point
 Times New Roman 11 point

- **Sans Serif**

Arial 10 point
 Comic Sans MS 10 point
 Franklin Gothic 11 point
 Verdana 10 point

- **Font Size**

Although it may seem self-evident, the importance of font size cannot be stressed enough. Body text of 12 points or higher is recommended for easy viewing by all users, including senior citizens. A major problem with specifying type size, however, is the fact that users can independently set font sizes to their own comfort level, thus skewing the Web designer’s original intent. Patrick J. Lynch and Sarah Horton, co-authors of the Yale University *Web Style Guide*, suggest using CSS to set font size in pixels, because text so defined “will be the same size regardless of the browser’s default font size and resolution settings.”

- **White Space**

White space makes your pages more elegant, and your content infinitely more readable. As Web designer Bob Baxley notes in *Making the Web Work: Designing Effective Web Applications* (Indianapolis, IN: New Riders, 2002), “leaving an appropriate amount of ‘air’ and white space is a welcome relief to users. By reducing the visual density of text and tables, the impression made by the page is less cluttered, less overwhelming, and more inviting.”

- **Contrast**

The most readable combination of text and background colour—that providing the highest contrast—remains black text on a white background. Black text on a light colour such as grey is generally readable, but less so. Even less readable is light-coloured text on a dark background (such as yellow text on royal blue). Incidentally, an early Web readability study conducted in Texas (<http://hubel.sfasu.edu/research/AHNCUR.html>) found that the least readable combinations are red on green and—understandably—fuchsia on blue(!).

- **Justification**

Left-hand justification is generally the most readable text format on the Web. As Lynch and Horton note, “left justification requires no adjustment to word spacing; the inequities in spacing fall at the end of the line. The resulting ‘ragged’ right margin adds variety and interest to the page without interfering with legibility.”

Placement of Content

One of the most important carryovers to Web design from the print world is the concept of keeping important information “above the fold”—derived from the practice of folding broadsheet newspapers in half so that only the top portion, containing the headline story or photo of the day, is visible through the window of a sidewalk box.

On the Web, the “fold” is the point at which the user can no longer view information without scrolling downwards. Just as with its newspaper counterpart, therefore, a Web page must provide all of its important information above the fold—at or near the top. And, if a page necessitates scrolling, it is helpful to insert “back to top” links (``) at regular intervals.

Web-Safe Colours

While you should keep your Web design clean and simple, it certainly shouldn’t be just black and white—you will probably want to use colour in some way. Not all Web colours, however, are created equal; some will appear differently in various browsers or platforms than they were originally intended to.

You should make your selections from the group of 216 Web-safe colours chosen for use in both Windows and Macintosh environments—also known as non-dithering colours because they don’t “dither” or fluctuate, no matter where they are viewed. All of these colours have accompanying hexadecimal

(“hex”) codes representing different combinations of the numbers and letters 00, 33, 66, 99, CC, and FF. White, for example, is represented by the hex code FFFFFFFF, while black is 000000. Keep in mind that only hex codes using the two-number and two-letter combinations above—such as basic red, FF0000—are Web-safe. Tomato red, which has the hex code FF6347, is definitely not!

The *HTML Goodies* Web site provides a chart of all 216 Web-safe colours (www.htmlgoodies.com/tutors/non_dithering_colors.html), as well as a chart that includes many non-safe, but interesting, colours (www.htmlgoodies.com/tutors/colors.html).

HTML vs. Graphics

Finally, the use of graphics should be avoided (or at least minimized), if possible, to keep the “weight” of each Web page down. Graphics, especially large ones, cause pages to load more slowly, which may not be a concern to users with high-speed Internet access, but is a real frustration to those with dial-up access.

Even your logo can be created without having to use graphics software, simply by using good old HTML. An elegant typeface such as Garamond, presented in boldface in, say, 20 points and in a striking Web-safe colour such as 003366 (a very nice dark blue), makes a beautiful—and fast-loading—logo. It’s the perfect way to present yourself and your indexing services to the world.

