



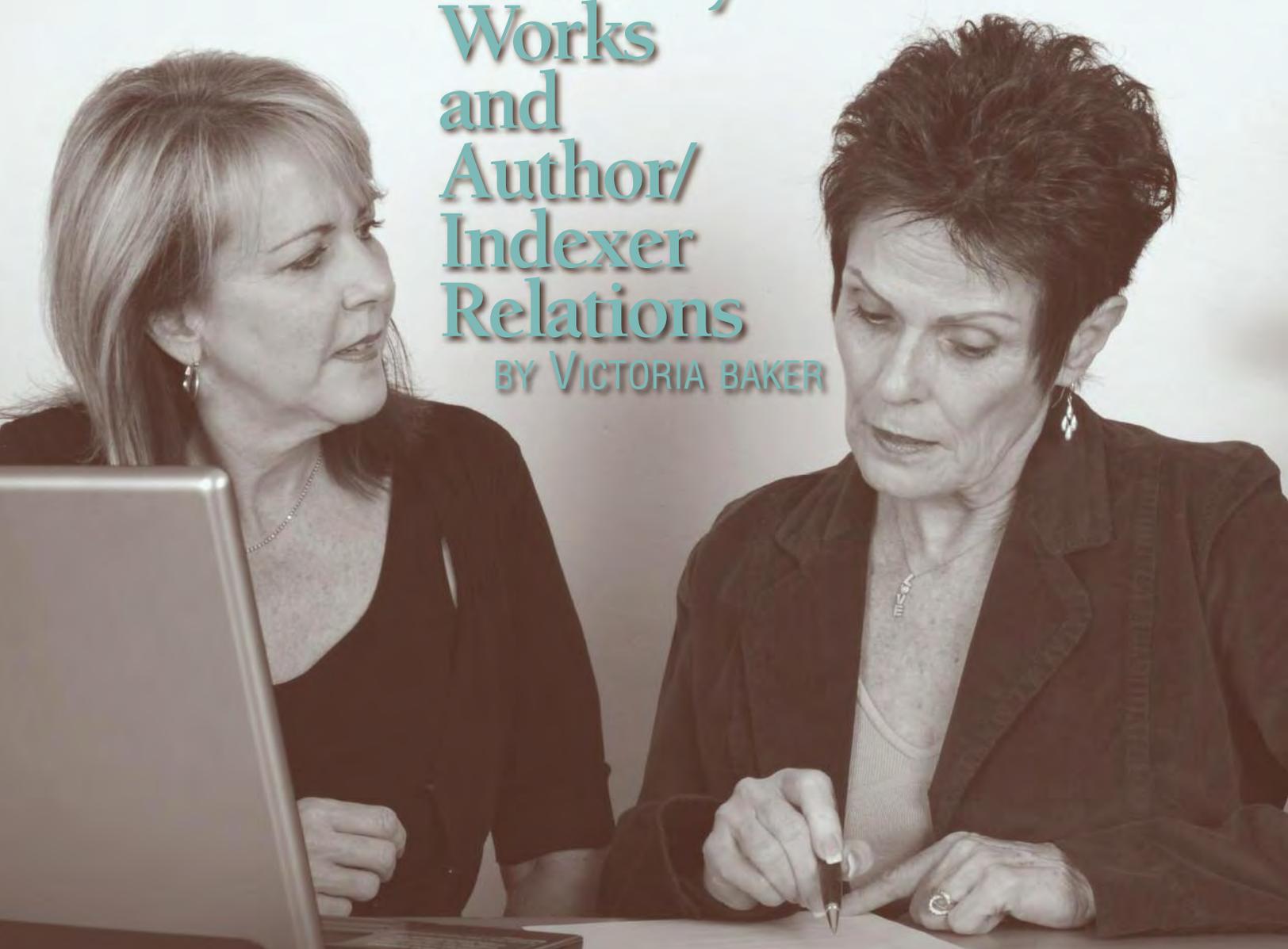
KeyWords

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Authors as Collaborators: Scholarly Works and Author/ Indexer Relations

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Demystifying IndexDeconstructor

BY LUCIE HASKINS

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INTRODUCTION

In this article I intend to demystify the IndexDeconstructor¹ utility and explain the step-by-step process I use to deconstruct existing indexes. While tedious and nit-picky in spots, it's not difficult to understand.

