Gender and authorship in *The Indexer*, 1958–2007

Catherine Sassen

In this study Catherine Sassen explores the gender distribution of authors who contributed to volumes 1–25 of The Indexer, in other words the first 50 years of publication. In the first decade of the journal's history, women authors constituted only 10.53 percent of all authors. Their participation grew to 67.91 percent in 1998–2007. The contributions of women authors increased in all areas studied, including editorials, reviews, articles, and letters to the editor.

Introduction

In recalling the early history of the Society of Indexers (SI), Elizabeth Wallis (2007: 229) wrote, 'I remember the overwhelming maleness of the Society's officers; now it is the exact opposite, almost exclusively female.' Maureen MacGlashan (2008: 102) also mentioned gender issues in her article on the history of *The Indexer*. She noted that the journal had served as a 'window on sociological changes' in the history of SI in various ways, including its documentation of the predominance of male officers in its early years.

Another way in which *The Indexer* has reflected gender issues related to sociological changes is in the composition of its authorship. The present study was undertaken to analyze the gender distribution of authors published in *The Indexer* during its first 50 years.

Studies of gender and authorship have been conducted in a variety of disciplines ranging from herpetology (Wilson, 1998) to political science (Breuning and Sanders, 2007). Gender is a factor considered in many authorship studies in the discipline of library and information sciences. Researchers such as Nisonger (1996: 398) and Buttlar (1991: 39) have justified these studies as a way of documenting the sociological characteristics of the literature of a discipline.

Methodology

Volumes 1 through 25 of *The Indexer*, published from 1958 through 2007, were analyzed in this study. Authorship information was gathered through personal examination of each issue.

'Authorship' was defined as the person or persons who were identified as the writers of articles, editorials, letters, and reviews. Using the methodology of one of the earliest authorship studies in library and information science (Olsgaard and Olsgaard, 1980), each instance of authorship was considered as a separate case. Therefore, a contribution written by two authors in collaboration was counted as two authorship cases. Multiple contributions written by the same author were counted separately. For example, if an author contributed one article in 1988 and another in 2003, each article was considered as a separate instance of authorship.

The byline and biographical information accompanying each contribution were analyzed to identify each author. If the byline listed more than one author, information about each author was recorded.

Gender was determined by an analysis of the author's first name, or by pronouns or terms of address used in an author's byline or biographical information. If gender could not be determined in this analysis, the author's name was searched in other sources. In some cases, the author used only initials in the byline of an article, but a fuller form of the name was found elsewhere in *The Indexer*, such as a list of editorial board members or indexing society officers. In the remaining cases, names were searched in indexes including *Library Literature*, *Library Literature and Information Science Full Text* and *Library and Information Science Abstracts*. Occasionally the index itself provided a fuller form of the author's name. If the index contained citations to other articles by the same author, those articles were examined to find information about the author. In some cases it was impossible to determine gender because the author's first name was not gender-specific, or because the author used initials instead of a first name, and a fuller form of the name was not found elsewhere.

This study included articles, editorials, letters to the editor, and reviews. The category of 'articles' included historical and descriptive papers, quantitative research, position papers, conference presentations, case studies, biographies, 'centrepieces', bibliographies, and indexes. Excluded were brief news items, announcements of upcoming events, summaries of conferences, brief reports of awards, and reports on articles in earlier issues of *The Indexer*. Unsigned contributions were excluded, as well as contributions signed only by initials which were not readily identified. Also excluded were features compiled with the assistance of many contributors, such as 'Indexes Reviewed' and reports from national indexing societies.

Gender distribution of all authors

'Overwhelming maleness' is indeed an appropriate description of the authorship of *The Indexer* in its first two decades. Men constituted 85.26 percent of all authors in 1958–67, and 78.43 percent of all authors in 1968–77. In the decade of 1988–1997, the participation of female authors increased to 48.73 percent and almost equalled that of male authors. Then in 1998–2007, the participation of female authors grew to 67.91 percent, surpassing male authors for the first time. The gender distribution of authors of all types of contributions is summarized in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1 Gender distribution of all authors

	1958–67		1968–77		1978–87		1988–97		1998–2007	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	30	10.53	71	20.70	255	40.61	326	48.73	383	67.91
Male	243	85.26	269	78.43	360	57.32	339	50.67	179	31.74
Unknown	12	4.21	3	0.87	13	2.07	4	0.60	2	0.35
	285	100.00	343	100.00	628	100.00	669	100.00	564	100.00

Figure 1 Gender distribution of all authors

Editorials

From 1958 to 1977, all editorials in *The Indexer* were written by male authors. However, female authors wrote the majority of editorials in each of the following three decades. To a great extent, this pattern reflects the gender distribution of the journal’s editors. All the editors serving from 1958 to 1978 were male. Since that time, women have served as editors. However, women have not written all the editorials published since 1978 because some were authored by male guest editors.

