BRITISH STANDARD

BS ISO 999:1996

Incorporating corrigendum June 2009

Information and documentation — Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes

ICS 01.140.20

NO COPYING WITHOUT BSI PERMISSION EXCEPT AS PERMITTED BY COPYRIGHT LAW

British Standards Documents Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of ISO 999:1996.
It supersedes BS 3700:1988 which is withdrawn.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted by Technical Committee IDT/2, Information and documentation, to Subcommittee IDT/2/2, Indexes, filing and thesauri.

A list of organizations represented on this Subcommittee can be obtained on request of its secretary.

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

This British Standard, having been prepared under the direction of the DISC Board, was published under the authority of the Standards Board and comes into effect on 15 February 1997

© BSI 2009

ISBN 978 0 580 67682 6

Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date	Comments
30 June 2009	Document republished with correct ISO text due to errors in previous BS implementation

Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 999

Second edition
1996-11-15

Information and documentation — Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes

Information et documentation — Principes directeurs pour l'élaboration, la structure et la présentation des index

Reference number
ISO 999:1996(E)

AVA Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

Contents

		Page
1	Scope	1
2	Normative references	1
3	Definitions	2
4	Function of an index	3
5	Types of index	4
5.1	Subject indexes	4
5.2	Author indexes	4
5.3	Name indexes	4
5.4	Geographic indexes	4
5.5	Title indexes	4
5.6	Number and code indexes	5
6	Quality control	5
6.1	Quality of indexes	5
6.2	Length and detail of indexes	5
6.3	Consistency in indexing	5
6.4	Relations between the indexer and author/publisher/user	6
7	Content and general organization	7
7.1	General content and construction	7
7.2	Concepts: representation in headings and subheadings	7
7.3	Proper names and titles of documents: choice and form of headings	13
7.4	Locators	18
7.5	Cross-references	21

© ISO 1996

All rights reserved. Unless otherwise specified, no part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and microfilm, without permission in writing from the publisher.

International Organization for Standardization
Case Postale 56 • CH-1211 Genève 20 • Switzerland

Printed in Switzerland

Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

8 Arrangement of entries in indexes **25**
8.1 Basic order of filing characters **25**
8.2 Word-by-word versus letter-by-letter alphabetization **26**
8.3 Alphanumeric arrangement **26**
8.4 Filing index headings **27**
8.5 Index headings beginning with the same term **27**
8.6 Filing subheadings **28**
8.7 Filing entries which include cross-references **28**
9 Presentation of printed indexes **28**
9.1 Preparation of index copy for final processing **28**
9.2 Introductory note **29**
9.3 Presentation of published index **29**
9.4 Search aids **30**
9.5 Set-out (indented) style versus run-on (paragraph) style for layout **31**

Annex

A Bibliography **33**
Index **34**

Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 999 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation,* Subcommittee SC 9, *Presentation, identification and description of documents.*

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 999:1975). It updates, clarifies and exemplifies the basic indexing methods recommended in the 1975 edition entitled *Index of a publication.* This edition expands the seven sections of the first edition to eight, provides more detailed guidance on the organization of indexes and includes examples. New sections are included on quality control, arrangement of entries in indexes and presentation of indexes.

Annex A of this International Standard is for information only.

Documents
Document Sharing Hub
Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

Information and documentation -- Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes

1 Scope

This International Standard offers guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes.

This International Standard applies to indexes to books (including works of fiction), periodicals, reports, patent documents, and other written or printed documents, and also to non-print materials, such as electronic documents, films, sound recordings, video recordings, graphic materials, maps, and three-dimensional objects.

This International Standard is concerned with basic indexing principles and practice rather than with the detailed procedures of indexing that vary according to type of matter indexed and the users for whom the index is intended. Therefore the examples given, including punctuation, are illustrative and not prescriptive.

This International Standard covers the choice, form and arrangement of headings and subheadings used in index entries once the subjects to be indexed have been determined. (For the examination of documents and the selection of subjects for indexing, see ISO 5963. For the compilation of a monolingual thesaurus that may assist in the selection of index terms, see ISO 2788.)