In my repagination projects, this part of the process takes about 50% of the total project time, but it provides a very stable foundation for the remaining portion of my work effort — which goes quickly.

I really enjoy repagination projects and I actually enjoy deconstructing indexes. I think there might be others of my ilk out there and this article is for them. I've provided as many details as possible (and identified many issues that might arise) to provide you with a solid understanding of how to successfully complete an index deconstruction.

Note: Please read my associated article *Repagination Projects: Knowing When to Walk Away and Knowing When to Run*, in this issue, which discusses the entire pagination process in detail.

For the rest of you, if this article just strengthens your resolve to stay away from anything remotely resembling deconstructing indexes then it's served its purpose also — because it has educated you on what you don't want to work on and that's just as important as knowing what you *do* want to work on!

What it is

IndexDeconstructor is an exceptionally useful utility created by **Jack Lyon** to convert back-of-the-book indexes into tab-delimited files that can be imported into a standalone indexing program such as SKY Index™, CINDEXTM, or MACREXTM. It functions as a macro add-in to MS Word. (Pricing, installation, and usage information is found at the website identified in note 1.)



Figure1. IndexDeconstructor dropdown menu

Why it's so helpful

Consider this example of two index entries (with subentries) in a typical indented index (where the main entry appears on one line and each subentry on a separate line of its own):

```

Addition
  of complex numbers, 176
  of functions, 149
  of matrices, 502
  of polynomials, 640
  of radicals, 669
  of rational expressions, 654
Division
  of complex numbers, 179
  of functions, 149
  of polynomials, 232
  of rational expressions, 653
  synthetic, 235
  
```

We humans, because of our ability to recognize subtle formatting differences, can easily distinguish the main entries from the subentries and the associations between them. We can also quickly pick out the page locators.

But the relationships between these pieces of information are all *implied* links. There is *no real connection* between these lines. Once they are manipulated into this format — where each portion of the

index record resides on a separate line — all connections between records are broken and, unfortunately, computer applications cannot work with these lines (and maintain the relationship in the process).

That is the crux of the problem.

In fact, if you tried to import these index entries *as-is* into Cindex using a DAT file of the index entries, this is what you would get:

```

A
Addition

D
Division

O
of complex numbers, 176
of complex numbers, 179
of functions, 149
of functions, 149
of matrices, 502
of polynomials, 232
of polynomials, 640
of radicals, 669
of rational expressions, 653
of rational expressions, 654

S
synthetic, 235
    
```

All the subentries are now main entries. The relationships between the subentries and main entries have completely disappeared. In addition, the page locator information is just part of the subentry text and cannot be manipulated separately.

Now there is an interesting caveat to all this. In Cindex (and perhaps the other indexing packages), if you view the imported entries in unformatted, unsorted, record number order, the records appear in the order they were imported, with the main entry imported first and the subentries for that main entry immediately afterwards, one after the other. So, even though the relationship is broken on the higher level, the records have been imported together, but the indexing software doesn't see that relationship.

This might be something to work with for people more knowledgeable in macros than I am, but that's not something I'm savvy enough to figure out how to use on my own, so I rely on IndexDeconstructor to do the job for me because **IndexDeconstructor retains the relationship between main entry and subentry during the conversion (deconstruction) process.**

An alternative

If deconstructing indexes isn't your cup of tea, Indexing Research² and Leverage Technologies³ provide index conversion (deconstruction) services for very reasonable fees and I would recommend them to bypass the deconstruction portion of this process.

Note: There might be other companies providing these services, these are just two that I am familiar with.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

There are several steps in deconstructing an index:

1. Preparing PDF or MS Word files.
2. Running IndexDeconstructor (deconstruction process).
3. Importing the deconstructed file into your indexing program.
4. Validating the imported records.
5. Saving the validated records.

PREPARING PDF OR MS WORD FILES

If you're going to use IndexDeconstructor, you'll first need either a PDF or a MS Word version of the index you want to deconstruct.

IndexDeconstructor does not work with PDF files. So if you only have a PDF version of the index you want to deconstruct, you will first need to take some additional steps to produce the RTF format file that IndexDeconstructor expects as input to its process.

PDF methods

Here are several ideas on how to convert your PDF file to RTF format.

