Heather Hedden, The Accidental Taxonomist.
Information Today, Inc. 2010

In the interest of full disclosure, I must reveal my dirty little secret: I *often use a thesaurus as a resource for back-of-the-book indexing!* I fully agree with Mulvany that "The author's language should always take precedence over alternative terms" and with Wellisch's admonition to avoid the 'sin' of classification in indexes. But I've found that a subject-specific thesaurus can be invaluable not only for journal indexing (one of my specialties), but also for reconciling conflicting terminology in a multi-authored work, quickly identifying hierarchical relationships between terms, and finding relevant cross-references for an author's "coined" term. That's why *Heather Hedden's* comprehensive and readable guide to a very complex subject now has pride of place on my reference shelf.

This book is designed as a practical guide ("what you need to know") to the practice of taxonomy rather than as a how-to guide for taxonomy

creation, and much of the content is directly relevant for freelance indexers who are interested in expanding the range of services that they offer to clients. Chapter 1 provides background information about taxonomy types and applications for information organization and retrieval, and chapters 2 and 12 cover taxonomy as a profession. Much of the content will resonate with indexers who, like "accidental taxonomists," come to the profession because a need arose within an organization where they were working in another capacity. Hedden points out that over half of self-described taxonomists have library science backgrounds, but that other disciplines are well-represented in the field.

Chapters 3 and 4 cover the basics of term creation and establishing relationships in accordance with the ANSI/NISO Z39.19 standard, and chapter 5 focuses on taxonomy management software. Chapters 6 and 7 differentiate between taxonomies for use by human indexers and those intended for automated indexing, and chapters 8-11 focus on technical issues that is primarily of interest to those creating taxonomies: structures, display options, planning and design, and maintenance.

The book concludes with four useful appendixes, including a survey of taxonomists, glossary, recommended readings, and a list of cited websites. The glossary (Appendix B) is an excellent reference tool for anyone interested in the subject. The Recommended Readings (Appendix C) are arranged by chapter, but would have been more accessible as a traditional bibliography in alphabetical order. The website list (Appendix D) is also arranged by chapter, but entries within each chapter listing are arranged in the order cited in the text, rather than in alphabetical order, which somewhat limits its usability for someone seeking a specific site name. On the other hand, the websites are all linked on the author's website at *www.accidental-taxonomist.com*, and she promises that the list will be updated as needed, with new sources added as they become available.

Heather Hedden is a freelance taxonomist, an instructor of taxonomy development, and a freelance indexer of books and databases. The Accidental Taxonomist gracefully bridges the divide between her two worlds, and should be a welcome addition to the literature of both.

— Carolyn Weaver ●

Index It Right! Volume 2,
Janet Perlman and Enid Zafran, eds.,
Information Today, 2009

***Volume Two of Index It Right!* covers topics for all levels of indexers.** All of the subjects are helpful for refining or expanding indexing skills. "Specialty areas" address the detailed nuances involved in creating a top notch index. The broader arenas of embedded indexing, database indexing, controlled vocabularies, thesauri and taxonomies are presented. I would highly recommend this book to anyone taking the ASI indexing course. Each chapter is written by highly qualified and often award winning indexers. The sprinkling of expert tips throughout is a pleasant way to review important principles.

Victoria Agee and *Margie Towery* tackle the topic of creating elegant subheadings in a straightforward fashion with excellent examples. This chapter could serve as a mini indexing course. The obvious structural and grammatical issues receive thorough coverage. Of equal interest is the more subtle topic of bias (recently a lively discussion within ASI). While a seasoned indexer might have mastered many of the skills, there is likely some tidbit of wisdom that can be extracted. For new indexers, this chapter deserves extra attention.