Resources

General

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), led by Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee, is the motherlode of information about industry standards and specifications and ongoing work and research. Its Web site (www.w3.org/) is very large and complex, but it is highly recommended that you take some time to browse through the various sections. A page for first-time visitors, *Finding Your Way at W3C* (www.w3.org/2002/03/new-to-w3c), is helpful, as is the alphabetical site index located at www.w3.org/Help/siteindex.

HTML

Elizabeth Castro, *HTML 4 for the World Wide Web*, 4th ed. (Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 1999). Part of the popular Visual QuickStart series.

Ian S. Graham, *HTML 4.0 Sourcebook* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Canada, 1998)

HTML Goodies (www.htmlgoodies.com/). Wide-ranging Web site with primers and tutorials on a variety of subjects.

National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), *A Beginner’s Guide to HTML* (<http://archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimerAll.html>)

Dave Raggett, *Getting Started with HTML* (www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/) and *More Advanced Features* (www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/Advanced.html). Two user-friendly tutorials on the W3C site.

P R O F I L E S

RUTH PINCOE, Ontario

Interview by Rachel Rosenberg

I sat down to interview Ruth Pincoe, the new president of IASC/SCAD, with a few questions to hand, but thought I would first share a few details of her life history.

Ruth graduated from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music in the early 1970s with a Bachelor of Music (History and Literature) and a Master of Arts (Musicology). After leaving school, she worked for short periods at the Toronto Board of Education Historical Collection and at the music library of the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library (formerly located at St. Clair and Avenue Road). In 1975 she was appointed cataloguer at the Canadian Music Centre, where she worked for seven years. She left in 1982 and began her freelance career as an editor, indexer, and archivist. In the mid 1990s, she spent two years as a part-time student at the Faculty of Library and Information Studies, but finally decided to drop archival work in order to concentrate her efforts on indexing and editing.

In 1982 Ruth also married David Peebles, whom she credits with being a major component of her success. David and Ruth met in 1976, since when he had worked freelance as a technician and jack-of-all-trades, fixing anything with a plug on it, from kettles to theatre lighting. Always literate, David also helped Ruth on many of her freelance projects. This changed about six or seven years ago, when an in-house editor at an educational publishing house called Ruth to say, "I'm sending you a book on electrical wiring because I think David could do it." Now David has a successful career as an editor and Ruth has a colleague in the next office! Both David and Ruth have been awarded the Editors' Association of Canada's Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence: Ruth in 1994, and David in 2002.

Apart from indexing and editing, Ruth's passions include the theatre. She has stage-managed about 50 shows, mainly for the Alumnae Theatre at the corner of Berkeley and Adelaide in Toronto. One of her favourite shows was a production of Timothy Findlay's *Can You See Me Yet?* She is totally mad about walking and hiking, especially in mountains, and she also swims regularly (in the slow lane!) with the University of Toronto swim club the Toronto Masters of the Universe.

This thumbnail biography may shed some light on the questions I posed to Ruth at her local Second Cup:

Editor: When did you realize you wanted to index more than editing or engaging in other of the writing professions?

Ruth: I don't know. I think I literally inherited it from my mother, a professional librarian who worked as a cataloguer. She lived and breathed classification. The Dewey Decimal system dominated our house. When extra milk wouldn't fit into the fridge, there would be a note (on a 3x5 slip) attached to the milk jug that read "See also back shed." [*Editor's note:* Ruth didn't say whether the "See also" was italicized.] This was an accepted way of life that we didn't consider unusual; it was just the way Mother's mind worked. As a child, the concept of classification was a constant companion. I absorbed this way of thinking, not realizing until I sat down to write my first index (about 20 years ago) that I instinctively knew how to do it.

My mother obtained her degree library in 1926, and pursued a long career that included Toronto Public Libraries, the Art Gallery of Toronto (now the AGO), a 10-year stint as head of cataloguing at Etobicoke Public Library, and the Toronto Board of Education. In addition to the extensive library exposure from my mother, I also worked in libraries through my years at university, doing card filing, classification work, and, of course, shelving. I also developed a passionate love for books.

Editor: How did you train for indexing, *vis-à-vis* the skill and the technology involved?

