The Slice

A Potomac Indexing Newsletter

Indented vs. Run-in 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 indexes; I have them go find two books with indexes and evaluate their usefulness.

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 as a rule.

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; and power issues, 254; vs. sadness, 84

OR

A New Tool for Embedded Indexing

by Meghan Brawley

When Potomac Indexing was approached to work on an enormous, complex embedded indexing project, Founding Partner Richard Shrout knew to turn to Leverage Technologies, Inc. and developer David Ream. While utilities already exist to take an index from standalone indexing software and place the entries in Word documents, at least two of the primary utilities—DEXEmbed and WordEmbed—are no longer being updated. Ream's previous work with CINDEX indexing software utilities was excellent, so LevTech was a natural choice.

We're very excited to announce Leverage Technologies has now officially released the product Ream developed—IXMLembedder. It's already been a great success, both because of its speed and its functionality beyond Word embedding. IXMLembedder works with InDesign, AsciiDoc, and DocBook and other XML—even clients' proprietary XML files.

Indexers create their index using their standalone software—Sky Index or CINDEX—using IDs instead of page numbers or other locators. From there, IXMLembedder runs, as a Windows program not a Word or InDesign macro, to embed the entries in the documents—quickly and into a new file so the original file is not changed. Errors are reported, and after addressing any, such as an ID in the index not found in the document(s), simply rerun the embedding process. There are specific Word and InDesign macros to assist with getting IDs into the documents and other related

Welcome to this Fall's Edition of Slice!

Potomac Indexing has been working on many changes over the last several months, including new connections in the religious publishing sector, a steady flow of book indexing projects and geographical moves for three of our partners.

In this Issue...

Celebrating our tenth year of service to the publishing and taxonomy services industries!

Special Notice—Billing Address Change

Our billing address is changing as a result of one of our partners relocating (see *Fresh From the Oven* for details), so our new **billing** address as as of December 4, 2016 will be:

Potomac Indexing LLC
501 California Street, Ste. G1
Lawrence, KS 66044

Mail will be forwarded for at least six months, so, no panic, just a heads up.

Indexer Associate Profile: Janet Perlman

We've launched a series of interviews to introduce you all to our wonderfully talented group of independent indexers and taxonomists who enable us to say "yes" to the variety of project types and turnaround times our clients are looking for.

Your Business

PI: *How long have you been an associate at Potomac Indexing?*

I've been with PI since it was formed. [Ed.: 2006]

PI: *Tell us your indexing (or other information access system) origin story. All superheroes, including indexers, have an origin story.*

Straight out of college with a B.S. in chemistry and a minor in languages and literature, I went to work as an editorial assistant (eventually editorial supervisor) with New York City publishers—first with Macmillan, then with John Wiley & Sons, in New York, working on their scientific monographs and encyclopedias. For the books I was editing, young women would bring me the indexes on alphabetized, interfiled, index cards (those were the good old days). It fascinated me. Then came a time when we had to do some indexing in-house, and I got quicky in-house training by my supervisor. That's how I learned indexing. After that, I acquired a few private clients because some of the Wiley authors I worked with asked me to index some of their other materials, and their journals. I indexed manually (no computers for that in the 1960s) on the side that way for a few years, and then we moved from New York City to Phoenix, Arizona.

After the move, I was out of the workforce for a few years raising our young family. When I went back to work in Phoenix, it was office and administrative work for about 15 years. There was no publishing industry in Phoenix to speak of, so indexing faded into the background. Gone, but not forgotten.

With older children and non-creative office jobs, I got restless and felt the need to do something more creative and intellectual, and that's when I thought of going back to indexing. By then, in the late 1980s, indexing software and the Internet were in their infancy, and it seemed feasible to work freelance and without the drudgery of hand-writing (or typing) index cards. I investigated the software, the American Society for Indexing (ASI), and the possibility of indexing with clients who are not in my city and was very excited by the idea.

I did some jobs for the one small publisher I could find in Phoenix, all the while keeping my day job. But I was very excited about being an entrepreneur, so I started trying to grow my business.

I began by attending ASI conferences in the late 1980s and early 1990s, made some excellent contacts there, and got to know other experienced indexers who took me under their wings and mentored me. The ASI workshops were golden—full of instruction for me. I acquired a few clients and my business started to grow. I left my full-time job to concentrate on my indexing business in 1993, and as they say, the rest is history.

PI: *What are your specialties and/or favorite subjects?*

Anything science-related, although I'm not too fond of medical books. I am pretty much of a generalist, though. I also am bilingual and am fluent in Spanish. Almost half my work is in Spanish.

PI: *Pick one of your favorite subjects and tell us why it fascinates you.*

I love to work on science and technology books because they are always well-organized and have plenty of headings and subheadings, which makes indexing much easier. There isn't much difficulty trying to figure out what a paragraph or section is "about."

PI: *What do you consider the most challenging aspect of the work?*

The most challenging aspect of indexing is the scheduling part—allotting sufficient time for the indexing work, dealing with sliding (and sometimes colliding) schedules.

PI: *Where do you usually work? (Please include a photo of your office setup unless it's a secret superhero location)*

I can only work in my office. Alternative locations just don't work for me. I don't concentrate well. Not in an easy chair. Not on the patio. Just at my desk.

