

# Verifying personal names on the Web

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*Discovering the appropriate forms of personal names for index entries can be a problem. Now indexers can extend their home library of indexing and biographical resources with internet sites that range from the comprehensive to the obscure.*

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Most of the personal names encountered by indexers are easy to understand and straightforward to enter: obvious first and last names in inverted order – last name followed by first, with a comma dividing the two. However, when names do not conform to this pattern, the time and effort required to establish the form of entry according to indexing rules can be horrific. These names are those where first and last names are not obvious – or, if they are, may derive from a country where the western tradition of ordering names is not followed. Other problems stem from names comprising elements consisting of phrases indicating any one or more of parentage, occupation, dwelling-place, physical characteristics, or status within the community. In addition, some people use more than one surname or have changed their names over time.

The classic indexing texts (Booth, Mulvany and Wellisch) and bibliographic guides (*Chicago manual of style* and the *Anglo-American cataloguing rules*, 2nd edn) may not provide enough helpful information for the indexer with a looming deadline, especially for names in developing countries. Published biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias usually follow the same indexing conventions as back-of-the-book indexers, as do the indexes to many, if not most, general encyclopedias and library catalogues. All of these are invaluable aids, when accessible. A good biographical dictionary can be considered a near-indispensable resource for its relatively modest cost, but often the names needing verification are not well-known enough to be included. The indexer may or may not have easy access to library catalogues. Reliable general encyclopedias are usually too costly for the individual indexer and thus have to be consulted within libraries. Now, however, previous unpleasantly rushed trips to libraries can be diminished significantly. By judicious use of internet resources, significant help in establishing the order of difficult names is available without leaving one's desk.

The Web cannot take the place of a good biographical dictionary or encyclopedia in book form. Either of the latter is quicker to consult and more reliable than almost every site listed below. However, the Web is particularly useful in locating the order of those names not sufficiently well known to be included in published biographical dictionaries, in providing access to reliable reference resources that would otherwise be too costly for indexers' reference shelves, like the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Catholic encyclopedia*, and in the perilous but rewarding use of search engines to access many databases at once.

## What does the indexer need from the Web?

First, indexers need to find the name presented in the order that is correct for the index – one that conforms with established conventions of entry, whether inverted or in direct order, depending upon historical period and country or ethnic group of origin. They also need to be able to find the name quickly. Examples of useful sources in this category are library catalogues, encyclopedias, directories and specialized websites that enter names in the order corresponding to the appropriate conventions. Although it is less reliable to toss the name into the cauldron of a search engine to see what happens, this is too often the preferred option, probably because it is quick and one hopes that the name will come up immediately and magically in the required form.

Failing these resources, we need clear guidelines on how to work out the order of names. This can be accomplished by using information on how particular names are constructed – that is, what the different parts mean and their order of importance, and preferably their usage within a historical and cultural context. The indexing manuals – Booth, Mulvany and Wellisch – provide the foundations, but there are a number of websites that add more specialized detail regarding names belonging to particular cultures and periods. These latter are usually intended to serve the purposes of genealogists, archivists, members of the Society for Creative Anachronism (of which enchanting body, more later), journalists, and others needing to construct names in some conventional or official form.

## Googling (or yahooing, and other such pastimes)

Using search engines to find a name is a method for indexers who like to live on the edge. However, when performed with knowledge and discrimination, these searches are useful for finding two types of resources.

First, they are good for locating contemporary names that are not yet to be found in reference sources or catalogues but that *are* in the news. They therefore appear in established news sources, such as reputable newspapers, and the newsletters and bulletins of such bodies as governments and international organizations. These types of sources conventionally use a relatively full version of the name on first mention, then the person's surname or other element used

as such. The citations provide valuable clues as to the correct orders.

For example, before Osama bin Laden became a household name, I needed to index his name. Would it be 'bin Laden, Osama', or 'Laden, Osama bin'? Throwing the name 'Osama bin Laden' into Google, then seeing him referred to as 'bin Laden' and 'Mr bin Laden' in online documents and news sources told me my form of entry: 'bin Laden, Osama'.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, with the name Anderson Mutang Urud, the Sarawak environmentalist, I had a hunch that Urud was a title of some sort, and not a name *per se*. A Google search found him referred to in news sources, memoranda and articles both as Anderson and as Mutang Urud, but Anderson was used less often and in an informal context where other people were referred to by their first names, giving me the confidence to go with my hunch: 'Mutang Urud, Anderson'.

The second type of resource that can be found by the use of web-wide searches is background information about particular sorts of names. However, getting to substantive background information is an exercise in realizing the lack of tools suited to our purposes and the plethora of tools suited to others' needs. In doing a search on, say, 'Arab names' or 'Russian names', initially the number of results looks most gratifying. However, most sites devoted to names are provided to fulfil the following purposes:

- baby-naming;
- biography hunting;
- genealogy, archival and similar research purposes;
- guidance by the Academy of Saint Gabriel for members of the Society for Creative Anachronism;
- guidance for organizations needing to index or otherwise cite names in some formal style (like HURIDOCS, see below).