Ruth: Like many others, I first worked as an editor, and one of the many seminars I took from the Freelance Editors' Association of Canada (now EAC) was a day-long course on indexing. I found out about IASC/SCAD and immediately joined. I attended various other IASC meetings and programs, and did a lot of reading, starting with the chapter on indexing in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Much of my indexing style and technique I have learned from colleagues. You can also learn a lot by teaching, as I found out when Barbara Sale Schon and I taught a book-indexing seminar for the Continuing Education series at the U of T Faculty of Information Studies.

Editor: Describe your favourite indexing project from your early indexing years and most recent times.

Ruth: Well, it's not a book indexing project—actually it was more like online indexing. In the late 1980s I was hired to complete the arrangement and description of the Glenn Gould Papers at the National Library of Canada. This collection included several thousand letters, all of which were catalogued using an early version of InMagic to create records describing

Continued on page 15

B O O K R E V I E W

Vancouver: A Novel

By David Cruise and Alison Griffiths (HarperCollins Canada; ISBN 0002006588)

On the west coast of Canada, Vancouver, B.C., is a city surrounded by a vast expanse of ocean, forests, and mountains. *Vancouver* (the historical novel) is a highly entertaining “creative non-fiction” that was published in July 2003, and has now been nominated for the prestigious Giller Prize.

Similar in style to Edward Rutherford’s *Sarum*, *Vancouver* chronicles the movement of people along the West Coast of Alaska and Canada. The book starts with seal hunters near the ice bridge that joined the landmasses of northern Asia and Alaska about 13,477 BC, and continues to 2003 in the City of Vancouver.

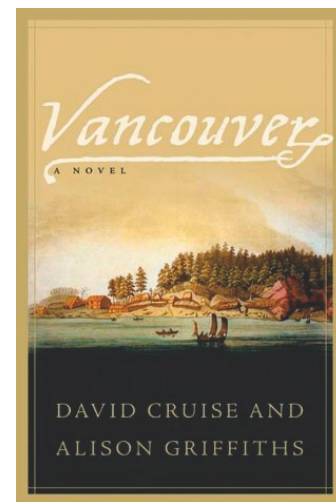
The authors, the Canadian husband-and-wife writing team of David Cruise and Alison Griffiths, spent some three years meticulously researching archival material, interviewing hundreds of people, and reviewing the anthropological evidence. Their goal was to bring the history of this land vividly alive for the reader.

The authors saw B.C.’s history as more than just names, dates, and places. They developed rugged characters representative of the times and the events that shaped them, and included generous descriptions of the natural environment. The stories are addictive to read, with original plot lines and several surprise endings. Whether you are “experiencing” a potlatch or an inside view on how the Vancouver Stock Exchange worked, it is a pleasant way to learn a lot about some of Canada’s early history.

While this book is currently suited for the not-too-serious history enthusiast, it could also be used as an indexing exercise. If you have been wanting to index a fairly lengthy book (perhaps to encounter the complications that length brings), you might try this index-free book: it has 753 pages, with 12 fascinating stories varying from 34 to 88 pages in length.

The book *Vancouver* would make a perfect gift for anyone with time to read either now or over the holidays. Whether you choose to index it or give it away, this thick, fun, and informative book makes a thoughtful and enjoyable gift to receive at Christmas. Notwithstanding that it is a relatively new issue, www.amazon.com and www.amazon.ca list both new and used books for a greatly reduced price.

Note: The 512-page *Vancouver* by Linda Wikene Johnson, published in November 2002 and also set in Vancouver (but spanning only the years 1886 to 1914) is not the same book.



Reviewer’s Additional Comments:

The book *Vancouver* has caused some controversy here in this city. A few people panned the objectivity of the work and the naming of places. I don’t happen to agree with them. One of the writers displayed gross ignorance, but his letter was published anyway.

I attended one of the authors’ book signings in Vancouver and so know a bit more background. The authors have published several other non-fiction historical pieces, and they said it was a tremendous undertaking to do this novel. In my view, the benefit that it will give to history students far outweighs any trivial errors.

