The main aim of information is to get information at the right time. Therefore, this paper takes a legal approach to indexing and Abstracting in Libraries. It generally takes an extensive look at the importance of indexing and abstracting as a tool for effective retrieval and dissemination of information in any library- academic, public or special. Results show that most library materials are not properly indexed and abstracted because librarians/library staff are not properly trained in the art of indexing and abstracting, and for any library (particularly law library) to achieve the purpose for which it is set up, it must ensure that legal materials are properly indexed and abstracted. The paper concludes by recommending ways library services can be improved in disseminating information through knowledge acquired in indexing and abstracting.

**Key words:** information, indexing and abstracting in libraries, law library.
INTRODUCTION

Libraries and information centres function to provide access to information and knowledge. In the same vein, these institutions strive to meet the information needs of their users. It would be difficult for information institutions such as libraries and information centres to provide access to their resources if the materials in their holding are not processed. These institutions ensure that information is located in documents; it may be a book, non-book sources or in electronic formats in order to facilitate access to information by users. Information professionals have devised tools which include catalogues, indexes and abstracts. Information materials are indexed and abstracted to bring readers/users nearer to information sources and essentially to assist them find or locate their information need or reading interests in the sources. Indexing and Abstracting are essentials processes that ensure that information contained in documents are easily retrieved.

Abstracting and indexing (Lamikanre, 2007; Landes, 1966) started in the early part of the 19th century to assist the researcher keep abreast of increasing current developments in his field of interest which may be difficult to achieve as a result of information explosion. The need to be updated in all fields and kept abreast of any development has, therefore, become necessary in order to avoid any duplication of efforts on the part of the research mind.

Besides, the ocean flow of on-line information are all streaming together, and the access tools are becoming absolutely critical. If it is not indexed, it does not exist.
WHAT IS INDEXING?

According to the British Indexing standard (BS 3700:1988), (Brown F. 2010), an index is a systematic arrangement of entries designed to enable users locate information in a document.

Indexing is the systematic process of arranging of entries designed to enable information users to locate items in a document. It is a process fixed at providing a guide to the information and knowledge contained in documents. Subject terms or heading and descriptors which described the intellectual content or cover the main theme of documents are carefully chosen in indexing. In essence, indexing is the process that produces entries in an index by analyzing the content of documents, revealing the essential details of the document item in a summarized form and indicating the location of the information; creating substitutes to information items. James chen. (2019) indexing is broadly rehired to as an indicter or measured of something.

THE NATURE OF INDEXES

Indexes are usually created from the text of primary publications which introduce the objective to the user or reader who intends to proceed to the remainder of the text with its content. Indexes are example of tools used to organize literature of particular disciplines, thereby making a significant contribution to communication and information flow among users who could be scientists and researchers, Indexing is one of the avenues through which literature of disciplines are organized.

Cleveland and Cleveland (2000) in explaining the nature of indexes viewed that in order to come to terms with indexes, you should think of abstract informational spaces, which means that one should think of information items in an abstract space and then also think of indexes in this space. Indexes change document space into index space. In producing indexes, there is a significant reduction in the amount of words in the documents
themselves for the indexing space. This is done to ensure that both spaces exist in the same subject space.

Indexed documents reflect two fundamental states or dispositions which are determined by indexers. What is included in the index and what is excluded from the index? Both situations may have captured what is important as well as what is trivial. Indexes may have omitted information. Therefore when crucial information is left out, we can conclude that the indexing process may have lost information.

An index is not just an alphabetical list of nouns, of words and phrases in a text. The process of indexing itself is more than simply generating words or terms in the attaching locators to them. It is neither a rearranged table of content. It must be said that it is a distinct record having its own avidity and consistency. Indexes come in different forms and serve many purposes. According to Cleveland and Cleveland (2004) some are name indexes, subject indexes, map indexes etc. There are indexes to books, periodicals, images, databases etc, some are created manually while others are automated.

Whatever the form, format or method of production, good indexes are the product of the knowledge/know how of an indexer.

In a very simple Language the main goal of indexing is to assist users/readers find information in a document or an in-formation source, specifically indexes are created to achieve the following:

- To help users to become familiar with a text or document such that those who intend to exploit the text can do so easily.

- To act as a kind of summary to text or document serving as a selection guide to the content.

- To serve as a tool for document analysis.