SAVE PDF FILE INTO TXT FORMAT

Acrobat Reader allows you save the PDF file in TXT format.

This creates a perfectly usable "starting" version of the index to work with. However, extraneous lines (that will need to be manually deleted) are incorporated into the output file — blank lines, document page numbers, document title, etc. A small sampling of the output from this method displays below:

```

index_pgsl5-12 11/22/05 12:36 PM Page 1-5

Index

A

Abel, Niels Henrik, 251
Absolute maximum point, 220
Absolute minimum point, 220
Absolute value, 96

definition of, 96
properties of, 128
    
```

In TXT files all formatting (such as italics, bolding) has been stripped out and diacritics and special symbols (such as the multiplication sign or pi sign) do not convert.

SAVE PDF FILE INTO RTF OR DOC FORMAT

The professional version of Adobe allows you to save the PDF file as an RTF file. The output file produced doesn't save the lines as easily manipulated, individual lines. Instead the column structure remains intact (a 3-column layout is output as a 3-column layout), line breaks are often lost and subentries often become run-in with no separation between entries, and index records seem to be clumped together as groups, preventing work on individual records. (See Figure 2.) In addition, extra markings such as page margins, figures, etc. are also included. I don't find this output usable at all.

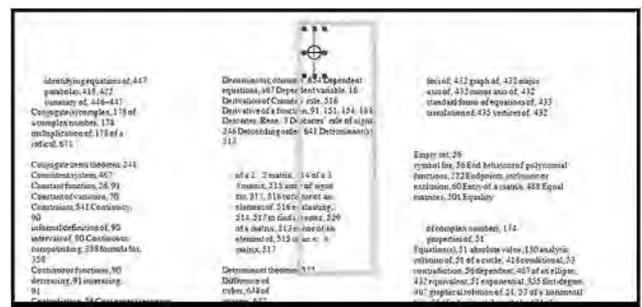


Figure 2. Output of .PDF file saved as .RTF file

COPY FROM PDF FILE TO RTF FILE ONE COLUMN AT A TIME

Even though the TXT file option seems attractive, I use a third method, which is to copy-and-paste one column at a time into a new RTF document. (Both Adobe Reader and the professional version of Adobe allow you to copy selected text.)

I've found that copying and pasting, while a tad tedious, isn't really time-consuming after you get the pattern of steps identified. For example, a 3-column index occupying 12 pages, with approximately 2,000 lines, took me 5 minutes to copy-and-paste from PDF format into an RTF document.

In the PDF document, simply select as many lines as you can comfortably see in one column, invoke the copy command, and then paste the lines into the correct location in the RTF document.

Preparing newly created Word document

Once you've created the Word document by using one of the PDF methods mentioned above, you need to prepare the index records before you can invoke the IndexDeconstructor utility. Again, while tedious, it's not difficult work. (Recently, it took me about 1 hour to complete this step for a 2000-line index.)

The following tasks need to be completed in order to massage this new Word file into a format that provides IndexDeconstructor with the opportunity possible for correctly deconstructing each line item:

1. Tidy up index: remove alpha headers; remove blank lines; pull up turnover lines
2. Correct formatting for cross-reference lines.
3. Apply styles to each line item (Index 1, Index 2, etc.)

TIDY UP INDEX

Go through the index line-by-line and delete blank or extraneous lines (footers, document page numbers, document titles, etc.).

If you encounter lines that begin with numbers, these are turnover lines in the index and need to be pulled up into the previous line to convert correctly with its associated subentry/main entry.

Turnover lines where the *text* itself has run over to a separate line are much more difficult to spot and you may not catch all of them. You might glance through the PDF file to see if they jump out at you. If so, then pull up the turnover line into the preceding line.

Note: If you don't catch these turnover lines during this step, you'll notice them as nonsensical main entries in the Cindex file and can correct them there.

CORRECT FORMATTING FOR CROSS-REFERENCE LINES.

IndexDeconstructor expects cross-references to follow a very specific pattern. (Verify that the formatting is exactly as expected.)

APPLY STYLES TO EACH LINE ITEM

In order to deconstruct the index correctly, IndexDeconstructor uses styles (Index 1, Index 2, etc.) for each record (line). That's how it identifies the relationships between records.

Unfortunately, PDF files do not contain that information, so the files copied from PDF are style-less and the styles need to be applied to all the lines.

