



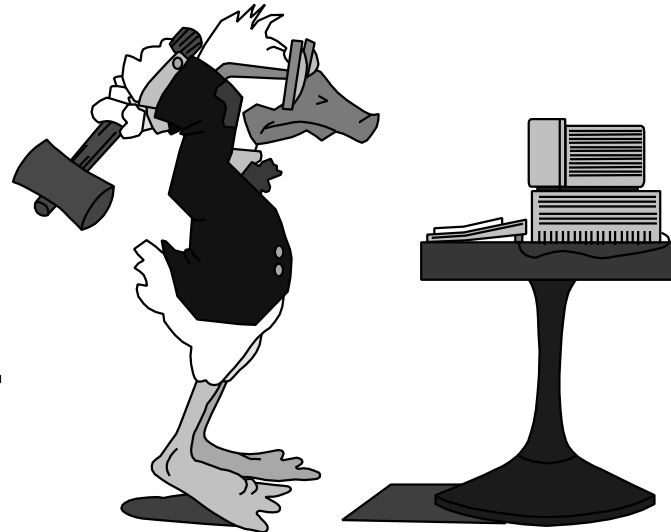
Indexing with a Vengeance

**Or, how I learned to stop worrying and
love the index...**

Indexing builds a better manual by...



- ...reducing user frustration as they can find exactly the information they need.
- ...pointing out possible structure problems.
- ...encouraging the writer to think of the manual in terms of how users will use it.
- ...teaching users to use new terms.



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What is an index?



- An organized set of access points to printed (or online) material.
- Indexes can be:
 - tables of content (book-level and chapter-level)
 - tables of figures/illustrations
 - formal indexes, as we commonly know them
 - a set of keywords or terms in online searching

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What to index?

- chapter headings
- table/figure captions
- terms
- acronyms
- main topics of paragraphs
- notes/cautions/warnings
- main task/feature
- screen names/fields
- menu options
- appendixes
- glossary
- footnotes
- functions
- important concepts



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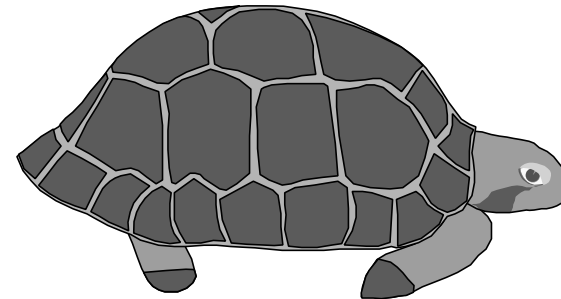
How to index



- **Two ways to do:**

- Index as you go

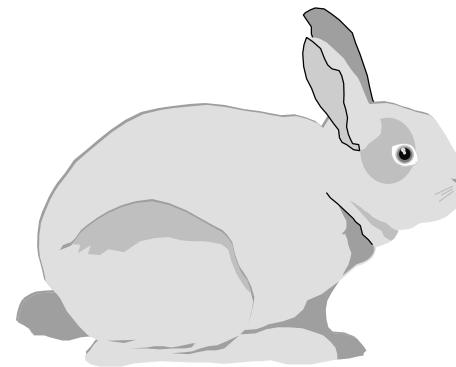
- PRO: material is fresh, indexing is not rushed
 - CON: *must* edit index carefully before release, go back and fix entries



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- Index at the end

- PRO: get a better picture of whole manual
 - CON: indexing can be rushed



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Indexing "Do"s

- Use noun and gerund forms
- Use SEE and SEE ALSO references
- Think about user questions
- Be consistent
- Rearrange entries
- Point to useful information
- Aim for 1 index page for every 12-15 manual pages