- An intelligently compiled listtopics covered in a book or document prepared with the readers needs in mind.
- A systematic presentation of the salient terms and concepts of a document in all formats organized so as to provide access to those terms and concepts in the primary document through accurate and direct references to their positions and locations

- An open-end finding guide to the literature of an academic field or discipline, to works of a specific literary form or published in a specific format or to the analysed content of a serial publication.

Indexes lead the user directly to the exact information required with no hurdles. It leads the user to the pertinent information, reducing to the barest minimum the need for cross-references. An index strives to minimize the time and effort of the user in locating information and to maximize the success of the user in searching. These are achieved by choosing the best terms or words that will match a finders language and by having a system of accurate and complete cross-references to related information.

**INDEXING IN LAW**

To carry out successful indexing of legal collections, ranging from periodicals, subject and primary collections the following must be observed:

(i). Correctness or accuracy: This has to do with correct spelling and correct presentation of information in the index:

(ii). Uniformity or consistency: Since indexing systems vary, indexer must adopt informing in indexing;

(iii). Completeness: This simply complete bibliographic data

(iv). Clarity: There should be specific and concise subject heading

(v). Consideration: This must use the language the user can easily understand.
ABSTRACTING

The preparation of a brief and objective statement of the content of documents to enable users to quickly determine whether to read the entire text or not in order to satisfy an information need. It involves summarizing or interpreting the content of a document giving the salient points so that the user may decide whether to consult the document or not. In essence, abstracting process provides additional value to documents aside providing a summary and bibliographic detail of documents.

An abstract is brief summary of a research article, thesis, review, conference proceeding, or any indept analysis of a particular subject and is often used to help the reader to quickly ascertain the paper’s purpose. Abstracts are formal summaries prepared by writers or abstractors to completed works, They are important tools for information users, especially as they strive to keep abreast of explosion of information. Abstracts are formal summaries writers prepare for their completed work.

However, Encyclopedia Britannica (1964) defines an abstract as a complete citation, condensation and summary of essential facts of theories and opinions presented in an article or book.

An abstract is, therefore, a brief summary, generally from 100 to 200 words, of the contents of a document such as a research paper, journal, article, thesis, review, conference proceeding, and other academic or legal document. A reader can decide what to read and what not to read. An abstract, together with an index can then be described as a key finding aid of information in today’s overabundance of information.
THE NATURE OF ABSTRACTS

Abstracts also provide access to information and documents just like indexes but beyond this, it provides a summary of the details of a document in a concise and accurate manner. Abstracts are created to represent the original document by capturing the essential information thereby acting as a surrogate of the original document. With abstracts, the user may not need to see or use the original because it may probably provide him enough information or serve as a substitute to the document. Abstracts are noted to save the time of a user who needs to go through several documents.

The International Standard Organisation (ISO) (1976) cited in Ama (2004) viewed that “users of abstracts are able to identify the basic content of a document quickly and accurately, to determine its relevance to their interests, and thus be able to decide whether they need to read the document in it’s entirely or not”. Abstracts are devices for information search, it represent the content of an item with words that are explicit to their information searches. They are a kind of formal summaries prepared by abstractors for completed works or documents. Abstracts are important tools for information users and readers as it brings them up to speed with today’s information explosion.

ABSTRACT IN LAW

Abstract in law is a brief statement that contains the most important points of a long legal document or of several related papers. Examples of abstracts of such long legal document or of several related papers include: - abstracting of title used in estate transactions which is more common form of abstract. It lists all the owners of a piece of land a house. Or a building before it came into possession of the present owner. The abstract also records all deeds, wills, mortgages, and other documents that affect ownership of the property. Abstracting of title which is a clear title to
In this case, it clearly states any obligation in the deed to the property: and reveals no breaks in the chain of legal ownership. - abstracting of Patent law. This is a common way to find relevant prior art document to question to novelty or inventive step of an invention. Under United States patent law, the abstract may be called 1Abstract of the Disclosure”, Property abstract. This is a collection of legal documents which chronicles activities associated with a particular parcel of land. Generally included are references to deeds, mortgages. WillProbate records, court litigations and tax sales.

Assist information users to remember the important findings on a topic.

After consulting a document or write-up, readers often retain abstracts so that they are reminded of the summaries and other details. Abstracts usually include complete bibliographical citations and are therefore needed when readers start producing their own write-up or research papers and citing information sources.
PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

In the practice and procedure relating to indexing and abstracting in respect to legal material the following requisites must be considered:

(i) Subject knowledge
(ii) Experience
(iii) Concentration or orderly mind
(iv) Reading ability
(v) Comprehension
(vi) Passion for Accuracy
(vii) Legible hand writing
(viii) Knowledge of user needs

PROCEDURE FOR INDEXING LEGAL MATERIALS:

The following are also to be observed:

(i) Bibliographic description - follow given template/ worksheet software used
(ii) Analysis of contents:

THIS INCLUDES:

• Examining title abstract, table of contents, text and reference section of the book.

