

VOLUME 3

# Index It RIGHT!

Advice From the Experts

Edited by  
**ENID L. ZAFRAN**



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# Introduction

**Enid L. Zafran © 2014**

“Index It Right!” started in 2005 as a series I conceived to give expert advice on a wide variety of indexing topics and specialties. Unlike the “Indexing Specialties” series where each publication is devoted to a particular type of indexing (e.g., legal, medical, cookbooks), “Index It Right!” volumes are like a smorgasbord of tasty dishes. It has been especially rewarding to see how enthusiastically they have been greeted by the indexing and information community.

Volume 3 concludes my time as the publications chair for the American Society for Indexing (ASI). I have held this post since 1998 and during that time have worked with Information Today, Inc. (ITI) to produce almost 20 books devoted to the field of indexing. Every single contribution was written by a volunteer who understood the need to expand the literature available about indexing and to take a practical, hands-on approach. These works were never intended for “ivory tower” reflection but to guide indexers in applying their art.

I want to acknowledge the assistance of Rebecca McCorkle, who generously proofread the submissions for this volume. And in general, I want to express my gratitude to John Bryans, editor-in-chief of the ITI books division, who has always offered the best advice, remained supportive even in recessionary times, and saw the usefulness of our endeavors. Amy Reeve, managing editor of the books division, has shepherded the titles through production, and her attention to detail has impressed me with every book on which we have collaborated.

For this specific volume, I have been lucky to work with some longtime associates once again: Frances Lennie, who writes about indexing as an “art form,” Fred Leise, who has blazed the path for indexers to become taxonomists, and Martin White, who has the most impressive resumé and a long career as an indexer of scholarly books. This book shows how the field of indexing has evolved in the past decade to be more than just words on a paper page. In addition to Fred Leise’s chapter on ecommerce taxonomies, Chuck Knapp discusses how his world as an indexing manager changed when he moved into taxonomy creation at Bloomberg BNA. Glenda Browne and Mary Coe both have played instrumental roles in the development of an indexing standard for ebooks. Their

article offers insight into how indexes work within that electronic environment and the importance of gaining industry acceptance to provide the best functionality possible.

Covering specific niches of indexing has always been one of the hallmarks of “Index It Right!” and so this volume adds to the growing list: history (Connie Binder), multicultural texts (Celeste Newbrough), and medical and science (Anne-Marie Downey). For all the mathematics-phobes out there, Cynthia Landeen shows how math can be approached with the same analysis as any other field of indexing.

At the ASI Conference in San Diego in 2012, I met Lai Heung Lam when she presented her talk “Understanding Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Personal Names” and asked her immediately to contribute to this volume. Her explanation of how to deal with Romanized Chinese names and the various transliteration systems will prove helpful to indexers and editors. This topic was touched upon in *Indexing Names* (edited by Noeline Bridge, ASI/ITI, 2012); Lai Lam’s article augments that volume.

To help in the mechanics of indexing and improve productivity and accuracy, Scott Smiley has devised useful tips for the use of patterns. These powerful shortcuts prove why indexing software exceeds the capabilities of word-processing software—once you use patterns, you will definitely be hooked.

Lucie Haskins has served the indexing profession in many capacities, and for this book she describes her teaching role with the Berkeley course for beginner indexers. For those who are considering adding “teaching” to their skills, Lucie will offer an insightful view into the work involved as well as the satisfaction to be obtained.

And this volume has one of the most complete treatments of journal indexing I have seen. For that I thank Linda Dunn, who has taught this indexing specialty as well as worked in it for many years. She has produced an article that will become a major reference for any indexer working with serial publications. She also describes the experience of using a thesaurus to assign terms.

As in other volumes, ASI is pleased to give a newer indexer the opportunity to create the index to this book. Eve Morey Christiansen is still in the early years of what I hope will become a long and successful career for her.

I appreciate the opportunity that ASI has afforded me to create these publications and fulfill my desire to educate others about indexing. While I have often heard people describe what I do as “the most tedious thing they have ever heard,” the very opposite is true: Indexing has provided me with minutes, hours, days, months, and years of amusement and education. And I have tried to share that with you, the readers of these books.

