

The Slice

A Potomac Indexing Newsletter

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 3, AUTUMN 2017

Beating the Afternoon Slump

by Meghan Brawley

The afternoon slump is a tough problem for most of us, and freelancers are no exception. In fact, working from home can have its own post-prandial pitfalls—namely, the sofa. While there's nothing wrong with catching a quick 20-minute snooze, especially when tight deadlines mean working late into the night, there are a few other things I like to try first.

What is the 2pm slump?

Understanding what's behind the drop in energy levels can help you deal with it. Part of it is just **biology**—your circadian rhythm causes a rise in sleepiness in the afternoon, and something called sleep/wake homeostasis kicks you with sleepiness after being awake for a long time. These both work together to make sure you get enough sleep, so getting enough sleep the night before is one way to preempt the afternoon nap.

Prevention

Aside from just getting enough sleep—something that's not always possible—you can also do any of the following:

Get outside

Sitting still for a long time will make anyone sleepy. Sunlight and activity can help you wake up a bit, and has the added bonus of improving your mood and your health. Even a quick 10-minute walk around the block will often do the trick.

Go somewhere else

Just a change of scene may make the difference. Pack up your laptop or page proofs

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The Slice

Main Headings: The First Priority

by Joanne Sprott



“Yes, please, main headings. Pretty please?” This is the index user's plea.

Most amateurs in the indexing business (students and often times authors) have the mistaken idea that an index is just a more detailed outline of the text. Here's an excerpt of what the index for a book on health breakthroughs would look like if you stuck to just the outline idea, based on chapter-level topics:

Blood pressure, 21–28 [followed by 16 subheadings]

Brain health and memory, 39–54 [followed by 22 subheadings]

Cancer, 55–72 [followed by 40 subheadings]

Cholesterol levels, 27–38 [followed by 9 subheadings]

Consumer health alerts, 73–102 [followed by 34 subheadings]

Diet and nutrition, 287–305 [followed by 55 subheadings]

Emotional health, 139–54 [followed by 50 subheadings]

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Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2017

Welcome to this Autumn Edition of Slice!

We have had a busy summer indeed, and looking at more indexing and taxonomy projects going into Fall.

We're finishing up an interesting information architecture project for an online library, along with embedded indexes and back-of-book indexes for how-to books, accounting guides, scholarly topics of various sorts, and books on religious topics.

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Your Business

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

Since 2011

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

While working as a case manager in a community mental health center, I found a book at the library entitled *Careers for Bookworms and Other Literary Types*. It told about ASI, and I contacted the organization and started the USDA course. Meanwhile, a local publisher advertised for indexers, so I took time off from work as a case manager to attend the training and became a part-time in-house indexer, indexing computer manuals and *Complete Idiots Guides*. I was mentored by Margie Towery as I transitioned to full-time freelance indexer.

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

Psychology is my favorite, as it was my field of study in college and graduate school. Also history, education, politics, public policy, international relations, social issues, and health.

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

History—have learned a lot from reading books I wouldn't ever have read, leading to an education I never would have received otherwise.

PI: What's your best productivity or indexing secret tip (that you are willing to share, that is)?

Focusing on rate per hour and translating that to number of pages to index per hour

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

Scheduling and communication with clients about scheduling

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

Office with sit-stand 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?

Best thing I ever read was a comment by Do Mi Stauber to the effect of "Just do it." In other words, don't procrastinate, just start the work, and just keep at it. Sooner or later, every difficult, poorly edited, or boring project will be in your rearview mirror!

PI: What are your favorite/most-used tools, for indexing or other business purposes?

LevTech's Entry Expander and IndexCheck, Excel spreadsheets, iPhone

PI: CINDEX, SKY or Macrex (or other)? What do you like best about your choice?

CINDEX

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.

Tennessee with a view of the mountains out my office window. I live with my retired (as of end of 2015) husband.

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?

Since moving to TN, I've become a Master Gardener, and we have hiking regularly. I like to create things, like mosaic and needlepoint items.

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

The Secret Life of Violet Grant by Beatriz Williams

PI: Thanks so much, Becky!



Becky Hornyak has a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and a Master's degree in Counseling, and worked in the fields of developmental disabilities and mental health. She has been indexing since 1996, first as an in-house indexer, then as a full-time freelance indexer, completing indexes for over 1,200 books. She is a member of the American Society for Indexing and served as officer for both the Heartland and Mid-Atlantic Chapters. Volunteer activities include docent at an historic property in Virginia for and Master Gardener in Tennessee. Find out more about her here: www.hornyakindex.com



In the News

...Great article on the future of indexing (old forms, new forms) from Cheryl Landes. More [here](#).

...In the world of taxonomy, complex regulatory information is being transformed from book form to searchable database form. There are some books that really do need to become something more to be accessible to more users. Read more [here](#).

...On the inauguration of National Indexing Day in the UK this past spring, a cogent and clear explanation of the advantages of book indexing. More [here](#).