Reviewed by Betty Taylor

Btaylor@quik.com

Betty is a resident of Vancouver, where she practises back-of-the-book indexing, the art of computer applications, copy-editing and proofreading, editing, and writing. Her indexing software of choice is SkyIndex 6.0.

Want to learn more about indexing?

Training in indexing

A good index adds value to any publication, and publishers always need good specialist indexers. Our training course gives a comprehensive introduction to indexing principles and practice and leads to Accredited Indexer status. The new fully revised and updated edition – in electronic as well as printed format – will be released during 2002. For more information on the course, contact:

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Simply the best way to prepare indexes

Profile (Continued from page 12)

the subject content of each letter. Developing the controlled language for this project was a real challenge.

Editor: Your love of cookbook indexes must make for an interesting counterpoint to heavier academic indexes you do. Have you come across any favourite cookbooks you'd recommend?

Ruth: *On Cooking: A Textbook of Culinary Fundamentals*, by Anne Labensky et al. I wrote the index for both the first and second Canadian editions. The book is over 1,000 pages, and includes not only detailed instructions for everything from soup stock to crème brûlée, but also a wide variety of haute cuisine designer recipes! The index, set in eight-point type, four columns to a page, is 24 pages long. I like cookbooks because they're fun and because they provide an excellent complement to academic books. I don't seek them out, but I do any that come my way. On a personal level, my favourite—and most used—cookbook is Elizabeth David's classic *French Provincial Cooking*, first published in 1960. Try the onion soup; it doesn't include beef stock and is especially recommended for colds!

Editor: What do you like to read in your spare time?

Ruth: I often read job-related stuff—books on subjects that are close to current projects—both for extra background and for my own interest. These days, I seem to be reading a lot of history, and of course, whodunits (I like the funny ones).

Editor: Have you attended international indexing conferences?

Ruth: I've only been to two international indexing conferences. I was in Vancouver for our joint conference with ASI last June, and I also went to the 2001 ASI conference in Boston in 2001.

Editor: Since there is some controversy about educational programs, how do you feel about the quality of indexers coming from Canadian universities?

Ruth: Nancy Mulvany has expressed the opinion that indexers are born, not made; if a person doesn't have the "indexing gene" it's difficult for them to become a good indexer. I think she has a point, although I'm not entirely happy with this rather exclusionist view. It seems to me learning indexing is really about learning how to think in a particular way. This way of thinking may be very easy for some, and next to impossible for others. I also know it's possible for someone with an aptitude for indexing to write a bad index. This may be why excellent indexers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and why some have solid professional train-

ing while others are for the most part self-taught. Writing a good index does involve training and craft, but it also requires creativity and inspiration. Really good indexers have both the craft and the creativity. That being said, I'm delighted to see the wide variety of educational opportunities for indexing that are available today.

Editor: What advice do you have for those starting out in indexing?

Ruth: Do really good work, no matter how long it takes you. It is important, right from the beginning, that you take the time to do your best, even if your hourly rate shrinks to a depressingly low figure. You'll pick up speed as you develop your craft, but you need the excellence in order to get the chance to do the second, third, and fourth jobs for your client. If the deadline is short, pass on a project rather than submitting bad work. Take time to edit your indexes, and read your finished product carefully. If you can, have a colleague or a friend read them too. A second pair of eyes (my husband's) helped me a lot when I was starting out.

Editor: How do you perceive publishers are coping with the benefits of a human indexer versus automated, computerized indexing in these days of fiscal tightness?

Ruth: Very badly, I fear. Today, much publishing is big business, focused on the bottom line. I suspect that a lot of business people don't understand what indexers really do. They seem to think an index is something that can be generated by sorting the text alphabetically. True, we can and should be using machines for the drudgery work—copying, sorting, and searching—but people are needed to evaluate and interpret the text, to know when "bottle caps" is just a passing reference, and when it is an important reference to be picked up and analyzed. A computer can tell the difference between 1 and 0, but only human indexers can pick up the shaded meanings that differentiate one set of numbers from another. As an organization I'd like to see IASC/SCAD help to make indexing more visible to the general public.

And with our lattes finished, so was the profile interview.

