**Keyword Guidelines and Tips**

Keywords are important for increasing discoverability. They are one of the highest ranked fields used by Amazon.com and other retailers to determine relevance in search results. For example, when compiling search results, Amazon.com tends to weight keywords just below the title/subtitle and above the description, meaning keywords can have a very significant impact on a book’s search ranking.

**Best Practices**

1. Keywords should be words and phrases that an end user might search for.
2. Separate keywords with a semicolon and space. This allows keyword phrases to include commas, if necessary.
3. Avoid special characters. Some special characters, such as “&” and “%”, may cause issues when entered into web search tools.
4. Include synonyms and alternate spellings.
   1. Example: World War II; World War 2; Second World War; WWII
   2. Example: indigenous people; aboriginal people; native people
   3. Example: labor; labour; organization; organisation; analog; analogue
5. Keywords should be relevant and describe the book’s content. Misleading or irrelevant keywords used to increase search results should be avoided.
6. 500 characters is a suggested maximum for the keywords field. The upper limit for major retailers is between 500 and 600 characters.
7. **If more than 10 words/phrases are used, the most relevant keywords should be listed first.** Some retailers and aggregators only accept a certain number of keywords, so in some cases, additional keywords will be cut off. If keywords include several alternate spellings or synonyms, less common terms/spellings can be considered less relevant.

**Choosing Keywords**

* **Think like the reader.** What search terms would the audience of this book use? If someone searched for this keyword, would they be interested in this book?
* **Google potential keywords.** Wikipedia and other sources often provide definitions, synonyms, and related topics that might be good keywords.
* **Think broadly and narrowly.** Consider broader and narrower subject areas, synonyms, geographic keywords (Lima; Peru; South America), temporal keywords (20th century; twentieth century; 1900s; 1960s; 60s), and form (essays, biography, etc.) as keywords.
* **Avoid long phrases.** Using more short phrases and single words allows a wider range of potential searches to find the book.