Although this International Standard does not give any guidance on computerized index generation as such, it is relevant to the preparation of all types of index, regardless of whether they are produced manually or by computer-assisted methods, and whether compiled by one indexer or by a team of indexers. It does not cover the mechanized extraction of text words to generate indexes, e.g. KWIC (Keyword in Context), nor does it cover special systems of indexing such as PRECIS, chain indexing, citation indexing or the techniques of post-coordinate indexing, although its recommendations may be relevant to any of these systems.

It does not make recommendations for the compilation of catalogues for libraries or museums.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 2788:1986, *Documentation -- Guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri.*

ISO 5127-1:1983, *Documentation and information -- Vocabulary -- Part 1: Basic concepts.*

AVA Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

ISO 5127-6:1983, *Documentation and information -- Vocabulary -- Part 6: Documentary languages.*

ISO 5127-3A:1981, *Information and documentation -- Vocabulary -- Part 3a): Acquisition, identification, and analysis of documents and data.*

ISO 5963:1985, *Documentation -- Methods for examining documents, determining their subjects, and selecting indexing terms.*

ISO 7154:1983, *Documentation -- Bibliographic filing principles.*

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the definitions given in ISO 5127-1, ISO 5127-3A and ISO 5127-6 apply together with the following.

3.1 **authority file**: List or file of headings to be used in an index, e.g. forms of proper names, subject headings.

NOTE 1 - Such pre-established lists are used in particular to coordinate the indexing of collections.

3.2 **collection:** Group of documents to the contents of which reference is made or expected to be made in an index, e.g. those documents scanned by an indexing service; a database of abstracts.

NOTE 2 - Both collection and index may be intended to expand indefinitely.

3.3 **cross-reference**: Direction from one heading or subheading to another.

3.4 **document:** Any item that presents information, including machine-readable records, microforms, print and non-print media.

3.5 **index:** Alphabetically or otherwise ordered arrangement of entries, different from the order of the document or collection indexed, designed to enable users to locate information in a document or specific documents in a collection.

3.6 **index entry:** Single record in an index; it consists of a heading; a qualifier or scope note if required; subheading(s) if required; and either locator(s) or cross-reference(s) or both.

3.7 **index heading:** Term chosen to represent in the index an item or concept in a document.

NOTE 3 - The index heading is used alone, or related or modifying terms may be subsumed under it.

3.8 **index subheading:** Heading that is subsumed under a heading to indicate a subordinate or modifying relationship.

NOTE 4 - A subheading may have one or more sub-subheadings.

AVA Documents Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

3.9 **locator:** Indication, following a heading or subheading, of that part of a document, or that item in a collection, to which the heading or subheading refers.

3.10 **qualifier:** Term, added to a heading, but separated from it by punctuation (preferably parentheses), in order to distinguish the heading from homographs in the same index.

NOTE 5 - The qualifier forms part of the heading.

3.11 **scope note:** Explanation added to a heading to clarify the range of the subject matter encompassed or the usage of the heading within the index.

NOTE 6 - The scope note does not form part of the heading.

3.12 **"see also" cross-reference:** Direction *from* a heading or subheading that is followed by one or more locators, *to* one or more other headings or subheadings under which related information will be found.

3.13 **"see" cross-reference:** Direction *from* a heading or subheading not followed by locators, *to* one or more other headings or subheadings under which information will be found.

3.14 **term:** Word, phrase or symbol used to denote a concept.

4 Function of an index

The function of an index is to provide the user with an efficient means of tracing information. The indexer should therefore:

a) identify and locate relevant information within the material being indexed;

b) discriminate between information on a subject and passing mention of a subject;

c) exclude passing mention of subjects that offer nothing significant to the potential user;

d) analyse concepts treated in the document so as to produce a series of headings;

e) ensure that the terms used in the index are appropriate to the users of the index, so that they will:

1) quickly establish the presence or absence of information on a specific subject in an unfamiliar work;
2) quickly retrieve information on a remembered item in a known or partially known work;
3) quickly identify appropriate documents in a collection.

f) indicate relationships between concepts;

g) group together information on subjects scattered by the arrangement of the document or collection;

h) synthesize headings and subheadings into entries; this synthesis may already be established in an authority file;

AVA Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

i) direct users seeking information under terms not chosen for index headings to terms that have been chosen as index headings, by means of "see" cross-references;

j) arrange entries into a systematic and helpful order.

