Freelance Indexing: The Basics

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Getting Started

Joining a professional organization for indexers will give you access to resources that will make it easier to find work.

-The American Society for Indexing (ASI) is the "only professional organization in the United States devoted solely to the advancement of indexing, abstracting and database construction."

-You can sign up for a membership at the ASI website. Cost is $175 per year.

-Membership includes training materials, discounts on conferences and workshops, marketing tools, community resources, publications, and even access to health insurance.

Getting Hired

-Join the Jobs Hotline Service, free to members of the ASI.

    -Publishers provide job information to ASI.

    -Indexers can respond directly to publishers regarding the available jobs.

    -Nonmembers can purchase access for $100 per year.

-Pay $150 per year to be included in the ASI's Indexer Locator.

    -When publishers search for an indexer, you would be included in the listing.

    -The locator includes a personal statement from each indexer.

    -It is searchable by subject and language specialty.

Getting Hired

-Choose a [Special Interest Group (SIG)](#): a group of indexers dedicated to particular subjects such as business, culinary arts, or science.
    -Choosing a specialty area may get you more business.

-Work to overcome your novice indexer status (some clients may avoid hiring a beginner). As a novice:
    -Emphasize any specialty areas you have.
    -Make availability a priority--if you are more flexible, you might be more appealing to the client.
    -Advertise your strengths, such as software knowledge or particular familiarity with a certain type of audience.

Getting Hired

-Send letters and resumes to publishers.

　　-The Association for American Publishers Member Directory is a good resource for finding publishers.

　　-It may take hundreds of letters to get a first indexing job.

-Network! It is a key aspect of finding work.

　　-According to the ASI, "experienced indexers say they get most jobs through recommendations from satisfied clients and networking, although some still come from marketing efforts."

-Consider apprenticing with an experienced indexer to gain skills.

　　-Mentor indexers can help apprentices network and find jobs.

Contract for Services

-Once you are hired, you will need to establish a contract to ensure that your client's expectations are clear. Some publishers and authors may require one.

-You should consider including the following elements in a contract:
- -Deadline for submission of the index
- -A schedule for your work
- -Format for delivery
- -Limitations on the index
    - -Page requirements, formatting conventions, etc.
- -Copyright stipulations
- -Compensation details

Sample Contracts

AGREEMENT made between ***** (Indexer) and ***** (Client) .

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

1. The Work. The Indexer shall prepare index entries to ************ (the "Work")
in accordance with proper and agreed indexing style. (Insert references here to any style manual, list of requirements, etc.)

2. Delivery of Work. The Client shall deliver the text to be indexed to the Indexer according to the following schedule:

The Indexer shall deliver the work according to the following schedule, assuming all pages are provided to the indexer in good time:

3. The Work shall be delivered by the Indexer to the Client in the following format:

4. Acceptance of Work. The Client will accept the Work ("Acceptance") if the Indexer delivers the Work in a form and content in accordance with proper and agreed indexing style and satisfactory for the market for which the Work is intended. If the Client does not accept the Work, the Client has no right to use or publish any portion of the Work except by separate arrangement with the Indexer.

TERMS OF PUBLICATION

5. Copyright. The Client understands and acknowledges that the Indexer owns the Work until final payment is made by the Client to the Indexer. Once the final payment is received by the Indexer, however, the Indexer understands and acknowledges that ownership passes to the Client, and the Client has the right to apply for and obtain copyright protection for the Work.

6. Compensation. The Client agrees to pay indexer a fee of ****** per page of indexable text for preparation of the Work. Full and final payment of this fee will be made upon Acceptance. Interim payments will be made by the Client to the Indexer according to the following schedule, invoiced with the following schedule of deliverables:

7. Indexer's Representations and Warranties. Indexer represents and warrants:

(a) Indexer shall be the sole indexer of the Work and has the exclusive right and power to enter into this Agreement OR (a) Indexer shall engage and manage reputable and appropriate subcontractors to assist in creating the Work, and shall practice overall editorial control of the Work;

(b) The Work will not infringe any existing copyright or right of privacy or contain actionable defamatory matter; and

(c) The representations and warranties set forth in this paragraph 7 shall survive the termination of this Agreement and shall extend to the Client and its licensees, successors, and assigns.