Rachel Rosenberg, Editor
wordgoddess@sympatico.ca

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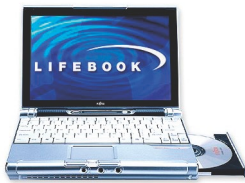
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*an embedded indexing product created by
Paul Scott, Judith Scott, Rachel Rosenberg*

THE OFFICE AT WORK

Wireless Laptops Work Anywhere!

The one thing that has improved my working life recently is a new sub-compact laptop—namely, the Fujitsu P5010 (www.fujitsu.ca/products/notebooks/lifebook_p_series/p5010/). This has to be one of the smallest, most light-weight notebooks in existence, at approximately three pounds. No wonder Sony and others are striving to copy it with their newest releases.



Besides ultraportability, there is the built-in wireless Wi-Fi, thanks to the Intel Centrino chip, specifically made for wireless communications. This chip rates lower than current chips in straight numbers (900 MHz compared to 3 GHz), but it is a faster-running chip and certainly competes favourably with my new-from-this-year desktop at 2.6 GHz. You can automatically hook into the wireless networks offered by Starbucks and other local hotspots—handy for doing research while writing and editing. Wireless is also handy for working away from home (say, at a café) and yet still keeping in contact with publishers and other important people.

It handles a variety of media, including memory stick technology, flash cards, PC cards, RJ-11 and RJ-45 networking ports for dial-up and high-speed Internet LAN connections (on top of the wireless), 2 USB ports, and a DVDPlayer/CD-burner.

Digital Storage: More Convenient Than Ever

Although my laptop has no floppy diskette drive, most people have weaned themselves away from this device, and use their wireless connection to send backup copies via e-mail to their home computer, burn to C:, or, increasingly, use the next product that has made my life so much easier: the mini-USB compact hard drive. Even for backing up desktop files, this can't be beat. It comes in 64MB, 128MB, and 256MB. File transfer is blazingly fast, much superior to sending to a floppy A: drive. These are readily available at local computer stores and come with a keychain attached.

Vision Care

Another piece of important office equipment that we rarely discuss, except in passing, is our eyes. It was quite a shock when I saw Mary (*This Hour Has 22 Minutes*) Walsh doing a

news special on her sudden onset of macular degeneration, and what that has meant to her working life of reading scripts.

It is almost a year ago to the day since Mary joined forces with The Foundation Fighting Blindness (www.ffb.ca/) to combat this debilitating illness (www.ffb.ca/news_release_mary_walsh.php?hc=1). More information can be found at the CNIB's Web pages (www.cnib.ca/vision/eng/fall2002/health.htm). Another excellent site with information on all types of eye health issues is www.allaboutvision.com/sitemap.htm, which contains superb information on prevention through nutrition and specific vitamin and mineral supplements.



Mini-USB compact hard drive

Keep an Eye on Your Computer Screens—Or Not

A further warning about office equipment has to do with your monitor refresh rate, which can be found in your Control Panel under Display's Advanced settings. This should be set to well above 60 Hertz, the recommended minimum being 75 Hertz. Monitorworld.com currently sports this enlightening article, "What should I consider when buying a monitor?" at www.monitorworld.com/faq_pages/q11_page.html.

Another issue is the dot pitch of your screen, currently in the 0.23 to 0.25 mm range for CRT monitors, but 0.26 to 0.28 mm for flat panel screens. This is the distance between the pixels that make up the screen. Flat panel screens can look wonderful in the store, but sit in front of them for long enough, and you start to feel discomfort as you become aware of the granularity of these screens compared to top-notch CRTs. In my experience, I sometimes find new laptop screens to be superior to the flat panel type of screen sold for desktops. Buyer beware!

Rachel Rosenberg, Editor
wordgoddess@sympatico.ca

Creating Your Own Space on the Web

(Continued from page 11)

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

Håkon Wium Lie and Bert Bos, *Cascading Style Sheets: Designing for the Web*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1999)

Eric A. Meyer, *Cascading Style Sheets: The Definitive Guide* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly & Associates, 2000)

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), *Cascading Style Sheets Home Page* (www.w3.org/Style/CSS/) and *W3C Core Styles page* (www.w3.org/StyleSheets/Core/)

Dave Raggett, *Adding a Touch of Style* (www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/Style.html). Tutorial on W3C site.