In addition, after the copy process, each line in the Word file is flush left, with no automated way to identify what is a main entry and what is a subentry. All that has to change and this step does that.

Note: This is the most time-consuming part of the entire process except for the actual indexing. But it's relatively simple and easy to catch on to.

Here's my current routine for applying styles to each line item:

1. Open the PDF version of the index in my second monitor (for review as necessary), and the Word version of the index in my main monitor.

All the remaining steps are for the Word version of the index.

2. Select all the line items and change the text to a different color (like red). This way, as I manipulate the line items, I can easily

track what I've completed and what I haven't since, as I change the style (assuming the default of automatic [black] is in effect for that style), the modified record will change to black.

3. Open the Styles pane on one side of the screen. Make sure that Index 1 and Index 2 styles display (if not, then fiddle with the Styles pane until they do.)

Hint: Check to see if the Styles pane (under **Select styles to show**) has **All Styles selected**. See Figure 3.

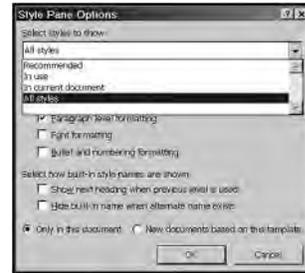


Figure 3. Style Panes Options dialog box

4. Select the desired record groups and apply styles.

- First select (highlight) subentries for that section (as many as you can comfortably see without manipulating the display). Look in the PDF file if you're having problems distinguishing between the subentries and the main entries.

Hint: Use a combination of CTRL + left mouse to select multiple non-contiguous groups.

Hint: I find it beneficial to first modify the subentry lines in a section because, when they change to Index 2, they indent (as part of the Index 2 style) and the unmodified main entry records just visually pop right out.

- Once the subentries are highlighted, find Index 2 in the Styles pane (Figure 4) and click on it to select that style for the highlighted records.

You should see all the highlighted records change color and indent to the right. (See Figure 5.)

- Repeat these steps for the Index 1 style (main entries) in the same section.

You should see the highlights disappear, the formatting change, and the color change to distinguish the entries you've manipulated from the ones still left unmodified.

Note: to remove unneeded styles (once you've applied at least one grouping of Index 1 and Index 2 each), in MS Word 2007 select the Options option at the bottom right of the Styles pane, under **Select styles to show**, select the In Use option (see Figure 3) and that will eliminate the majority of the styles, displaying only the few styles in use.

- When you've completed one section, manipulate the pages to bring another section of unmodified records into view.
- Complete these steps until all records have had styles applied to them.

Note: You might have problems transferring over diacritics and bold/italic/etc. formatting. (You'll be able to spot those discrepancies during the validation step).

5. When you've finished, save this document. You will compare it later to the imported file.



Figure 4. Highlighted subentries prior to applying Index 2 Style



Figure 5. Highlighted subentries after applying Index 2 Style

MS Word method

If you already have the index in Word format, you might be lucky and save yourself lots of preparation time. But, then again, you might not. Each index is different and just having an index in Word format doesn't guarantee that it is ready for IndexDeconstructor to do its magic. Note: Before you begin this process, make sure you have a backup copy available in case something catastrophic happens and you need to restart!

As I mentioned above, the index in Word format needs to have styles applied to its line items. So you'll need to check if styles already have been applied.

Here are some of the scenarios I've encountered:

STYLES HAVE BEEN APPLIED AND THEY ARE INDEX 1, INDEX 2, INDEX 3, ETC.

If styles have been applied and the styles in use are Index 1 (for main entries), Index 2 (for level 1 subentries), Index 3 (for level 2 subentries), etc., you are all set. The majority of the preparation is complete! You just need to apply the **Tidy up index** steps discussed above.

STYLES HAVE BEEN APPLIED BUT ARE NOT INDEX 1, INDEX 2, INDEX 3, ETC.

Here are some simple methods to globally modify the currently applied styles to the styles that IndexDeconstructor needs.