## Chapter 1

# Indexing as Canvas, Musings On

Frances S. Lennie © 2014

I've always had a thing for paintings. I enjoy viewing them, thinking about the artistic approach, appreciating the artist's technique, and relating to the subject matter. In many ways indexes and indexing provide not dissimilar diversions—except our medium is words not visual images.

### PORTRAITURE

I first started thinking about indexes akin to pieces of art during an interview for *Key Words*<sup>1</sup> quite some time ago. In that piece, I compared indexes to the commissioning of portraits, in that the indexer (artist) does not know if the expectations or preferences of the author/editor (sitter) have been met until the completed index (canvas) has been delivered and viewed. I also mused that perhaps one is hired because of one's personal indexing style, just as particular artists may be commissioned<sup>2</sup> for their known handling of portrait subjects.

With a few remarkable exceptions (Pablo Picasso in his Cubist period comes to mind), one could expect most portraits to contain a number of standard elements such as facial features and hair. Facial expressions, adornment, and context, however, may be rendered differently. If you look at the many images of Queen Elizabeth II, you will immediately recognize the person, even over the course of her lengthy reign, but each with different accoutrements and expressiveness.<sup>3</sup> Indexers speak of the 60/40 rule: The same text indexed by different experienced indexers will produce indexes with strong commonalities (60 percent) and items differing (40 percent) in perceived importance or audience interest. I like to think that, in this regard, indexes are like portraits. Except that, of course, rarely is the same identical text ever indexed by more than one indexer (only perhaps if the initial result was not agreeable to the author or editor). A close approximation would be the indexing of a new edition: same author, same topic, but with some changes in content, and a different indexer. However, unless the clients disliked the earlier index, they usually insist that the overall style, organization, and length remain the same.

## IMPRESSIONISM VS. PRECISIONISM

Portraiture is a particular form of artistic endeavor, just as book indexing is one form of indexing. The art categories of Impressionism and Precisionism are broadly commensurate to the depth of indexing and the related indexing concepts of specificity (exhaustiveness) and retrieval (recall).<sup>4</sup>

With broad brush strokes, an impressionist artist can convey a sense of place, mood, or object. With great attention to detail, a precisionist artist depicts the place or object exactly as it appears, leaving little to the imagination or sensibility of the viewer.

An indexer may similarly outline the scope of a text with broad topic and concept headings providing little specificity for the user but probably resulting in a high rate of retrieval which requires further scrutiny. The converse of this is the indexer who indexes exhaustively, providing the user with a very high degree of detail resulting in limited but highly relevant retrieval.

Because indexers work with words, not images, we have the luxury of mixing the two artistic opposites to great effect. We help guide the user with an overview of the metatopic (an impression of the scope of the text) interleaved with whatever level of detail (precision) the text requires. We can also combine (mash up) multiple indexes into a cohesive and workable whole. Can you imagine the artistic outcome of Claude Monet's impressionist *Waterloo Bridge* ([magart.rochester.edu/Obj4132](http://magart.rochester.edu/Obj4132)) integrated with Ralston Crawford's precisionist *Whitestone Bridge* ([mag.rochester.edu/seeingAmerica/pdfs/60.pdf](http://mag.rochester.edu/seeingAmerica/pdfs/60.pdf))? Indexers can do this because, unlike the art viewer who is able to view and appreciate the whole image at once, the index user (as far as I'm aware) concentrates on individual terms in separate excursions into the index. With the advent of ebooks, this may change as the ability to access and view multiple terms simultaneously becomes a possibility. A new indexing art form to be sure!

## THE ARTIST AT WORK

I've never had the privilege of observing an artist at work other than on video (Jackson Pollock comes to mind). I have read accounts of how Monet would have several different canvases in progress and available at the same time (the better to catch the subject of the painting—river, haystacks, facade of Rouen cathedral—in different light), and I saw Johannes Vermeer's methods depicted in the movie *Girl With a Pearl Earring* (adapted from the book of the same name by Tracy Chevalier).

