A Script to Allow Full Editing of Index Topics in InDesign CS4

INTRODUCTION

InDesign CS4 has a limitation that does not allow full editing of index topics. For example, if certain topics appear in the index as:

Burns, Joy 3, 5, 11
Burns, Max 2, 9, 17, 23, 45

they cannot be edited, as topics, to become:

Burns
  Joy 3, 5, 11
  Max 2, 9, 17, 23, 45

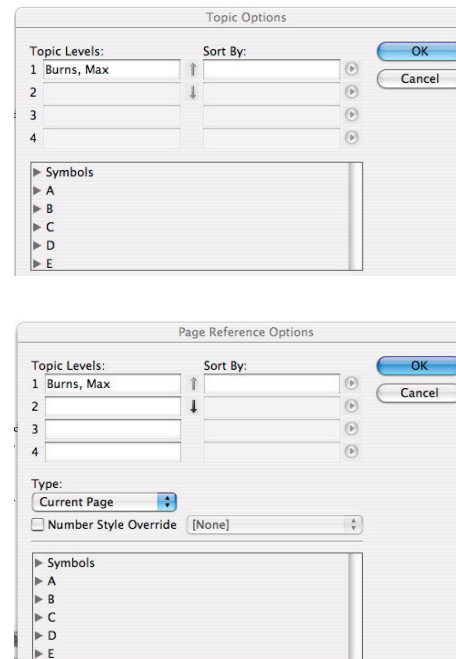The *Topic Options* window (right, top) shows why: the window does not allow entries into Levels 2, 3 and 4.

However, full editing is possible in the *Page Reference Options* window (right, bottom). The problem is, of course, that each individual page reference has to be altered – a time consuming process if there are more than a few entries.

Three scripts overcome this limitation. These scripts are called:

- *index-list.jsx*
- *duplicate_line.jsx*
- *index-list-update.jsx*

index-list.jsx

This script exports all the index topics in an InDesign document (the one that is open) to a new InDesign document called *index_update*. Within *index_update* the topics can be fully edited to four levels. When editing is complete, the topics can be exported back to the original document.

duplicate_line.jsx

This script performs a certain function that makes it easier to edit the topics within *index_update*.

index-list-update.jsx

This script takes the edited topics from *index_update* and exports them back to the original InDesign document.

HOW TO INSTALL THE SCRIPTS

In what follows, it is assumed the three scripts have been installed in the correct folder to allow InDesign to access them from *Window > Automation > Scripts*. Details can be obtained here:

http://www.kahrel.plus.com/indesign/script-info.html#download_install

HOW TO USE THE SCRIPTS

1. Open the document whose index topics you want to edit. Let's assume the document is called TEST.

2. Run *index-list.jsx*. This script will generate a new document called *index_update* in the same folder as TEST. If a document with the same name already exists (because you have run *index-list.jsx* previously), you will be asked to rename or delete the existing document. You must delete or rename it, else *index-list.jsx* will not run.

3. When *index-list.jsx* has generated a list of topics in the new document, you can begin to edit the topics. The process requires some explanation. The topics appear one per line. For example, the first two topics in the index might be:

   Burns, Joy
   Burns, Max

   If the topics already have several levels, a "#" symbol is used to indicate the level breaks. For example, if the topic in TEST had two levels:

   Burns
       Max

   that same topic inside *index_update* would appear as:

   Burns#Max

   The "#" indicates that *Burns* is at Level 1, and *Max* is at Level 2.

4. To edit the topic, you insert a 'tab' after the topic and add the new version of the topic. The script *index-list-update.jsx*, when it is run, looks for tabs and updates the index inside TEST with what appears to the right of the tab. An example should make this clear. Assume you want to change *Burns, Max* into a two-level topic. Within *index_update* the topic would first appear as:

    Burns, Max

    After adding the edited version of the topic, the line would appear as:

    Burns, Max   Burns#Max

    There is a 'tab' after the first *Max*, and it is this tab which triggers the update script (*index-list-update.jsx*) to alter the topic in TEST to a two-level topic.

    The two examples which follow show how to turn a single-level topic into a three-level and a four-level topic (the long space indicates a 'tab'):

    Burns, Max   Burns#Max#early childhood

    Burns, Joy   Burns#Joy#early childhood#first school

5. It should now be clear why the script *duplicate_line.jsx* comes in handy. Instead of having to insert a tab and retype the topic (before editing it), *duplicate_line.jsx* does that for you. By simply clicking in the line that is to be edited and running *duplicate_line.jsx*, you get the tab and a repeat of the original topic. The big advantage of using *duplicate_line.jsx* is that it can process multiple lines at once. If you have several topics that have to be edited, simply select them, run *duplicate_line.jsx,* and the selected topics will be duplicated ready for editing. It is convenient to assign a keyboard shortcut to this script.

6. When you have finished editing, make TEST active and run *index-list-update.jsx*. The script will search through *index_update* looking for tabs. After it has found all lines that contain a 'tab', it notes the changes that are to be made, and then enters TEST and makes those changes.

NOTE: Apostrophies in the original topic, such as in *Gannon's Hotel*, may cause the topic to be skipped and not edited. You may have to rename the topic in the original document before attempting to edit it.

Guy Burns

August 2009