

# Indexing and Abstracting Assignment

Assignment three, special topics

## Overview

In this assignment, you will select a current issue in indexing and abstracting. Each issue will have a maximum of three people working on it. You will select and review two significant articles and will write a structured abstract about that article to share with the class.

During classes 9 (10/22) through 14 (11/26) the class will share and read each other's abstracts and will discuss the issues presented. All abstracts will be due in class 8.

## Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to look into specific issues in indexing and abstracting in more depth.

## Group Definition

### *Current Issue 1*

#### Members

#### Topic

Who should index is a growing issue in the indexing and abstracting field. Traditionally, only trained indexers were allowed to create indexes and abstracts. In recent years a number of alternative models (including author generated and end-user generated indexes) have emerged. What commonalities/differences do indexes created by these groups have? What issues do these approaches raise?

### *Current Issue 2*

#### Members

#### Topic

Automated indexing and abstracting techniques have become more popular in recent years, particularly in response to the growing amount of data on the web. While automated indexing has the promise of being able to save indexer time, it also raises a number of issues surrounding accuracy and quality of indexing. How can automation be used in indexing and what impact does it have on manual indexing practices? Is it more or less effective?

### ***Current Issue 3***

#### **Members**

#### **Topic**

The career of the indexer is not the same as it used to be. While traditional indexing careers could focus on isolated work on back of the book indexes, the challenges posed by changing publishing, economic, and information access models means that the indexer is competing for work with a wider variety of individuals and professions. How can the indexing profession respond? What (if anything) has professional organizations done to help this situation?

### ***Current Issue 4***

#### **Members**

#### **Topic**

Multi-media is both a growing component of information and is much different from text in indexing. While multi-media is very rich in content it is also very hard to index. What techniques are being used/developed to facilitate the indexing and retrieval of multi-media? Are there automated/manual techniques? What issues do the inclusion of media into indexing raise?

### ***Current Issue 5***

#### **Members**

#### **Topic**

The Internet has radically changed the publishing and information landscape. The sheer amount and type of information on the web seems to defy traditional indexing approaches. Further, the fluid nature of documents and the open qualities of user-contributed content do not mesh well with traditional indexing practices. What techniques can be used for indexing items on the web? Are indexers the best people to do this work? Why or why not?

### **Guidelines**

In the first two weeks of the course, review the topics and select your preferred topic. Each topic can have a maximum of three participants and those with their requests in first will get first selection. I may ask you to select a different topic if necessary. Select an aspect of the topic to investigate. Perform a more extensive search of literature, news, etc and select two resources to review and abstract  
Read your resource and write a structured abstract to share with the class  
On or before class 8 upload your two abstracts to the group workspace in blackboard (see instructions below)

Between classes 9 to 14 we will be reading the relevant abstracts for the issue that we will be covering that week. When your abstracts are being read, you should take a more prominent role in the discussion forum.

## **Evaluation**

This assignment will be evaluated using the following criteria.

### ***Individual abstract evaluation***

#### **Quality of abstracting**

##### **Extensivity of indexing**

Are the main ideas of the resource covered?

Are supplemental ideas, procedures, information covered where appropriate

##### **Specificity of indexing**

Does the level of coverage for the resource match the type/scope of the abstract?

#### **Consistency of abstracting**

##### **Consistency of structure**

Do the abstracts follow standard formatting and structure?

##### **Consistency of content**

Are the abstract contents consistent with the resource being reviewed?

##### **Formatting of the abstract**

Does the abstract follow expected format (particularly for structured abstracts)?

Are sentences well formed and grammatically correct?

Does the abstract 'make sense'?

### ***Discussion forum participation***

Did you help students in the course investigate the issue that was being investigated

## **Important Dates**

All abstracts due by class 8

## **Resources to consider**

### ***Library and information science databases***