

# A-Z Site Indexes for Improved Site Searching



Web Indexing Special Interest Group  
American Society of Indexers  
[www.web-indexing.org](http://www.web-indexing.org)



# Overview

- Definition of an index
- Structure of HTML indexes
- Examples of HTML indexes
- Comparison of indexes and taxonomies
- Advantages of A-Z indexes
- Sites best suited for indexes
- Indexing techniques and tools



# What is an Index?

- “A systematic arrangement of entries designed to enable users to locate information in a document.”--*British indexing standard (BS3700:1988)*
- Alphabetical (A-Z)
- Second-level terms (subentries)
- Variant terms (multiple entry points)
- Cross-references

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# HTML Indexes

- Content types

- Web sites, intranets, or sub-sites
- Online articles, periodicals
- HTML document management

- Index types

- Meta tag indexing
- Databases
- A-Z book style with hypertext index entries



# Structure of A-Z HTML Indexes

- Hyperlinked main entries and subentries
- Hyperlinked cross-references
- Hyperlinked navigational letters
- Single page, or a page per letter
- Icons or notes for non-HTML or restricted documents



# Structuring HTML Subentries: Indenting

- Nonbreaking spaces: `&nbsp;`;
- Definition lists: `<dl>`, `<dt>`, `<dd>`
- Unordered bulleted lists: `<ul>`, `<li>`
- Style sheets: `<div class="dd">`



# Web Site Index Examples

- Public library
- Membership organization
- Periodical



## Site Alphabetical Index

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [Y](#)

### A

[address of the library](#)

[art exhibits](#)

[current exhibit](#)

[past exhibits](#)

[author events](#)

### B

[blog for readers' reviews](#)

[Board of Trustees](#)

[book club kits](#)

[book discussion forum](#)

[book donations policy](#)

[book groups](#)

[book groups for teens](#)

[book lists](#)

[children](#)

[teens](#)

[books on tape](#)

[borrowing policies](#)

[borrowing policies, for nonresidents](#)

[borrowing records](#)

[bulletin board postings](#)

[business databases](#)

### C

## A–Z Index (\* denotes members-area pages)

[A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) | [K](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) | [U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#)



[Life Sciences Thesaurus](#)

[Linzer, Naomi](#)

[History/Archaeology Special Interest Group](#)

[Professional Development Committee](#)

[listserv lists](#)

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[tile.net search engine](#)

[Literature about Search Services](#)

[LitQuotes \(literary quotations\)](#)

[Locator Committee](#)

[\\*logos \(ASI\)](#)

[Louisiana, ASI chapter serving \(South Central Chapter\)](#)

[Lycos](#)

## M

[MacIndexers \(discussion group\)](#)

[Macrex \(discussion group\)](#)

[Macrex \(indexing software\)](#)

[Magellan \(search engine\)](#)

[mailing lists](#)

[\\*ASI members](#)

[discussion groups](#)

[tile.net search engine](#)

[Maislin, Seth](#)

[international representative](#)

[Vice President & President Elect](#)

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## A to Z INDEX

The following index includes all reports available on **ConsumerReports.org**. Reports listed with a month and year indicate either the *Consumer Reports* magazine publication date or when the content was posted and/or last updated on our site. A \* indicates a product that is part of our continual-testing program. Use "Ctrl F" to search for a specific word in the index. Don't see a particular product report listed here? Our [Index of previous reports](#) lists articles that are no longer available on our site. You'll also find information on how to obtain copies of these articles via fax or mail.

### A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**Abdominal exercises** 3/02

**Abdominal fat and disease risk** 8/03

**Abortion** (FREE) 2/05

**AC power supplies** 1/05

**Accidents, automobile** (FREE) 2/03

**Accounting reform laws** (FREE) 3/03

**Adhesive bandages** (Ratings) 8/02

**Adjustable rate mortgages** (FREE) 10/03

#### Advertising

[drug, federal regulation of](#) (FREE) 2/03

[misleading](#) (FREE) 2/02

#### Agents

[insurance, fraudulent deals from](#) (FREE) 8/04

[travel](#) 6/03

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**Air cleaners**(Ratings) 10/03

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[central](#) 7/03

[room](#) (buying advice and Ratings) \*

**Air mattresses** (Ratings) 11/04

**Air pollution, indoor** (FREE) 2/02

#### Air travel

#### Automobiles continued

[Federal rollover ratings](#) (FREE) 4/04

[fifty-year auto retrospective](#) (FREE) 4/03

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[Ford Escape Hybrid: First Look](#) 2/05

