

The Indexing Companion Workbook: Book Indexing

Sample Answers

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1.2 Quoting – questions to ask (TIC pp.8–9)

Quote for index to a 250-page book on astronomy.

- ⊇ If this means the index will be due in one month's time, when will the final page proofs be sent to the indexer?
- ⊇ What size pages, or how many words?
- ⊇ Is it illustrated? If so, how are illustrations to be indexed?
- ⊇ What is the target audience of the book?
- ⊇ What depth/detail of indexing is required?
- ⊇ Is there a space limit for the index?
- ⊇ Are there any special requirements?

3.2 Planning length of indexes (TIC pp.39–40)

Index entries per page to reach set index length

Assuming that there will only be one page number at each heading, and that none of the lines will turn over onto the next line, this gives space for 1100 main headings or subheadings.

You then have to allow for about 10% of lines to turnover onto the next line. A number of headings will have more than one page number, which adds an entry, but takes no more space. These will be more significant in indexes that have many undifferentiated locators, and less significant in indexes where page numbers are usually differentiated with subheadings. About a third of the first page of the index is used for the heading, so is unavailable for index terms.

It is usually easier to remove a few entries if an index is too long, than to add them in at the last minute if it is too short. Many entries are also removed at the editing stage as they turn out to be less important than at first expected. Also, typesetters are quite good at fitting in a few more entries if needed.

Our approach would therefore be to slightly overindex at the start. This would mean adding perhaps four to 5 entries per page, giving up to 1500 entries, which can then be revised to size as required.

Another approach for managing space requirements is to index at different levels in different passes through the text. For example, you might first index only concepts from section headings. Once you know how much space they take, you can go through the text and flesh out the index with other important terms.

4.2 Sources and categories of concepts (many indexable terms) (TIC pp.54–55)

Multiple index entries for news-style items

acquisitions, mergers & takeovers

Reed Elsevier to sell parts of Harcourt Education to Pearson

clinical testing tools

Reed Elsevier to sell Harcourt Assessment to Pearson

educational testing tools

Reed Elsevier to sell Harcourt Education International to Pearson

Harcourt Assessment, to be sold to Pearson plc

Harcourt Education International, to be sold to Pearson plc

Pearson plc, to purchase parts of Harcourt Education

performance measurement tools

Reed Elsevier to sell Harcourt Assessment to Pearson

Reed Elsevier, to sell parts of Harcourt Education

testing tools, *see* clinical testing tools; educational testing tools

This exercise shows one of the features of indexing news-type sections of periodicals – they may require many entries per paragraph to cover all of the entry types that have been requested. It is worth looking very closely at the requirements to determine what types of entries should be made.

4.24 Metatopic – 2 (TIC pp.65–67)

Removing the metatopic

advertising soft drinks

ingredients for soft drinks

manufacture of soft drinks

Here the entries are meaningful without the metatopic, and on finding nothing at ‘soft drinks’, users will know they have to look for alternative terms.

7.2 Subheadings – for undifferentiated locators (TIC pp.89–90, 103–104)

7.2a Differentiating undifferentiated locators – arms race

arms race 23, 28, 30, 48–50, 94

Cuban Missile Crisis and 60–61

disarmament agreements 136–137

Gorbachev and 130

mutual deterrence 17, 91, 94

Reagan and 117

7.17 See reference selection – 3 (TIC pp.96–97)

See references from slang terms

crystal meth

glass, *see* crystal meth

ice, *see* crystal meth

methamphetamine, *see* crystal meth

'Crystal meth' is the basic language of the book so is the preferred term. 'Methamphetamine' is the scientific name, so should be used as a reference. 'Ice' and 'glass' are used in the text and also in the user quotes, so reflect language in use. There are many other slang terms for crystal meth including 'crank', 'meth', 'crystal', 'tina', 'glass', 'shabu' or 'syabu', and 'tik'. For most indexes it won't be possible to include them all, so usage in the text is the main guide to follow. (I have seen a book which has a separate index of slang terms for drugs leading to preferred terms, so it is possible in some situations to include all options.)