The lists of baby names are overwhelmingly predominant. Thankfully, indexers can often find meat in the other four categories, along the way encountering amusing diversions. While doing a search on Afghani names, I carelessly entered 'Afghan + names', to be confronted with an astonishing number of sites on a craft I had never imagined: the incorporation of personal names into the making of those blankets called afghans. Even when I refined the search to include either Afghan or Afghani and to exclude all embroidery, knitting, crocheting, babies and dogs, I still found mere lists of given names, including those intended for Afghan hounds.

## Decisions to be made in accessing the Web

When I turn to the Internet, my choice of resources is based on my answers to the following questions:

1. What nationality is the person and in what period of time did he or she live? Nationality and time period can be crucial in deciding the order of the name, and which elements to include or omit.
2. Does the name reflect a particular religious affiliation (by given names, titles indicating this affiliation and possibly status within the religion)?
3. Did the person write books, or is he/she likely to be the subject of books? If so, the name may well appear in

national and other major library catalogues, as an author or subject, or both.

4. Is the person otherwise sufficiently well known to be included in online encyclopedias and biographical resources?
5. Is the person of recent contemporary significance, being the subject of news and other reports that are likely to be found online? Clues to the name order may well appear within the texts of such reports.

Anyone citing websites in an article has to begin with a disclaimer, and here's mine: this paper includes only the sites that I have come across, along with those that colleagues have pointed out, and which I have found to be useful for my own purposes. There are almost certainly others that I don't know about, or that I do, but which I have not explored enough to do justice. To this, I must add that those cited here were available the last time I tried them but, as anyone using the Web will know, sites tend to vanish, are unavailable at the very time you need them, or may have suddenly decided to exact a fee.<sup>2</sup>

## National library catalogues

National libraries are listed on the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) site, *IFLANET, Web accessible national and major libraries* ([ifla.org/II/natlibs.htm](http://ifla.org/II/natlibs.htm)).

These are first-rate sources for determining the form of entry for names, the same rules or conventions being used as those for back-of-the-book indexing. However, library catalogues differ from most indexes in two important ways. First, the level of detail required is greater. Because library catalogues cover much more material than most indexes, the possibility of conflict between similar names is much higher, so names tend to be longer and may include dates, for example, which are rarely needed in most forms of indexing. Secondly, in the case of names originally written in non-Roman alphabets, with varying transliterations, national libraries are likely to use forms that are tied to national sensitivities or most-universal usefulness, which may not be the forms as written in individual books to be indexed. The name forms may therefore be rather more complicated than are needed by most indexers. For example, the 14th Dalai Lama is entered in three national library catalogues as:

Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Dalai Lama XIV, 1935–

whereas back-of-the-book indexes may need only Dalai Lama XIV, or even just Dalai Lama, if he is the only one in the text, or, more remotely, under his given name, usually rendered as Tenzin Gyatso.

The library catalogues that are probably most useful to indexers reading this article, in no particular order, are:

- British Library Public Catalogue at [blpc.bl.uk/](http://blpc.bl.uk/)
- National Library of Canada at [www.amicus.nlc-bnc.ca/wapp/resanet/search.htm](http://www.amicus.nlc-bnc.ca/wapp/resanet/search.htm)
- National Library of Australia, catalogue search at [www.nla.gov.au/catalogue/](http://www.nla.gov.au/catalogue/)
- Library of Congress Online Catalog at [catalog.loc.gov/](http://catalog.loc.gov/)

The best are those allowing for 'subject keyword' or 'name keyword' searching. The second most important factor is time spent in loading and, related to that, the incidence of down time. Library catalogues can sometimes become overwhelmed with traffic, or may be down for updating or renovation just when the indexer needs them (especially Sunday night for a Monday deadline!).

## Encyclopedias

### Bartleby

The *Encyclopedia of world history* ([www.bartleby.com/67/](http://www.bartleby.com/67/)) tells us that:

Renowned historian Peter N. Stearns and thirty prominent historians have combined their expertise over the past ten years to perfect this comprehensive chronology of more than 20,000 entries that span the millennia from prehistoric times to the year 2000.

The index to this work is a splendid resource. Skip the Table of Contents and Appendixes, and click on the Subject Index at the bottom of the screen, <http://www.bartleby.com/67/s0.html> for spans of the listings, and then for the detailed listings themselves.

Bartleby also brings us the 6th edition of the *Columbia encyclopedia* ([www.bartleby.com/65/](http://www.bartleby.com/65/)), published in 2002, with nearly 51,000 entries and 80,000 hypertext cross-references. The Alphabetic Index of Entries is very valuable, with the names entered correctly, in inverted or direct order, as relevant.

### Encyclopaedia Britannica

Limited information is accessible without a subscription on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* site ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)). However, as this includes the headings of articles, it may be enough for indexers. Otherwise, access to all its resources is available by annual subscription. A free trial is offered for a 72-hour period.

