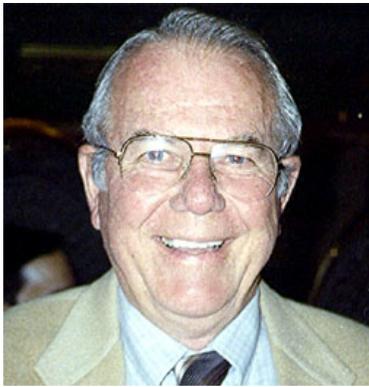


GET RID OF CHEATER!

-- Part One of Two Articles (Revised June 28, 2004)



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We faceters know that there will be a definite need to alter the index settings as we go about faceting our gems. Something bothers me about the terms most faceters use when they describe the procedure and the faceting machine control they use to get flat on a facet. Those terms are "CHEATING" and "CHEATER." Cheating to get the job done does not sound nice to me. None of us feels comfortable in saying we cheated to get a beautiful stone completed.

As a group, why don't we decide on a NEW NAME for the procedure of slightly altering index settings? What we are doing is simply splitting a 96 Index Gear (as an example) into an almost unlimited number of hairline settings. The procedure should not be considered as cheating, in any stretch of the imagination. We are simply rotating the gem left or right to get flat on a facet, from side to side. We are fine-tuning. We are taking advantage of all of the features our faceting machine offers us.

In cutting for a competition, you have to be out of your mind if you do not use your faceting machine to its fullest potential. We are making very fine adjustments because the index gear does not have enough teeth. The procedure is a REQUIRED operation if you are cutting for competition. Index splitting left and right is just as important and natural as it is to raise or lower the stone on the mast in order to set the facet angle...to get flat on the facet at it's top, bottom, and both sides.

I feel that we should all call the control an INDEX SPLITTER, and call the procedure INDEX SPLITTING. Of all of the possibilities splitter and splitting sound the best to me. The terms describe what we are really using and doing.

There have been many articles and books written about the need to "cheat," after the transfer of a gem to another dop. This is sometimes done to get the crown facets aligned properly where they meet the girdle facets and the pavilion facets. This procedure is not a matter of choice. These corrections



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become necessary because of very small errors in the diameter size of dops, a dop that is bent, the need to get a level girdle, the faceting machine being just barely out of alignment, a change of lap or index gear being used, the lap not being perfectly flat, the need to work at a different area of a lap, the transfer jig not being accurate, the poor quality of a particular index you are using, the facetors tired eyesight at the time, the stone that moved in the wax, or because of many other possible reasons.

My main use of the "cheater" is to make very small adjustments from side to side on a facet, as I go to smoother laps and finally to the polish lap. I take lots of notes as I facet. The index setting will be written there--12-24-36-48 or whatever. And above the index setting, I note left and right corrections like L4 or R1-1/2, etc. As I go to finer laps these L & R amounts will change. I want to know exactly what the settings were when I last worked on that facet! I want to know as much as I can about that facet in case I have to go over it later, because of some changed condition in the surrounding facets. I also make notes about the facet angle. I "cheat" by noting the 43-degree facet was last worked on at 43.09, or 42.8, etc. Is this angle cheat OK and the index cheat is not OK? They are both OK...they are the smart way to use your faceting machine.

I have had situations where I used a 96 Index Gear and yet had to make large "cheater" corrections, in order to get properly placed on a facet. I could go to using a 120 index (or a 200 index if one were available) but then it would be so easy to get set at the wrong gear notch, and really screw things up. I could set down on the wrong group of small facets! I prefer working with a 96 Index Gear. My tired eyes can still see pretty well, and the adjusting of fine details in between gear notches is done with use of the "cheater."

So what do you think? Should we leave the "cheaters" as is or should we give the procedure a better name? I favor the terms INDEX SPLITTER and INDEX SPLITTING. For short we should say SPLITTER and SPLITTING.