7.31 Filing rules – word-by-word or letter-by-letter (TIC pp.104–105)

7.31a Identifying basic filing rules – 1

Word-by-word

7.31b Changing filing rule used – 1 (letter-by-letter)

Bad girl movies
Beach party film
Bildungsroman
blackcurrant
black lovage
blackthorn
blueberry
B movies

Now the 'a' in 'Bad' files before the 'm' in 'movies', and the 'c' in 'blackcurrant' files before the 'l' in 'black lovage'.

8.4 Evaluation (editing by editor or indexer) (TIC pp.113–114)

8.4b Editing index entry structure

The first entry array does not need a reference to 'education policy' in addition to the same term as a subheading. As 'education policy' is not really an aspect of Catholicism, the best approach would be to delete the subheading and retain the cross-reference, as well as adding '63' to the entry 'education policy'.

I would check the spelling of Shrley, which probably should be Shirley.

As they file together, I would combine the English Ladies entries to give:

English Ladies (Englische Fraulein) 23-28, 39

Peg and Margaret Flynn are possibly the same person, especially as there is a photo of one (an italic page number) and text about the other. I would check the text, the internet, and/or with the author to see whether they should be combined. I would then let the editor know.

I would consider moving 'Little, Thomas' above 'Little Sisters of the Poor', so that names file before things, however, I would probably leave it in straight alphabetical order.

I would add a cross-reference from Burma to Myanmar.

9.3 How-to book indexing (TIC pp.141–142)

Indexing a book on home hints

blocked sinks and drains
drains, unblocking
sinks, unblocking
unblocking sinks and drains

11.2 Overall indexing practice – re-code.com

Indexing step-by-step

Familiarisation: Need to consider whether to index names of organisations, people, and websites. Also what sort of topics to include.

Concept analysis/markings up: I have underlined topics in the text below that I think could, or should be indexed, or that might provide information for subheadings or cross-references (ie, I highlight a lot more terms than I will probably end up using in the index).

1. A group of students and artists known as the Carbon Defense League (CDL) has created a website so controversial that key parts of it have had to be deleted.
2. The website was called re-code.com and was a database of bar codes for common supermarket items; guests of the site could download them, print them onto stickers and put them on top of existing bar codes to replace the real, more expensive prices.
3. US retail chain Wal-Mart issued a “cease and desist” notice and the media responded. Some time later, American CDL ringleader Nathan Martin was interviewed.
4. “Initially it was about companies in the US that use the rhetoric of revolution and the language of consumer power to sell product,” Martin told the interviewer. “We wanted to make ‘name your own price’ a reality.”
5. “Name Your Own Price” is a tag line of the US-based Priceline.com.

Term selection/typing up:

bar codes, fake, for supermarket items 2
Carbon Defense League (CDL) 1–4
consumer power, fake bar codes and 4
Martin, Nathan 3–4
‘Name Your Own Price’ slogan 4–5
re-code.com website attack on 2
Priceline.com 5
re-code.com website 1–2
retail items, *see* supermarket items
supermarket items, fake bar codes for 2, 4
Wal-Mart, response to fake barcodes 3

- ⊇ I would have used the reference ‘CDL, *see* Carbon Defense League’ or a double entry if the acronym and full term hadn’t filed next to each other.
- ⊇ By using ‘re-code website attack on’ as a subheading under ‘Name Your Own Price’ slogan’ I felt able to include paragraph number 2 – without the subheading the connection of this paragraph to the main heading would not have been as clear.
- ⊇ There are other paragraphs in which the discussion relates to topics but the connection is not explicit. Eg, I used the range 1–2 for ‘re-code.com website’, even though ‘re-code.com’ was not named in paragraph 1, as I felt there was important

information about it in that paragraph. Another option here would be to use the heading 're-code.com (CDL website)'. The inclusion of 'CDL website' in the heading would make the connection to paragraph 1 clearer.

- ⊇ Other entries that could be included in the index are 'retail pricing' or 'pricing', 'fake', and 'websites'. What you finally end up with depends on other content in the work being indexed.