### The Catholic encyclopedia

Those who have used the multi-volume set in libraries will know the comprehensiveness of *The Catholic encyclopedia* ([www.newadvent.org/cathen/](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/)). It is wonderful for names, not only the obvious Catholic ones, but many other ancient and medieval names. Consult the alphabetical index for the form to be used in an index; the headings of articles give the name in direct order only, for example 'Jean-Pierre Camus de Pont-Carré', where the name in the index is 'Camus de Pont-Carré, Jean-Pierre'. Occasional double-posting, as in entries under both 'Fra Angelico' and 'Angelico, Fra', needs to be watched, but generally this resource is trustworthy.

## Collections

These always look more immediately useful than they are, particularly the collections of biographical sites. Those best suited for indexers' purposes come with an overall index, tailored to impose consistent conventions (especially if they

are the same as ours); *xrefer.com*, *Librarians' index to the Internet*, and *Biographical dictionary* are three examples. Next in usefulness are those that possess any overall index, even if it is only an amalgamation of the individual indexing of the sites. The least useful are those with no overall index, so that each likely-looking site must be assessed for its indexing. Their only compensation is that in spite of the hard work involved, good sites can be found.

### xrefer

My favourite collection is *xrefer* ([www.xrefer.com](http://www.xrefer.com)), especially [www.xrefer.com/allfreebooks.jsp](http://www.xrefer.com/allfreebooks.jsp), which is a list of the searchable reference books available, organized by topic. It is a well-presented, clear and logical British site providing electronic access to 42 reference books published by Oxford, Penguin, Macmillan, and Thames and Hudson. All the names are indexed correctly in a system overriding individual characteristics or quirks of individual volumes. So there is no nonsense with Leonardo da Vinci being found under all of 'Leonardo', 'da Vinci' and 'Vinci', and other unhelpful variants. This one is gold: it is fast, clean and authoritative. Its only apparent quirk is that the indexing system threw around the 'Sir' of Sir Isaiah Berlin's name, placing it before, in the middle, and following his name, but the best order was easy to see, nevertheless. You can mount an entirely new search on the same page as the results of the previous search, or modify an existing search right there also. You can also search in a particular subject or Select All (all the reference books in *xrefer's* quiver).

It should not be confused with *xreferplus* ([www.xreferplus.com](http://www.xreferplus.com)). At present, this latter is available only to libraries and other institutions, with a fee to match. Since it provides access to 100 publications, it is worthwhile finding out if local public libraries subscribe. But no one need feel short-changed in accessing the free *xrefer*.

### The Librarians' index to the Internet

The *Librarians' index to the Internet* ([lii.org/search/file/people](http://lii.org/search/file/people) is the URL for its 'People' section) is especially valuable to the indexer, with its provision of catalogue entries for each site, including Library of Congress subject headings. Names are thus entered in the form indexers need, so it is the equivalent of consulting a library catalogue. Not only that, the name searched for is highlighted within the listed subject headings, as well as in the generous description provided of the site. It should be noted, however, that names do not appear as individual headings; they appear in the listed subject headings at the foot of the record.

Of secondary but laudable benefit is *lii.org's* selection criteria and weeding program, with its motto: 'Information You Can Trust'. It is 'a searchable, annotated subject directory of more than 10,000 internet resources selected and evaluated by librarians for their usefulness to users of public libraries'. Should indexers need more than the name as listed in the subject headings and access the site itself, they can rely on its having been chosen for its quality and on the probability that it will still be 'alive'.

### The Internet public library

The *Internet public library* ([www.ipl.org/](http://www.ipl.org/)), hosted by the School of Information and Library Studies of the University of Michigan, claims that [lii.org](http://lii.org) is its 'spiritual sister'. Would that it were up to the standard of [lii.org](http://lii.org)! The 'Biographies' subheading of 'Reference' ([www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/ref15.00.00](http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/ref15.00.00)) seems the most relevant part for indexers. Maybe it would be, if the search facility were still not under construction – no Boolean or phrase searching is possible, for example. Then it appears that only titles, abstracts and keywords are searchable; indexes pertaining to specific sites listed are not. 'Memorable Canadians', for example, is one of the sites listed under Biographies: it contains a good name index, yet my two attempts at surnames from its list – Adaskin and Mulrone – met with zero results.

It is not even as if the search limitations are posted up front. I had to go into 'Searching Tools', then 'Search This Site' ('Having trouble finding what you need?') to discover that the trouble lay not in my own search strategy, but in the limitations of [ipl.org](http://ipl.org). Perhaps this site will improve in time; perhaps others have had more success with it than I have. It is included here because it is often listed along with the *Librarians' index to the Internet* as if it were, indeed, a sister-site.

### The WWW Virtual library

The *WWW Virtual library* ([vlib.org/0verview.html](http://vlib.org/0verview.html)) has no overall 'Biography' or 'People' section, but the indexer can search the entire library. However, I have lately had problems accessing the results of my searches on this site. Whether it is a chronic problem or just something temporary, I do not know. Because this site is dependent upon volunteer help and contributions, individual parts vary in comprehensiveness, quality and usefulness. The 'Religion' section, for example, contains a number of headings for Buddhism but none for Christianity. 'Classical Music' looks reliable while 'Art' includes no provision for painting or sculpture. A section called 'Roadkill' further illustrates its idiosyncrasy. To access the subjects, there is a choice of a hierarchical listing or an alphabetical subject list. Because each gives a different picture of what is in the library, and because of the spotty coverage, it is best to try both.

