

Reviews

one dives into the web indexing market.

While the course deals mainly with the creation of A-Z back-of-the-book style indexes for web sites, Lesson 11 deals with other types of web indexing, specifically taxonomies (including periodicals and thesaurus creation), database indexing, and metadata indexing. There is a chapter for each type, with clear descriptions, advantages/disadvantages, other skills and expertise that may be necessary, and links to examples. The chapter on metadata indexing includes an assignment to create a metadata index based on keywords created and added by the student.

This sounded complicated to me at first, but Hedden's ability to break down even complex processes into easy-to-follow, understandable steps made it achievable even for me. An additional, optional assignment for the same chapter was to assign meta keywords to a site of the student's creation, add a search engine to the site, and configure it to search on keywords only (again, with clear, detailed directions). Time hasn't allowed for me to attempt this assignment yet, as I need to create the web pages first, but I plan on trying it out eventually.

The final three lessons (12-14) consist of techniques for choosing what to index, choosing index terms, and refining and editing the index. I assumed that this would be mostly review for me, but that wasn't the case. Although there was a lot of information which can be applied to back-of-the-book indexing, Hedden presents it from a web-oriented mind-set.

In order to create a really useful web site index you need to think differently and remember that people use web sites in a much different way than they use books. I found the chapter on variant terms quite helpful, especially the exercise for seeing which hyperlinked terms change color when just one is clicked on.

Also, the editing checklist at the end of Lesson 14 is something I know I will refer to again and again.

At the time of this writing, I am still finishing up the final assignment, to complete and edit a web site index and submit it for feedback. I submitted one draft, and am working

on the (extensive) revisions that need to be made for it to be publishable. As throughout the course, though, instructor feedback has been timely and constructive.

There is no doubt that Hedden is extremely knowledgeable about this complex field and committed to promoting the need for web site indexes and educating web professionals and site owners of their usefulness. I would have no hesitation in recommending "Creating Web Site Indexes" to anyone who hopes to add this skill to the range of services they offer.

Additional courses available from Hedden Information Management include "Creating Web Site Indexes & HTML Basics," "Creating Web Site Indexes & Indexing Techniques," and "Creating Web Site Indexes: Full Course."

Heather Hedden will offer the core lessons of the online course through Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science Continuing Education program starting in February 2006, rather than directly through Hedden Information Management.

— *Review by Wendy Catalano, Last Look Editorial Services*

Smith, Sherry, and Kells, Kari. *Inside Indexing: The Decision-Making Process*. Northwest Indexing Press. 2005. 189pp. [Available from www.insideindexing.com.]

You say "po-tay-too," I say "po-tah-toe"

Kari Kells and Sherry Smith's new book is a must-read for any indexer. Experienced indexers will find it illuminates many of their intuitive practices. New indexers will find illustrations of terminology selection so many say they want more information about.

The authors tested the waters before publication to see whether there might be a market for a book on the thought process in indexing. The international acclaim for *Inside Indexing* that followed is posted on the web-

site where you can order this wonderful book: www.insideindexing.com.

Kari and Sherry each wrote an index for the same book and then analyzed the decisions each made in producing those indexes. They begin by describing their organizational approach. I always like to hear how others attend to the administrative details of our work. I know I can improve and often incorporate part of someone else's method into my approach.

Each chapter has a presentation by both indexers on the decisions made about the influence of the audience on writing the index, on text analysis, on dealing with the metatopic, on gathering. They discuss access routes into the text, phrasing, and consistency or inconsistency choices. These presentations are accompanied by illustrations of how they made those choices.

The wide format of the book is helpful in presenting both the decision-making process and the examples focusing on specific decisions close by.

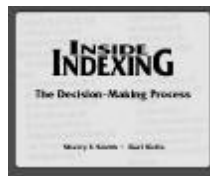
An additional design feature is the use of different fonts in order to reflect each indexer's voice and another font for the summary or discussion about how each approach is similar or different. While differences in fonts can make a text busy, in this case it helped me navigate.

Running footers of one or two words at the corner indicate which chapter you're in. I found myself flipping back and forth because I was more interested in these topics in a different order than are presented here (but that's just me). The order in the book is logical.

In one chapter there were a couple of widow lines in the text that were a little confusing but didn't ultimately slow me down. A slight text reflow would have prevented that.

The differences between their indexing styles and the resulting differences in their indexes are intriguing.

As an experienced indexer who's often chained to her desk with too many projects to deal with all at once, I was struck by Sherry's comment about her strategies for dealing with tunnel-vision during a project. So many times page proofs come to me in batches and I find



“I found reading the index is as interesting as reading the book.”

— Deborah Patton

myself trying to remember what I was doing with this one or that one. *Inside Indexing* has helped me think about *process* instead of just “what’s the next term on this page?”