I have, however, heard colleagues describe how they work, which is probably as varied as the different techniques employed by artists, with no single one better than any other *as long as* the result admirably serves its intended purpose. Indexers face challenges similar to those of artists: arrangement and organization (composition);

choice of wording (color and brushstrokes); and, if we think about the 60/40 rule just discussed, how much background information should be added after the primary subject (metatopic) has been fully addressed. Here, the artist possibly has greater license, but the background still has to be compatible with the primary subject and understandable by the intended audience. For example, Renaissance paintings of religious subject matter included visually coded political, social, or religious references in foreground or background. Perhaps a visual cross-reference to matters of related interest?

Artists and indexers also approach their work in similar ways. An artist may produce an initial sketch or study; an indexer may draft an outline or concept map of major terms or topics. I confess that I do neither but tend to “word-doodle” through the first chapter or so until I find the rhythm and cadence of the text. In artistic terms, one might think of this as my “Jackson Pollack” approach—scattered but hopefully less messy.

An artist’s editing tools are his brush and paint to best render his subject; ours are the words we use to convey contextual accuracy. Words can be dry, challenging, and frustratingly elusive, but when you strike just the right note, they are enormously satisfying.

## **SO, JUST HOW BIG IS THE CANVAS?**

I’ve never thought about this before, but I am curious to know what factors determine how the artist selects the size of canvas. Does the fee, time frame, genre, potential hanging space, or artist’s vision determine the size? For an indexer, it is more likely that the editor or publisher determines how many pages are available for the index. Sometimes, given the text, it is a wholly inappropriate number whether on the plus or minus side. Unlike miniaturists who provide exquisite detail in small formats or abstract painters who produce blocks of single color on large canvases, the compositor has very little leeway in adjusting type size before the index becomes unreadable or a jarring counterpoint to the existing type size of the preceding text.

We may disagree, but I think it is more difficult to fill abundant index space for a content-light text than it is to craft a short index to content-rich text. With the former, one is repeating minute detail in all its synonymous forms. In the latter, one can only at best adopt an impressionist stance.

## **A WORD ABOUT VISUAL INTEGRITY**

Although the content and purpose of a text primarily decide how exhaustive we need to be in our indexing, we can also exert some control to ensure the index is visually appealing.<sup>5</sup> By *appealing*, I mean that the index will be easy to use, allowing the



reader to skim the columns quickly and automatically intuit clues to structure and organization. We can do this by means of concise but unambiguous wording, judicious use of capitalization and text styling, and index format (indented, run-in, or combination of the two), but rarely can we control the final layout parameters determined by the editor or book stylist. However, we can ensure that our effort adds to the user's experience: easy, fast, and accurate access.

### YOU CAN TAKE THE INDEXER OUT OF THE PAINTING ...

Not long ago, I thoroughly enjoyed a wonderful exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art entitled *Rooms With a View: The Open Window in the 19th Century*. The foreground of the paintings often depicted the interior of the artists' studios or simple, hushed interiors with contemplative figures.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes the focal point was the window itself. As interesting and absorbing as the paintings were, largely by artists whose work was unfamiliar to me, all I could keep thinking about was, *How did they locate these? What was the keyword search? Who indexed the database?*

### ENDNOTES

1. Frances Lennie and Alexander Nickerson, "Indexing Works: A *Key Words* Interview With Two Medical Indexers," in *Indexing Specialties: Medicine*, ed. L. Pilar Wyman (Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 1999), 3–13.
2. Words do convey a publishing culture long passed. When I first started indexing in the 1970s, indexes were indeed "commissioned" for an offered set fee, I was pretty much left to my own devices, and the pace was leisurely. I was not "hired," and there were no discussions of page rates, no dictates from editor or author, and definitely no time crunch unless of my own making.
3. See images (including a few wonderfully misindexed images) at [www.google.com/search?q=queen+elizabeth=2=portrait&hl=en&client=safari&tbo=u&rls=en&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=CyXFUNPmEqe0AGrloGABg&ved=0CC4QsAQ&biw=1236&bih=887](http://www.google.com/search?q=queen+elizabeth=2=portrait&hl=en&client=safari&tbo=u&rls=en&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=CyXFUNPmEqe0AGrloGABg&ved=0CC4QsAQ&biw=1236&bih=887).
4. See relevant sections in Hans H. Wellisch, *Indexing From A to Z*, 2nd ed. (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1996).
5. See Frances S. Lennie, "The Visual Appeal of Indexes: An Exploration," *The Indexer* 28, no. 2 (June 2010): 67–68.
6. See [www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2011/rooms-with-a-view](http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2011/rooms-with-a-view).