## Biographical collections

### The Biographical dictionary

The *Biographical dictionary* ([www.s9.com/biography](http://www.s9.com/biography))

covers more than 28,000 notable men and women who have shaped our world from ancient times to the present day. . . The dictionary can be searched by birth years, death years, positions held, professions, literary and artistic works, achievements, and other keywords. . . Two search pages are available: the normal search page allows searches to be done using Names, Keywords, Dates, or combinations thereof; the Advanced Search page allows searches to be done using boolean expressions.

If the name wanted is at all complicated, it is best to go to Advanced Search. This has the bonus of providing one of the clearest, most concise explanations of Boolean

searching, the 'logical elements', that I have seen. If this does not satisfy you, you can go to Help. This is worth reading for two contrasting reasons. The first three sections also provide a clear, concise overview of searching this (and, for that matter, other) sites. This is followed by a very long section entitled 'Format of entries – More than you ever wanted to know'. It begins, disarmingly: 'This section of the help file explains, in ludicrous detail, the format that each entry of the dictionary follows'. Well, they said it!

Any names I have looked for have been indexed conventionally and usably. The only exception has been the current Dalai Lama, entered under the startling form 'Tsering, Tensin (Tenzin Gyatso; the [14<sup>th</sup>] Dalai Lama)', which I have never seen elsewhere, not even as a *see* reference.

### Biography.com

A&E's *Biography.com* ([www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com)) is a decent site once you get past all the gossipy chatter. BioSearch appears on the top left-hand side (I missed it twice when I began using this site). It is run by the Arts and Entertainment television channel's *Biography* programme, but includes far, far more than the persons who have been portrayed in the TV programmes; there are over 25,000 entries. Its indexing is conventional and reliable enough. A curious feature is its indiscriminate and promiscuous system of links to any of the same elements of a name occurring elsewhere within the database, whether in another name or within the biographical entry for that person. This can be an amusing time-waster: a search, for example, for the jazz singer Blossom Dearie ('Dearie, Blossom' – it is her birth name, my chief revelation for that day), also turned up such disparate persons as Tao Qian, for a poem including blossom in the title, and movie actress Rita Hayworth, for the second paragraph of her biography, which begins, 'Blossoming into an international beauty . . .'. A search on Mies van der Rohe netted me an amazing 883 results, beginning with the name itself (properly indexed) and then going on to list all names including any element of Mies van der Rohe within them or the associated biographies.

### Biography-center

The aim of *Biography-center* ([www.biography-center.com](http://www.biography-center.com)) is to index all the available biographies on the Web. However, indexing seems to have been done without any overall authority control: names are entered as they appear in the original sites, resulting in some oddities. For example, the Australian athlete Betty Cuthbert can be found both in the Bs as 'Betty Cuthbert' and in the Cs as 'Cuthbert, Betty'; some popes are entered as 'Blessed . . .' and not under their papal names; Czar Nicholas II appears both in the Cs under 'Czar' and in the Ns as 'Nicholas II'; there are two separate entries for 'Christ, Jesus', with no entry for Jesus, as one would expect, even in a listing as loose as this.

It shares with *Biography.com* the facility for bringing up every name in which a particular element occurs, although it excludes the biographies. Hence my search for Mies van der Rohe produced a relatively modest '470 answers!', this piece of self-congratulation immediately contradicted by no hit on

Mies van der Rohe himself! Use this site only if you absolutely need to.

### *Lives, the biography resource*

As the URL ([www.amillionlives.com](http://www.amillionlives.com)) of *Lives, the biography resource*, suggests, this one is mammoth, consisting of categorized collections of biographical sites, a multi-layered resource. Right away, however, the user must note that the site is divided into two sections, individual biography and 'the Collections'. On the right-hand side of the screen, the content is categorized as 'Individuals', 'Collections' and 'Special Collections'. Although the letters of the alphabet are provided with 'Individuals', this is *not* an overall index to the collection as a whole, as it may appear at first sight; it is an index to the individual biographies only, and comprises only biographies of people who have died – no living persons are included. Because the sites containing the names are listed just as they are found, duplications for names of individuals are included – three listings for 'Ashe, Arthur', four for 'Astaire, Fred', without indication as to quality or comprehensiveness of each. Under 'Leonardo da Vinci', there is a *see* reference to 'da Vinci, Leonardo'. The latter is not filed under 'D', as the *see* reference would lead the user to expect, but under 'V'. De Gaulle is under De Gaulle, with nothing under G.; Corrie Ten Boom is filed under Ten Boom, with no reference under Boom. The Dalai Lama is under Dalai Lama, without reference from his other names. Choosing the appropriate letter of the alphabet can be a guessing game.