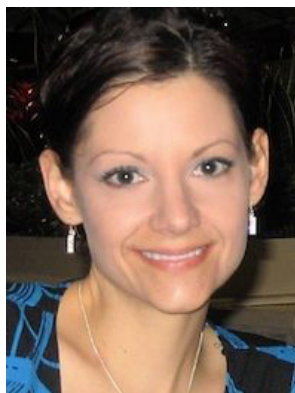
...And just for fun for book lovers, there's a hotel where you can order books through room service! Check it out [here](#).

Let us know if you find any interesting tidbits about book indexing, publishing, content strategy, or editing that you think Slice readers would be interested in. Just reply to this email newsletter. 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 slice.editor@potomacindexing.com

Fresh from the Oven

Sad news from associate Galen

Schroeder: Kaela Sue Schroeder Carlson, age 46, daughter of Galen Schroeder, passed away on Feb 14, 2017 after a long battle with progressive Multiple Sclerosis. A sad time for the family and friends who stood by her through the long downward spiral. I would like to believe I learned how to be a better man by watching the unconditional love, care, and attentiveness given her by her husband, Mike. He was a rock through the years and has earned a higher place in heaven. *All the partners at PI send condolences for this deep loss, Galen.*



From partner Richard Shrout: I'm off to the AAR (American Academy of Religion) conference in Boston in the latter part of November. A very enjoyable networking opportunity with many religious publishers represented. I'm looking forward to learning more about religious books' special indexing needs.

From associate Ina Gravitz: Starting this November I will be saying good-bye to Minnesota winters! Larry and I got a house in Green Valley, Arizona, which is just south of Tucson. From approximately November through April I will work from snow-less and ice-less Arizona. We will spend the remainder of the year in our Minnesota home, which is just two blocks from a great swimming lake, perfect for quick dips between indexing sessions.

From partner Estalita Slivoskey: We have settled back into North Dakota life after moving from West Virginia this past summer. We moved right as football camps were starting for my husband and son, and our gymnastics practice commute changed to an hour and 15 minutes each way, so we got a few house projects done and boxes unpacked, and then came to a standstill until mid-November...just in time for basketball and gymnastics meet seasons to start...ok so maybe by April!!

From partner Joanne Sprott: We are moving closer to a Halloween closing date on a house in southwestern Oregon. Excitement mounts as we make plans to have our own place again after a couple of detours over the past almost three years.

"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.

and head to a cafe, or even just another part of your house. If you can't work away from your office, take a break anyway. Turn on some happy music, go load the dishwasher, switch to a new task, or just get away for a minute. Don't click over to your email or the internet for a break -- refresh yourself by engaging your brain in something completely different.

Drink some water

While you're at that cafe, get a big glass of water to go with your coffee. Being dehydrated can make you sluggish, according to the [National Sleep Foundation](#). Drinking plenty of water has the additional benefit of forcing you to get up every couple of hours, too.

Put on a sweater

Dips in body temperature can also trigger sleepiness, as a mid-afternoon core temperature drop triggers the release of melatonin as part of the body's circadian rhythm.

Step away from the sugar

If you do head to a cafe, skip the muffins. Carbohydrates—especially at lunch—can lead to the dreaded sugar crash, when your blood sugar levels spike then fall. Try complex carbs and protein instead.

If all else fails ...

Go for that nap. Keep it short—20 minutes or so—to avoid feeling groggy afterwards. Try drinking a cup of coffee or tea right before lying down, to sync waking with the caffeine taking effect. And go to sleep at a reasonable hour tonight.



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

- Family relationships and health, 155–70 [followed by 13 subheadings]
- Heart health, 171–96 [followed by 30 subheadings]
- Infectious diseases, 197–208 [followed by 31 subheadings]
- Longevity and optimum aging, 209–30 [followed by 32 subheadings]
- Men's health, 247–60 [followed by 22 subheadings]
- Natural remedies, 261–86 [followed by 19 subheadings]
- Pain remedies (nondrug/natural), 311–40 [followed by 24 subheadings]
- Respiratory conditions, 1–20 [followed by 15 subheadings]
- Stroke risk, 183–96 [followed by 16 subheadings]
- Women's health, 341–57 [followed by 16 subheadings]

As an index user, you'd be OK if you happened to know these main topics and looked for other topics underneath these. But what if you want to know about breast cancer or asthma breakthroughs, or if you wanted to know what the latest recommendations are about statins? And where's exercise or weight management (they are main topics on their own in the final index, but are not reflected in the subheadings under these chapter topics as such—information about them is scattered through the text).

It's important to be aware that an index is a searching and browsing tool meant to provide location information about more detailed as well as more general topics at the main heading level. The main headings are what people will scan for first, then if they see subheadings under the topic of their choice, they will look at those.

So, the main headings are your primary access points for your readers. If you just give priority to that, you'll be headed in the right direction. Subheadings are just for when you have too many page numbers after a main heading (more than about

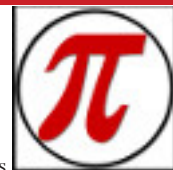
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five or six) that will make the index user flip back and forth from index to text too many times. Then it's a courtesy to provide more information.

The idea is not just to outline your book for the index user, but to get that person as quickly as possible to the page in the book where the actual information on a topic resides. And it's rude to make the user spend extra time studying the index to find what they want.

The main heading is the core of the index and deserves priority and respect. Please? Thanks!

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