# Contributors

**Connie Binder** has been a freelance indexer since 1999. With degrees in anthropology and library science, Connie's first job out of library school was analyzing scientific grants for a database and cataloging research reports. When her boss took over the company's indexing division, she insisted that Connie learn to index, and a new career was born. A generalist, Connie is happy to index almost anything that comes her way, but history books and biographies are her favorites. She is a member of the American Society for Indexing (ASI) and has served on the board of directors, as a chapter officer, and as manager of the Sports-Fitness Indexing Special Interest Group. Certified by the Institute of Certified Indexers, Connie is dedicated to providing quality indexes and to promoting consistency and quality within the profession.

**Glenda Browne** is a freelance indexer of books, websites, and databases, and is also a librarian and a teacher of indexing. She has written (or co-written with Jon Jerney) three books on indexing: *Website Indexing* (Auslib Press 2004), *The Indexing Companion* (Cambridge University Press 2007), and *The Indexing Companion Workbook: Book Indexing* (self-published). Glenda is the representative for the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI) on the IDPF EPUB Indexes Working Group. Two of her indexes have been Highly Recommended in the ANZSI Medal Award, and, in 2007, she was awarded the IgNobel Prize for Literature for an article on alphabetizing index entries that start with "The." Glenda has been involved with AusSI/ANZSI since she became an indexer in 1988 and has filled various executive roles in the National (now Council) and NSW committees as well as serving as chair of the Education Committee Working Party, conference administrator, and newsletter editor. She is a long-term member of the ASI Web Indexing SIG. Glenda can be contacted at [glendabrowne@gmail.com](mailto:glendabrowne@gmail.com), or through her website at [www.webindexing.biz](http://www.webindexing.biz) or her Facebook page at [tiny.cc/IndCompFB](http://tiny.cc/IndCompFB).

**Eve Morey Christiansen** began indexing in 2010. She completed the indexing course through the University of California–Berkeley and Enid L. Zafran's

Indexing Boot Camp. After discovering an especially welcoming community within ASI, she was excited to become further involved by becoming the co-chair of the Upper Midwest Chapter. With a BA in anthropology and international studies, experience from living in Central America, and fluency in Spanish, she specializes in indexing cultural studies books, but enjoys general interest topics as well, especially agricultural and gardening books. She currently resides in Iowa.

**Mary Coe** has been a freelance book indexer for 20 years, working in a wide range of subject areas. She has extensive database indexing experience, including the National Library of Medicine's MEDLINE database and the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C. She is currently a student in the Master of Information Studies course at Charles Sturt University and serves as the secretary of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers. Mary lives and works in Sydney, Australia. She can be contacted at [coe.mary@gmail.com](mailto:coe.mary@gmail.com) or through her website at [www.bookindexing.com.au](http://www.bookindexing.com.au).

**Anne-Marie Downey** has been an indexer for 15 years, specializing in medical and science indexing. She is based in Ohio and works with Columbia Indexing Group. Anne-Marie is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and holds degrees in journalism and political science. She spent her early career writing and editing for newspapers in the South and Midwest. She developed her medical and science specialty over years of indexing texts on such topics as the neuroscience of vision, hospital pharmacy practices, the genetics of monocots, molecular biology, environmental geology, and chemistry.