For biographies of living persons, you have to access the 'Collections', which are divided into 'General' and 'Special Collections'. Each is subdivided in turn: 'General' encompasses Professions, Eras, Regions and Criticism. 'Special Collections' takes in African Americans, Women, US Civil War, the Holocaust, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders, and Latin Americans/Latinos/Hispanics. Because there is no overall index, you have to locate and note any sites that you may find valuable. Initially the 'Collections' look promising, and useful sites can be found by ploughing through them, but you should not hope for too much.

### *Institutional sites*

The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada/Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents ([www.indexingsociety.ca/indexlinks.html#directories](http://www.indexingsociety.ca/indexlinks.html#directories)) includes a selected and annotated collection of resources for indexers under 'People' (scroll down to 'Reference Links', and then to 'People').

The American Society of Indexers' 'Reference sources on the Internet' (<http://www.asindexing.org/site/refbooks.shtml>) includes 'Biographical references sources', a listing of five sites. Apart from that, you may well find what you want under specialized subjects; for example, the splendid *Union list of artist names* appears above under 'Art and Architecture'. Many of the listings are annotated.

*Biography resources: finding information on the famous, infamous, and obscure*, by Susan A. Schreiner and Michael A.

Somers, appears on the Association of College & Research Libraries' site ([www.ala.org/acrl/resjan02.html](http://www.ala.org/acrl/resjan02.html)). This listing is valuable in that the items are selected and critiqued; however, indexers will still not know which resources are indexed or provide formal entry of names.

Compilations like these are valuable for indexers specializing in particular fields and wishing to locate some sources of names in those fields. However, they should be prepared for a 19/20 frustration level, for it is that twentieth site that is worth bookmarking.

### **Academy of Saint Gabriel**

The Academy of Saint Gabriel ([www.s-gabriel.org/index.html](http://www.s-gabriel.org/index.html)) consists of 60-odd volunteers who

research medieval names and armory. Our primary purpose is to assist members of the Society for Creative Anachronism to find historically accurate medieval names and coats of arms for use in SCA activities.

If, like myself, you have driven past the astonishing sight of riders in armour jousting on horseback, you will have seen the SCA at one of its recreations. In advising members of the SCA on how to construct medieval names for their alter egos, the Academy also passes valuable information to indexers on what the various elements of a name meant (and sometimes still mean) and how they were used. The Academy remarks: 'We use different (and generally stricter) criteria than the SCA'. A demonstration of its rigor can be found in its list of unreliable websites on names ([www.s-gabriel.org/names/arval/badpages.shtml](http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/arval/badpages.shtml)). Although that degree of rigor is not usually necessary for book indexers who are depending upon what the author says, genealogical indexers, among others, may well find this document of value.

For all indexers, it is an indication that papers in the Academy library ([www.s-gabriel.org/docs/](http://www.s-gabriel.org/docs/)) will be reliable sources of information. The library is worth more than a passing acquaintanceship for indexers dealing with developing world and medieval names, or with areas where individuals are reverting to traditional naming practices – taking patronyms rather than surnames, for example. Listed here are the papers of the Academy, organized by culture. Some are bibliographies and many are based on records pertaining only to a limited geographical area and historical period, which can be very small (the records of a few years in one city, for example). But these very limitations reflect the Academy's strict concern for authenticity and its scorn for sentimental speculation. Many of the individual sites mentioned below are products of the Academy.

### **Working the names out**

Quite simply, there is no web-based rival to the indexers' reliance on Booth, Mulvany and Wellisch for comprehensive and useful rules for ordering names. However, more detail is often required on particular names and their problems than can be found in the basic texts. The following provide some of that extra detail.

## Contemporary names

**HURIDOCS** HURIDOCS' (Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems) *How to record the names of persons* is a splendid resource and deserves to be much better known. The intention behind this 24-page PDF document is

... to provide a set of standard rules for use when completing any of the HURIDOCS Standard Formats for the recording and exchange of information on human rights ... It provides general guidelines for recording personal names in a standard form, style and order ... During the last years, there has been a constant increase in the diversity of nationalities, languages and cultures actively present in the HURIDOCS network.

This, along with 'a rich accumulated experience ... and ... exchange mechanisms within the network' have led to a need for 'the highest possible level of compatibility' and 'standardisation and efficiency in the recording and exchange of human rights information'.

The rules are based on the *Anglo-American cataloguing rules* (2nd edn, 1988 revision), the IFLA manual *Names of persons: national usage for entry in catalogues* and *The Chicago manual of style* (14th edn), all of which are seminal tools for the indexer. They therefore constitute a welcome expansion of those contained in Booth, Mulvany and Wellisch, and the many examples in each category are a boon, especially for African, Arabic and other names from the developing world. However, it must be noted that, because of HURIDOCS' mandate, the recording of only contemporary names, not historical ones, is addressed here. The other area that differs from the work of back-of-the-book indexers, specifically, is HURIDOCS' overriding need for consistency. This is due, of course, to that aforementioned 'network'. Book indexers may or may not feel the need to be as consistent as possible with other sources of information, and may or may not consider themselves to be working within an information 'network'.

