

Minutes of Vanindexers meeting January 17, 2010

In attendance

Jean Lawrence
Daphne Sams
Elspeth Richmond
Sheilagh Simpson
Linda Budd
Tia Leschke
Suher Zaher
Clara Johnson
Pamela Ovington

Presentation

Geoff Wright from Health and Safety, City of Vancouver gave an excellent presentation on work station ergonomics.

Geoff defined ergonomics as “the science of people at work.” Ergonomics optimizes the design and use of tools to fit the worker.

Tips for avoiding injury included:

- Keeping the top of your computer screen at eye level, or a bit lower if you wear progressive lenses or bifocals, so that you move your eyes instead of your head to view the screen. If you work with two documents at once, use a large screen to accommodate two 8 1/2 X 11 pages side by side or put one screen above another.
- For a laptop, use a separate keyboard.
- Learn to “mouse” with your left hand. When you mouse with your right hand, you have to reach around the number pad which causes discomfort.
- If your feet can’t touch the floor, use a footrest.
- Don’t rest your wrists on a keyboard pad. Use palm support instead.
- Keep elbows and knees at right angles.
- You need a 27” opening for a keyboard tray.

Ideas for next meeting

Elspeth and Sheilagh advised us to bring our laptops to the April meeting so that we can talk about the features of indexing software. The group also expressed an interest in learning about online indexing. Sheilagh and Elspeth will confirm the April date in an e-mail.

Peer review

The group peer-reviewed an index that Jean Lawrence wrote for *Let Them Eat Prozac* by David Healy (Toronto: James Lorimer, 2003).

Jean gave an excellent summary of the book, an expose of the relationship between the drug industry, pharmaceutical companies, and academics. David Healy is a whistleblower who once worked for drug companies, which put him at odds with colleagues who accepted money from drug companies.

Indexing issues included:

- 400 pages, a lot to index
- abstract ideas
- permutations on names of drug companies, the result of many merges and splits
- a plethora of common and scientific drug names necessitated a lot cross-referencing
- the need to accommodate both a popular and academic audience

While indexing, Jean noticed that page 91 was missing and advised the publisher, who concluded that it was too late to fix the problem. With her characteristic wit and humour, Jean told us that she and the publisher “conspired to pretend” that page 91 existed.

Ideas discussed:

- “Orphan” subheadings, that is, single subheadings. One solution put forward is to index the main idea with “about” as one subheading and “orphan” subheading as the other subheading.
- Whether to put “the” at the beginning of a heading and then alphabetize with the main idea letter or whether to put “the” at the end.

Jean reports that the author loved the index. She found him and substantive editor both very helpful. Thank you, Jean, for sharing your index and your insights.

And thank you Pamela Ovington for these excellent minutes!

Next Meeting

April 17. We'll have two indexes to review – from Heather Hollingworth and Suher Zaher. And please bring your laptop and we'll share some tips in using Cindex or your other indexing software more efficiently.