By: (Client) Indexer: (Name Here)

Date: Social Security or Tax ID Number:

Indexing contract: a draft proposal

Between publisher		and indexer	
Name:	....	Name:	....
Address:	....	Address:	....
....		....	
Tel:	....	Tel:	....
Fax:	....	Fax:	....
Email:	....	Email:	....

Contact name:

Title/description of work to be indexed:

Author:

Author's contact details (if liaison required):

Delivery date (proofs to indexer):

Delivery date (completed index to client):

Type of index required: Name/subject/integrated/separate

Conventions to follow

Total length of index: Limited/unlimited
Number of lines
Maximum line length

Layout: Set out/run on
Coverage of index to include: Illustrations/text figures/tables
House style for index: None/previously sent/attached
Delivery/presentation of index: Email/disk/printout/typescript/CRC

Proofreading by indexer: Yes/no
Copyright in index: Client/indexer/other
Fee negotiated: By hour/page/flat fee/other
VAT chargeable by indexer: Yes/no
Expenses allowed (define):

Signature of client: Date:
Signature of indexer: Date:

Fees

Deciding what to charge for your services can be a complicated process for a novice indexer. Here are some tips:

-Always ask to see proofs of the text so that you can make a fair assessment of the work involved.

-Decide whether to charge per page, per entry, or by the hour.
-According to the ASI, usual rates are per book page, at a rate of about $2.50 to $4.00 per page.
-Remember that as a novice indexer, you may not be able to charge as much as an experienced indexer would.

Fees

-Consider the following when establishing fees:
- -Level of detail needed
- -Difficulty and complexity of material
- -Length and space requirements
- -Time allowed for completion

-Consider raising your rate for the following situations:
- -Complex text which requires detailed understanding of the subject
- -Pressure to produce an index in a very short time
- -Necessity to work unsocial hours
- -Embedding of tags or insertion of hyperlinks

Fees

See the following resources for a more thorough discussion of fees:

Guidelines for Clients from the Society for Indexers (UK)

How Do Indexers Price Their Services? from the ASI

Working with Freelance Indexers from the ASI

Working with Clients

There are several considerations for working with clients as an indexer.

-Get as much detail as possible about what the client wants--do not make assumptions. Confirm any details in writing.

-If you do not have the time or skills to complete a job, you can always say no.

-Keep detailed records of time and cost so that you can compare new projects to previous ones.

-Keep lines of communication open with clients--e-mail is a convenient way to do this.

Completing the Job

-Allow yourself plenty of time to get the job done.
    -According to the ASI, "the time needed to index fairly straightforward text is 5-10 pages per hour."

-Make sure you know who to contact with questions you have during the indexing process (such as name spellings or inaccurate information).

-Obtain a style sheet or indexing guide from the publisher or author. If one is not provided, use one such as this guide from the Institute of Certified Indexers (ICI).

-Proofread carefully to ensure a quality product.

Helpful Skills

There are several skills you can develop which will increase your success as a freelance indexer:

     -Language skills

     -Clerical aptitude

     -Accuracy

     -Attention to detail

     -Self-discipline

     -Curiosity

     -Tolerance of isolation

     -Love of books

     -Business and marketing skills

Business Practices

As a freelance indexer, you are self-employed. Promoting yourself and your business will increase your income.

-Keep prior clients up-to-date with your availability so that they can request your services again.

-Create a promotional brochure for potential clients or set up a website that you can direct them to.

-For practice, index material that is currently unindexed, then offer to sell it to the publisher. You never know--they might purchase it!

-Vary your work and be open to new opportunities.

-Consider purchasing the "Business of Indexing" course from the ASI.

Resources

American Society for Indexing

"Freelance Indexing" by Glenda Browne

Institute of Certified Indexers

Society of Indexing (UK)