**Linda S. Dunn** has been a periodical indexer for over 30 years. Before becoming a freelance indexer, she was an editor and indexer for the *Film Literature Index*. Several times a year she teaches an online workshop, Periodical/Database Indexing, through the Continuing Education program of the Simmons Graduate School of Information and Library Science. Presentations include "The Unbearable 'Aboutness' of Periodical Indexing," "Everything Is Illuminated: The Mysteries of Controlled Vocabularies Explained," and "Going Global: Working in a Multilingual and Multicultural World," a panel discussion at the ASI 2011 conference in Providence, Rhode Island. Publications include the article "Names in the Performing Arts" in *Indexing Names*, and "Ten Things I Learned Teaching a Workshop on Periodical/Database Indexing Online" in *Key Words* (July–Sept. 2011).

**Lucie Haskins** lives in Woodland Park, Colorado, and became an indexer in 2000, after a long career in corporate America, with roles spanning the computer industry and management consulting. She specializes in embedded indexing and in computer- and business-related topics. She has served on the ASI board, on the ASI webmasters

team, and in various officer positions, including chairperson, for the Rocky Mountain chapter. She has a BS degree in technical management and an MBA. Lucie loves to share her passion for indexing by talking about it to anyone who will listen! To that end, she has given workshops on embedded indexing to ASI chapters, at ASI national conferences, and to local university-level technical writing classes, and has instructed students enrolled in UC Berkeley's online indexing course.

**Chuck Knapp** is a taxonomy and indexing manager at Bloomberg BNA. He leads the Bloomberg BNA taxonomy team and has been in the Bloomberg BNA indexing department in metropolitan Washington, D.C. for 20 years. He oversees publication of indexes and finding aids for print and electronic products from its Legal Publishing Group as well as its Tax & Accounting Group. He works with a broad range of legal subjects ranging from bankruptcy to intellectual property law. Previously, he was the indexer for *U.S. Law Week* and *Supreme Court Today*, and he created the index for BNA's *Health Law & Business Series* that won the American Association of Law Libraries' 1997 Best New Product award. He authored the chapter on indexing court cases for the book, *Indexing Specialties: Law*. Chuck is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma School of Law, and he grew up in Kansas and Texas.

**Lai Heung Lam** was born and raised in Hong Kong. Lai worked in graphic design, translation, and marketing prior to immigrating to New Zealand. Having worked for many years in multinational companies in liaison roles, Lai enjoys the challenges of helping to bridge the cultural gaps between the East and West. Lai holds a BA in Japanese as well as a master's degree in library and information science. She came to indexing with a one-year project indexing the *New Zealand Chinese Journals Database* for the Auckland City Libraries. Lai currently works at the University of Auckland Library cataloging both English and Chinese resources.

**Cynthia Landeen** opened In.dex.trous for business in 1998, after reading an article in the Portland *Oregonian* about people who made their living from books, but didn't write them. One of the people interviewed for the article was an indexer. Cynthia was a consulting engineer before she began indexing. This job required knowledge of all levels of math, making her familiar with the language. She began indexing math when asked if she could repair an index. Although she is a generalist indexer who indexes everything outside of cookbooks, legal, Western medicine, or straight philosophy, she still gets calls from publishers that begin with "I understand you know math." Cynthia says she is honored to have been asked to write an article, believing that indexers are smart, dedicated to their craft, and interested in increasing their skills base.

**Fred Leise** has indexed on a freelance basis since 1995, specializing in scholarly works in the humanities, including East Asian history and civilization, international relations, and politics. Since 2000, he has also worked as a taxonomy and information architecture consultant for such clients as Abbott Laboratories, HP, Dow Corning, Disney, and Accenture. Most recently, he was manager of the taxonomy team at Sears Holdings Corporation. Fred has written and spoken extensively on controlled vocabularies and indexing, presenting workshops at the annual conferences and regional meetings of ASI, the Information Architecture Institute, and the Special Libraries Association. He has taught indexing for the University of Chicago Publishing Program and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science of Dominican University (River Forest, IL). Fred has served several terms on the national board of ASI, including one term as president. He is a founding member of the Institute of Certified Indexers.

