Questions for Indexers to Ask Clients (Authors/Publishers)

When taking on an embedded or ebook index (eIndex) project, it is critical for the indexer to know more about the project than the usual back-of-the-book index project. Ask some questions to get perspective on the process and desired outcomes:

- What software tool are they using to create the ebook, and what version?
- How precise do they want the links—To the top of what was the printed page, to the paragraph level or to the precise point within the paragraph? Linking just to the top of the original printed page can be problematic for accurate index links if the text is reflowable.
- Are they relying on the software to create the ebook, or do they use a conversion house?
- Will they allow the indexer to embed codes in their files?
- What kinds of output are they going to create? EPUB, Amazon formats, PDF, HTML, other?
- Will they allow a test compile of the ebook with indexing to ensure everything works as planned?
- What is their schedule and when can they allow the indexer in the files?
- Will they allow the indexer to make recommendations on the indexing tools, process, and timing of the indexer's work within the project?

Issues preventing publishers from implementing eIndexes
with counter-arguments to these issues

- **It will cost too much.** *Indexer's counter-argument:* If you are creating a print index you are making a substantial investment already. With new tools for embedding, the cost of having someone create an embedded index has dropped significantly, so for a relatively small additional cost, you gain two indexes. This adds value to your original investment in the print index. You also gain a competitive advantage by offering an embedded index in your digital publications that other publishers do not.
- **It will take too long.** *Indexer's counter-argument:* An experienced indexer will not take significantly longer to produce an embedded index. Modern indexing tools also allow indexing at an earlier stage in the publishing process. Software options such as Index-Manager and WordEmbed enable the indexer to embed the index into a Word manuscript or XML text. Embedded indexing can therefore take place at copy-editing stage, before final page proofs are typeset, once the text is reasonably stable. It can also accommodate text changes, as the index will update each time it is regenerated.
- **We don't have the knowhow.** *Indexer's counter-argument:* I have the necessary training and experience to guide you through this process. As a member of ASI (or SI or other affiliated indexing society), I also have access to many other indexing professionals who have extensive knowledge in creating embedded indexes. I am confident that I can help to resolve any technical problems.
- **We don't have the right software**. *Indexer's counter-argument:* You may not need any special software. The indexer has already invested in the software to create the embedded index and can deliver it in Word, InDesign or XML file format. There are also plug-ins that can enable the indexer to convert an existing print index into an embedded and linked index in InDesign.
- **We are using a conversion house/program that strips out the indexes** (e.g. Amazon CreateSpace). *Indexer's counter-argument*: Kindle Direct Publishing does support indexes. You can use a different service of Amazon's to keep your indexing.
- **We don't see the need for eIndexes.** *Indexer's counter-argument:* We are trying to start more conversations to persuade publishers about the benefits of eIndexes. Refer to the additional supporting documents (*Benefits of an eIndex*) for further arguments in support of digital, embedded and linked indexes.

For more information, see:

- ASI Digital Publications Indexing Special Interest Group: www.digital-publications-indexing.org
- SI Publishing Technology Group: www.ptg-indexers.org.uk