

# GUIDANCE ON INDEXING YOUR BOOK



*by John Vickers*

*revised 2018, with permission, by Paula Clarke Bain (Society of Indexers)*

## Preliminary Considerations

Every non-fiction book needs and deserves an adequate index and is defective without it, whatever the quality of the text itself. A good index will both help to sell the book and make it more useful to the reader.

It is important to recognise that compiling an index is as much a skilled task as copy-editing or jacket design. Nevertheless, for economic or other reasons, many indexes are compiled by the book's author, or as a labour of love by a spouse or friend. With the best will in the world, the result is sometimes (but not necessarily) disastrous. However, several prize-winning indexers have been author/indexers who have taken the trouble to master the skills involved.

This booklet is no more than an introduction, offering basic advice and guidance. There is much more to be said, but for this you should consult some of the books and websites listed at the end. And if after reading this guide and indexing your own book you feel you have an aptitude for the task (and enjoy it), you might like to consider joining the Society of Indexers.

As its author, you have an inside knowledge of the subject matter of your book and are already familiar with the text. That is both an advantage and a disadvantage. On the one hand, it gives you a head start over anyone reading your text for the first time. On the other hand, over-familiarity with it can make it more difficult for you to put yourself in readers' shoes and so envisage what terms they are likely to look up. You will need to be particularly alert for concepts, associations and relationships of which you as author are fully aware, but which may not be self-evident to the reader. The needs of the reader are paramount: indexing 'rules' are essentially guidelines, with the effectiveness of the index always the ultimate consideration.

Your publisher may impose a limit on the length of your index, determined by the number of spare pages available when the book reaches page-proof stage. Producing a short index can be more problematical than a full-length one. It calls for greater powers of discrimination and in general is best left to the experienced professional. In particular, because a good index has shape and coherence, cutting down an index to a required length is a hazardous procedure.

Beware of underestimating the length of time needed to compile your index, especially if you are inexperienced. (Professional indexers are accustomed to working to a tight schedule.) Your publishers will be working to strict deadlines at this late stage and will not easily be able to adjust them to allow for delays. They will not be pleased if you fail to deliver the goods, so that a professional indexer has to be recruited at short notice to remedy the situation. In particular, you need to allow extra time for the necessary editing described in the 'Editing the Index' section below.

Wait until you have page proofs to work on (your publisher should supply an extra set for this purpose) and make sure that the publisher alerts you to any last-minute changes to the pagination. (These are not normal, but can occur: e.g. through the insertion or relocation of illustrations.)

Indexing can also take place earlier in the publishing process by 'embedding' index entries within the Word manuscript. Embedded indexing is a more complex process, however, and is best accomplished by a professional indexer. Be wary, too, of publishers who just require a word list, with page numbers to be completed later by production staff rather than the author or indexer. This is not how indexers usually work and will produce a poorer index.

If you do, after all, decide to seek professional help, your first step should be to consult the Society of Indexers (SI), which maintains a register of qualified and experienced indexers. You can find and search the SI Directory of Professional Indexers at [www.indexers.org.uk](http://www.indexers.org.uk).

## Definitions

The following definitions may be helpful:

- **Entry:** the basic unit in an index. A simple entry is made up of a heading and one or more page references.
- **Heading:** a word or phrase chosen to represent in the index an item or concept in the book (not necessarily identical with the wording in the text).
- **Subheading:** used to subdivide longer or more complex entries into subsections.
- **Cross-reference:** an instruction directing the user from one heading or subheading to another elsewhere in the index.

## Making a Start

First, a word about computerised indexing. The average word-processing package can produce an alphabetical word list, but it cannot cope with the more complex aspects of compiling a genuine index. Without human input, the computer will only deal with words as they exist on the page and cannot provide the additional concepts that need to be added. Nor can it discriminate between what is significant enough to be indexed and what is merely a passing reference.

The Microsoft Word program does have an embedded indexing facility but it is not easy to use. Avoid its 'index all' option, which indexes every mention of a word/phrase regardless of context or significance. Professional indexers use additional plug-in programs (such as WordEmbed, DEXembed or Index-Manager) to embed index entries in Word rather than trying to index in Word itself.

