The Slice

A Potomac Indexing Newsletter

Taxonomy Tidbit
Things, Modeled
by Seth Maislin

Nothing today is isolated. Our data are shared across users and systems, where they can be measured and manipulated by other users and systems.

The challenges inherent in designing for interconnected systems is nowhere more apparent than with the Internet of Things. The data path begins and ends with our behavior; the objects in between need to perform and predict according to our expectations. For example, combining our home-to-work schedule and our desire to save time and money are the boundary conditions needed for our thermostats, locks, and maps, as well as the dog walker and delivery services. Each app and item outputs what the next needs for inputs.

Oh, and by the way, often each link in the chain has a completely different owner. After all, your job, car, garage, thermostat, and energy provider are otherwise unrelated. Compatibility is NOT a given.

IoT systems, like DAM and WCM and MDM and CRM, must be constructed for a domain larger than system itself. You need use cases that extend into the entire ecosystem, the entire journey. You need to intelligently design a "data API" that can be leveraged by devices you can't know much

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Inside Indexing
Book Index Layout
by Joanne Sprott

I teach an introductory online course on indexing twice a year over at the Library Juice Academy. It's always fun to see the students go through the first lesson, which has nothing to do with building their own index; I have them go find two books with indexes and describe what those indexes are like, what aspects are useful, what aspects seem less useful.

Most index users are pretty savvy about what works for them in an index, and of course my students, being mostly librarians, are even more astute.

One of the things that they always comment on if they see it, is the difference between the two basic index layouts: run-in/paragraph and indented/line-by-line. Here are examples of each:

Control, sense of: in adolescence, 95; assumptions about, 147; coping with illness, 36–37; as critical family issue, 30–31; fear of losing, 95,182, 202; with Parkinson's disease, 353; in patient behavior, 258; physician's need to maintain, 298–299

OR

Control, sense of
    adolescence, 95
    assumptions about, 147
    coping with illness, 36–37
    critical family issue, 30–31
    fear of losing, 95,182, 202
    Parkinson's disease, 353
    patient behavior, 258
    physician's need to maintain, 298–302

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of Slice!

We have been responding to many new projects from indexng clients trying to meet their end-of-year deadlines and providing keyword enhancement updates. A very busy fall so far!

In this Issue...

Comments and Questions: Contact Joanne Sprott, Editor and Designer at slice.editor@potomacindexing.com
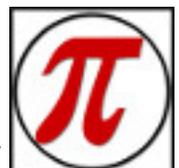
Ruminations of a Hines Award Winner

by Carolyn Weaver

I was deeply honored to receive the 2015 Hines Award for service to the American Society for Indexing (ASI) at the national conference in Seattle. As described in my acceptance speech, published in the June 2015 issue of Key Words, I was speechless and teary-eyed when Fran Lennie called to tell me that I would be receiving the ward, and six months later I'm still peeking at the plaque occasionally to make sure that it's real!

When Joanne asked me to revisit the experience of receiving the award, I realized that my first career as an academic medical librarian and my second career as a freelance indexer are now exactly the same length at 24 years each, including an overlap of 9 years when I was moonlighting as an indexer while still employed full-time as a librarian. When I started moonlighting in 1991 to generate additional income to put two daughters through college, I thought of myself as a librarian who indexed on the side. At some point I started thinking of myself as an indexer with a day job. That's when I knew it was time to go full-time—which I did as soon as Daughter #2 confirmed her graduation date. My only regret in transitioning to full-time indexing in 2000 was that I had waited so long to do it!

At this point in my career, I'm semi-retired, accepting only jobs that can be done in the amount of time I want to spend on them—my personal definition of full-time indexing. Although I no longer market, double-book, or schedule projects that force me to work evenings or weekends, I do continue to accept interesting assignments (including those from Potomac Indexing) that keep me busy without interfering with camping, visits with the granddaughter, or other high-priority activities. And for the most part (with occasional relapses due to entreaties from those in ASI who have perfected the fine art of arm-twisting) I've kept the vow I made in 2009 to limit my ASI activities to those tasks I most enjoy: serving as an ASI course grader, webmaster, and indexing discussion list manager—no more offices or committee assignments!

I'm a self-taught indexer who learned my craft from reading Mulvany, Wellisch, and the other indexing classics. My "graduate education" in indexing was accomplished via attendance and presentations at ASI conferences (national and chapter), advice gleaned from Key Words and other ASI publications, and indexing discussion groups. And much of my work through the years has come from *Indexer Locator* or Special Interest Group (SIG) marketing directories, as well as referrals from indexing colleagues who are either current or former ASI members. Even my status as a Potomac Associate is the outcome of a conversation with Kay Schlembach at an ASI conference.