Access the rules through [www.huridocs.org/popnames.htm](http://www.huridocs.org/popnames.htm), where you will have to complete a simple form in order to download the PDF file. Print the document out and keep it, rather than bookmarking the URL, in order to avoid having to fill out the form each time.

**Genealogical indexers** Colin Mills provides an ingenious categorization of forms of names in his paper *Cataloguing and indexing of personal names* for the Society of Indexers' Genealogical Group ([www.sigg.org.uk/arts/arts2202htm](http://www.sigg.org.uk/arts/arts2202htm)). Mills places the construction of names into six categories, with a listing of which countries conform to each category. For example, 'family name + personal name' is to be found in China, Hungary, Japan, Korea and Vietnam, and 'forename + individual name' in Burundi. The bare listings are amplified by extensive notes, which should be consulted as they often instance important exceptions, like that for Iceland (listed in the 'forename + surname' category): 'Icelandic names do not always include a surname in the accepted sense and may be formed as forename(s), followed by patronymic **or** patronymic **or** family name **or** family name **or** prefix plus place name' (bold in the original).

**Rules for archives** The National Council on Archives' (British) *Rules for the construction of personal names* ([www.hmc.gov.uk/nca/rules2.htm](http://www.hmc.gov.uk/nca/rules2.htm)) occasionally run counter to those in standard indexing texts and the forms used in mainstream biographical dictionaries and general encyclopedias. For example, the NCA reflects British preference for the last element of a compound surname, even in the case of hyphenated names. This results in a breathtaking simplification of European compound names in Rule 2.3C.1 'Names in European Languages', which states that in all modern European languages, 'the last word of the surname or its equivalent should be selected as the entry element'. An explanatory note acknowledges that this

... simplified Rule disregards the practice of the country or language of origin of the name in respect of compound and hyphenated names, prefixes, conventions for changes of name on marriage and at different periods for which AACR2 makes provision. It is intended to be easily applicable to European names found in British contexts without recourse to specialist reference books.

Whether indexers outside of the NCA could or should follow this attractive heresy is another topic.

That said, apart from the rules having been compiled for the purposes of archivists (fuller forms of names and additional detail where indexers normally use less), there is much of value here for the indexer. The sections on Welsh and medieval names are particularly well expressed, and the sections on royalty are very useful provided one ignores the wholesale inclusion of dates here.

## Medieval names

*A brief introduction to medieval bynames* ([www.s-gabriel.org/names/arval/bynames](http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/arval/bynames)), by Talan Gwynek (Brian M. Scott) and Arval Benicœur (Joshua Mittleman) is a clearly written, basic introduction to medieval names consisting of a given name followed by a word or phrase identifying the person when surnames had not yet come into use. The same principles also apply to many names in the developing world today, so universal was and is the custom.

The purpose of *Medieval names archive* ([www.panix.com/~mittle/names/](http://www.panix.com/~mittle/names/)) by Joshua Mittleman is to provide 'historical re-creators' with reliable guides to choosing an authentic medieval name. Skip the introduction and warnings to those wishing to adopt such a name (unless you are also thinking of doing this) and scroll down through to the listing of sites below. Many of these are too detailed for most indexing purposes, but there is no doubt of their authenticity – they are often based on names in historical censuses and records, and the like – and reliability, chosen by the rigorous Mittleman, a stalwart of the Academy of St Gabriel. You may well find an answer to a vexing question here.

*The Latinization of names in the middle ages* ([members.tripod.com/nicola5/articles/latin.html](http://members.tripod.com/nicola5/articles/latin.html)) by Magistra Nicolaa de Bracton (Susan Carroll-Clark), may be of help to the indexer perplexed by Latin and vernacular name variants borne by the same person.

## Other specialized sites

This is a collection of sites devoted to specific topics, which I have found particularly useful and/or interesting. The first four provide reliable indexed forms of names in their fields. The remainder provide at least reasonably substantive background information on how names are formed.

### The sciences

Eric Weisstein's *World of scientific biography* ([scienceworld.wolfram.com/biography/](http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/biography/)) provides names listed alphabetically or retrieved with the use of the search box. Alternative forms, entered into the search box, will bring up the biography, headed by the name in an instantly usable indexed form. I tested the system with two names:

- Al-Khwarizmi, Muhammed ibn Musa – I entered 'Khwarizmi' in the search box, and immediately got the indexed form;
- Gerard of Cremona – by entering 'cremona' in the search box, I was rewarded with Cremona, Luigi, and Gerard of Cremona.

Weisstein proudly claims that his site consists of '1,064 entries, 2,117 cross-references, 223 figures, 0 animated graphics, 0 live Java applets, and counting...'

The good folks at the School of Mathematics and Statistics at Scotland's University of St Andrews provide a very useful site, *The MacTutor history of mathematics archive*, which includes a full alphabetical index to the biographies ([www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Indexes/Full\\_Alph.html](http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Indexes/Full_Alph.html)). Names are entered in conventional indexing format, but because compound names are indexed under each element, it is best to go to the biography to see how the biographee is addressed in the article. The number of names is not given, but I estimate it to be between 1500 and 2000.