1. Invoke IndexDeconstructor's **Standardize Styles** function from the dropdown menu (Figure 6). Enter the current styles in use that need to be replaced under the **Existing paragraph styles** option.
2. You can also use Word's **Find/Replace** function, searching on the style currently in use, and replacing it with the appropriate Index 1, Index 2, etc. style.
3. If you find there are multiple variations of a style in use, consider using the Styles pane and the styles **In Use** option to identify these variant styles. In the Styles pane, right click the style in use and select **Select all ... instances**. You'll see all instances associated with that variant style highlighted in the main body of the document. Move your cursor to the appropriate Index style and click on it. All the variant styles have now been changed to the correct style. Review the Styles pane and continue this strategy until only the Index 1, Index 2, etc. styles remain in use.

SKY INDEX PROFESSIONAL V7.0

DID YOU KNOW IT CAN DO THIS?

Swap Acronym

The swap acronym command will swap the text in an entry that has parentheses such that the text that is outside the parentheses will be swapped with the text that is within the parentheses.

Example #1:

If you have this entry:

qualified terminable interest property (QTIP) trusts

Execute Swap Acronym and you will get:

QTIP (qualified terminable interest property) trusts

* Note that the trailing identifier "trusts" did not cause a problem.

Example #2:

If you have this entry:

MR (Magnetic Resonance)

Execute Swap Acronym and you will get:

Magnetic Resonance (MR)

Want to know what else SKY Index can do to help you with your indexing?
Visit: www.sky-software.com/whatitcando

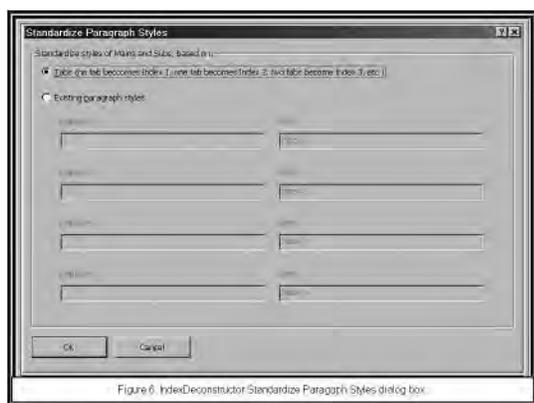


Figure 6. IndexDeconstructor Standardize Paragraph Styles dialog box

NO STYLES USED BUT TABS INDICATE SUBENTRIES; NO TABS FOR MAIN ENTRIES

If the index uses tab indents to distinguish between subentries and main entries, then IndexDeconstructor's **Standardize Styles** function (Figure 6) also accommodates that scenario. Select the **Tabs (no tabs becomes Index 1, one tab becomes Index 2, two tabs becomes Index 3, etc.)** option.

NO STYLES USED AND NO WAY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SUBENTRIES AND MAIN ENTRIES

In this worst case scenario, to apply styles, you will need to follow the process detailed above in the **Apply styles to each line item** section.

Save Word document

Once you've completed the preparations and each line item has the correct style associated with it, then save this document for later comparison with the imported document.

DECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

You are now ready to invoke IndexDeconstructor to create the tab-delimited file you will later import into your indexing program. After the time-consuming nature of the preparations, you'll be surprised at how quick this part of the process is!

1. Open the Word document you previously prepared. (Make sure you have a backup copy available.)
2. Access IndexDeconstructor from the **Add-Ins** menu (see Figure 1).
3. Select **Convert to Tab-Delimited File** from the dropdown menu.

The Convert to Tab-Delimited File dialog box (Figure 7) appears.

4. You can select the indented or run-in option. (I've never used the run-in option so all my suggestions are for the indented option.)
5. IndexDeconstructor starts processing. You can verify that it's executing properly if you see the "Word is replacing..." message in the message box at the bottom of the screen.

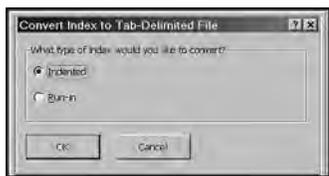


Figure 7. IndexDeconstructor Convert to Tab-Delimited File dialog box

6. After IndexDeconstructor completes processing, it closes the RTF file and opens the newly created DAT file (that will be the basis for import into your indexing software).

Note: If IndexDeconstructor hasn't completed processing within a few minutes, something is wrong. I've accidentally used a DOC format instead of RTF format and IndexDeconstructor just sat there until I canceled the program. If you have used an RTF document and it still doesn't complete, please contact Jack Lyon to help you troubleshoot. He is extremely knowledgeable and very responsive. You can obtain contact information from the IndexDeconstructor link I've provided at the end of this article.