**Frances S. Lennie** is the owner of Indexing Research whose best-known product is CINDEX indexing software. She graduated from the University of Hull (U.K.) with honors in geography and economics, acquired graduate certificates in education and computer science, and worked as a teacher and National Institutes of Health research project coordinator before embarking upon her indexing career in 1977. Initially specializing in clinical and research medical texts, she now indexes in a variety of subject areas but especially education texts. From 2001 to 2006, she taught the semester-long “Indexing Books” unit for NYU’s School of Continuing and Professional Studies Certificate in Editing course. Deeply committed to the purpose and goals of ASI, she has served as treasurer and president, and is extremely proud of two initiatives—the ASI Training Course and the Digital Trends Task Force (DTTF)—that she was able to facilitate, encourage, and support while under her watch. She has served as a juror for the Wilson Award, and, in 2005, she was honored to receive the Hines Award for her continuous and dedicated service to ASI. Frances lives in Rochester, New York, with her husband.

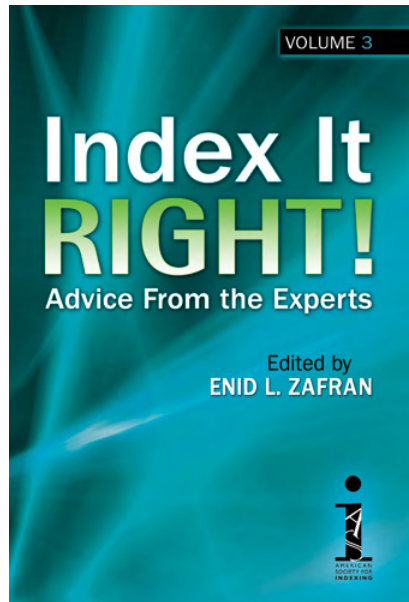
**Celeste Newbrough**, principal indexer of Academic Indexing Service (AIS), has over 20 years of experience as a classification specialist in natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and international studies. Retired from the University of California–Berkeley, Celeste taught at City College of San Francisco and the Harvey Milk Institute, and served as Chief Information Officer for Cubedex in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She holds an MA from San Francisco State University and a BA from Louisiana State University. AIS has composed indexes for major academic and institutional publishers including The Smithsonian Institute, The MIT Press, University of California Press, Harvard University Press, University of Minnesota Press, The World Bank, University of Hawaii Press, and others.

**Scott Smiley** has been an ASI member since 1999 and indexing full time since 2001. He indexes scholarly, professional, and trade books as well as textbooks, primarily in the social sciences, humanities, environmental studies, and related subjects. Scott is also an instructor for Basic Indexing through the Graduate School USA (formerly USDA). He has used CINDEXTM for Mac throughout his indexing career and has given several workshops and panel presentations at national and chapter ASI meetings on both CINDEXTM and the use of patterns.

**Martin White** has been an indexer since 1982. He worked in the indexing department of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for 13 years. Martin has been a full-time freelance indexer since 1995. His clients are mainly university presses, but he does index the odd trade book and a few medical journals. Martin's index to John Patrick Diggins's *The Promise of Pragmatism* received the 1995 ASI-H.W. Wilson Award. He contributed the chapter on indexing biographies to *Index It Right! Advice from the Experts, Volume 1*, the chapter on indexing philosophy in *Indexing Specialties: Scholarly Books*, and the chapter on indexing biographies in *Indexing Names*.

**Enid L. Zafran** has been indexing since 1975, and her business, Indexing Partners LLC, specializes in legal, public policy, scholarly, art, education, history, and psychology topics. A past president of ASI, Enid has served ASI in many capacities as a board member and as chair of the publications committee. She writes extensively on indexing, contributing to many of ASI's books as well as writing a column entitled "Indexing A to Zafran" in *Key Words*, the ASI newsletter. In previous positions, Enid has managed in-house indexing departments and has taught indexing at the Catholic University School of Library Science. She holds both a JD and a Masters in Library Science. In 2011, Enid received the Hines Award from ASI in recognition of her contribution to the profession of indexing. She is a founding member of the Institute of Certified Indexers, the only certifying organization for indexers in the U.S.

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