Web Design and Usability

Patrick J. Lynch and Sarah Horton, *Web Style Guide: Basic Design Principles for Creating Web Sites*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002)

Jakob Nielsen, *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity* (Indianapolis, IN: New Riders, 1999)

Jakob Nielsen and Marie Tahir, *Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed* (Indianapolis, IN: New Riders, 2001)

Jared M. Spool et al., *Web Site Usability: A Designer's Guide* (San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann, 1998)

Jakob Nielsen, *Alertbox: Current Issues in Web Usability* (www.useit.com/alertbox/). Bi-weekly column by noted Web usability expert.

Patrick J. Lynch and Sarah Horton, *Web Style Guide*, 2nd ed. (www.webstyleguide.com/index.html?/contents.html). Online companion to their book, listed above.

User Interface Engineering (www.uie.com/). Web site of Massachusetts-based usability consulting firm headed by Jared M. Spool. Their article "Why On-Site Searching Stinks" (www.uie.com/searchar.htm) is still one of the best studies of its kind—not to mention an excellent argument for including traditional alphabetical indexes on Web sites.

Cheryl Lemmens

cheryl.lemmens@utoronto.ca

www3.sympatico.ca/lemmens/cheryl.htm

Cheryl Lemmens has her Ph.D. in English from the University of Toronto. She indexes and does Web-related work from her home in Toronto.

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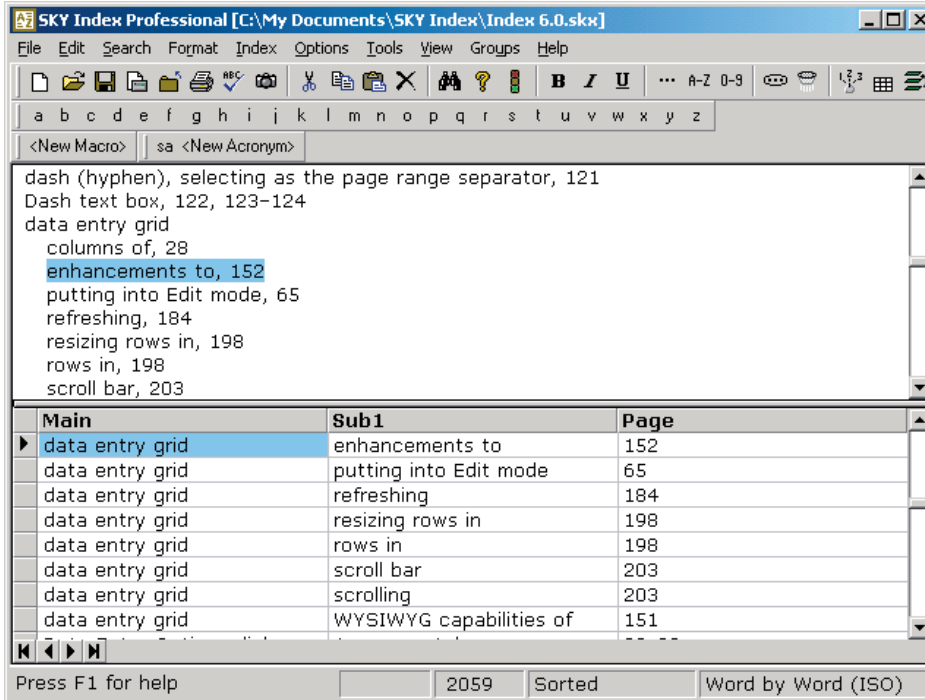
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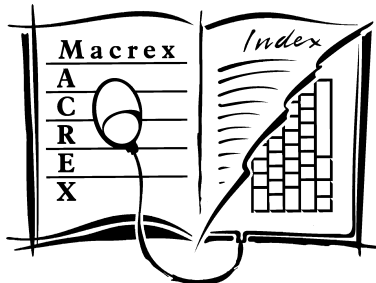
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