

# **A Study on Indexes and Abstracts as Valuable References Sources for Researchers**

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## **Abstract**

Knowledge of reference sources is essential for researchers, scholars and librarians. An index is a detailed list of names, terms, subjects, places or other significant items in a complete work with the exact page number or other reference sources in that work. An abstract is abbreviated, accurate information of a work, usually without interpretation or criticism, accompanied by bibliographic references to the original work. They are valuable sources for among different types of reference sources. This study aims to provide the best knowledge of reference sources and to identify its usefulness in doing research work. The required data are collected through various documentary sources. This study is useful for those in various fields who search for the required information in their studies.

**Key words:** abstract, index, reference sources, documentary sources

## **Introduction**

There is no more familiar reference form than the index. It is used daily by all librarians and numerous laymen; it is truly the heart of any information retrieval system. The index, whether it is a separate guide to periodical articles or part of a book, is used to locate specific pieces or bits of information in a larger unit. The majority of indexes are easy enough to understand, and the beginner's primary challenge is to isolate and identify those most commonly used in the reference process.

An abstract is the terse presentation in the author's own language, of all the points made, in the same order as in the original piece of primary documentary information- and that can be a book, a research report, a periodical article, a speech, the proceedings of a conference, an interview, etc.

An index locates materials an abstract goes a step further by not only locating, but briefly describing the essential points of a primary source in a given field. Usually the abstract is short, indicates primary points, methodology, arguments, essential results, and conclusions.

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## **Meaning and Definition of Index**

An index is a systematic guide to the text of any reading matter or the contents of other collected documentary material, comprising a series of entries, with headings arranged in alphabetical or other chosen order, and with reference to show where each item indexed is located.

According to George S. Bonn, an index is a detailed alphabetical list of the names, terms, topics places, formulate, numbers or other significant items in a complete work (such as a book, set, or bound journal) with exact page references to material discussed in that work.

## **Types of Index**

Index can broadly be classified into the following.

- (i) Book Indexes
- (ii) Indexes to Collection
- (iii) Newspaper Indexes
- (iv) Periodical Indexes

### **Book Indexes**

The indexes to the book represent an example of a book index.

### **Indexes to Collection**

Collections of works require an index. These indexes provide collection of poems, fictions, plays, songs, essays, stories, biographies, etc.

### **Newspaper Index**

These are particularly important for historical research. The request may be incidents, events, facts, from day to day of local, national and international importance. Current newspapers are helpful in presenting day to day information on various aspects and back issues for use in tracing the contemporary situation and trends in development,. Hence, it is practiced that some libraries keep the bound files of certain newspapers and some library maintains files of paper cutting of significant new events. However, it is difficult to maintain due to shelving and preserving problem.

Newspaper indexes are generally of two types:

- (i) Indexing many newspaper  
e.g. Indian new index
- (ii) Indexing a single newspaper  
e.g. Index to the times of India

### **Periodical Indexes**

These are regular issues which compile articles of periodicals. They are the most important bibliographical tools for controlling periodical literature.

Periodical indexes are of three types:

- (a) General indexes
- (b) Subject indexes
- (c) Index to single periodicals

### **General Indexes**

They cover many periodicals in a wide field of knowledge.

- e.g. The Readers' guide to periodical literature.
- Applied science and technology index.

### **Subject Index**

The cover not only several periodicals, but also other materials found in new books, pamphlets, reports, or government documents. The subject is restricted to a narrow field.

- e.g. Library Literature: an index to library and information science
- Index medicus

### **Index to Single Periodicals**

It can be seen either at the end of a volume or as separately published works.

- e.g. The Geographic Magazine Commulative index

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## **Principles of Index**

The principles of indexing are as follows:

- (i) Alphabetical indexing

- (ii) Classified indexing
- (iii) Co-ordinate indexing (Pre and Post Co-ordinate)
- (iv) Facet analysis and chain indexing
- (v) Citation indexing

### **Alphabetical Indexing**

An alphabetical index is a list of words or terms, arranged dictionary wise or alphabetically, indicating the subject content of a document. According to Metcalf "all indexing depends directly or indirectly on alphabetical order, because whatever number, notations, symbols or coding it goes on to, it must begin with names written with letters called the alphabet. Alphabetical order is the world's most important precision tool because; it is the most important device in indexing."

### **Classified Indexing**

In a classified index instead of using words as symbols and alphabetization as the ordering rule, it uses figure or letter symbols, arranged in the order of the symbols or notation, which is a logical sequence of bringing related subjects together. Thus, Classified index is one in which all entries are filed in notational order of the classification scheme used in the index. It groups the topics from the most generic to the most specific in an hierarchy. Space for growth and expansion of topics is also allowed.

According to John R. Sharp, classified index avoids the need for cross-references and escapes the danger of synonyms and homonyms. Classification deals with concepts and not titles and therefore the same subject is indexed in the same place. A classified index can be international.

Example:       Aluminium  
                  E 131-CC  
                  546.673-DDC

### **Chain Indexing**

Chain indexing is a systematic method of deriving subject headings for specific subject. A Chain is deemed to be a structure of manifestation of subject. A chain is also a mutilated sequence of subclass or isolated area. Hence, a chain is always derived from class no. of classification scheme.

