

Workshop 7: SKY Index Professional: Kamm Schreiner, From Basics to Advanced



Kamm Schreiner, for SKY index

One of the most frequent questions a conference attendee asks is “Is a pre- or post-conference workshop really worth the additional registration fee?” In the case of Workshop 7 in particular, **Kamm Schreiner** did not disappoint! We received a 36-page guide covering a multitude of topics and 3 ½ hours of Kamm’s undivided attention. The format of the workshop allowed for unlimited questions from the audience. The attendees encompassed a wide range of experience levels from new to highly experienced indexers and each of our questions were addressed thor-

oughly. Every answer was accompanied by a demonstration of how the software could execute the task efficiently and quickly. Kamm also pointed out where SKY Professional version 7 would differ from version 6, which was of great interest to everyone in the room.

Kamm demonstrated the basic set-up of SKY and pointed out just a few of the many helpful features on the display:

- The splitter bars are adjustable to control viewing area.
- The acronym toolbar can be used to define an acronym (for example, when you type “ASI,” the full name American Society for Indexing will be inserted).
- The macro toolbar for creating shortcuts for repetitive tasks.
- The easy access of HELP—press F1 or the Help button, by clicking on the question mark if displayed, by right clicking on any toolbar button, or by searching through Help>Search for Help on to locate your topic in the index.

The session continued with tips on how to add entries, how to move about the screen quickly, and how to select and edit entries—all using a minimum of keystrokes. Kamm

then explained the settings for program configuration, which applies to all indexes; and index configuration, which applies only to the currently open index.

More tips followed on the Find/Replace, Group and other advanced editing functions. Both Find and Group can locate entries with the same or similar words and display them as a group for comparison and editing. Every function is accessible by a set of key strokes, making common functions like duplicating and swapping a breeze.

Kamm also covered the creation and use of macros. Macros can reduce repetitive tasks requiring multiple steps down to just a few keystrokes. The indexer can use the handy list of codes and their resulting action to create their own macros or visit the SKY company website for macros that others have created and found useful. Either way, using macros can significantly reduce the time spent on both index creation and editing.

Translations are similar to acronyms, but even more flexible. Found under Data Entry Options, the translation table can be defined to

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SKY Index 7.0: A Sneak Preview

When I previewed SKY Index 7.0 (SI7) in 2008, the changes from SKY Index 6.0 (SI6) were impressive. Those changes included:

- Unlimited Undo/Redo
- Labeling with nine different color options
- Subheadings up to six levels
- Toolbars that can reshape and float
- Edit View, which makes it possible to change a heading in one location and propagate the change to the same heading in other locations
- Consume Subheadings command, which removes subheadings and moves the locators to the main heading.
- New Child Heading command, which breaks out locators with main headings so that it is easier to add subheadings

For a discussion of those features and others, see the *Key Words* issue of July – September 2008.

As SI7 launches in 2009, the additional changes that have fallen out of the SKY are monumental. As a working indexer, I particularly like the improvements to time-saving fea-

tures of routine clerical tasks. For example, SI6 makes it easy to increment or decrement lone locators and locators at the upper end of a range. SI7 will make it easy to put in a range and to increment or decrement either end of the range. Furthermore, when locators in a range become equal, they will convert to a lone locator. These seemingly trivial time savers can add up over the course of an index.

Another improvement is in the AutoComplete function. As a working indexer, I find AutoComplete one of the most significant time savers. In SI6, entries in the AutoComplete list stayed there forever—even if they were misspelled. In SI7, when you correct an existing index entry, AutoComplete will correct the AutoComplete entry so spelling corrections and editing changes replace earlier entries without any effort by the indexer.

A welcome upgrade is the feature for flipping acronyms. Creating double posts and cross references from acronyms to terms that are spelled out can be a real annoyance. SI7 flips acronyms and spelled-out terms effortlessly. It even picks up an acronym embedded within a term and moves it to the front of the entry.

SI7 also has features that will be used only

occasionally but are welcome when they are needed. One such feature is the ability to split apart clusters of authors for an author index. In the past, the easiest way to perform this function has been with a separate utility. Now that utility is unnecessary.

Other new features include:

- Ability to copy/cut/paste/delete entire headings, including all their subheadings, just as you would copy/cut/paste/delete text
- Ability to place the Preview Pane and Data Entry Grid side-by-side to show more of the index in the Preview Pane
- Right clicking on a cross-reference will pop-up a mini Preview Pane showing the target of the cross-reference.

Of course, the real way to learn about these amazing changes is to purchase a copy of SI7. SI7 is available now for \$579. The cost to upgrade from SI6 is \$199.