That's the deconstruction process in a nutshell. The next steps are to import your DAT file into your indexing software and then to validate the imported records. Those steps are addressed below.

IMPORT PROCESS

1. Create a new index file with your indexing software.
2. Follow your indexing software instructions on how to import the DAT file.

Note: For Cindex, which I use, select the File/Import command. You'll get a dialog box that allows you to browse for the location of the DAT file. Find it and select it.

3. The records are imported and the index file is now populated with the imported records.

VALIDATING THE IMPORT PROCESS

The validation step is **critical** to a solid and accurate foundation to work from. Do not skimp on this step! Your goal is to be completely satisfied that 100% of the index entries were imported correctly. (And while this step might seem daunting, it really isn't, and it doesn't take that much time either.)

1. Open your index file with the newly imported records. You will review all the records to see if any need correction. In my experience with IndexDeconstructor, it correctly deconstructs at least 95% (if not more) of all the records. I've found that records that are converted incorrectly are pretty easy to spot and to correct. Here are potential trouble areas to search:
 - *Are any page number fields blank?* (Sort the index in page number order. Blank page numbers will sort to the top. To correct, find the index term in the original PDF/Word file and modify the record in your index file as appropriate.)
 - *Are there records with blanks in the main entry field* (sorted before the A's?). If so, just delete them.
 - *Are there garbage records with nonsensical information?* (This can happen if you've inadvertently copied header or footer lines. Just quickly scan the index for unusual/weird entries. They should pop right out. Delete them when you find them.)
 - *Are there orphan subentries that appear in the main entry field?* You might spot these during a quick scan of the index but the more reliable way to find these errors is during the **Compare Documents** process discussed below.
 - *Did page numbers incorrectly import into the main entry or the subentry fields?* This is trickier and more time-consuming to resolve. I conduct pattern-matching searches that look for numbers in the main entry fields and in subentry fields. You'll have to decide on a case-by-case basis what the appropriate correction will be. Again, finding the corresponding record in the original PDF/Word file is essential to determining the appropriate course of action.
 - *Did the cross-references import correctly?* Find the See and See also references and review placement, etc. Correct as necessary.
 - *Were diacritics and symbols converted correctly?* You might spot these during a quick scan of the index but the more reliable way to find these errors is during the **Compare Documents** process discussed below.

- *Did italics/bold formatting import correctly?* You might spot these during a quick scan of the index but the more reliable way to find these errors is during the **Compare Documents** process discussed below.
- *Is there any “continued” text appended to the main entries?* If so, delete the “continued” portion of the text.
- *Are there truncated page numbers in page ranges?* If truncated page numbers in page ranges were a client format style, IndexDeconstructor does *not* expand them, and they will need to be re-expanded. If your indexing software doesn’t play well with truncated page ranges, then you’ll need to find a way to re-expand the page ranges.

Note: I developed an extensive set of pattern matches in Cindex to find/replace all variations of truncation and I just go through each pattern, one at a time, until I’m satisfied all page numbers have been expanded appropriately. Again, this isn’t a difficult procedure to invoke, it’s just difficult to grasp the initial concept and find a way to identify the affected records. But, once you’ve done that, resolving the problems are a simple matter.

2. Save your updated/corrected index file as an RTF file (to match the format you used to save your original Word file).
3. Compare the original Word document to the Word document just created from the updated index file. Completing this step will provide you with the index file you can use to complete the remainder of the repagination process.
 - a. Make sure the sort order is set the same between the original and imported indexes to reduce inconsequential differences found.
 - b. Invoke the **Compare Documents** command within MS Word. In MS Office 2007, this command can be invoked via Review -> Compare -> Compare two versions of a document (see Figures 8 and 9).
 - The **Original document** is the updated/corrected pre-import Word document.
 - The **Revised document** is the RTF document just generated from the index file.
 - **Comparison settings** should include formatting and case changes.
 - Check at the **word level**.

