



Indexing Best Practices

1. **Collocation:** The index gathers similar information in one place; synonymous or near-synonymous terms use cross-references to point users to the single array where the information is gathered, rather than splitting the information in multiple arrays.
2. **Differentiation:** The index clearly separates information on different topics.
3. **Exhaustivity:** The index covers the entire range of significant concepts (both major and minor) discussed in the text, without including items that are merely passing mentions.
4. **Completeness:** The index provides, either directly or through relevant cross-references, access to all discussions of each significant topic.
5. **Information Scent:** The index uses terms for headings that strongly indicate to the user the content contained in that array.
6. **Multiple Access Paths:** Using appropriate double-postings and cross-references, the index offers readers multiple access paths to information.
7. **Appropriate Structure:** The structure of the index appropriately mirrors that of the text.
8. **Literary and User Warrant:** The terminology of the main headings in the index reflects the author's usage. Additional entry terms ("see" references) lead users from common terms to the language used by the author.
9. **Consistency:** Whenever possible, the index displays consistency at all levels, from technical aspects of formatting to levels of indexing exhaustivity and phrasing.
10. **Audience-Relevance:** The index is appropriate for its intended audience, in both format and terminology.
11. **Author-Relevance:** The index accurately reflects the author's point of view without adding any bias or editorializing by the indexer.
12. **Metatopic:** The index provides readers with appropriate means of moving from the metatopics of the text to applicable secondary topics.
13. **Locator Differentiation:** The index eschews long strings of undifferentiated locators; rather it uses appropriate sub-headings to provide specific context to the reader.



14. **Accuracy:** The index has been proofread and mirrors the spelling and style (e.g., capitalization or italicization) of the text where choice of spelling or style is possible; locators are accurate and tally with the text; and locators for double-postings are mirrored exactly.
15. **Style:** The index adheres to standard style guidelines (such as *Chicago Manual of Style*) regarding consistency of index format, capitalization and alphabetization of entries, punctuation, and locator format.
16. **Cross-references:** Validity of cross-references has been checked to eliminate blind or circular cross-references. The use of generic cross-references makes sense and has been used appropriately. Cross-references do not lead users to an entry with a single locator (in such instances double-posting should be used instead of cross-referencing).
17. **Acronyms and Abbreviations:** Acronyms and abbreviations that are used within the sublevels of entries are explained within the index by use of cross-references from the abbreviated or acronym form to the fully spelled out form, or by double posting of the acronym or abbreviated form with the spelled out form as a parenthetical qualifier.
18. **Names:** Where a last name is used in the text and the author provides the first name or initials in the notes or the references at the end of the chapter or the book, the indexer has looked up the first name and initials and added them to the index entry.
19. **Titles of Works:** For book or article titles (and titles of works of art), the author's (creator's) last name is added as a parenthetical to the entry.
20. **Headnotes:** A headnote explains any special treatment of tables, figures, notes, boxes, illustrations, etc.