[fuel economy](#) (FREE) 8/04

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[vs. performance](#) 8/04

[fuel efficiency](#) (FREE) 8/04

[fuel-efficient](#) 7/03

[fuel-saving tips](#) 7/04

#### fuels

[alternative](#) 10/04

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[gas-saving tips](#) 7/04

[gasoline, premium](#) 9/04

[gasoline substitutes, emergency](#) 3/04

[headlights, HID](#) (FREE) 4/03

[HID headlights](#) (FREE) 4/03

[hoses and belts, inspecting](#) (FREE) 3/04

[IIHS crash testing](#) (FREE) 4/03

[incentives & dealer discounts](#) 4/04



# Indexes vs. Taxonomies

- Hierarchical taxonomy vs. alphabetical index
- Two-step process of taxonomy development and content linking vs. integrated indexing/index creation
- Each is more suitable for different kinds of content.
- Sometimes have both, as different means to access the same content



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[Add / Change My Listing](#)  
[Advertise With Us](#)  
[Print Advertising](#)  
[Contact A Rep](#)

**TOOLS**

[My Directory](#)  
[Maps](#)  
[Driving Directions](#)

Home → [Category Browser](#) → Top Level

**Category Browser**

**[Arts & Entertainment](#)**

[Art Galleries](#), [CDs & Records](#), [Movie Theaters](#), [Nightclubs](#), ...

**[Automotive](#)**

[Car Dealers](#), [Car Parts](#), [Car Repair](#), [Truck Dealers](#), ...

**[Business & Professional Services](#)**

[Copying Services](#), [Employment Agencies](#), [Labs](#), [Office Supplies](#), ...

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[Furniture](#), [Home Improvement](#), [Pet Shops](#), ...

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[Farms](#), [Importers](#), [Machine Shops](#), ...

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**[Shopping](#)**

[Books](#), [Department Stores](#), [Florists](#), [Toys](#), ...

**[Sports & Recreation](#)**

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**[Travel & Transportation](#)**



# Content More Suitable for an Index

- Content not easily categorized into a taxonomy (e.g. policies, instructions)
- A combination of topics and names
- Content for varied users
- Content that is varied or broad (e.g. a general site or intranet)



# Advantages of A-Z Indexes

- Compared to search engines
  - Index, Search Engine Combined
- Compared to taxonomies, site maps



# Advantages over Search Engines

- Indexed to substantive information
- Browsible pick-list precludes typos, singular/plural issues
- Points to specific information at anchors within pages



# Index, search engine combined

- On large, changing sites, where index is not so specific
- With meta tag keywords from controlled list/thesaurus



# Advantages over Site Maps, Taxonomies

- Index has multiple variant entries.
- Site maps and taxonomies are structured only one way.
- Index length, scrolling is not a problem.
- Ideally have both: like a book's table of contents and index



# Sites Best Suited for Indexes

- Not a high level of change
- Repeat users
- Small-medium number of pages, documents (10s – 100s)
- Specifically: institutions, membership organizations, intranets, information-oriented sites or sub-sites



# Indexing Technique

- Look at each page, each heading
- Decide what is worth indexing
- Add named anchors as desired
- Decide what to call it/how to label it
  - Break complex concepts into main entries and subentries
- Add all variations of what to call it
- Edit



# Web Indexing Tools

- Add-on tools for automated site map creation and indexing
- HTML help authoring tools
- Book indexing tools
- Dedicated web site indexing tools
- (Database index with thesaurus)



# Help Authoring Tools

- RoboHelp, HTML Help, etc.
- Margin/frame index
- Type-ahead scrolling
- Content needs to be imported
- Used by online help technical writer



# Book indexing tools

- CINDEX, Sky Index, or Macrex
- HTML/Prep utility
- Convert a tagged ASCII index to create an HTML document
- Used by back-of-the-book indexers



# Dedicated Web Indexing Tools

- HTML Indexer [www.html-indexer.com](http://www.html-indexer.com)
- XRefHT32  
[publish.uwo.ca/~craven/freeware.htm](http://publish.uwo.ca/~craven/freeware.htm)

Automates:

- Inserting URL links
- Creating indented subentries
- Alphabetizing entries and subentries
- Creating navigational letters

Includes indexing non-HTML documents



# Who Creates the Index

- Freelance professional indexers  
[www.web-indexing.org/contract-indexer-search.php](http://www.web-indexing.org/contract-indexer-search.php)
- Information specialists, librarians, content specialists, writers, editors, etc. trained in indexing



# Training in Web Indexing

- “Creating Website Indexes” online workshop Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science: [www.simmons.edu/gslis/continuinged](http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/continuinged)
- Hedden Information Management online workshops in web site indexing: [www.hedden-information.com](http://www.hedden-information.com)
- “Writing Indexes for Books and Websites” online certificate course Middlesex Community College: <https://middlenet.middlesex.mass.edu>
- American Society of Indexers annual conference workshops: [www.asindexing.org](http://www.asindexing.org)