Table 2a Gender distribution of authors of editorials

	1958–67		1968–77		1978–87		1988–97		1998–2007	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	66.67	16	69.57	26	86.67
Male	13	100.00	4	100.00	5	33.33	7	30.43	4	13.33
	13	100.00	4	100.00	15	100.00	23	100.00	30	100.00

Table 2b Editors of *The Indexer*

Editor	Dates
Harold Smith	1958–9
John Thornton	1959–63
Monty Harrod	1964–78
Hazel K. Bell	1978–95
Janet Shuter and Nancy Mulvany	1996–9
Christine Shuttleworth	1999–2004
Maureen MacGlashan	2004–present

The distribution of authors of editorials is illustrated in Table 2a and Figure 2. The number of authors is not the same in each time period for several reasons. Some journal issues did not contain any editorials, and others contained more than one editorial. Table 2b lists all the journal’s editors and their dates of service.

Letters to the editor

Male authors had more letters published in *The Indexer* than female authors during each of the five decades under investigation. The disparity of participation was most pronounced during the period 1958–67, when female authors were responsible for only 7.69 percent of the letters published. The participation of women authors increased over time, and they wrote 45.45 percent of all letters published in 1998–2007. The distribution of authors of letters appearing in *The Indexer* is summarized in Table 3 and Figure 3.

Reviews

Male review authors outnumbered female review authors in the first four decades of the history of *The Indexer*. Female authors were responsible for only 4.44 percent of the reviews in 1958–67. Their contributions grew to 75.53 percent in

Figure 2 Gender distribution of authors of editorials

Table 3 Gender distribution of authors of letters

	1958–67		1968–77		1978–87		1988–97		1998–2007	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	3	7.69	6	13.95	27	38.03	34	37.36	15	45.45
Male	36	92.31	35	81.40	43	60.56	57	62.64	18	54.55
Unknown	0	0.00	2	4.65	1	1.41	0	0.00	0	0.00
	39	100.00	43	100.00	71	100.00	91	100.00	33	100.00

Figure 3 Gender distribution of authors of letters

Figure 4 Gender distribution of authors of reviews

1998–2007 when they surpassed the contributions of male authors for the first time. The gender distribution of the authors of all book and software reviews is presented in Table 4a and Figure 4.

Reviews editors are listed in Table 4b. The first individual designated in *The Indexer* as a reviews editor was Philip Bradley, who served from 1984 to 2003. From 2004–07, only women served as reviews editors. However, as it happens, both the current reviews editors (Christopher Phipps and Michael Jackson) – outside the period of this study – are male.

Table 4a Gender distribution of authors of reviews

	1958–67		1968–77		1978–87		1988–97		1998–2007	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	4	4.44	9	11.69	120	41.10	143	46.58	179	75.53
Male	84	93.33	67	87.01	167	57.19	164	53.42	57	24.05
Unknown	2	2.22	1	1.30	5	1.71	0	0.00	1	0.42
	90	100.00	77	100.00	292	100.00	307	100.00	237	100.00

Table 4b Reviews editors

Reviews editor	Dates of service
Philip Bradley	1984–2003
Sue Lambert	2004
Nancy Mulvany*	2000–05
Maureen MacGlashan	2005–07
Frances Lennie*	2006–07

*North American reviews editor

Figure 5 Gender distribution of authors of articles

Table 5 Gender distribution of authors of articles

	1958–67		1968–77		1978–87		1988–97		1998–2007	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	23	16.08	56	25.57	98	39.20	133	53.63	163	61.74
Male	110	76.92	163	74.43	145	58.00	111	44.76	100	37.88
Unknown	10	6.99	0	0.00	7	2.80	4	1.61	1	0.38
	143	100.00	219	100.00	250	100.00	248	100.00	264	100.00

Reflections

Why has there been a sustained increase in the participation of women authors in *The Indexer*? Women constituted only 10.53 percent of all authors in 1958–67, and then 20.7 percent of all authors in 1968–77. However, their numbers grew considerably in the following decades. In 1978–87, they made up 40.61 percent of all authors, increasing to 48.73 percent in 1988–97, and then to 67.91 percent in 1998–2007. What happened during this time to encourage the participation of women authors?

This increase should be viewed in the larger context of women in the field of indexing. Women made up 44 percent of the SI’s personal members in 1958 (Membership, 1958: 26–8). At that time, none of the Society’s officers were women (Society information 1958: 21). By 1988, however, women constituted 66 percent of SI’s membership, and 78 percent of its officers (Firman, 1988). Another indication of the growing visibility of women in the field of indexing may be found in the profiles of selected indexers in *From flock beds to professionalism: a history of index-makers* (Bell, 2008). Of the six indexers born between 1900 and 1919, three are men and three are women. Of the nine indexers born between 1920 and 1939, five are men and four are women. However, of the 14 indexers born between 1940 and 1954, four are men and ten are women.

Why were women drawn to the field of indexing in increasing numbers? In some cases, mothers with child care responsibilities were attracted to indexing because it allowed them to work at home (Bell, 2009; Shuttleworth, 2009). In a symposium article entitled ‘Why I am an indexer’, Hazel K. Bell wrote that she chose this career after searching for ‘skilled, commissioned work to be done at home in those hours when son (a) was at nursery school and son (b) asleep’ (Bancroft et al, 1969: 169). In the same symposium article, an author identified as ‘Bedfordian’ said that indexing at home suited her circumstances as a mother because it allowed her to be ‘available in family crises’ (Bancroft et al, 1969: 167). In another symposium article entitled ‘How I became an indexer’, Oula Jones recalled that she took up indexing when she was a ‘housebound mother of two’ (Vickers et al, 1988: 120).

