**Writing Better Metadata**

Writing the best keywords, title and abstract is all about increasing your article’s discoverability. Some readers will come to articles through reading lists, or journals they already know. Many will come through more general search engines. Full abstracts may be shown on specialised indexes, platforms or library sites, but it is useful to think about what can be seen on search engines as well (this will usually just be the first few lines of the abstract, for example). Databases, indexers, libraries etc. will all use your title, keywords and abstract to decide when to display your article in a search, or as ‘recommended reading’ following other products.

It is a good idea to spend time working on your abstract and keywords after you have written your article, and definitely before submission for peer-review. Keywords and variants can be useful in your headings, abstract, conclusions, and even in image captions. Be careful of ‘Keyword Stuffing’ – overuse of keywords can make your article lose credibility.

**Keywords:**

- 6-8 key words, or can be key phrases

- Read through your article and write down any phrases you have repeated to start off with

- Ask yourself: What is my article about? What techniques/designs/methodologies were used? Who/what is studied? What were the results? Answers to these will help pull out keywords

- Think from a reader’s point of view and be relevant

- Be specific, and also use variant terms and phrases that readers are likely to search for (graphic design, design education, arts of design, graphic art etc.)

- Include full forms of any abbreviations or acronyms

- Word order, spelling, punctuation and capitalization are all relevant

- Type your keywords into a search engine and check that the results you are coming up with match your research

**Title:**

- Include 1-2 keywords in the first 60 characters of your title

- As a guide, 10 to 12 words is enough for a title

- Keep it relevant, subtitles can be reworded into the abstract if needed

**Abstract:**

- Write your essential findings and key points into the first few lines of the abstract

- Include 3-6 keywords

- Abstracts are marketing tools – editors read them before accepting articles or allocating peer reviewers, they are presented for conferences, they can be read by A&I services

- Explain your motivations behind the paper, what the aims were, and what your findings or concluding thoughts are. These are generally more descriptive in the humanities than they are in sciences or law, but abstracts should still have a sense of the purpose and importance of your article

**Sites to test keywords, titles & abstracts:**

- The best way to track the above is by using a range of Metadata Search Tools. These will help identity key themes and unique phrases to make your keywords, title and abstract stand out.

- [Google Trends](https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US) and [Google Adwords](https://adwords.google.com/intl/en_uk/home/tools/keyword-planner/) are useful for popular words and phrases in your field

- RefSeek is a very user-friendly method of checking MetaDdata <https://www.refseek.com/>

- Metacrawler allows you to check several search engines at once <http://www.metacrawler.com/>