

# A to Z: The Newsletter of STC's Indexing SIG

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A to Z welcomes letters from members of the STC Indexing SIG and others interested in indexing. Printed letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the STC Indexing SIG and may be edited for length. Letters may be sent to Jan Wright at [jancw@wrightinformation.com](mailto:jancw@wrightinformation.com).

# Microsoft Indexers in the Classroom

by Mary Rosewood

"You mean you get paid to read?" one boy asked with awe. That question came from a seventh-grade Language Arts class in suburban Seattle when Mary Rosewood and Colleen Dunham gave an indexing lesson there in January.

Colleen and Mary are indexers at Microsoft who took advantage of Coughlin Indexing Services' education program for middle schools (<http://www.indexing.com/>), which is designed to introduce young readers to indexing. The curriculum explores students' familiarity with indexes, reviews the features of an index, and provides an opportunity for students to write an index themselves. The seventh-graders wrote an index for *A Day in the Life of a Midshipman*, a book jam-packed with interesting information, but no index. The young readers saw that without an index, information in that book got lost. If they couldn't find it when they needed it, they couldn't use it. It was knowledge wasted!

"You have to read a page, then turn away from it, and play it back in a few short statements. That's what indexing is all about. A collection of those statements, organized in some useful way, is what becomes the index," Colleen told the students. She showed the students the index her team created for Windows XP Help and Support.



Coughlin Indexing Services will share their lesson plan and materials with other indexers who would like to use this program in the classroom. Contact Jennifer Burton at: (410)269-0978 or [jen@indexing.com](mailto:jen@indexing.com) for more information.

To see more pictures, please visit <http://groups.msn.com/Midshipman/yourwebpage.msny>

Since we are no longer publishing in print, please check our Web site ([www.stcsig.org/idx/](http://www.stcsig.org/idx/)) for information on all events. We also want to thank to Ginny Hudak-David for acting as events editor over the past several months, and wish

you didn't have to give it up. But we are pleased to announce a replacement. Please send upcoming conference and meeting announcements to our new events editor, Colleen Dunham, [colleend@microsoft.com](mailto:colleend@microsoft.com).

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# Review of i-TORQUE, the New Indexing E-zine

by Janet Perlman

At last! an independent publication for indexers. The new e-zine, called i-TORQUE, will appear ten times a year, and is a welcome addition to an indexer's professional reading. The first issue appeared in January 2003.

The credentials of its publisher, Nancy Mulvany, couldn't be more exemplary. Her book *Indexing Books* (University of Chicago Press, 1994) is the seminal book in the field, and is used as the basis for the USDA indexing correspondence course, which Nancy designed and oversaw until last year. Nancy has extensive experience as an indexer, teacher of indexing, and lecturer.

i-TORQUE's primary audience is the freelance indexer; but there is much of interest in the e-zine for indexers who are not in private practice. In the two issues so far the articles have ranged from software tools (not limited to indexing software) to skill-building, from work practices to legal issues.

Technical writers will profit from the discussion of the fine points of indexing in each issue. And if a career change to entrepreneur is even a glimmer on the distant horizon, the business-related articles will be of interest. Those who evaluate indexes or are responsible for contracting with indexers will find articles that improve their knowledge of indexing theory and technique and will especially find the Legal Beagle column interesting. Everybody who uses a computer will enjoy the discussions of computer issues and software.

The lead articles in the two issues that have so far been published have discussed making money as an indexer. The first article discussed wage estimates for various occupations in the publishing industry, including technical writers and indexers, using U.S. Dept. of Labor data and data from the most recent American Society of Indexers salary survey. The second article included a detailed derivation of hourly wages for indexers based on different rate structures and speed of work. A very useful table showed variation in hourly earnings when the speed of indexing (pages per hour) and per-page rates varied.

Regular departments in each issue included the following:

- \* Software tools, which discussed Zone Alarm (a firewall), eFax, and Drive Image (backup and recovery software),
- \* Legal Beagle, which discussed the work for hire contract and the issue of satisfactory performance (quality of work produced),
- \* Q&A, which is indexing skill-related, and so far has included discussion of multi-volume indexes, acronyms and abbreviations, and cross-references from subheadings.

Other articles appeared on information mapping, push technology, search engines, computer crashes, and market trends, such as indexing of Spanish language materials and Web site indexing.

The e-zine is delivered as a .PDF attachment to email. Subscription information is available at [www.i-torque.us](http://www.i-torque.us).

*Janet Perlman is an indexer with more than 25 years of experience. Working as Southwest Indexing ([www.sw-indexing.com](http://www.sw-indexing.com)), she specializes in scientific, medical, and engineering materials, and also provides indexing services for Spanish-language materials. Janet has indexed trade books, journals, encyclopedias, and cumulations.*