Indexing was publicized through a variety of channels to women seeking freelance careers. In the 1960s, several organizations offered various types of jobs, including indexing, to mothers who wanted to work at home (Bell, 2009). One such organization was the Agency for the Employment of Mothers Ltd. Occasionally the mass media provided false impressions of the nature of indexing, and thus attracted the attention of women searching for work that could be

performed at home. For example, the BBC *Woman’s Hour* program on 25 January 1977 included an interview with Mrs Liz Till, who was not a member of the SI. Mrs Till claimed that indexing is ‘a job you can do largely sitting with your feet up at the end of a hard day’s work’ (BBC, 1978: 110). In another case, the *Daily Mail* published an article which Cecil Robertson summarized as ‘any ninny with a pencil could be making a fortune’ by indexing (Robertson, 1983: 196). The article was accompanied by ‘ever such a humorous drawing of a young mother working at a table with a baby atop each of several piles of page-proofs’.

The increase in contributions by women to the field of indexing and to *The Indexer* should be viewed in the context of the social history of the 20th century, particularly in regard to the considerable advances made by women in education and in the professions. Gillian Pascall (2003: 738) wrote, ‘The enormous gains in women’s educational achievement are the strongest support for their increasing equality in public and private life.’ She continued, ‘The women’s movement has been a crucial element in the politics of social welfare, in which the desirability of more equal gender relations is a taken for granted assumption.’

The enhancement of educational and professional opportunities for women in the 1960s and 1970s eventually led to their advancement in the professions, including the profession of indexing. Social conditions have changed remarkably from 1958 to 2007, and those changes have been reflected in the world of indexing and in *The Indexer*. The days of ‘overwhelming maleness’ are in the past.

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Software Solutions

Sylvia Coates

Sylvia Coates reports on the Software Solutions session she led at the Toronto 2009 Editors' Association of Canada (EAC) Conference. The editors were introduced to the CINDEX™, MACREX, and SKY Index dedicated indexing software programs. Then, using five different crisis scenarios, the editors were shown how easily indexing software can find a fast and relatively painless solution to what looks like a production disaster.

In October 2004 the UC Berkeley Extension Indexing Theory and Application online course opened for registration. This course was the first one to include indexing software as an integral part of the assignments and curriculum as part of the student learning experience. Though there are many indexing software programs available, I wanted to introduce students to three of the best-known and most functional indexing programs currently available for back-of-the-book (BoB) indexing. These are, of course, the CINDEX™, MACREX, and SKY Index software programs. Each of these programmers graciously agreed to donate a student CD version of their program designed for students to complete their Berkeley course assignments. Due to the generosity of these programmers the students have an opportunity to try out this most valuable of all tools for indexers.

Although I work primarily with only one of these indexing programs, by working with students taking the Berkeley course, I have become familiar with all three of them. That opportunity has allowed me to discover the commonalities, differences, and the almost magical 'solutions' offered by all three programs. Last June, at the Editors' Association of Canada 2009 Conference, I had the opportunity to share these findings through the Software Solutions presentation. That presentation introduced CINDEX, MACREX, and SKY Index via a discussion of five production 'crisis' scenarios and the solutions provided by indexing software.

Readers will notice that the focus of this article is on traditional BoB indexing. My EAC conference audience was interested in traditional production schedule crises and solutions, so that became the focus of my presentation. These indexing software programs also, of course, have much to contribute to the niches of embedded, automatic, web, and eBook indexing, as well as serving as a Word indexing tool.

Certainly these are all indexing growth areas, and I expect that all three programs will continue to expand in order to meet the future needs of indexers.

Prior to discussing the five crisis scenarios the editors were given a brief introduction to each of the indexing software programs. Introducing the programs in alphabetic order I begin here, as in my presentation, with CINDEX.

CINDEX

CINDEX was originally introduced as a DOS program in 1986. Since then the program has been rewritten and released in versions for both PC and Mac computers, the most recent updates being CINDEX 2.0.5 for Windows® and CINDEX 2.0.3 for Mac®.

Entries are cleverly entered in CINDEX as records representing 3 x 5 inch index cards, emulating the original shoe box method of indexing. The entries are automatically sorted and formatted and displayed in the document window, allowing the indexer to see the index as it is being created. Dialog boxes and content menus allow the indexer to configure the index format as needed.

Some of the built-in features of CINDEX are automatic sorts, either word-by-word or letter-by-letter, auto complete, hot keys for editing, duplicating, copying, grouping, both ASCII and Windows diacritics, the ability to create up to ten macros for special editing, and search and replace (including Boolean operators). There are also statistics kept by the program allowing the indexer to track time spent on a project, how many entries per page, and so on. There is also a handy built-in English spelling spell-check, and specialized legal and medical terminology spelling dictionaries can also be purchased. The Abbreviations feature (like the SKY Index Acronyms or MACREX Keywords) can be set

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