Sherry tells us of strategies she has developed to “avoid one of the perils of becoming a more experienced indexer: taking shortcuts and making omissions for the sake of indexing speed.”

Each chapter begins with a statement of the part of the process they’re looking at and ends sometimes with a summary and sometimes with a dialogue about why they chose different approaches. Sometimes that discussion causes one or the other to change their methodology. Both indexers teach indexing which we can see in this book as they describe indexing processes. They also provide questions at the end of the book which summarizes each main chapter and is designed to focus us in our approaches to indexing.

The discussion of the metatopic reflects on points Do Mi Stauber made in her workshops and book, *Facing the Text*.

Kari makes the point that some books need *metatopic keywords*. She led a workshop with trained, professional indexers which included a component on keyword identification and was surprised at how many of those indexers included metatopic keywords. The discussion here focuses on when and how much to use the metatopic in main headings.

Martha Osgood of Back Words Indexing wrote the *index*. While it’s startling in the number of undifferentiated locators, she used them appropriately. I found reading the index is as interesting as reading the book. She has entries for the title of the book and both its authors. The book structure and philosophy show through clearly in the index. As is often the case for all of us, the typesetter allowed a few widow lines to creep in. The “continued” lines mostly overcame those difficulties, but one wishes they weren’t there.

Buy this book. Read this book. Discuss this book with colleagues. While it’ll never make the best seller list, *Inside Indexing* adds to

the discourse on indexing. Such discourse gives validity to our profession. Reading it should be part of each indexer’s professional development.

— Review by Deborah Patton

Towery, Margie and Enid L. Zafran, eds., *Indexing Specialties: Scholarly Books*. Information Today, Inc. (ITI); Medford, NJ USA. 2005, ISBN: 1-57387-236-9. 100 pp.

According to the most recent ASI Salary Survey (2004), 90% of the respondents are back-of-the-book indexers and 62% index scholarly books, so this title in the *Indexing Specialties* series is one that many of us have been eagerly awaiting.

After reading the introduction by *Enid Zafran*, it occurred to me that I could just refer you to that and end this book review here — so don’t overlook what she has to say. There are two themes that carry through all of these articles on indexing scholarly works. The first is revealed in each contributor’s emphasis on their personal background and experience, and the second is the importance of knowing the terminology of your indexing specialty.

This volume covers the indexing of books in music, law, political science, philosophy, and economics. If you were hoping for guidance with art or literature, religion, or the sciences you won’t find that here. Each of these articles provides a starting point for those who want to index in any of these special interest fields.

My personal favorite was *Fred Leise’s* lyrical work on indexing books on music. It’s a pure joy to read from beginning to end from the first movement to the finale. With creativity he has also very clearly and concisely given us a practical tutorial for indexing music history, theory and criticism, biography and more.

My only quibble is that with *Hazel Bell’s* third edition of *Indexing Biographies* just being released I would have hoped that he

would refer his colleagues to at least the second edition that was published in 1998 rather than the 1992 edition. This is a problem I have seen before with books in this ITI series. Leise is not alone. *John Beale* refers to the first edition of *Hans Wellisch’s Indexing From A to Z*. We need to be keeping current.

Mary Mortensen’s chapter on “Indexing Economics” and *Kate Mertes* on “Legal Indexing” are gems, as well. The strength of Mertes’ article over others on this topic is reflected in her years of experience and breadth of knowledge in working with a variety of legal materials. She gives clear guidelines for approaching college textbooks or casebooks, codes or statutory law and regulations, case law, treatises and monographs, journals or periodicals, what she terms jurisdictionally mixed law, supplemented texts and encyclopedic texts. For each of these she concisely confronts specific challenges that might be encountered and provides well-articulated solutions. Perhaps we can look forward to Mertes expanding this into a book-length work in the future. Mortensen in few words gives us clear direction on indexing economics and I particularly enjoyed reading her opinion on how to approach the indexing of equations and figures and tables. For those who have difficulty grasping the concept of indexing structure her examples are very helpful.

Martin White brilliantly elucidates for all of us that mysterious world of indexing philosophy. He kindly gives us some direction on logic, postmodernism/poststructuralism and how to deal with the indexing of philosophical arguments. And, of course, being not only a writer of indexes but a librarian myself, I was very excited to see the extensive resources section that he has provided for us of both print and Internet resources. This puts this book as a principle reference for those of you working with this subject.

Deborah Patton in writing about indexing political science and public affairs has targeted some of the basics in indexing for the novice, like establishing consistency, developing a structure for organizational or entity names, and some thoughts on alphabetization. The more experienced practitioner might want to take the time to read her approach to dealing with the indexing of notes. I tried out a modified version of her “tip and trick” for indexing notes and it