5 Types of index

Indexes may be produced with the indexed documents, or separately.

Indexes may include entries for a variety of categories including names (personal, corporate, geographic), technical terms, subjects, titles of works, first lines of poems, quotations, abbreviations, acronyms, numbers, dates, etc.

General indexes combine entries in all or any of the above categories in a single sequence.

When appropriate for the document or collection to be indexed, separate sequences may be used for entries of different types. The most common of these are differentiated in 5.1 to 5.6 (see also 7.1.4).

5.1 Subject indexes

Subject indexes provide access to the contents of documents by subject matter. The subject headings are arranged in alphabetical or other systematic order.

5.2 Author indexes

Author indexes may

a) provide access to information on documents cited by the author´s name in the indexed document; or
b) list documents distinguished by author´s name in the indexed collection.

Author indexes may include personal or corporate authors.

5.3 Name indexes

Name indexes provide access to names contained in documents, whether of persons, organizations or other animate or inanimate objects which are identified by a proper name, e.g., Red Rum (racehorse), Macrex (computer program). Such names may be combined in a single index.

5.4 Geographic indexes

Geographic indexes provide access to information or documents through the names of geographic locations. These locations may be very broad, such as continents or countries, or very specific, such as cities and towns, or specific buildings within a town.

5.5 Title indexes

Title indexes provide access to documents or document citations by displaying in one sequence the titles of the documents.

Documents
Document Sharing Hub
Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

5.6 Number and code indexes

Number and code indexes provide access to information or documents by numerical designation, e.g. by patent number, ISBN, date of creation or publication (or both).

6 Quality control

6.1 Quality of indexes

An effective index meets the needs of those seeking information contained in the documents indexed (see 7.1).

Entries should allow for the different approaches likely to be made by the user (e.g. a novel or a play discussed in the document should be entered under both author and title).

The indexer should be impartial and objective both in selecting subject matter and in choosing terminology (see ISO 2788 and ISO 5963).

The indexer´s knowledge of the principles of indexing, gained through study and experience, determines the quality of the index. Other important factors include the indexer´s knowledge of the language and subject matter of the document and the quality of indexing tools used, e.g. controlled indexing languages (see ISO 2788).

6.2 Length and detail of indexes

The index should be sufficiently detailed to meet the expected needs of the user, given the amount of detail in, and the number of subjects covered by, the indexed documents. Factors affecting the length of an index include:

a) the character and purpose of the documents indexed, for example, technical or academic material is likely to require more detailed treatment than popular material;

b) the purpose of the indexing, for example, a specific audience may be interested in only one aspect of complex documents. Where there is a particular slant to the indexing, this should be clearly indicated in an introductory note, in the title or elsewhere.

If the indexer´s professional judgment of the detail of indexing required leads to the creation of a longer index than the publisher considers economic, changes in presentation or typography are preferable to reducing the number of entries in the index.

It will be helpful if the indexer can estimate the number and extent of entries at an early stage, so that presentation can be discussed in good time (see 6.4).

6.3 Consistency in indexing

The detail, style and layout of an index should be consistent.

The index should be constructed according to a logical, balanced, consistent and easily recognizable pattern. Consistency is relevant to amount of detail given, use of terminology, subdivision, inversion, cross-references, locators and general style and layout.

Consistency is more likely to be achieved if

a) indexing policies and authority files are established and followed;

AVA Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

b) reliable indexing resources are used, e.g. dictionaries, controlled vocabularies, consultations with experts;
c) indexing decisions are systematically recorded;
d) work on the same index done by two or more indexers is carefully coordinated.

Careful checking, editing and proof-reading of the index is essential to ensure consistent use of headings and subheadings, accuracy in cross-references, locators, alphabetical or other arrangement, proper use of punctuation and spacing, and (where appropriate) replacement of cross-references by additional entries (see 7.5).