### The arts

**Art** According to its website, the Getty Research Institute . . . is an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. Its goals are to promote innovative scholarship in the arts and humanities, to bridge traditional academic boundaries, and to provide a unique environment for research, critical inquiry, and debate. The Research Library — accessible to both on-site and remote users — supports scholars and researchers around the world.

The institute provides two valuable sites for names, the *Union list of artist names* (ULAN) ([www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/ulan/index.html](http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/ulan/index.html)) and the *Thesaurus of geographic names* (TGN) ([www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/tgn/](http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/tgn/)). They comprise two of the three vocabulary databases (the third is the Art and Architecture Thesaurus), and both are comprehensive and reliable.

I have found ULAN especially valuable for those difficult Italian medieval names that may or may not be entered in either direct or inverted order respectively. Only the briefest descriptions accompany the names, just enough to identify the person, but variant forms are numerous to the point of

being exhaustive. Concise searching tips are presented under the search box.

**Music** *Dr. Estrella's incredibly abridged dictionary of composers* ([www.stevenestrella.com/composers/index.html](http://www.stevenestrella.com/composers/index.html)) — 'basic and accurate biographical information on more than 500 composers' — provides an alphabetical listing in indexed form. This is authoritative, reliable and comprehensive, in spite of the title. Steven Estrella is being modest.

His site is better than the more authoritative-sounding *ClassicalNet composer master index* ([www.classical.net/music/mstrindx.html](http://www.classical.net/music/mstrindx.html)), which lists 364 composers, but not always in the most reliable, useful way. For example, Jean-Henri d'Anglebert is listed as D'Anglebert, but under the As, with no corresponding entry in the Ds; Josquin des Prez is listed, correctly, in the Js, but as Des Prez, Josquin, and not Josquin! To be sure, Anglebert (or D'Anglebert), with or without curious alphabetization, does not appear in Dr Estrella's dictionary, but it is equally sure we cannot have everything in this imperfect world. Dr Estrella gets the nod, but both sites are helpful.

### National and ethnic origins

**African names** *The contemporary Africa database* (<http://www.africaexpert.org>) is 'a continuously growing, participatory online project, designed to provide easily accessible and current information concerning prominent Africans, African organizations, and dates in the African calendar'. Those prominent Africans included in this database numbered 8,607 as of 14 March 2003. Click on 'Browse Profiled People' to reach the alphabetical listings.

This one is lovely: beautifully laid out, with the names indexed just as we need them, then a brief synopsis of the person's career with a link to more. It is searchable by name or alphabet (and divisions within individual letters) on every screen, and all in a clear non-serif font. The only disadvantage, apart from the lack of historical coverage, is that there are no *see* references from alternative forms or other elements of a compound name. However, with the search tools so accessible, this is no more than a minor inconvenience.

*Issues in cataloging non-western materials: special problems with African language materials* ([filebox.vt.edu/users/bertel/africana.html](http://filebox.vt.edu/users/bertel/africana.html)), although written for library cataloguers, presents some valuable information on African names. Scroll down to 'African Names: Examples of Problems in Cataloguing', and the three following sections — 'Other Inclusions in African Names', 'Mossi Names from Burkina Faso' and 'Names from Benin'. This is a valuable source of information in an area where very little help is available.

**Arabic names** *Arabic naming practices and period names list*, by Da'ud ibn Auda (David Appleton) ([www.s-gabriel.org/names/daud/arabic-naming/](http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/daud/arabic-naming/)) begins by explaining the meaning of various elements of traditional Arabic names (probably the more valuable part of this paper for indexers) and then goes on to list many given names.

**Mongolian names** *On the documentation and construction of period Mongolian names*, by Baras-aghur Naran ([www.s-gabriel.org/names/baras-aghur/mongolian.html](http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/baras-aghur/mongolian.html)) is not as immediately useful or accessible as many of the others. It is quite academic; I cite it as of possible use if ever you have to sort out a Mongolian name from the period of the Mongol Empire.

**Jewish names** *Jewish naming convention in Angevin England*, by Eleazar ha-Levi ([www.sca.org/heraldry/laurel/names/jewish.html](http://www.sca.org/heraldry/laurel/names/jewish.html)) is restricted by geography and period, but is of more general applicability than would seem from the title.

**Hungarian names** *Hungarian names 101*, by Walraven van Nijmegen (Brian R. Speer) ([www.geocities.com/Athens/1336/magyarnames101.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1336/magyarnames101.html)) contains a simple and clear exposition of patronymics and bynames applicable to other cultural conventions as well. Although the author is addressing medieval names, he also goes into modern Hungarian names, which follow the same order as Chinese names, the person being addressed in surname-forename order, and the name entered similarly, without a comma between the two elements.