Dedicated indexing software programs like CINDEK, MACREX and SKY Index are a different matter, because they rely on and use the indexer's own intellectual input. But they cost money – quite possibly as much as you would pay a professional indexer to do the job; and it takes time and practice to learn how to use them effectively. So unless you expect to be making a series of indexes and are in no hurry to complete the first of them, they are not necessarily the answer.

It is likely that the publisher will expect you to submit the index by email; discuss the correct format at the outset with the publisher or typesetter, especially in relation to subheadings.

Since you are already familiar with the text, your first step will be to mark up a set of page proofs. (Remind your publishers that you will need a spare set of proofs for this and make sure that you are informed of any alterations that affect the pagination.) Underline or highlight items to be included in the index and write in the margin any additional terms to be used (i.e. terms not explicit in the text, but which an intelligent reader might expect to find, and ones from which a cross-reference may need to be made). You can highlight pdf proofs if only electronic proofs are available.

## What to Index

The exercise of intelligent judgement on what is to be included is a major difficulty for the inexperienced indexer. This aspect of the task calls for a combination of common sense and imagination which cannot be reduced to a series of rules. What is important is to put yourself as fully as possible in the readers' shoes and ask what terms are likely to lead them from the index entry to the required passage in the text.

The two factors which should influence the process of selecting entries are: the text of your book (especially its scope and focus); and the needs of your readers and the type(s) of information they are likely to seek in it.

Be as specific in wording your headings as the text warrants. If the only reference to Canada relates to its export of wheat, then the heading 'Canada, wheat exports' is much better than just 'Canada'. But there will be times when it is in the readers' interests (and reflects the scope and arrangement of the book) to use a broader term as the heading, with related topics grouped together as subheadings under it.

Thus, if a number of other aspects of Canadian life are mentioned in the text, then 'wheat exports' would become one of several subheadings under 'Canada'. Decisions on such matters depend on the nature of the text. The use of subheadings will also help to avoid lengthy and unhelpful 'strings' of page references under the main heading. (There is more advice on this under 'Subheadings' below.)

One measure of a good index is its comprehensiveness: i.e. how fully it covers the content of the book (but without wasting the user's time on trivia). No aspect of the subject that is dealt with in the text and might be looked for by the reader should be omitted from the index.

Bear in mind that your index will serve readers in two ways. It will enable them to find out whether your book deals with specific topics or mentions particular persons or places they are interested in. (The Contents page gives only a general overview.) And, once they have read the book, it should also enable them to locate particular passages which they remember and want to return to.

Some parts of a book are not normally indexed. These include the preface or foreword, acknowledgements and bibliography. But there may well be information in your introduction that needs to be included. Footnotes (or endnotes) are indexed only if they contain additional information not found in the main text; and much the same applies to any appendices. The subject matter in any illustrations, figures or tables should be included and the page numbers on which they occur differentiated in some way (e.g. by using bold or italic). Your publisher may have a preferred style, which you should follow.

Index all information of any substance, but not passing references which give no information. In particular, exclude 'adjectival' or 'defining' references: e.g. the italicised names in the following examples:

'Sir Peter Scott, son of *Captain Scott* of the Antarctic...'

'Borrowdale, south of *Keswick*...'

'the Community Charge, not to be confused with the *Poll Tax*...'

(This last example assumes that the Poll Tax is not dealt with elsewhere in the book; if it is, then a cross-reference to it from 'Community Charge' would be required, to take account of two closely related, but not identical, subjects. See further under 'Cross-references' below.)

## ***Headings***

These fall into three main groups: personal names, place names, subject matter/concepts.

### *Personal names*

Invert first names or initials:

Bloggs, Joe  
Martin, Betty  
Wells, H. G.

For easy identification, add first name(s) or initial(s) (and possibly other identifying details such as dates or occupations) even if these are not given in the text:

Brown, Joseph (draper)  
Brown, Joseph (solicitor)  
Brown, Joseph, of Truro  
Brown, Joseph (1856–1907)

In the case of alternative names, you should generally enter under the form by which a person is best known (Carroll, Lewis, not Dodgson, Charles Lutwidge; Twain, Mark, not Clemens, Samuel) with a cross-reference from the alternative form. Dealing with persons whose names changed during their lifetime presents its own problems. The solution usually depends on the way in which the person is dealt with in the text. In most cases it would be appropriate to index Beatrix Potter under her maiden name, rather than under 'Heelis, Mrs Beatrix (née Potter)' and Benjamin Disraeli under that name rather than under 'Beaconsfield, Lord'. Reference to a standard biographical dictionary or reliable online sources will often help you to decide (but don't be surprised to find discrepancies between one work of reference and another); and a cross-reference is always advisable.