6.4 Relations between the indexer and author/publisher/user

The quality and consistency of an index will be enhanced if the indexer can discuss the document with the author, knows the publisher's requirements, and fully understands the likely requirements of the potential users of the index. This information will help indexers to make correct decisions on the choice of entries, inclusions in or exclusions from the index, and the need for special indexes (see also 6.1 and 7.1.4).

If there are conflicts between the interests of, for example, authors, publishers, database managers and indexers on such matters as cost, time scale, layout, length, etc., the expected need of the user for an effective guide to information in the document should be the deciding factor (see also 6.2).

6.4.1 Briefing indexers

Publishers should inform indexers in advance of any special conventions or requirements, for example, whether there shall be a comma between headings and locators (but see 7.4.5), whether there is a preferred number of pages for the index, whether there are any particular restrictions in the typesetting system being used. Indexers should not be burdened with unnecessary constraints, but they should be given sufficient information and guidance to complete the work satisfactorily.

6.4.2 Documents for indexing

Indexers should have access to

a) complete documents, for example, the entire text including captions and non-text materials such as illustrations, maps, tables and charts;
b) documents in their final form, for example, marked page proofs incorporating all changes to the text and pagination.

The indexer should notify the publisher of possible errors or inconsistencies in documents.

6.4.3 Final checking (proof-reading)

The publisher should give the indexer an opportunity to check the proofs of a printed index before publication.

6.4.4 Naming of indexers

Publishers should offer indexers the opportunity to be named in the document.

AVA Documents Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

7 Content and general organization

7.1 General content and construction

7.1.1 Coverage

Indexes should normally cover all matter in the documents. Significant exclusions should be brought to the user´s attention in an introductory note (see 9.2).

In the case of printed documents, matter normally indexed includes introductions, notes, addenda, illustrations and appendixes.

Title pages, dedications, tables of contents, synopses or abstracts at the beginning of articles or chapters, advertising, and similar items, are not normally indexed, though they should be examined for material to be included in the index.

7.1.2 Implicit and additional information indexed

Indexes may supply information implicit (but not given) in documents, for example, full names, identifying dates, names of chemicals, since this information can be especially helpful to the user.

7.1.3 Introductory note

Where necessary, an introductory note explaining its design and construction should be supplied at the beginning of the index, or series of indexes (see 9.2).

7.1.4 Single and multiple indexes

A single index to the contents of a single document is preferable to a series of indexes. Indexes to collections may be general (single) or specific, such as those listed in clause 5.

The following circumstances may influence the decision as to whether to provide more than one index:

a) a particular interest in specific parts of documents, e.g. advertisements or reviews;
b) a particular interest in specific items in the material indexed, e.g. authors or cited legal cases;
c) difficulty in assimilating non-verbal headings, e.g. patent numbers or chemical formulae, into a primarily verbal list.

The title of each index should clearly indicate its contents and function(s) (see also 9.3.3).

7.2 Concepts: representation in headings and subheadings

7.2.1 Choice of headings

7.2.1.1 Choice of concepts

The choice of concepts to be included in indexes depends on the expected needs of the user and the nature of the documents indexed [see 4c) to 4f) and 6.2]. Headings should be as specific as necessary to assist the user.

AVA Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

The purpose of the document will influence the expression of the heading.

For example, in an index to a work on human resources management, a discussion of economic theories of labour might be indexed as such: the heading would begin "economic theories ..." because that is the specific subject of that part of the document. "Labour: economic theories" would not be useful, as labour is the subject of the whole work. Conversely, in a work on economics, "labour" would correctly introduce the entry (see also 7.2.3.4).

7.2.1.2 Terminology

Headings should be chosen from the terminology employed in the document, especially in the case of single document indexing; or, in the case of collection indexing, from an authority file.

7.2.1.3 Synonyms, linked terms and homographs

7.2.1.3.1 Synonyms

One term should be used consistently to represent the same concept. If there are synonyms for the term chosen as the heading, "see" cross-references should be made from the alternative terms.

When indexing collections or documents of multiple authorship, particular care is needed to collect under one heading all references to a concept for which different authors have used different terms, for example, either philately or stamp-collecting.

Variant spellings and abbreviations should be treated in the same way as synonyms.

