

# LETTERS

This letter is in response to the review by Thomas Jacoby of *The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals on CD-ROM* published in this journal 1995 20/2. As General Editor of the *Avery Index*, I appreciate the view that the *Avery Index* on CD 'is as indispensable on disk as it has been on paper'.

I would like to take this opportunity to recommend a searching technique on the CD-ROM which obviates the problem of variant name forms. By hitting 'control, enter' at each variation of a name, one can select all variations and have them searched together. This results in a display which includes records for all name variants. This is the easiest method of searching the indexes and provides the user with the most complete information, despite variations in name form.

Mr. Jacoby is correct when he writes 'use of the indexes indicates some of the problems inherent in the retrospective conversion of record . . .'. Many of the name inconsistencies are precisely because of reconned records and pre-AACR II forms of names. In a database of this size (some 136,000 records, spanning almost two decades), there are going to be errors.

The *Avery Index* does create a name authority file for names and firms used as subjects – the Avery Reference File available an RLIN in the Authorities File. In the RLIN environment in which we produce the *Index*, there are no programs for name matching. We also do not currently have the capacity to do global changes when a name or date changes, so every change must be laboriously done by hand for each record.

We are struggling to find an effective yet cost efficient solution to the name authority problem. We do realise that this problem must be solved especially as we move forward with plans for further retrospective conversion. We plan additional maintenance of the database this summer in order to eliminate single record types but the larger clean-up issues and changes will have to wait.

In the meantime just hit 'control-enter' and select them all!

Ted Goodman,  
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