Basisboek technische communicatie
. Peter Bart and Michaël
Steehouder (eds). Assen: Van Gorcum, 2008. 328 pp. ISBN 978
90 232 4386 1 (pbk) €42.50.

Basisboek technische communicatie
is a comprehensive Dutch
language manual on technical communication. The idea for the
book was developed by the education and training working group
of the Dutch Society for Technical Information and Communica-
tion (STIC). It is meant as a training manual for technical
communicators and the subjects of the chapters are derived from
The guidelines for professional education and training of technical
communicators in Europe
, developed by TC Europe.
The book therefore covers a wide variety of subjects, such as
project management, graphic design, editing, user testing, online
help systems and translation. One whole chapter is devoted to
indexing; it was written by NIN member Pierke Bosschieter, who
was invited to write this chapter as a result of the excellent rela-
tions NIN has developed with STIC. Furthermore, one of the
book's editors, Professor Steehouder, has conducted research
into users of indexes, which may also explain his special interest
in indexing.
The book is clearly structured and practical, thus making it
very suitable as a training manual for beginners in technical
communication. Nearly all the 18 chapters end with a checklist,
for example. The chapter on indexing presents a very short, basic
overview and cannot, of course, be a comprehensive guide.
Nevertheless, the chapter manages to cover a lot of ground. All
the important aspects of indexing are covered, such as length and
depth of indexing, indexing software, indexing standards, choice
of entries, cross-references, sorting orders and layout. At the back
of the book there is a list of recommended reading and useful
websites, ordered by chapter. Those readers who want to know
more about indexing will find all the well-known basic books on
the subject there (Booth, Mulvany etc). A few minor points of
criticism here: the list does not mention any indexing websites,
and my preference would have been to have these recommended
reading lists attached to each chapter, instead of at the back of
the book.
The index to the manual itself was also compiled by Pierke
Bosschieter. Although this had to be done under great time
pressure as the book was already way behind its publishing
schedule, she still managed to produce a fairly comprehensive
index. I know she would have loved to have done a much more
thorough job, but I would go as far as to say that for a Dutch
language book it is a very comprehensive index, as most Dutch
books tend to have very inadequate indexes. On the whole, I think
it is very important that indexing is recognized as one of the skills
a (Dutch) technical communicator needs to possess, and this
training manual is a reflection of this.

Caroline Diepeveen, indexer