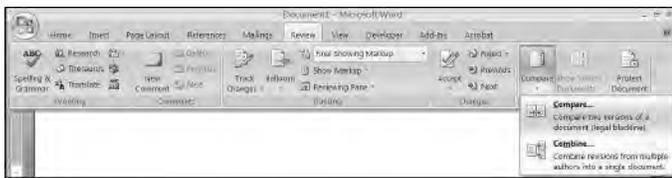


Figure 8. Invoking Compare Documents

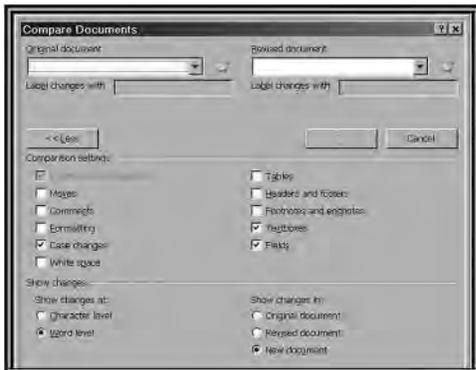


Figure 9. IndexDeconstructor Compare Documents dialog box

- c. **Show changes** in a **New document** (so you can save it and refer to at a later date if necessary).
- d. In the generated Compare Documents document, you’ll note that the differences are pretty easy to spot (Figure 10). Additions and deletions are identified. You need to review this document line by line and resolve any differences identified:
 - Remember, page locators will **not** change. They are just considered text strings. So there is no need to check the accuracy of page locators.
 - However, there might be missing page locators because of missing records. So check for missing locators. If you find any, they will need to be added as new records to the index file.
 - Sometimes entire index entries will be missing from the expected location. First see if they’ve been moved en masse elsewhere (a case of difference in sort order). If so, nothing needs to be done here except potentially changing sort order in the index file. If they haven’t been moved to another location and really **are** missing, then you’ll need to create records in the index file for these missing entries.
 - Sometimes index records were incorrectly combined under another main entry or a subentry becomes a main entry. These will need to be correctly manually in the index file.
 - Apostrophes always show up as a difference between the two documents. You can ignore these.
 - Incorrectly imported diacritics will often show up as weird symbols and will be easy to spot. They will also need to be corrected in the index file.

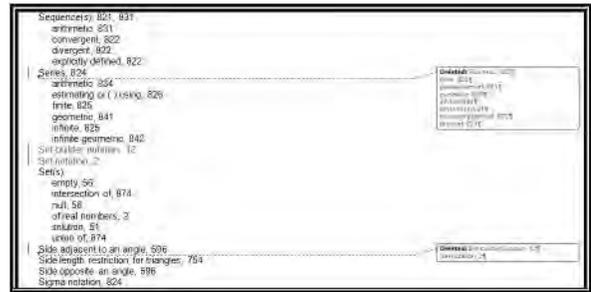


Figure 10. IndexDeconstructor Standardize Paragraph Styles dialog box

4. Once you’ve completed the **Compare Documents** process and updated the index file to reflect the necessary corrections, consider the validation step completed.

SAVING YOUR WORK

Once you’re satisfied that the index file now represents the original index document accurately, save a copy of it in case you need to come back to it later. Save it with a suffix like SAVE or ORIGINAL for easier identification. Then make a working copy to work from.

WRAP-UP

Hopefully this article demystified IndexDeconstructor and the deconstruction process I use. And perhaps you are intrigued enough by this solution to try it for yourself.

I’ve offered my methods in the hopes that others might benefit from the knowledge I’ve gained but also in the hopes that some of you out there might find ways to improve the process even more.

I don’t consider myself an expert in repagination, just someone who has worked in this niche for over seven years and has learned a lot from my experiences. The techniques I’ve developed work for me. But who

knows? There might be faster and easier ways to complete this process than I've uncovered.

So, If you know of any shortcuts or improvements to this process, I'm all ears and can be reached at lucie@luciehaskins.com.

NOTES

1. IndexDeconstructor: www.editorium.com/indexdeconstructor.htm.
2. Indexing Research: www.indexres.com/home.php.
3. Leverage Technologies: www.levtechinc.com/.

Author's Addendum

I just had an ah-ha moment in the midst of preparing an index full of complicated formatting for "deconstruction" with IndexDeconstructor. As I applied the necessary styles to the index entries, all that wonderful formatting vanished!

In a panic on how to preserve the formatting, I decided to use the alternative (tab character) method that IndexDeconstructor also supports to distinguish between main and subentries. As required by IndexDeconstructor, I used a single tab to indent each level-1 subentry in my Word document. Then I selected IndexDeconstructor's Tabs (no tabs becomes Index 1, one tab becomes Index 2, two tabs become Index3, etc. option. All the formatting remained intact!