Similarly, composite names should be indexed under the form by which the person is generally known (Lloyd George, David, not George, David Lloyd; Vaughan Williams, Ralph, not Williams, Ralph Vaughan). An Anglicised name such as 'de la Mare, Walter' should be indexed under the form in which it is normally used. But foreign names present a variety of problems that cannot be dealt with here. See the indexing manuals listed at the end.

Include titles (e.g. Scott, Sir Walter; Johnson, Dr Samuel), especially where these help to identify the person; but also see 'Arrangement of Entries' below. Where members of the nobility are best known under their title, use the latter, e.g. Shaftesbury, Antony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl or Shaftesbury, Lord (Antony Ashley Cooper) – with a cross-reference from Cooper. (But note 'Disraeli' above.)

### *Place names*

Invert geographical terms: e.g. Thames, River or Thames (river), not River Thames; Sinai, Mount, not Mount Sinai. But do not invert compound place names such as East Grinstead, Great Yarmouth, Forest of Dean, Isle of Wight. Add the county or other identifying details where this will avoid ambiguity: e.g. Whitchurch (Hants); Boston (Mass).

### *Subject matter/concepts*

These will usually, but not invariably, be referred to explicitly in the text. In some cases, cross-reference from a synonym or antonym will be desirable: e.g. theatre see drama; affluence see *also* poverty. But if there are only one or two page references, it is better to enter them under both terms, taking care that the two entries agree.

In the case of titles of books, newspapers, etc., invert only initial definite or indefinite articles, not prepositions or conjunctions:

*Of Mice and Men*  
*Passage to India, A*  
*Times, The*

Some publishers require that initial articles are not inverted, but headings are still filed as if they were inverted (e.g. *A Passage to India* filed under 'P').

Notice the distinction between

Joan of Arc, St  
and  
*Saint Joan* (Shaw)

Do not use adjectives as head-words, unless they are part of a familiar noun phrase ('anti-social behaviour', 'Bloody Mary', 'forensic science') which it would be unhelpful to invert.

If an organisation is known both by an acronym and as fully spelled out (e.g. RSPB and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), ensure that both are in the index, with the page references at one and a cross-reference from the other.

### ***Arrangement of Entries***

This is a more complex subject than might appear. For fuller treatment, see the 'Further Reading'.

There are two basic methods of arranging entries alphabetically, usually known as the 'word-by-word' and the 'letter-by-letter' methods. The difference between them is best illustrated by an example:

<i>Word-by-word</i>	<i>Letter-by-letter</i>
Blue, Lionel	Blue, Lionel
Blue Danube (waltz)	Bluebeard
Blue Days at Sea	bluebells
Blue Peter	Blue Danube (waltz)
Bluebeard	Blue Days at Sea
bluebells	Blue Peter
blueprints	blueprints

In the 'word-by-word' arrangement, a short word precedes a longer one beginning with the same letters: e.g. 'Blue Peter' precedes 'bluebells'. In the 'letter-by-letter' arrangement, the space between words is ignored and the words are arranged according to the sequence of individual letters (i.e. 'bluebells' precedes 'Blue Danube', which is treated as if printed 'BlueDanube').

Some headings will include a comma, usually because of the inversion of a name ('Dickens, Charles') or because of a qualifying expression ('maps, topographical'). In such cases, the alphabetical arrangement stops at the comma and a fresh alphabetical sequence begins after it. (Hence in the example above, 'Blue, Lionel' heads the list in each column.) In the case of inverted names, initials precede full names:

Jones, B.  
Jones, B. L.  
Jones, Bernard

In arranging personal names, also ignore any titles (Mrs, Sir, Revd, Capt, etc.) and arrange by initials or names only:

Jones, Revd B.  
Jones, B. L.  
Jones, Sir Bernard  
Jones, Mrs C. R.  
Jones, Lady Caroline  
Jones, Capt Charles

Names beginning with Mac, Mc or M' have traditionally been arranged as though they all began with 'Mac'; but the latest trend is to arrange them as spelled (but ignoring the apostrophe).

