GUIDE TO MANAGING HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Involving People

Style guides for local history publishing

(Paper presented by Vicki Court at the History Victoria Support Group Seminar Day at Moe in March 2010)

Part of the role of historical societies to make the information held in collections available to the public. One way of doing this is to publish books and magazine articles.

Unfortunately not all authors write well.

In his book *How to do local history*, Gavin McLean describes his experience of reviewing a two volume history of a city –

> The books were heavy, the prose heavier. Had every hard-won historical nugget the author unearthed been shoehorned into these paper bricks? It seemed so. It was classic 'one damn thing after another' history, an impenetrable thicket of facts that had overgrown and strangled the life out of the story – and my interest.

McLean then describes later visiting, with a friend, the city about which the book was written –

> We went to the library for some information about the history of a local attraction. 'Is it in the twin tubby?' one librarian asked a colleague. 'Perhaps', came the vague reply – she never used them because she found them almost impenetrable.[i]

When writing, it is important to know your audience. A good writer researches the subject thoroughly and then sorts the information before selecting the facts to include. Choosing what to leave out of the final project can be a challenge. As well as informing the readers, the author also needs to capture and keep their interest. Facts are important but McLean stresses that readers 'want and deserve stories that are imaginatively written and attractively written'.[ii] There is no point in writing a book, no matter how well it has been researched, that no one is going to read.

A number of books on writing, including writing history, are available in libraries and bookshops. These books provide information on how to research, write clearly including the use of grammar, spelling and punctuation plus information on designing and producing the publication.

A recent Australian publication on this topic is *How to write history that people want to read* by Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath.

Another useful tool for authors is *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*. The sixth edition was published in 2002.

In 2006 the Federation of Australian Historical Societies Inc. published *Publishing history: a guide for historical societies* written by Helen Doyle and Katya Johanson.

Researching and collecting the information and presenting the facts in an interesting manner is the first step in producing a book or an article, but that is only part of the project. The style in which the information is presented is also important. As well as assisting with the layout of documents style guides provide information about using other important elements of the publication such as citations and bibliographies and, in some cases, indexes.

Style guides
The editors of most publishing houses and journals stipulate the style guidelines to be followed. For example the editors of the *Victorian Historical Journal* provide the following information concerning guidelines for their publication.

> Where not otherwise indicated, the *Journal* follows the style set down in the *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers*, 6th ed., Milton, John Wiley & Sons, 2002. Spelling and hyphenation should follow the *Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, 6th ed., Sydney, Macquarie Library, 2009.[iii]

If a style guide is not stipulated for your publication then select one of the recommended styles for writing and always be consistent when citing sources and preparing reference notes or bibliographies. Style guides used by Australian writers include –
- Commonwealth of Australia. *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* revised by Snooks & Co. 6th ed., Milton, John Wiley & Sons, 2002.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A manual for writers of term papers, theses and dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007

Both of these publications have been updated to include working with electronic publications.

Citations
Readers of non-fiction frequently check the footnotes or endnotes and the reference list or bibliography for other material that may be useful for further research on the topic. Quotes provided in books and articles are often partial quotes and the reader may wish to read the full item from which the quotation was taken. The author may also allude to further information on a topic available in a newspaper article or other source and the citation can direct the reader to that source.

To cite is to 'quote (a passage, book or author) in support of an argument etc'.[iv] Citations are used when quotations from other works are included in the writing and when reference is made to the ideas of another person.

Using citations shows that the writer acknowledges the use of material of others and has based the work on research. Citations can show how an idea became accepted. Using citations can also be useful when building an argument to demonstrate an alternative viewpoint.

However do not over use citations, especially in a work for a general audience.

Footnotes, endnotes or reference lists
As well as citing the work and ideas of others, the use of footnotes or endnotes allows the writer to provide additional short items of information that, if included, would hinder the train of thought in the main work but which may be relevant to the topic.

Unless a publisher stipulates a style guide the author needs to choose a style for footnotes, endnotes or reference lists and be consistent in using that style.

If there are many citations, endnotes or reference lists (citations grouped at the end of the article / chapter or publication) are usually used. If there are only a few citations, footnotes may be used. Having the footnotes on the same page allows the reader to check the footnotes as the article is read.

Word processing programs include the ability to insert footnotes or endnotes in a document. In Microsoft Word 2003 use the Insert menu to locate the Footnote box after placing the cursor at the end of the word where the indicator (usually a number) for the footnote or endnote is to be placed.