Chain indexing or chain procedure is a mechanical method to direct subject heading or subject index entry from the class number of a document. This method is intended to offer general as well as specific information to all information sequence by deriving subject headings from the chain of successive divisions.

According to J. Philip Immroth, "A chain index is a direct and specific index based on the extracted vocabulary of a classification system retaining all necessary contexts but deleting all unnecessary contexts, with sub-headings being superordinate terms."

Dr. S.R. Ranganathan opines that 'the technique or procedure of chain indexing links the indexing process closely with the chain of progression from general to specific in the classification scheme in use. the indexer begins with the most specific step in the notational chain and works his way back to more general terms, indexing each step in context.

-Nationalism of Banks in India

-**Specific subject:** Nationalization of Banks in India

-**Expressive name of subject:** Nationalization of Bank in India in 'Economics'.

-**Analyzed name of subject:** Nationalization, Banks, India, Economics.

- **Transformed title:** Economics, Banks, Public Enterprise, India.

-**Determination of kind of link**

-Economics

-Public Enterprise, Economics

-Banks, Public Enterprise, Economics

-Asia, Public Enterprise, Banks, Economics

- India, Banks, Public Enterprise, Economics

### **Citation Indexing**

Citation indexing has been a new development in the area of indexes using the titles of documents, as a source of information retrieval, available through the citations provided. The citations are actually the footnotes given at the end of the page providing reference for further reading. These footnotes were used to prepare an index which would enable the user to get information on a particular topic, without the original subject indexes.

Eugene Garfield utilized the concept in preparing a new technique for information dissemination. Citation indexing had the capability to overcome the flaws seen in the traditional indexing systems, which were as follows.

(i) It is free from intellectual involvement.

(ii) It does not face the problem of providing subject headings.

- (iii) It is able to bring forward, all the related documents, on a subject.
- (iv) As the system is based on bibliographical references, it is not subject to technological obsolescence.
- (v) It is computer manipulative, being fast and easy to operate proves to be more useful.

Thus, citation index is an ordered list of cited articles, along with a list of citing articles. The cited article is identified as the reference and the citing articles as the source. The index is prepared utilizing the citing articles as the source. The index is prepared utilizing the association of ideas existing between the cited and the citing articles, as the fact is that whenever a recent paper cites a previous paper there always exist a relation of ideas, between the two papers.

## **Evaluation of Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature Index**

### **(i) History and Authority**

It is most prolific publication of periodical index. This is being published by H.W. Wilson Company, New York in 1900.

This is published semi-monthly from September to October, December and March to April. It is also published monthly in January, February, May, June, July August and November with a bound commutation, each year since 1900. It is brought out the volume annually march to February. The latest volume for the study is being edited by Mr. Jean M. Marra with the help of assistant editors.

### **(ii) Scope and Coverage**

It is cumulated by author, subject index to periodicals of general interest in the United States. The text produced about 200 periodicals of general interest published from United States.

### **(iii) Subject Arrangement**

The arrangement of information according to author and subjects are arranged in one alphabetical order. The subject arrangements are arranged alphabetically in their subject name only. Geographical heading follows the other sub-division in a separate alphabetical index.

**(iv) Entry Structure**

It gives full bibliographical information which is provided under author and subject but not under title. The following information is given in subject entry.

1. Series No.
2. Name of the subject, name of the article or title.
3. Author of the article.
4. Name of the periodicals where it is published.
5. Statement of illustration.
6. Volume Number, Page No., Month and Year of Publication.

**(iv) Cross Reference**

It provides both "see" and "see also" references that are used exclusively through the text. "see" references are made from variant form of subject heading and personal names where as "see also" references are made for a subject to related subjects which additional material or information may be found.

**(v) Format**

It is a single volume text, with the well-bound. A good quality of paper is used for typing. The entries are provided in 2columns. The typographies are bold and clear.

**(vi) Special Features**

- (i) It is published semi-monthly i.e. September – July & monthly from July – August.
- (ii) A list of abbreviations of periodicals are to be indexed only with key.
- (iii) A list of periodical index is given in the beginning of the text.
- (iv) Suggestion for the use of text is given at beginning.
- (v) This is the excellent index to periodical publication and it is authorities indexing services in each types which aims to index U.S. periodicals of a broad, gender, non-technical and popular nature, providing a service which covers all important scientific as well as other subject fields.

## **Meaning and Definition of Abstract**

An abstract is a concise representation of the contents of a document, in a style similar to that of the original. Abstract should be clear, concise, accurate, non – critical and comprehensible, independent of the document.

The international Conference on Science Abstracting, held in Paris in June 1949, accepted the following definition of abstract:

An abstract is a summary of a publication or an article accompanied by an adequate bibliographical description to enable the publication or article to be traced. So, in general, an abstract is a precise of information and according to the connotation in information science, it denotes the information contained in an article of a periodical or a short pamphlet or any serial publication with bibliographic citation.

## **Types of Abstract**

There are basically two types of abstract.