Thus, the first method would result in:

M'Avoy, Margaret  
McCarthy, Joseph Raymond  
M'Carthy, Justin  
MacDiarmid, Hugh  
Macdonald, George  
Macmillan, Harold

whereas the second gives a different order:

MacDiarmid, Hugh  
Macdonald, George  
Macmillan, Harold  
M'Avoy, Margaret  
M'Carthy, Justin  
McCarthy, Joseph Raymond

In the first example, Joseph McCarthy precedes Justin M'Carthy; whereas in the second, M'Carthy precedes McCarthy.

The second method is more strictly logical and easier for a computer program to handle; but the first comes more easily to the human brain, which may not remember the exact spelling of a particular name and which, in any case, tends to read words rather than individual letters.

Unless your book is a very long one, or contains a large number of Scottish and Irish names, you may find that this problem doesn't in fact arise.

Names beginning with the abbreviation 'St' (St Albans; St John, Henry) are normally arranged as though spelled out in full, but check your publisher's guidelines as some prefer them filed as spelled:

<i>Spelled out in full</i>	<i>Filed as spelled</i>
sabbaticals	sabbaticals
St Albans	<i>Saint Joan</i> (Shaw)
St Ives (Cornwall)	Saintsbury, George
<i>Saint Joan</i> (Shaw)	seduction
St Louis (Mo)	St Albans
St Neots	St Ives (Cornwall)

Saintsbury, George  
seduction

St Louis (Mo)  
St Neots

Accents and diacriticals should be ignored for purposes of alphabetical arrangement.

## **Page References**

At all costs, be accurate. Distinguish carefully between several separate references to a topic on adjacent pages of the book (e.g. birth control, 52, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77) and a continuous treatment through several pages (e.g. 52, 73–7). Do not use f (or ff) to indicate references extending over two (or more) pages; and avoid *passim* as too vague.

Be consistent. The normal practice in Britain is illustrated by the following examples: 33–41, but 54–7 (rather than 54–57); 133–41, but 154–7 (rather than 154–57 or 154–157). But note that numbers between 10 and 19 are given in full: 12–17 (not 12–7); also: 112–17 (not 112–7 or 112–117).

References to footnotes are usually indicated by placing n after the page number (e.g. 173n). In the case of endnotes, it is helpful (to say the least) to add the number of the note: e.g. 307 n.27, or 307 (n.27), or 307n27 – where 307 is the page on which endnote 27 is to be found. Explain your chosen usage in your introductory note (see under ‘Format and Presentation’ below). Find out if your publisher has a preferred house style for page references and follow that if so.

## **Subheadings**

A common fault in indexes is a long ‘string’ of page references indicating that a particular subject is referred to frequently throughout the book. These can be a serious deterrent to readers, who need more specific directions. If your index is to serve their needs, such strings must be avoided at all cost. (As a general rule, avoid more than six page references under any one heading.) The usual method is to disperse as many of the page references as possible under several appropriate subheadings. This can be done towards the end of the indexing process, when the need becomes apparent; but it is better to devise subheadings from the outset and delete them later if they prove unnecessary.

Once again, the nature of the text being indexed is the determining factor. A book dealing in general with economics or government is likely to have a few references to ‘taxation’, and these might be indexed together under that general term. But if taxation is the main subject of the book and so is dealt with in detail, there will be specific entries under ‘excise duty’, ‘income tax’, ‘VAT’, and so on.

Similarly, a book on the Elizabethan theatre will inevitably refer frequently to Shakespeare. Many of the page references can be grouped under the titles of his plays, leaving a few more general references under the main heading, thus:

Shakespeare, William 12, 17–18, 55–62, 108  
    *All's Well that Ends Well* 73, 94  
    *Antony and Cleopatra* 46  
    *As You Like It* 32, 94–5

On the other hand, if the book were on Shakespeare himself, rather than on Elizabethan drama as a whole, then the titles of individual plays (and poems) would become main headings and so be dispersed throughout the index. The entry under ‘Shakespeare, William’ would probably then

become one that dealt only with biographical information under such headings as 'birth', 'death', 'marriage'; or (according to the nature of the book) with aspects of his art (e.g. 'characterisation', 'poetic diction', 'sense of theatre').

