

**Case Studies in HTML Indexing: Moderated Panel Presentation
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IASC/SCAD: A Web Site Index in Two Official Languages

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This case study examines the creation of an alphabetical index for the IASC/SCAD Web site, <http://www.indexingsociety.ca/siteindex.html>, which is presented in both English and French.

Background

English and French are the official languages of Canada. All federal government Web sites, as well as some provincial government Web sites and the Web sites of most corporations, non-profit agencies, etc., are presented in both English and French. The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada, or la Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents, provides a Web site that – while not completely bilingual – presents most of its information in both official languages. Thus, it makes sense to provide a bilingual site index as well.

This case study focuses mainly on the language issues involved in creating an English and French index for the Web, but later briefly touches on usability / indexing principles and HTML issues.

Language Issues

(i) Matching the two languages as closely as possible

Each English entry should have a French equivalent. For example:

Contact Us

Contactez-nous

Within the parameters of the index, however, the match doesn't have to be exact, as illustrated by the English entry "International Agreement." In English, this is also double-posted as "Agreement, International." In the French, however, it can appear only as "Accord international" because the adjective can only follow the noun in this case. There is therefore no double-posting in French.

Furthermore, the International Agreement appears only in English on our Web site. A parenthetical reference thus has to be added to the French entry:

Accord international [en anglais seulement] – *in English only*

Lastly, because the English entries were created in title case, there can never be an exact match in French because titles are styled differently in that language; only the first word, and any proper nouns, are capitalized.

Even though there is a French equivalent of "International Agreement" in our site index, then, the two do not match exactly, for various reasons.

(ii) Inversion of terms

In the example above, the English entry “Agreement, International,” is inverted as a double posting. Inversion of terms is also a major characteristic of French.

The English entry “Home Page,” for example, would be translated as “Page d’accueil,” or “Welcome page.” However, alphabetizing it under “Page” is not a recommended indexing strategy. It is thus indexed in an inverted form as follows:

Accueil, Page d’

The same principle is followed with entries for various associations. In English, we have the entry “Editing Associations.” In French, this would be “Associations de rédaction.” It makes more sense, however, to invert this as “Rédaction, Associations de.” Of course, there are also umbrella headings for “Associations” in both languages.

In another example, the French entry for “Executive” would be “Bureau de direction.” I have indexed it as such, but have also double-posted it in inverted style as “Direction, Bureau de,” for ease of use.

(iii) English-only entries

As noted above, any entries for Web pages with English-only text need to be identified with the parenthetical notation “en anglais seulement” (in English only):

Accord international [en anglais seulement]
Constitution [en anglais seulement]

Because the conference pages, other than the conference home page, were presented in English only, I provided a parenthetical reference to include them all, as follows:

ASI – SCAD / IASC – Conférence conjointe 2006
[pages ci-dessous en anglais seulement] – *pages below in English only*

Entries for indexing societies whose names are styled in English only, such as the American Society of Indexers, appear in English in the French index as well.

(iv) Proper translation of terms

When creating entries in another language, care must naturally be taken to ensure that translations are correct. For example, “keynote address” is translated as “Discours d’ouverture.”

In a Web site index, translation issues also involve Internet terminology. For example:

discussion group	forum de discussion
external link	lien externe
home page	page d’accueil
listserv	liste de diffusion
software	logiciels

Then, of course, there is the “last updated” information, or “date de la dernière mise à jour.”

To check translations, consult a print or online resource that you know is reliable. In my case, I use two government sources:

- Office québécois de la langue française (<http://www.olf.gouv.qc.ca/>) – has a searchable dictionary (<http://www.olf.gouv.qc.ca/ressources/gdt.html>), as well as specialized dictionaries covering various subjects, including the Internet
- The Government of Canada Web site (<http://www.gc.ca/>), which can be searched for specific English words or phrases that can then be compared to the French versions, as provided by government translators

Usability / Indexing Principles

- Two-column format, to allow for maximum readability and ease of use.
- Indented subentries
- “See” references and parenthetical explanations, as well as double-posting
- Matching of the English and the French as closely as possible – for example, matching of entries with parenthetical explanations:
 - American Society of Indexers [external link]
 - American Society of Indexers [lien externe]

HTML Issues

- Fairly straightforward: the index was hand-coded, and set up as a basic two-column table
- Indented subentries were created using non-breaking spaces
- All French accents needed to be coded in HTML