The indexing process is a complex series of actions. First and foremost, decisions need to be made on what sort of index is needed. This can be determined by examining the document in question and taking in consideration the needs of the user group. There also may be organizational policies that further govern the indexing, such as term limits (9 terms max), controlled vocabularies, etc.

With that criteria in place, the indexer can then examine the document. Reading the main important parts of a document such as bibliographic information, abstracts, the introduction, paragraph subtitles, summary, conclusion and citations can give a great deal of insight to what the main themes of the document are about. Then further selection of how best to translate those themes, or the aboutness, of the document into terms to index. Once those are selected, then a new entry can be made into the index.

I was pleased to read about the concept of an evolutionary vocabulary authority list. One of my previous positions was working for a retired lawyer who had hundreds of boxes of documents that needed to be sorted through, decided which were worth saving, and then I would scan and title the documents. Unfortunately, since it was only a few month position, we weren't able to create a clear authority list for titling, nor organizing the documents into a clear index with sub folder headings. It would have been nice to make order out of that chaos.