- (i) Indicative abstract
- (ii) Information abstract

### **(i) Indicative abstract**

They briefly tell what the document is dealing. They are also called as descriptive abstract. They summarize the contents in brief indicating the scope and content of the document. It is a short abstract written so that a reader is able to decide for himself whether or not to read the original document. However, it is very useful for providing current awareness services.

e.g. Nature, vol.273, no.5658, 11 May, 1978.

### **(ii) Informative abstract**

These provide quantitative and qualitative information in the parent document. They are lengthy and present data so that the reader need not refer to the original document. They provide a synopsis of the significant contents or research of a subject. They act as a selected tool.

e.g.    Chemical Abstract  
           Biological Abstract  
           Sociological Abstract

## **Functions of an Abstract**

An abstract performs the following functions.

- (i) It helps in keeping one up-to-date with new knowledge.
- (ii) It indicates, whether the article is of value to him or not. Thus he need not search unnecessarily and waste his time.
- (iii) It serves as a rapid survey of retrospective literature.
- (iv) It helps the user to overcome the language barrier to some extent because the abstract of an article in a language not known to him can be made available in a language he knows.
- (v) It helps in improving indexing.
- (vi) Classified abstract bring together material on the same subject, which may otherwise be found scattered in a journal and elsewhere.
- (vii) An informative abstract, sometimes can serve as a substitute the original document.
- (viii) It assists in writing reviews.
- (ix) It enables one to make a retrospective search for literature in a field.

## **Importance of Abstract**

- (i) They provide more accurate information about literature than any other tools like catalogue, bibliography and indexes.
- (ii) They are useful for the preparation articles.
- (iii) It promotes Current Awareness service.
- (iv) They help to select the research problems.
- (v) They help the researchers to keep track with the ever increasing.
- (vi) It helps in keeping one up-to-date with new knowledge.
- (vii) It indicates, whether the article is of value to him or not. Thus he need not search unnecessarily and waste his time.
- (viii) Classified abstract bring together material on the same subject, which may otherwise be found scattered in a journal and elsewhere.
- (ix) An informative abstract, sometimes can serve as a substitute to the original document.

## **Evaluation of Library and Information Science Abstract**

**(i) History and Authority**

It is formerly known as Library Science Abstract. It is published by Library Associations in London since 1950 as a bi-monthly issue. It is a British based abstracting periodical and it is continued as Library and Information Science Abstract in 1980 onwards. It is edited by Nicholas L. More.

**(ii) Scope**

The subject coverage in these abstract is library and information science and its related areas likely to be interest to librarian and information scientists, including online information retrieval; new information technologies, publishing, book selling, reprography, etc. Its abstracting periodicals are collected for different sources like periodicals, conference paper, thesis and dissertation, research monograph, report. The number of abstract published is more than 600 per annual.

**(iii)Arrangement**

The arrangement of information is based on the scheme of classification used by faceted classification scheme according to CRG (Classification no. Research Group). The scheme is divided into two sections in the arrangement of information. The first section employs or covers on alphabetical notation, by A to Z whereas the second covers the notation 1 – 9 for the arrangement of subjects.

**(iv)Treatment**

It is a good abstracting service for Library and Information Science fields. It is based on European Journals.

**(v) Entry Structure**

In the entry, it gives full bibliographical information including the title of the original language, illustrations, tables and references; Class no. is also given.

**(vi) Index**

Each issue contains a name index and subject index printed on block edged paper at the end. These indexes are cumulated to form an annual index issue.

**(vii) Format**

It is a bi-monthly issue or a publication at the beginning but later 1980 onwards it is published as a monthly issue. The information is given on two volumes. The headings and subject headings are given in bold faces. It is available in print as well as in CD-ROM format. Library and Information Science Abstract on CD-ROM combines a 20 year file of abstract, containing over 100,000 records.

**(viii) Special Features**

It is possible to use these periodicals for CAS, preparation of bibliography, comparative librarianship information.

## **Conclusion**

A reference book, which has many subject specialists on its editorial staff, provides much information on the different subject fields; however, since the aim of the reference book is to give wide and unrestricted coverage, specialized treatment of any one subject is necessarily limited.

An index points out where information can be found. There are indexes to articles which appear in periodicals and there are indexes to articles, essays, poems, and other writings which appear in collected works.

An abstract is a concise representation of the contents of a document in a style similar to that of the original. Abstract should be clear, concise, accurate, non-critical and comprehensible, independent of the document.

An index and abstract can be defined as a publication in which items of information about one particular subject-literature, history, music, sports, education-are brought together from many sources and arranged so that individual items can be found quickly and easily.

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5. ကျော်အောင်၊ ဦး နှင့် ဒေါ်ကြွန်း ။ ၁၉၈၅။ *မြန်မာ့ရည်ညွှန်းစာအုပ်စာတမ်းများ(ပထမတွဲ)*။ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်။
6. သော်ကောင်း၊ ဦး နှင့် ဦးမောင်မောင်ညွန့်. (ညွန့်ကြူး)။ ၁၉၈၅။ *မြန်မာ့ရည်ညွှန်းစာအုပ် စာတမ်းများ (ပထမတွဲ)*။ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်။