Note the following example:
> We went to the library for some information about the history of a local attraction. 'Is it in the twin tubby?' one librarian asked a colleague. 'Perhaps', came the vague reply – she never used them because she found them almost impenetrable.[v]
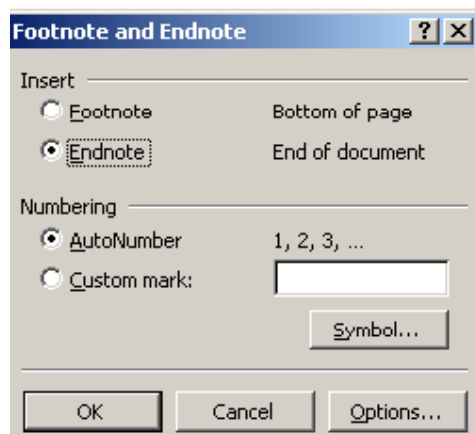
Place the cursor after impenetrable and then go to the Insert menu and select Footnote.

Select either Footnote or Endnote
The Options button allows the choice of style of numbering
Click the OK button.

In this case the next number for an endnote – number 5 – is added after the quotation and a number 5 is added to the list of endnotes for information relating to the citation to be added.

Chapter 12 of *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (2002) provides details for methods of citation for different forms of publications. Three systems are provided – the Author-Date system (AD), Documentary-Note system (DN) and the Vancouver system (V).

Examples for books:
- Curthoys, A & McGrath, A, 2009, *How to write history that people want to read*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney (AD)
- A Curthoys & A McGrath, *How to write history that people want to read*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2009 (DN)
- Curthoys A, McGrath A. How to write history that people want to read. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009 (V)

Examples for articles:
- J McCulloch, 'Why frontier Queensland beat urbane Victoria to Women's Suffrage', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 79, no. 2, 2008, pp 237-50 (AD)
- McCulloch, D 2008, 'Why frontier Queensland beat urbane Victoria to Women's Suffrage', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 79, no. 2, pp 237-50 (DN)
- McCulloch J. Why frontier Queensland beat urbane Victoria to Women's Suffrage. Victorian Historical Journal 2008; 79(2): 237-50 (V)*

Note: in the above examples initials were used instead of given names but full names can be used.
*Vancouver style does not use italics for titles of publications or quotation marks for titles of articles.

Basically the information used when items are cited include:
Author(s) name(s)
Title of article if applicable
Title of publication
Place of publication
Publisher**
Date (usually year)
Edition statement (if applicable)
Page numbers (if applicable)

**A publisher is 'a person or esp. a company that produces and distributes copies of a book, newspaper, etc. for sale'. A printer is 'a person who prints books, magazines, advertising matter, etc'. [vi] The name of the publisher will normally be located on the title page or the reverse of the title page or occasionally listed at the back of the book. Some books also list the printer but the printer is not the publisher. In some cases the author may be the publisher if the book is self-published.

Manuscripts
Provide the name of the author, title and date (where available) plus the name of the collection where the manuscript is held when citing a manuscript.
Example:
- Milbourne, Margaret, *The story of the life of Margaret Ellen Milbourne of Warracknabeal and Ballarat*, notes compiled from her diaries in 1982, Royal Historical Society of Victoria manuscript collection, Box 152-15, MS 000663
- McLean, D C, *The Colac-Alvie Railway*, 1974, Royal Historical Society of Victoria manuscript collection, Box 272-17, MS 001629

Websites and electronic documents
Generally information identifying the website or electronic document is provided as for a paper based item followed by the date that the source was viewed and the url for the source in diamond brackets.
Example:
- Royal Historical Society of Victoria, viewed 10 March 2010, <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au>
- *Guidelines for contributors of the Victorian Historical Journal*, viewed 10 March 2010 <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/pdf/Style.pdf>

Abbreviations used in citation lists

Abbreviations may be used to avoid repeating all the details again when a work is cited in a list more than once.

ibid signifies reference to a previous work cited immediately before the new entry
Example:

[1] McLean, Gavin. *How to do local history.* Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007 p58
[2] *ibid*, p57

op.cit. refers the reader to a previously cited work
[8] McLean, Gavin. *op.cit.,* p203

Be careful if using *ibid* in footnotes until the complete article has been written as the placement of footnotes can change if new text is inserted.

In-text citations

Citations can also be used within the text instead of using footnotes, especially when there are only a few citations in the document.

The name of the author, date and possibly page number can be provided in round brackets at the end of a sentence).
Example:
(McLean, 2006, p103)

When the name of the author is mentioned within the sentence, only the date and page numbers, if required need to be included in the round brackets.

