



Indexing Course

Aim

The aim of this course is to get you in the position of being able to index your own Word document and to be able to index some PDF documents.

Why indexing is important

In these days of internet search engines and electronic documents some people may consider an index is superfluous. I do not agree. To me, an index is one of the key elements making a document professional and accessible. The once onerous task of indexing is now much easier and should be done for any family history document of more than a few pages.

One hundred years ago compiling an index was very laborious. The manual process involved writing the index entries on index cards and sorting them by hand. The sorted index would then be typed and added to the end of the document.

Computers started to bring changes to indexing in the 1950s and 1960s. You can see evidence of this in one of my favourite resources O'Kief, Coshe Mang, Slieve Lougher, and Upper Blackwater in Ireland, by Albert Eugene Casey and Thomas Eugene P. Dowling with the assistance of Nell Neighbors Branson [and others]. The earlier volumes have computer assisted indexes at the family name level and the later volumes have full name indexing. The index is what makes this great compilation really useful. With fifteen volumes some with over 8000 pages the index makes finding the needle in the haystack feasible.

Moving on another half-century to today modern word-processors all include tools that allow you to compile indexes relatively simply. Simply highlight what you want to index and tell the program how you want it indexed, and the index entry is created. The index itself can be output in the document and updated automatically.

Genealogy indexing

One of the impediments to indexing persons is we want the index to be ordered by their family names. While Word allows you to modify the index entries in your document to achieve the correct order, the process is somewhat involved and slow. The course will help you index efficiently quickly while getting families right.

What to bring

The course is interactive so you will need to have a computer on the day. Let us know if you are bringing a desk-top so we can provide power.

Preparation for the course

We suggest that you visit https://nickreddan.net/tools/index_tools.html and download the index tools zip file https://nickreddan.net/tools/Index_tools.zip