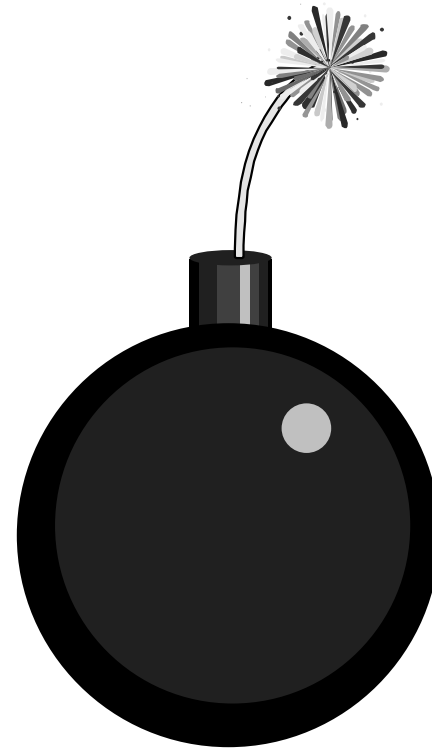


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Indexing "Don't"s

- Assume commonality of terms
- Leave single subentries under primary entries
- Have more than two or three page numbers
- Be afraid to use levels of subentries
- Capitalize anything but proper nouns



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What is Online Indexing?

- **Library-Style Machine Readable Indexing**
- **PDF/Page Display Indexing**
- **Online Help Keyword/FTS Searching**
- **WWW Keyword Searching**



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Library-Style Machine Readable Indexing

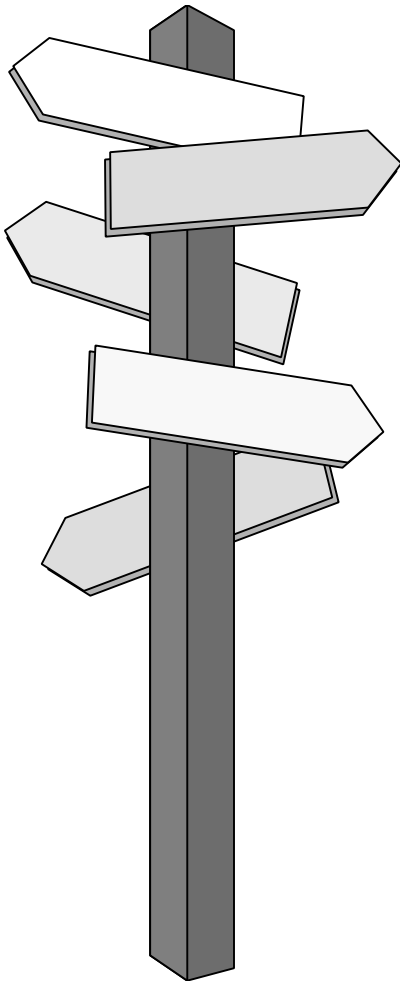


- Extremely detailed
- Usually follows standard format, such as MARC or an ANSI std.
- Intended for general research

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PDF/Page Display Indexing



- Most like back-of-the-book indexing
- If using Frame or Ventura to create, can use application's markup for links in index

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Online Help Keyword/FTS Searching



- FTS is no substitute for keywording
- Focus on keyword
- Little structure
- Watch how many characters users must type

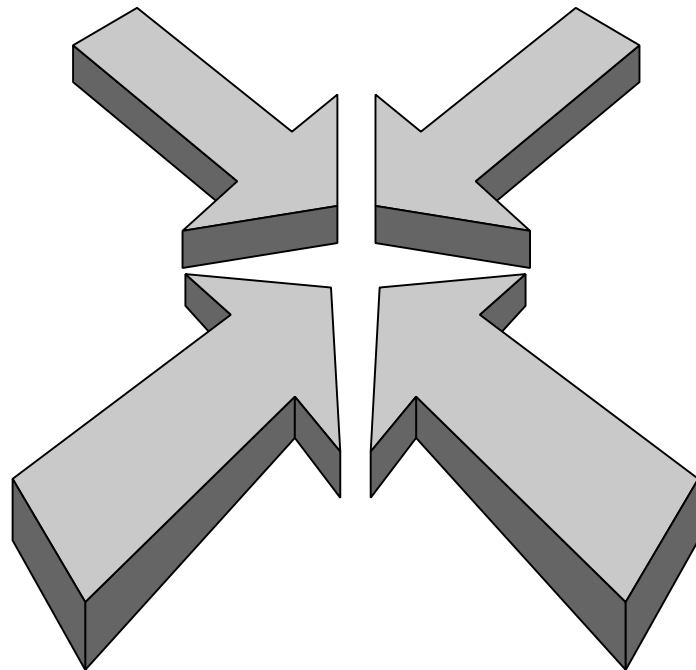
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WWW Keyword Searching



- Focus on keyword
- FTS not always available
- Words and combos may have different meanings/shades of meaning



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