I suspect that an upgrade will quickly pay for itself with the time saved on a few indexes.

I ordered my SI7 upgrade at the 2009 ASI conference. As a working indexer, I cannot afford to be without it.

— *Judi Gibbs* ●

Reports from Partners

Last but not least of all the presentations, **Frances Lennie** moderated a panel of delegates from indexing societies: **Jill Halliday** (United Kingdom), **Ruth Pincoe** (Canada), **John Simkin** (Australia), **Caroline Diepeveen** (Netherlands), **Pilar Wyman** (United States of America), and **Marlene Burger** (South Africa).

Other treats included group drumming with the Afrikaner Brothers in Beat, an underground boat ride back four billion years in geological time through some of the basic elements that make up our world (water, air, fire, and earth), a visit to the Maropeng Visitor Centre (one third of the world's hominid fossils, including Mrs. Ples and Little Scout, were found in the area), star gazing with Maropeng's resident astronomer Vincent Nettman, the Bekker Primary School of Magaliesburg Children's Choir singing *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*, and beautiful South African *Shweshwe* bags for all the conference attendees.

I stayed at Maropeng Hotel, in one of its 24 rooms with private patio and breathtaking views of the Witwatersberg and Magaliesberg range, a mere five-minute walk through the veldt grasses from the conference center.

Walks were accompanied by the songs of local birds, long-tailed male widowbirds with



A pair of red hartebeest near the Maropeng Conference Centre. Mornings and evenings a herd of red hartebeest can be seen grazing on a hill overlooking the conference centre.



View over the mountains from Maropeng



The Maropeng Conference Centre, known for its tumulus burial mound-shaped architecture.

their red shouldered-wings flying on display (yes, not unlike the red-winged blackbirds of North America, but with such long tails!), red hartebeest grazing on the hill in the distance, or the baboons that joined them on the last morning (and yes, being mindful of snakes, as the "Beware of Snakes" signs dictated).

Again, as I said above, this was one of the most enjoyable and stimulating conferences I have attended. What a rich experience, being 'back' in the cradle of South Africa.

— **Pilar Wyman**
ASI International Representative
c/o Wyman Indexing
Annapolis, MD, USA ●

ASI Web Indexing Award Presented to Mary Russel of ANZSI

The winner of the 2009 Web Indexing Award, awarded by the ASI's Web Indexing Special Interest Group, is Mary Russell.

Her index to the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI) website at www.anzsi.org impressed the judges with its comprehensiveness and usability.

Mary has been a Registered Indexer with the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers for over 10 years. She also wears a couple of ANZSI hats—she's ANZSI Vice-President and ANZSI Web Manager, as well as Secretary of the Victorian Branch. While she enjoys indexing predominately science and medical works, she occasionally branches out to index/catalog a private collection of objects, such as bookplates, or to prepare a descriptive bibliography of perhaps an author's complete work or a collection of old books.

In lieu of the prize money of US\$75, Mary elected to receive a one-year subscription to the American Society of Indexing newsletter

Key Words and the book *Indexing Specialties: Cookbooks*.

The Web Indexing Award is awarded annually to a deserving indexer for excellence in website indexing. The 2009 judges were **Fred Brown**, a recipient of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Web Indexing Award, **Heather Hedden**, author of the book *Indexing Specialties: Web Sites* and a past manager of the Web Indexing SIG, and **James Lamb**, author of the book "Website Indexes". Selected comments from the judges and further information about the award are available on the Web Indexing SIG site at: www.web-indexing.org/web-indexing-award.htm.

Submissions for the 2010 award will be accepted towards the end of 2009. The award is open to members of the ASI and affiliated indexing societies.

— **Rebecca Linford**
Web Indexing SIG Manager
www.web-indexing.org ●

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insert lengthy lines of text by using just a few keystrokes. Unlike acronyms, these keystrokes will be expanded to full length only when the index is generated. The example Kamm provided showed how to use this feature to insert HTML code for indexes that will be published on the Web.

The SKY company website is full of great information for both version 6 and version 7. Visit www.sky-software.com for overviews of both software versions, a well-organized 8-page command reference for version 6, an FAQ page for version 6, a list of handy macros that make quick work of common tasks, and a list of tips extracted from the SKYIndexUsers Archive of Yahoo's eGroups forum. Also on the website are instructions on how to get your questions answered by phone, e-mail or through the SKYIndexUsers@yahoo.com. With SKY Index, an indexer is never far from getting the help s/he might need.

— **Judith McConville**,
Allegheny Writing & Publishing Services ●