PI: *Talk about your process (and this can be for book indexing or other related projects, like keyword tagging, embedded indexing, etc.). Any advice for other professionals—new and experienced?*

I am an indexer who marks page proof. I work on paper, so the first thing I do is print out the entire file of page proof. I give a quick read of front matter and a chapter or two, very quickly, to orient myself in the book, and then start reading and marking page proof.

After a chapter or two, I input the entries into Macrex [ed.: professional indexing software]. Then I go back and read some more. This cycle continues until I'm through the book. After I've done data input, I usually scan the index file quickly and give it a light edit. At the end of it all, I read and do a final edit, spell check in Word, and I'm done.

PI: *Cindex, SKY or Macrex (or other) indexing software? What do you like best about your choice?*

I'm a Macrex user. I've used it for so long that I think I think in Macrex. I'm so used to it that even after trying the other indexing softwares (which I did not too long ago), I'm still most at home with Macrex. I love it because I see the index displayed on the screen WYSIWYG without doing anything to get that view. As I input entries, I see the indented index being created on the screen.

PI: *If you could only recommend one book about indexing, what would it be?*

For a beginner, it would be The Accidental Indexer, Nan Badgett's book, published in 2015. For a more experienced indexer, I'd recommend Do Mi Stauber's Facing the Text.

PI: *Where's the neatest location you've ever worked in?*

My own office. I'm a neat-freak!

Personal Perspective

PI: *Where do you live (just approximately, since this will be published on the Web)? And if you like, tell us a bit about your surroundings and folks you live with (including furry friends) if you wish.*

We live in Phoenix, in a hilly section of the suburbs. We're three in the house—me, my husband, and my adult son Josh. We don't have any pets.

PI: *Tell us about your hobbies. Are there specific ones you turn to as a break from work, or any that are a special treat in between or at the end of projects?*

We do jigsaw puzzles in our house in the evening, or whenever I need a break. I am also passionate about my backyard and patio, and love to putter with my plants and sit out there. It's peaceful and quiet and meditative.

PI: *What's the last book you read for fun?*

Just finished *Judgment Day,* by Sheldon Siegel. It's a legal thriller.

PI: *What's your superpower?*

I type very, very quickly. I'm so glad my parents made me take typing in high school! It stands me in good stead now.

PI: *Thanks so much, Janet! Looks like you have a great system for indexing efficiently and effectively. Janet can be found on the Web at Southwest Indexing.*

Resource Finds

For our associates in particular, we'd like to remind you of a great webinar series from our associate, Fred Leise called "How to Create Brilliantly Structured Indexes." It's available here at ASI's website. Fred is an expert information architect and has some great insights for your indexing practice.

In the News

—Used to be, we publishing services freelancers would look to get connected with managing editors at large publishers, but not more. This article from Publishers Weekly highlights how independent booksellers are getting into the niche publishing realm, which is where opportunities also exist for editorial and book indexing providers. More here.

—A profile of the university press world, where content is king and indexes are often required. Read more here.

—And mostly for FYI, unless your editing work includes this, an article on fact-checking. In our Internet-information-based world, fact-checking has become even more crucial than it was in the past. 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

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I know, why would *anyone* choose the first one? The subheadings for the entry are so much easier to scan with the second one! Well, 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 sub-headings into paragraphs. 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. 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.

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.

Whenever I can, I do try to wean my clients off of the run-in style to the indented style, but either way I'm just happy that my indexing software can switch between the two styles with a simple setting change. Whew!

Joanne Sprott, a PI Managing Partner, has been indexing, editing and proofreading books and other documentation since 1995.

functions.

PI associate Jim Diggins writes:

I recently completed a very large and complex embedded indexing project (approx. 1000 pages of text, 10,000 entries) using IXMLEmbedder, new embedding software developed by Dave Ream of Leverage Technologies. This software worked amazingly well and was far less time-consuming and problematic than other embedding programs I have used. Doing a previous edition of this same project with a different embedding program took more than 10 hours of processing time, while Dave's program ran in about 8 minutes. I thought this was something other indexers would want to hear about.

Additionally, PI associate Lucie Haskins has written a review of IXMLembedder that will appear in the forthcoming (Fall 2016) Key Words, the quarterly journal from the American Society for Indexing.

Meghan Brawley, Managing Partner at PI, indexes and provides research services from her home office in Georgia.

Fresh from the Oven

From Meghan Brawley: In May, I moved once again, from Savannah to Fort Benning, GA. This makes my family's fourth sojourn in this western Georgia town. Happily, my two boys are typical army kids, and were settled in before the last boxes were unpacked (just in time for the ASI conference in June).

From Joanne Sprott: We did finally make the move to the Northwest this summer. A great hauling-trailer-behind-us trek through the great plains of Okla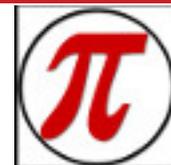homa, Kansas, and Nebraska, and then a left turn onto I-80 for the climb and descent of the Rockies through southern Wyoming, clipping the northeast edge of Utah, and then through Idaho to Oregon. We are now settled in for the winter in southwestern Oregon with ambitions for subsistence farming in the spring.

From Richard Shrout: The house in Maryland where I have been living for the past four years is being sold next year. The movers came by the other day to take my things to Lawrence, Kansas, the home of basketball.

So I am on my drive home to the real Midwest as we go to press, to Kansas and Missouri.

Rock chalk Jayhawk, KU!

"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.

The Slice is published four times a year as a service to our associates and clients, providing articles of interest to the publishing community.

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