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The Narrative of the Process

I. Scope

The scope of this index was chapters 1-3 of Cleveland & Cleveland's *Introduction to Indexing and Abstracting* (3rd ed.). Being a beginning indexer, I found the majority of the information found in the first chapters of Cleveland's book indexable and necessary to index. Specifically, when indexing chapters 1-3 I found terms related to the text subject of indexing. Upon inclusion of each term I asked the question of how this related to further understanding the topic of indexing. I then asked myself if someone would search for this term in his or her desire to find information on indexing quickly. Terms such as a John Denver should not be indexed because they have little to do with the theme of the chapters.¹

II. Format

Upon reading the Chicago Manual of Style and Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Controlled Vocabularies by NISO, I quickly decided to use an indented index rather than a run-in. I found the indented index easier to read because of the use of white space between terms. The white space made looking for terms more consistent and organized. I also chose to increase the size of the font of main terms to aid in a visual separation of terms. Luckily in this index the number of pages was not set and there was room to explore the best format. I also found the format of an indented index to be quite conducive to organizing the index via sub-headings. One must think of the index as a keyword list in which all words used are important and need to be extremely clear to the reader/researcher.

III. Headings and Subheadings

According to the Chicago Manual of Style the initial letter of main headings is lowercase unless the term is proper noun.² I found this suggestion easy to follow so I decided to accept the suggestion. I also used the text as the rule for the capitalization of terms for headings and subheadings as the Chicago Manual of Style also suggests. Although it is not mentioned I think that headings should be set apart in the text in some way. To aid in location of terms bolding or increasing the font size might aid in guiding researchers to terms

¹ University of Chicago Press. The Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 18.31.

² Chicago Press. The Chicago Manual of Style, 18.11.

more easily.

During my first back of the book index of this material I over sub-headed because I tried to organize the information too closely and more like an outline. There are large differences between an outline and an index. First an index's main purpose is as a search tool. An outline is not a search tool; rather it is summary of a work to be read in total. However, thinking out an index like an outline is not a feudal exercise because outlining forces the indexer to think about what is most important on a particular page or chapter. An index is meant to be skimmed and searched whether online or in a back of the book index. I found that I tried to sub-head too far where the intent becomes lost in a deep sub-head. A better practice would be breaking out important terms as main headings and only sub-heading to the first level. When I pulled out terms such as all the different technologies that I hid under that heading, I found that I over complicated the process. Also after five or six subheadings it is important to reevaluate the structure of the main term. "Subheadings often form a grammatical relationship with the main heading, whereby heading and subheading combine into a single phrase."³ An example of this in my index would indexing, relationship of which is under Abstracting. So my intent would be to show the relationship of indexing to Abstracting.

IV. Proper Name Usage

There were quite a few proper names in the text but I chose to only use a select few because not all of the proper names were directly related to the indexing field. The history of indexing was very important so any persons relating directly to indexing I did include. I also included the names of the first indexes. Readers of this book would most likely be library students and indexers so it was important to me to include that information that would be helpful for those people.

V. Importance of Prepositions

Much like Boolean searching which is so popular I thought it important to disregard any prepositions such as the, is, of, to, too, etc unless absolutely needed for clarity. In the end I did find that preposition were much more important then I thought they were going to be and changed my opinion of their importance. With a simple of the researcher becomes reminded of the top term they are searching in. Such as when researcher is looking at indexing and they go down to the sub-terms and see history of. The of signified that it is the

³ Chicago Press. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 18.9.

history of indexing rather than history in general. I found it helpful to put in reminders to the researcher and reader for ease of use of the index. As a result, I did put prepositions in the index, more than I had originally planned. Although, researchers are becoming more aware of the searching logic of search engines I think it is important for hand indexed indexes to be different and more helpful than their online counterparts. It is important to match what researchers are used to seeing but I did not want to break down phrases so much that the meaning of the sub-term was lost. If a preposition gave clarity to a term I felt it necessary to keep it with the heading. The NISO Guidelines give precedent to treating prepositions in this way. (A pre-coordinated term combines two or more concepts to denote a specific concept and its attributes more precisely.)⁴ If a preposition or any word is needed to give clarity to a phrase it is allowed.

VI. Style Sheet

Some of the decisions that I made when making my back of the book index included:

- Disregarding prepositions unless they are needed for clarity (but not being afraid to include them)⁵
- I decided to include proper names if they were relevant to the text's goals (as its own top term entry) For example of these proper names I decided to alphabetize by last name.⁶
- Clustering like items under a main heading but also including them as a main entry.⁷
- Being as clear and true to the text as possible (ie: using the same language as the text whenever possible)⁸
- Relate everything back to the topic of indexing and abstracting
- History should be spread throughout the topics and also as single history entry. Users will look in the topic they want for the history of that topic.
- Using the table of contents as a guide to the emphasis of chapters.
- Combining headings and subheadings to form a single phrase
- I decided to make each top term a bit larger in font to help with distinguishing top terms from sub-terms.

⁴ NISO. Guidelines, 7.2.1.

⁵ NISO. Guidelines, 7.2.

⁶ Chicago Press. The Chicago Manual of Style, 18.69.

⁷ Chicago Press. The Chicago Manual of Style, 18.66.

V. Comparison between the *Introduction to Indexing and Abstracting* Index vs. My Index

	<i>Introduction to Indexing and Abstracting</i>	My Index
# of terms	130	132
# of overlap	39	39
# of different terms	91	93

At first glance at the index of *Introduction to Indexing and Abstracting* I notice that the author has decided to capitalize each top term even though many indexing guides state to use the lowercase unless the term is a proper noun. I wonder why the indexer decided to use this format. I also found that in my own index I chose to put spaces between each word to clarify when one section started and the next term began. I see that the indexer decided against this method and I suppose it was due to space constraints.

During the initial comparing of each index I saw a difference in word choice. Also I noticed that quite a few of the terms in the actual index come into play because the indexer is indexing the entire text. Whereas I was only indexing the first three chapters, a sentence on a topic mentioned in passing would not be as pivotal in the first chapters as it might be later on. The actual index has a large focus on alphabetical arrangement in many forms (alphabetization, order, alphabetical subject arrangement, and chronological). I found the history to be a bit more important than the actual index did. I really went into depth on history and origins of each of the different aspects of indexing and abstracting (indexing, abstracting, information, and indexers). The actual index did not have as many sub-terms as I chose to have in my index. I also made the decision to include history in multiple terms to aid in clarity and for those looking for information. I also utilized the see also and see quite a bit more than the actual index. Both indexes are of comparable size and I think a lot of the differences can be attributed to choice of terms and understanding of the text. Overall many of the same terms are used in each index and both have the most important terms that can be found in the text itself.

In looking at both indexes I can truly see the how indexes are seen as art because of the differences that each class member and the indexer of the text vary in the terms they deem worthy to put in the index. I found that the indexer seemed to place terms in multiple places

⁸ Chicago Press. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 18.30.

when I would place them in one place (being I thought the most obvious place to look). The indexer also did not use terms such as Information Age even though that phrase played a key role in multiple pages of the text. The author used the word throughout the three chapters we were to index and I did not see it in the index. I thought Information Age was an important term and I expanded it to include all available information. Although I thought my history section was quite exhaustive, I found the indexer included terms I did not even think of. I think indexing the entire text gives the indexer a better sense of the entire work.

VI. Conclusion

As a result back of the book indexes are linked to the indexer. An indexer could take a text and index it twice and come up with a different index each time. Although there would be similarities, each index would have its own originalities. The process of making a back of the book index gives a good understanding of how and of what searchers would be looking.