Full details of the publication would need to be provided in a bibliography or list of further reading.

Bibliographies

A bibliography can be a list of books, articles and other material referred to by an author in a publication. A bibliography may also include other source material on the subject that may be of interest to a reader.

Bibliographies are alphabetical lists arranged by the name of the author and therefore the surname always comes first followed by the given name or initial(s). The style of the rest of the information in a bibliography follows the format of material in a reference list.

Bibliographies may also contain annotations, providing a brief summary of the content of an item or highlighting a section of the item that may be particularly relevant to the topic.

Bibliographies may be one long list of items or a bibliography may consist of several shorter lists divided by topic or types of publications. There may be a list of books on the topic followed by a list of articles.

When a bibliography provides a list of material not necessarily directly referred to in the book it may be entitled 'Further reading'.

Indexes

- Chapter 15 of *Style manual for author's writers and printers* provides useful information about indexing publications.

- *Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers* website <http://www.anzsi.org/site/> provides many articles and hints for indexing projects. ANZSI also run workshops on indexing.

- John Adams, for many years has run indexing workshops at the RHSV and his guide, *Indexing for historical societies*, can be purchased from the RHSV.

Indexes are an important component of books providing a valuable aid for researchers to locate information about the names of people, places, organisations and concepts or generic terms.

Before indexing a publication it is essential that the indexer reads the publication to be indexed, preferably twice, to gain an understanding of the text and to start formulating a list of the major terms for the index.

The main indexing element is called an entry.
Each entry has a main heading
Some entries may also have sub-headings providing additional levels for searching.
References need to be made to all significant information in the text.
Choose the best term (heading) to describe the information.
Attach any further terms that provide additional detail.
It is not necessary to index every item.

The page numbers for where the information can be found is then provided.

Indexes are arranged alphabetically.

Examples: (from the index of the book *Kapital* by Kristen Otto, 2009)
Tait family 66-8
Taylor, Squizzy 314-16

War
    outbreak 151-8
    enlisting 156-7

Creating the index
Word processing programs
Indexes can be created manually in word processing programs.
Create the list of terms and then add the page numbers, interfiling any additional terms as required.
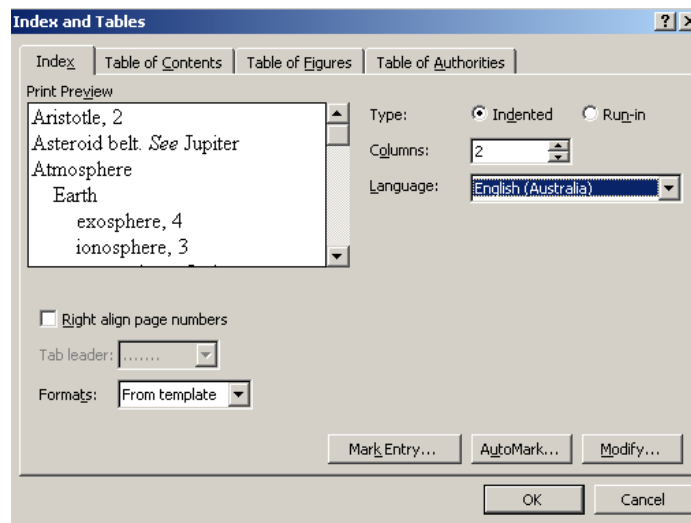
Many word processing programs also have a feature for creating an index.
In Word 2003
- Select the text to be indexed
- Go to the Insert menu
- Select Index and Tables

- Select the options required

It is possible to use a different term instead of the selected word.

Detailed information about doing this is supplied in Help. Search for Index in the Index list for details.

Databases
Databases can also be used for some indexing projects.
- Create a data structure with a field for terms and a field for pages.
- Create a report form for the presentation of the information.
- Use the write the report to file feature to produce the index list.

Indexing programs
There are a number of computer programs designed for indexing including:
CINDEX
MACREX
Sky Index

It is important to remember that the software does not index the document. The indexer still needs to select the terms required for the index.

When indexing, the indexer may choose a term to describe a concept although the author may not have specifically used that term.

It is important to remember that the reason for indexing the publication is to help the reader to quickly locate required information.

[i] McLean, Gavin. *How to do local* histor*y*. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007 p58
[ii] *ibid,* p57
[iii] *Guidelines for contributors of the Victorian Historical Journal*
<http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/pdf/Style.pdf>
[iv] *Concise Oxford dictionary of current English usage*. 8th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990
[v] McLean, Gavin. *op.cit.* p58
[vi] *Concise Oxford dictionary of current English usage*. 8th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990