I then followed the deconstruction process detailed in the article. And, finally, I imported the deconstructed index into my indexing software. Again, all formatting remained intact!

So, as an alternative to meticulously applying styles to each index entry in the Word document, you can simply indent the subentries (with a tab character) and invoke one additional step with IndexDeconstructor. This will save you quite a bit of time.

Letters to the Editor (Continued from page 5)

misgivings. He was deeply suspicious of a new principle Dovlatov had introduced into his writing: an insistence that no two words in a sentence should begin with the same letter. Dovlatov explained this in detail in a letter to Naum Sagalovsky a few years later:

I have to tell you a terrible secret. Or more precisely, share a literary secret with you. Only please do not think that I have gone mad. The point is that I have a sort of theory. I think that every prose writer has to put on some creative fetters, to introduce some discipline into his writing. In poetry rhyme and meter fulfill the role of such fetters. This discipline protects poets from verbosity and vacuity. Prose does not have such formal frames and I think one has to introduce them artificially. This is particularly true for those who do not possess by nature the kind of infallible selection mechanism that Zoshchenko had. It is well known that for ten years the famous French writer Georges Perec did not use in his prose the letter "e," which is the most popular letter in the French alphabet. As far as I am concerned, for the past six years I have written in such a way that all the words in a sentence begin with different letters. This even applies to prepositions. Even in quotations I avoid using two words in a sentence starting with the same letter. For example, in *The Sanctuary* I quote Pushkin: "And common folk shall keep the (people's) path well-trodden." I could not use the original lines by Pushkin because there were two words in that line beginning with the letter "n" in

Russian, so I had to change the word to "sacred" path: "And common folk shall keep the sacred path well-trodden . . ." I then made a footnote: "A distorted quotation. Pushkin has 'people's path.'" I had to reconcile myself to the particle "ne," as I could not think of anything. In short, this has become a psychosis for me.

p. 97 There are also small stylistic discrepancies between the original article and the text of *The Compromise*. An almost imperceptible change is made in the list of clothing: *kazakin* (a man's knee-length coat) is left out, and *mentik* (a hussar's pelisse) is added (presumably because of Dovlatov's avoidance of words beginning with the same letter);

p. 111 Ar'ev explains in his interview "Sergei Dovlatov po obe storony okeana" ("Dovlatov on Both Sides of the Ocean") that *The Sanctuary* was simply rewritten in the West according to Dovlatov's new, absolutely strict rules, which "allowed him to work on every sentence, on every word individually." Ar'ev explains that this allowed Dovlatov to achieve the strictest control over every line, even over every sound, in his writing.

Obviously, "avoidance of words beginning with the same letter in the same sentence" or "all the words in a sentence begin with different letters" was a concept that needed to be in the index, but I couldn't imagine a concise way of wording the index entry that readers might also look up. Also, two of the passages refer to this rule of Dovlatov's without specifying what it was.

I took a roundabout way of searching for an appropriate term. First, I Googled "Georges Perec," whom Dovlatov cites as an example of

the kind of thing he was trying to do. I knew there would be something on the Internet about his novel without an e. It turned out that a work in which a letter is omitted is called a "lipogram." I Googled "lipogram." This led me to the Wikipedia article on "constrained writing" and the amazing numbers of games writers play. Dovlatov's specific rule wasn't mentioned, but "writing constraint" was a broad enough term to include it. I still didn't think that "constrained writing" was something readers would instantly think of, but when I consulted with the author, she felt "writing constraints" would work. Eventually, I ended up with these two entries in the index:

literary techniques: contrasting elements, 137, 150–151, 153; no two words in sentence begin with same letter, 52, 57–58, 97, 111; plot, 65–66, 69, 135–136. *See also* dialogue; language and style; narrative structure; narrative voice; repetition of passages; writing process

writing process: in *The Compromise*, 94–95, 229n30; poetry as therapy, 64, 225n22; use of constraints in, 52, 57–58, 97, 111. *See also* literary techniques

I decided "no two words in sentence begin with same letter" worked as a subentry, although it wouldn't work as a main entry.

This is why I like indexing. You learn the most interesting things.

— Janet Russell