Subheadings are usually arranged alphabetically, but ignoring conjunctions and prepositions; i.e. arranged by the first significant word:

- policing 143, 194–6
  - of car parks 187
  - and the judicial system 154
  - in wartime 229–31

Note that it is now common practice, especially in scientific or technical indexes, to omit prepositions from subheadings:

- England
  - climate 9–15
  - local government 34, 52–8
  - population 4, 11, 72

But care must be taken to avoid any ambiguity that may result from this.

In the case of biographies and autobiographies, one alternative is to arrange the subheadings chronologically ('birth', 'education', 'marriage', 'divorce', 'retirement', 'death'). This may, however, present you with the problem of where to locate less time-related subheadings ('American visits', 'health'...).

Never arrange subheadings in page-number order: this is the arrangement least helpful to the reader and indicative of lazy indexing.

In a lengthy or complex index a second level of subheading may sometimes be necessary:

- policing 143, 194–6
  - of car parks 187
  - nocturnal 193

But avoid any further subdivision of entries. This can usually be done by promoting subheadings to main headings, with appropriate cross-referencing.

## ***Cross-references***

These are of two kinds:

(a) *see*, directing attention to an alternative heading (or headings) under which the required references will be found:

- Aquinas *see* Thomas Aquinas
- commerce *see* trade
- Dodgson, Charles Lutwidge *see* Carroll, Lewis
- Horeb, Mt *see* Sinai
- Hull *see* Kingston upon Hull



wireless see radio

NB Some of the above examples (e.g. 'Hull') might be reversed in the light of the usage in the text or readers' presumed expectations. A *see* cross-reference (unlike a *see also* one) has no page references associated with it.

(b) *see also*, directing attention to related headings, under which additional references will be found: e.g.

monasticism 17, 28–41  
    Benedictines 21, 35  
    Cistercians 43  
    *see also* abbeys  
travel 25–8, 46–51, 119–26. *See also* public transport

*See also* cross-references may alternatively be placed immediately after the heading and before any of the references:

monasticism (*see also* abbeys) 17, 28–41  
    Benedictines 21, 35  
    Cistercians 43

Be especially careful to avoid 'blind' cross references (leading to nothing) and 'circular' cross-references (taking the reader round in a circle):

commerce see trade  
trade see commerce

## Editing the Index

Entering all your data into the computer is only half the battle. When you have finished this, you still have much to do and it is important not to bypass this further stage. Your entries will need to be checked and edited. (If you have been using dedicated indexing software, some of this will have been done for you; but a good deal of checking and adjusting will still be called for.)

1. Look out for separate entries under synonymous headings, each with its own page references, and amalgamate them into a single entry: e.g. you might have made entries with different page numbers under both 'America, United States of' and 'United States of America'. These will need to be brought together under whichever heading you decide to use.

Be particularly vigilant in eliminating double entries under abstract terms: e.g. 'cleanliness' and 'hygiene', or 'agriculture' and 'farming' (unless, of course, a clear distinction has been drawn in the text).

Add a cross-reference from the abandoned heading to the preferred one: e.g. in a book on modern Africa two entries such as:

Rhodesia 17–23, 152, 167  
Zimbabwe 36, 72, 185–9

would become:

Rhodesia see Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) 17–23, 36, 72, 152, 167, 185–9

But if the book is about the colonial period in Africa, you would probably decide to use 'Rhodesia' as your main heading. In that case the entries would become:

Rhodesia (subsequently Zimbabwe) 17–23, 36, 72, 152, 167, 185–9

Zimbabwe see Rhodesia

2. If the entry is a short one with only one or two page references, a double entry under synonymous headings may be justified as taking up less space and more helpful to the reader than a cross-reference. In that case, it is especially important to check that the page references under both headings agree.

3. Make sure that you (or the computer) have not wrongly conflated page references that should be kept separate, e.g.:

Whitchurch (Hants) 47–8, 95

Whitchurch (Oxon) 23

Whitchurch (Salop) 72, 84

4. Double-check the alphabetical arrangement of the entries, taking care to be consistent. (See under 'Arrangement of Entries' above.)

5. Decide whether any of your headings should become subheadings of some different entry, or any subheadings deserve to be promoted to headings in their own right; whether any entries (say, those containing more than six page references) need to be subdivided; whether any further cross-references should be provided. Then recheck that none of your cross-references are either 'blind' or 'circular'. (See under 'Cross-references' above.)