Having never taken a formal indexing course, I initially felt like an impostor when I was selected as an ASI Course grader. The marking experience and access to the Training Course materials gave me confidence in my own indexing skills and taught me some of the fine nuances of indexing that I had not previously encountered. And as Training Committee Chair during the transition to the second edition of the Course, my inferiority complex finally disappeared, as I led the effort to Americanize the course materials, test the exercises, and develop the new exams. The launch of the new course was in many ways my personal Certificate of Completion.

The final sentence of my Hines remarks says it all: "I am deeply honored to be joining the roster of Hines Award winners today. But I can truly say that my greatest reward for 23 years of service to ASI is what the organization and its members have given back to me."

Carolyn Weaver, one of PI's expert indexer associates, has had a long and illustrious career as both a librarian and indexer, and was recently awarded by the American Society for Indexing for her years of volunteer dedication to the organization.

about. Like adapter plugs, data fields are integration fundamentals.

(Originally published on the [Earley Information Science blog](#) on 6/9/15)

Seth Maislin is a content consultant specializing in classification and indexing, information architecture, taxonomy and content modeling, search, and usability projects with more than 20 years experience in the information industry.

In the News

Wonderful good news story from the summer about providing reading material for Syrian refugees in Turkey. Much more has happened refugee-wise since, but I hope the spirit of educational support continues into at least some parts of Europe…More [here](#).

A list of great questions for publishers to ask for reader analytics. Without this information, it's hard to gauge the usability of ebooks in particular. I'd also love to hear your take on the author's assessment of indexes for ebooks. Read more [here](#).

The revival of paper, it would seem. An interesting article from the *Washington Post*. More details [here](#).

In this column, we'll tune you in to interesting blog posts and news articles around the Web. Your finds or links to company news are welcome. Just send them to the Slice editor at [editor.slice@potomacindexing.com](#)

Resource Finds

The Heartland Chapter of ASI has a great write-up on that pesky job of working with Word's embedded indexing feature, which includes the use of the WordEmbed software that makes this whole headache easier to bear. More details [here](#).

I know, why on Earth would anyone choose the first one? The subheadings for the entry are so much easier to scan with the second one. It's all about space and tradition. Back in the halcyon days of traditional publishing, it seemed like a good idea to save on paper costs by squishing all the subheadings into a paragraph. Also, if you read through the first example, you'll see more phrase-like wording, and the information does flow like paragraph reading, so it's not as hard to read as it might look at first. That said, the indented/line-by-line version is certainly a quicker scan to find what you want under the main topic.

So, originally it was a marginal space save, this run-in format, but you know how traditions are, particularly with larger educational institutions and such. Although we now have ebooks and different ways to design books to save space, a number of traditional publishers, particularly university presses, still use the run-in format, and if you do any indexing yourself, you'll be likely to "run-into" it and have to use it. On the other hand, if you have a technical manual or textbook to index, you'll be much more likely to see the indented format in the publisher's style guide or sample index.

Although the terms in the index may seem of primary importance in many respects, the layout is actually quite critical to usability. The index is like a map; you're looking at the book from "above" the actual narrative text, so to speak, so the visual organization is just as important as the content itself.

Joanne Sprott has been indexing, editing and proofreading since 1995 for trade, scholarly, and technical publishers in a wide variety of subject areas.

Fresh from the Oven

From Maria Sosnowski: I participated in a panel discussion on applying the EIS award criteria to your own work at a recent PNW/ASI chapter meeting. Others on the panel were Sheila Ryan, Scott Smiley, Do Mi Stauber, and Carolyn Weaver. I recommend being part of a panel if you are have thought about presenting at a conference but lack the fortitude to get up there by yourself. While I was drafted to participate, I found that it was less nerve-wracking than I thought it would be.

From Seth Maislin: A lovely feedback from an author appreciating Seth's detailed write-up ([here](#)) on dealing with embedded indexing in Word: "I just want to reach out and say THANK YOU for your page troubleshooting and describing various concerns with Word's Indexing tag systems. My wife, a historian, has just finished her first ambitious book and was told by the press (Cambridge) that she had to use the Word tagging functions to build her index, which she'd never done. We've just spent the last several days trying to work our way through the tagging system. Without a doubt, we could not have managed it without the crucial assistance of your page."

From Joanne Sprott: I was given the opportunity over the summer to pass on my duties as ASI Training Course Administrator (six years was enough) to one of our hard-working associates, Meghan Brawley, who has taken on this important coordination job that keeps the course flowing and ensures that quality indexing is passed on. Many thanks to Meghan for carrying on this contribution from PI to ASI. :)

"Fresh from the Oven" provides a space for our partners and associates to let us in on their personal and work lives as freelance professionals.