Indexing and Abstracting

Introduction

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Purpose

The purpose of this course is to present the fundamentals of indexing and abstracting as a foundation for entry-level professional practice.

- Indexing and abstracting are practical arts
- What is important is the information in those records founded, and the validity and completeness of that information still relies on the expertise of human indexers and abstractors.

- Indexes and Abstracts have two general purposes
  - Minimize the time and effort
  - Maximize the searching success
The Need for Indexes

- The function of an index is to give users systematic and effective shortcuts to the information they need.
- Indexes are needed for any information collection, except the very smallest.

Dual Spaces

- Document space
  - Original documents
- Surrogate space
  - Indexes
  - Abstracts
- Indexing and abstracting are to ensure surrogate space similar to document space
Indexing

- Document space
- Controlled terms
- Free terms
- Surrogate space

Abstracting

- Document space
- Surrogate space
Nature of Indexes

- Come in many forms and formats
  - Printed
  - Electronic
  - Both
- Serve many purposes
  - Name indexes
  - Subject indexes
  - Map indexes
  - Artifacts indexes
  - Address indexes

Nature of Indexes (continued)

- Surrogates of different materials
  - Books
  - Periodicals
  - Images
  - Database
  - Numerical data
- Compiled by
  - Human being
  - Computers
  - Both
Makers of Indexes

- Being a good, fast reader is also a real plus for an indexer
- The good indexer becomes the surrogate of the reader
- Makers of indexes are also censors
  - Unrecognized bias
  - Prejudice

Joseph Goebbels

Source: http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Holocaust/goebbels.html
Related Books

- **1878** - Henry Wheately
  *What Is an Index*

- **1975 and 1976** – Alan G. Brown
  Volume 1 –
  *Introduction to Subject Indexing: A Programmed Text. Subject Analysis and Practical Classification.*
  Volume 2 –
  *Introduction to Subject Indexing: A Programmed Text. UDC and Chain Procedure in Subject Cataloguing.*

Related Books (continued)

- **1975** – Harold Borko and Charles Bernier
  *Abstracting Concepts and Methods*

- **1978** - Harold Borko and Charles Bernier
  *Indexing Concepts and Methods*

- **1979** - G. Norman Knight
  *A Guide to the Indexing of Books and Periodicals*

  - Eugene Garfield
  *Citation Indexing-Its Theory and Application in Science, Technology and Humanities*
Related Books (continued)

- 1979 – Jennifer E. Rowley
  *Abstracting and Indexing*

- 1983 – Hilda Feinberg
  *Indexing Specialized Formats and Subjects*

- 1986 – Timothy C. Craven
  *String Indexing*

- 1991 – F. W. Lancaster
  *Indexing and Abstracting in Theory and Practice*

Indexing -- Historical Background

- Orderly society cumulates records quickly
- The need to index and abstract records is natural
- Subject indexes and abstracts were practiced hundreds of years B.C.
- Fifth century:
  - Alphabetical indexes
- 12th century:
  - social institutions
  - intellectual discourse
- 14th century: annotation
  - Manuscripts
  - Library catalogs bibliographies
- Codex form of books
- Debates as a major form of teaching
Indexing -- Historical Background

(continued)

- Blank space: do-it-yourself index
- Early indexes
  - Concordances indexes
  - Topical subject indexes
- 18th century
  - indexes to books were prepared primarily by their authors
- 19th century
  - compile indexes to cover entire fields
- 20th century
  - subject index consisted of a list of terms with no subdivisions or with subdivision in a simple hierarchical structure of two or three levels (main heading and modifier or main heading, subheading, and modifier)

Indexing -- Historical Background

(continued)

- 17th: Scholarly journals
  - with the rapid growth of journals, subject access become necessary
- Late 19th century- taxonomy
- 1850s, W. F. Poole
  - publication of an index across many journals
- 1882 – ALA
  - *Index to Periodical Literature*
- 1892 – Paul Otlet, Henri La Fontaine
  - International Institute of Bibliography
  - Title – word indexing
Indexing -- Historical Background

(continued)

- 1900- H. W. Wilson
  - *Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature*
- “Information explosion” during and following World War II
- 1950s –
  - Computers had entered the indexing and abstracting arena and efforts were begun to evaluate indexing using quantitative methods.
  - Hans Peter Luhn - KWIC indexes

Indexing -- Historical Background

(continued)

- Cranfield Project
  - 2 stages: 1957, 1963
  - C.W. Cleverdon
  - Major values of the Cranfield Project was the development of techniques for the quantitative evaluation of indexing
- 20 century –
  - Indexing has outstripped the ideas of previous ages. We have progressed from indexes to individual works, through indexes to several volumes, to cooperative indexes on an international scale
Abstracting - Historical Background

- 1665 – *Journal des Scavans*
- 1700s – other abstracts began to appear
  - 1703: *Monatsextracte*
- 19th century – abstract journal proliferate

Side Column

-- How to Measure Information

- A specific event $x_i$
  - $-\log(p(x_i))$
- A random variable $X$ represents possible events
  - Entropy of $X$ is $-\sum p(x_i) \log(p(x_i))$