## Format and Presentation

Your first consideration should be the publisher's house style. In the absence of any specific guidelines, the following advice may be helpful.

1. Begin entries with a lower-case letter, reserving upper-case for names that require it: e.g. personal or place names, or the names of organisations.

2. In cross-references, the words *see* and *see also* should be set in italic. Cross-references may be placed either after the main heading and before any subheadings, or (more commonly) at the end of the entry.

3. A comma between the heading (or subheading) and the first page reference is no longer considered essential.

4. Unless your publisher specifies otherwise, abbreviate page ranges by omitting any repeated digits; but only in accordance with the examples given under 'Page References' above.

5. Subheadings may be printed in one of two ways: 'set out' and indented to distinguish them from the main heading, or 'run on' in paragraph form.

*Set out*

Japan

Buddhism in 25–37, 54, 85–92

Christian missions in 36–7

Shinto 8, 43–8

war with China 86–9

*Run on*

Japan: Buddhism in 25–37, 54, 85–92; Christian missions in 36–7; Shinto 8, 43–8; war with China 86–9

The latter is more economical of space, but less easy for the reader to use. It is best to present the publisher with a copy in which the subheadings are ‘set out’, leaving the final decision with the copy-editor.

6. Do not conflate entries that happen to begin with the same word or name but are otherwise unrelated, e.g.:

common gull	not:	common
-------------	------	--------

common law		gull
------------	--	------

common sense		law
--------------	--	-----

sense

Jones, Emlyn	not:	Jones,
--------------	------	--------

Emlyn

William

7. Indent subheadings by two spaces (or as specified by the publisher). If any entry takes up two or more lines, use a hanging indent for the turnover line(s) and make sure that turnovers are not confused with subheadings.

8. If your index contains anything unusual or that is not self-explanatory, add an introductory note. Include any conventions or abbreviations and the type of alphabetical arrangement (word-by-word or letter-by-letter) you have used.

9. Put the title of the book and author’s name at the top of the index for easy identification.

10. Leave one blank line between alphabetical groups, i.e. between the end of the As and the beginning of the Bs, and so on.

11. Check that the pages of the index are numbered. (Use automatic page numbering in Word.)

12. Submit the completed index in single-column typescript as an emailed Word/rtf file. Check the publisher style guidelines for any specific formatting requirements (e.g. double-spaced lines).

13. Try to ensure (by impressing it on your publisher) that in the final printed index the main heading is repeated when an entry runs over from one page to another, with the word ‘continued’ after it. This is particularly important when a page turnover is involved.

14. Try to get a sight of proofs of the index and check them carefully for errors, especially in the page numbers. Accuracy applied throughout the whole indexing procedure is of little effect unless checked at this final stage.

## Further Reading

### Books

- Booth, Pat F., *Indexing: the Manual of Good Practice*, K. G. Saur, 2001
- Bridge, Noeline (ed.), *Indexing Names*, Information Today, Inc, 2012
- Browne, Glenda and Jerney, Jon, *The Indexing Companion*, Cambridge University Press, 2007
- *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition, chapter 16, 'Indexes', University of Chicago Press, 2017
- Fetters, Linda K., *Handbook of Indexing Techniques*, Information Today, Inc, 2013
- Mulvany, Nancy C., *Indexing Books*, 2nd edition, University of Chicago Press, 2005
- Stauber, D. M., *Facing the Text: Content and Structure in Book Indexing*, Cedar Row Press, 2004

### Guidelines

If you wish to consult officially approved guidelines, the most relevant British Standard is:

- BS ISO 999 *Information and Documentation: Guidelines for the Content, Organization and Presentation of Indexes* (British Standards Institution, 1996)

### Websites

- Society of Indexers: [www.indexers.org.uk](http://www.indexers.org.uk)  
For more information about indexing and to find an indexer in the SI Directory of Professional Indexers.
- *The Indexer*: [www.theindexer.org](http://www.theindexer.org)  
For archived articles from the international journal of indexing, including several useful 'centrepieces' on indexing foreign names.

### Postscript

My only qualification for writing this 'amateur's guide' to indexing is that I am an author and editor who strayed many years ago into the field of indexing. At best, I am an experienced amateur, committed to professional standards in the craft. The text has gone through several stages of revision, in the course of which it benefited considerably from comments and suggestions made by professional indexers, to whom I am grateful for their patient and supportive interest in the project.

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