EXAMPLES

1	*use either:*	aesthetics *or* esthetics
2	*use either:*	DNA *or* deoxyribonucleic acid
3	*use either:*	fantasme *or* phantasme

If non-current or idiosyncratic terminology from the document is used in the index, it should be qualified by the addition of the term in current use, with a "see" cross-reference from that term (see 7.5).

EXAMPLES

1 consumption (tuberculosis of the lungs)
tuberculosis of the lungs *see* consumption (tuberculosis of the lungs)

2 globule blanc *voir* leucocyte (globule blanc)
leucocyte (globule blanc)

7.2.1.3.2 Linked terms

Linked terms such as antonyms that cannot be treated without reference to each other should be entered as a single heading containing both terms. A cross-reference should be made from the second of the linked terms to the whole phrase.

EXAMPLES

1 evil *see* good and evil
good and evil

AVA Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

2 awards *see* honours and awards
honours and awards

3 décadence *voir* grandeur et décadence
grandeur et décadence

7.2.1.3.3 Homographs

Homographs should be distinguished by the addition of a qualifier.

EXAMPLES

1 Geschichte (historische Entwicklung)
Geschichte (Literatur)

2 grue (machine de levage)
grue (oiseau)

3 races (ethnology)
races (sport)

7.2.2 Form of headings and subheadings

7.2.2.1 Headings

Headings should represent concepts found in the document. Their presentation in the index should conform to common usage in the language and terminology of the document, or of users for whom the index is intended. In general, headings should consist of nouns, modified, if required, by adjectives or by other nouns or verbs used attributively.

EXAMPLES

1 arc à souder
2 artificial flowers
3 cutting tools
4 droit international privé
5 education
6 roman policier

7.2.2.2 Singular and plural forms

If a term chosen as a heading appears in the document in both the singular and plural form, one form only should be used in the index, except when the two forms have different meanings.

The choice of the singular or plural form of a word as a heading depends on the language of the index.

For example, in French and German the singular form is generally preferred, while in English the plural form should generally be used for terms denoting discrete objects (countables) and the singular form should be used for non-countables, i.e. the plural should be used when the question as to quantity asks "How many?" and the singular when the question as to quantity asks "How much?".

AVA Documents
Document Sharing Hub

Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

EXAMPLES

	ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN
non-countables			
1	freedom	liberté	Freiheit
2	air	air	Luft
countables			
3	animals	animal	Tier
4	watches	montre	Uhr

If the singular and plural forms have different meanings, both forms may be used in the index.

EXAMPLES

1 building (process)
buildings

2 échec
échecs (jeu)

3 Geschichte (historische Entwicklung)
Geschichten

7.2.2.3 Orthography

The spelling conventions of the text or authority file should be carefully observed in the index, for example, the use of "colour" or "color" (but see 7.2.1.3 for documents of multiple authorship).

Unless the orthography of the language of the document, for example German, requires otherwise, headings other than proper names should begin with a lower-case letter since the user can lose both information and time if all headings begin with an upper-case letter.

7.2.2.4 Terms consisting of more than one word

Terms consisting of more than one word that exist in common usage should be used as headings without inverting or subsuming.

When necessary, cross-references from, or additional entries for, the word or words following the first one should be made.

EXAMPLE

balance sheet
balance, trade *see* trade balance
trade balance

rather than

Documents
Document Sharing Hub
Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996

balance
    sheet
    trade

It may, however, be desirable to invert or subsume in cases where a hierarchy of headings and subheadings may appropriately be provided (see 7.2.3).

EXAMPLE

child benefits
invalidity benefits
unemployment benefits

and

benefits
    child
    invalidity
    unemployment

If punctuation marks are given a special meaning, for example, to indicate the relationship of terms in a heading, this should be clearly explained in an introductory note (see 9.2).

7.2.2.5 Prepositions

Prepositions should as far as possible be used only if their absence might cause ambiguity.

EXAMPLES

1	countryside: public access	("to" unnecessary)
2	food: rationing	("of" unnecessary)
3	land: use	("of" unnecessary)

but

4 computers
    for management
    management of

rather than

computers
    management

and

5 environnement
    influence de
    influence sur

rather than

environnement
    influence

Documents
Document Sharing Hub
Full document details: BS ISO 999:1996