**Russian names** Paul Wickenden of Thanet (Paul Goldschmidt) provides an admirable exposition of Russian names in ([www.sca.org/heraldry/paul/](http://www.sca.org/heraldry/paul/)) *A dictionary of period Russian names*. The most relevant part of this is 'Paul Goldschmidt's dictionary of Russian names - grammar', ([www.sca.org/heraldry/paul/zgrammar.html](http://www.sca.org/heraldry/paul/zgrammar.html)). This consists of 14 (printed-out) pages of the history of Russian names, element by element: given names, patronymics (masculine and feminine), and so many variations that at one point the author begins 'Just to make things even more fun . . .', metronymics, bynames, toponyms, surnames and titles. The emphasis is on medieval names, but any indexer having to cope with Russian names of any period would find this useful. As a bonus it is entertaining reading.

**Welsh names** *Welsh names and surnames*, by J.B. Davies ([web.korrnet.org/welsh/files/jbdavies.html](http://web.korrnet.org/welsh/files/jbdavies.html)) provides a longer than usual explanation of traditional Welsh names. Because there is a trend for a return to traditional names, this one is handy to know about.

**Far Eastern names** Vietnamese names are explained concisely on a ThingsAsian site with the same name, *Vietnamese names*, at [www.thingsasian.com/goto\\_article/article.630.html](http://www.thingsasian.com/goto_article/article.630.html) Name order, the meaning of the elements, and forms of address are given.

In a more lighthearted, although thoughtful, vein is John Fairbairn's discussion of *Korean name variants* ([www.msoworld.com/mindzine/news/orient/go/korea/korean-names.html](http://www.msoworld.com/mindzine/news/orient/go/korea/korean-names.html)) for MSO Worldwide, the organizers of the Mind Sports Olympiad.

*Etiquette - Japanese names* ([www.japan-guide.com/e/e2271.html](http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2271.html)) provides some short background information on Japanese naming practices. A link from this site ([http://business.baylor.edu/Phil\\_VanAuken/JapaneseSurnames.html](http://business.baylor.edu/Phil_VanAuken/JapaneseSurnames.html)) comprises a long list of Japanese surnames, which may well be useful to the indexer unable to determine which element is which.

## Conclusion

As anyone who uses the Internet knows, there is so much information out there, and so many sites that appear or disappear almost every day. Many look promising, and then deliver much less than the indexer needs, while probably being of value to other users. Each site one comes across needs to be studied for direct and reliable application. Almost every site I have mentioned here, and they have been carefully chosen, has exhibited both advantages and disadvantages. I would welcome suggestions of other sites, and comments, positive or negative, on the ones I have mentioned. My email address is given at the foot of this article.

## Notes

1. I chose the form of entry 'bin Laden, Osama' because that was the form available at the time, as explained in the text. Since then, cataloguing and indexing authorities have come up with the same form. However, other indexers may disagree on the grounds that 'bin' means 'son of', thus preferring 'Laden, Osama bin'. Also, authors of the books we are indexing may prefer the latter, in which case we defer to them.
2. All the URLs cited in this paper were checked on 17 March 2003 as being alive and well, and as described.

## References

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*As a library cataloguer, Noeline Bridge wrestled with the entry of names for 12 years. She has been freelancing as an indexer for 10 years, but still finds names fascinating, if troublesome at times, and continues to present workshops and write articles on them. She is a past president of IASC/SCAD, and is now international liaison for the society. Email: [nbridge@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:nbridge@nb.sympatico.ca)*

Use Namechk to see if your desired username or vanity url is still available at dozens of popular Social Networking and Social Bookmarking websites. Promote your brand consistently by registering a username that is still available on the majority of the most popular sites. Find the best username with Namechk. Securing your brand is important. It provides consistency to your users, and allows your business to be seen and recognized in more places. Namechk has partnered with some top companies to help you ensure your brand is consistent and easy to find across the internet. Read More About us. H A personal name, or full name, in onomastic terminology also known as prosoponym (from Ancient Greek ἰσχυρὸν ἄνθρωπος / prāsōpon - person, and ὄνομα / onoma - name), is the set of names by which an individual person is known, and that can be recited as a word-group, with the understanding that, taken together, they all relate to that one individual. In many cultures, the term is synonymous with the birth name or legal name of the individual. In linguistic classification, personal names are studied within a There are dozens of websites where you can find information about people or organizations and depending on the country, information openness can be different. Iâ€™m not going to write about it in details as the governmental resources I would provide might not be relevant to you, as a resident of a different country.â Depending on the complexity of your search and how successful it was using previous methods you might want to generate a wordlist. Itâ€™s useful when you need to try a lot of options as you donâ€™t have a clear picture of what username should be but have a lot of guesses. I have used this Python script for generating the wordlist below: Name and surname were specified in Names.txt, in Terminal we just see the output. Username search. Whois verification will only be needed for the Registrant contact information for generic TLDs (gTLDs) in the following cases: for new registrations; for registrant contact information changes on existing domains. When a new domain is registered, we will immediately send an email to the Registrant email address specified for the domain.â NB in regard to new registrations: You must verify the email address by clicking on the link within 15 calendar days after registration. If you do not verify it within 15 calendar days, the domain will be suspended, and the DNS of the domain name will be changed. The domain will resolve to a landing page with the instructions on how verification can be made and, as a result, the DNS will have the previous settings, and your website will be restored.