• Relating the content to the user

• Subject determination: subject represented in the work should be identified in the work, making up a list of possible descriptor
PRACTICAL RULES OF INDEXING LEGAL MATERIALS:

According to Small and Kenneth, to infectively practices indexing as an indexer, there are fifteen rules involve:

1. Index everything useful in the source materials
2. Include all index entries in one alphabetical sequence
3. Choose popular heading, with reference from their specific equivalents except where specialist audience is addressed.
4. Be consistent in choosing one form of spelling. Use a standard dictionary.
5. Choose the most specific headings which describe the items indexed.
6. Be consistence in the use of singular form or plural terms.
7. Combine the word and the action which describes it where it is useful and possible.
8. Invert headings, when necessary to bring significant word to the fore.
9. Check for synonyms and make suitable references
10. Check for antonyms and combine where suitable
11. Where words of the same spelling represent different meanings. Include identifying phrase in brackets.
12. Where possible, give full name of persons quoted
13. Omit the name of the country of a government or department
14. Use capitals for all proper name
15. Make references from main subdivisions of these subjects
PRACTICE RULES AND PROCEDURE FOR ABSTRACTING LEGAL MATERIALS

In the practice and procedure of Abstracting according to (Cremmins, 1996), provide the expedient and don’s for abstracting

(1). Writing and reading skills
(2). Rapid reading
(3). Ability to summarize a material

The Do’s and Don’s for Abstractors:

A. DO’S:

1. Scan the document purposefully for key facts
2. Tell the readers the purpose of the work (what the author did)
3. Tell why the work was done (reasons)
4. Tell how the work was done (methods)
5. Tell what was found (results)
6. Tell what it means (discussions and conclusions)
7. Be informative but brief
8. Be extract, concise and unambiguous
9. Use short, complete sentences
10. Avoid unnecessary words
11. Describe conclusions in the present tense
12. Use abbreviation sparingly
14. Cite bibliographic date completely.

**DON’S**

1. Repeat words of the title
2. Change the meaning of the original
3. Mention earlier work
4. Include detailed experimental work
5. Mention future work
6. Waste words by stating the obvious
7. Comment on or interpret the document
8. Begin abstract with stock phrases
9. Be a mere recital of subjects covered.
10. Use questionable jargon

**Therefore, a typical abstract entry consists of the following:**

1. Name of author(s)
2. Address of author
3. Title of the document (including sub-titles if any)
4. Indication of the language of the document
5. Bibliographical specification of the document (This is what is called imprints in librarianship).
6. Abstract proper
7. Information about the bibliography included in the original document.
USERS OF ABSTRACTS AND INDEXES

Users of abstracts and indexes are basically information finders. The use and importance of abstracts and indexes will continue to increase as information explosion deepens; as the cyberspace becomes the more filled with information and as people need to access information. Indexes are used to point to possible, important information while abstract allow the user to judge if the information will be relevant for use. Both tools are consulted by users to cut down what they need to know leading to finding the required information. Other uses of abstracts and indexes according to Cleveland and Cleveland (2001) are the follows:

To assist users locate information items given to them by a reference or a colleague.

— To find application of some new procedures or discovery in their field.

— To find recent trends or ideas in the field. To provide a comprehensive overview of a field, sub-field or concept.

— To discover the background of a problem.

— To locate other works by an author recently discovered by users

— To find out a piece of data that may be in an abstract or a document.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The importance of writing indexes and abstracts cannot be over-emphasized. This is because they help in the timely dissemination of information especially in a developing country like Nigeria and most other developing countries where readership promotion is low. Therefore, the indexer and abstractors in our various law libraries should always ensure that for every document we classify and catalogued (whether electronically or manually) there is need for indexing and abstracting of such documents. This may be a Herculean task for the law librarian performing both the work of classification and cataloguing. Therefore, there is need to employ the services or at best regularly train some staff of the library as indexers and abstractors who will in turn be better equipped for ability to sort and classify, better equipped to have passion for accuracy, ability to read rapidly, ability to have a good memory and wide general knowledge of legal materials.
REFERENCES


