

## Keyword requirements – advice for authors

**Metadata** (*title/author details/abstract/keywords*) is a vital part of any paper, because it is the metadata which describes your paper and which gets sent to many online sources, including indexing services like Scopus and Google Scholar, and from which users undertaking online searches will trace your paper.

To achieve maximum findability, the **metadata is vital**.

The Keywords field is **essential** in that this is the most frequently searched field if search results need to be narrowed, i.e. if the original search has produced too many records.

The **title** is a very concise indication of the content of a paper.

The **abstract** is a more detailed, but still concise, description of that content.

The **keywords** codify the key words and terms from the title and abstract (and text of the paper, if necessary).

Thus, the keywords should

- a) contain **ALL** the essential words/terms from the **title** and **abstract** and
- b) be in an **optimum format**, which is ideally of 1-3 words; if more than 1 word, the words should be a **phrase**, *not* a description (see below)

**TO HELP YOU DECIDE ON THE BEST KEYWORDS, THINK**

a) **WHAT IS THE PAPER ABOUT [IN TERMS OF KEYWORDS AND PHRASES]?**

b) **WHAT WOULD I SEARCH FOR IF I WAS TRYING TO RETRIEVE A PAPER ON THIS TOPIC?**

## Keyword Essentials

*The following requirements are not intended to limit your freedom to choose keywords; they are intended to maximise the online retrieval of your article by putting your chosen keywords into the form most likely to be found when users search for topics.*

### A) General

1. The Keywords field should contain **ALL** the essential word/phrases in the **title**, e.g.

a) If the title is “*Semantic metrics*”, then that phrase should also be used in the keywords field.

b) Similarly, for the title

“*Market information feedback for the high-tech dominated IPO companies*”

the keywords should be:

“*market information; information feedback; high tech companies; IPO companies.*”

c) the Keywords should also contain the phrase that IPO stands for (i.e. “*initial public offering*”) and also the full version of “high tech”, i.e. “*high technology*” – if only one of the terms is there, users searching using the other format will not find it.

Therefore, the keywords should be:

*“market information; information feedback; high tech companies; high technology; IPO companies; initial public offering companies.”*

2. Similarly, the Keywords field should contain **ALL** the essential word/phrases in the **abstract**

e.g. the key words/phrases in the following abstract have been underlined:

*“Improved interoperability between public organisations as well as between public and private organisations is of critical importance to make electronic government more successful. In this paper, stages of e-government interoperability are identified and discussed. Four stages are presented: work process stage; knowledge sharing stage; value creation stage; strategy alignment stage.”*

(**Note:** both “e-government” and “electronic government” are used for the reason as outlined in 1c) above)

See also section B4, below.

3. Additional keywords from the **full text** can be added if the author feels they are relevant, but only if they add significantly to the likelihood of the paper being retrieved, i.e. if they are “key”.

(And if they are “key”, consider why they are not appearing in the abstract.)

4. *Where applicable*, keywords from the **title of the journal** should also appear in the keywords (e.g. for International Journal of Nanotechnology, “*nanotechnology*” should appear in the keywords; for International Journal of Environment and Pollution, “*environmental pollution*” would be the phrase to use.

This is obviously more applicable to some journals rather than others. Common sense should be used, but in general, keywords from journal titles should be included where possible.

## **B) Specific**

1. **ALL** keywords should be in **lower case** (apart from abbreviations or proper names) and all keywords should preferably be **separated by semi-colons** and **end with a full stop**

a) e.g.

*balanced scorecard; performance measurement; performance improvement; SMEs; small and medium-sized enterprises; Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence; MBCPE; knowledge management; KM; R&D; research and development; ebusiness; electronic business.*

(All e-XXX terms should also be *electronic XXX*).

2. Acronyms should be spelt out where it makes sense (which is usually if the acronym is 3 or more letters):

a) e.g. *DEA; data envelopment analysis; TQM; total quality management; DFA; design for assembly*

b) please note that the spelt-out forms of acronyms are in lower case unless they are **proper names** (e.g. in 1a) above - *Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence; MBCPE*)

c) Although use of “of” and “and” is discouraged (*see 3 below*) it is acceptable in the spelling out of acronyms:

e.g. *ANOVA; analysis of variance; R&D; research and development; QoS; quality of service.*

d) *Acronyms of two letters only are discouraged, since they will either be Stop Words (i.e. searches will retrieve nothing) or will be too common, i.e. have too many other meanings*  
e.g. *IS or IT for information systems or information technology will be **stop words**.*

3. **No brackets.** Please do not use brackets; anything in brackets should be made into a separate keyword.

e.g. *supply chain management (SCM) should be *supply chain management*; *SCM*.*

4. Although **single keywords** are acceptable, **subject phrases** are **preferable**; **descriptive phrases** should be **avoided**, e.g.

a) *information; security* may be better as *information security*, if that is what the article is about

b) *information systems and technology* should be *information systems; information technology*; (for reasons outlined in A 1b) above)

c) *social needs with economic growth* should be *social needs; economic growth*;

d) *reconstruction of terminology* should be *terminology reconstruction*.

e) *investing in passive energy* should be *passive energy investment*.

5. **Normal phrases** should **not** be **hyphenated**

a) *knowledge-management* should be *knowledge management*; if in doubt, leave the hyphen out.

6. If the article is all or mostly about a **particular country**, **add** the country to the keywords (and spell out acronyms)

a) *UK; United Kingdom; United States; USA* etc.

7. **Spelling and terminology** should be **British**

a) *modelling* not *modeling*; *moulds* not *molds*, *behaviour* not *behavior*, *organisation* not *organization* etc.

8. **Plurals** are **preferred**

a) *dispersion models* rather than *dispersion model*.