# Notes for authors preparing indexes

As author, you are in the best position to know what type and size of index your book requires. Consider your readers' needs when compiling the index and adjust the complexity and language level accordingly. Information should be listed under the term that most readers will probably look at first. Use cross-references to list variations or written-out versions and abbreviations/acronyms. An understanding of the readers' needs will help you determine what to put in and what to leave out. Bear in mind that an index is a tool for the reader and not a summary of a book's content, you should always consider what is likely to be looked up.

You will be asked to index your book at page proof stage. Please bear in mind the fact that if you make extensive amendments to the page proofs resulting in changes to the pagination, the index will be affected.

A typical index entry is composed of the main heading and subheadings (with page numbers), as well as cross-references (as required). An index should include important ideas, facts, names, and terms that receive significant discussion in the text. Items that are only mentioned incidentally in the text should not be included.

**Main headings** are typically nouns rather than adjectives or verbs. For example:
1. Terms or concepts used throughout the book.
2. Names of authors whose work is quoted or discussed at length.
3. Names of people mentioned because of their importance in the text.
4. Names of relevant countries, regions, and jurisdictions.
5. Names of relevant organisations, political parties, and institutions.

**Subheadings** (consider creating a sub-entry when a main entry would contain more than six page numbers). For example:
1. Aspects or explanations of terms or concepts.
2. Subdivisions logically related to the main heading.
3. Works by authors listed under a main heading.

- Always bear in mind ease of use for the reader: an index entry followed by numerous page references is very time-consuming to use. It is far better to have sub-entries thus:

information  256
        exchange  156
        services  114–21
        systems  230
        technology  232–6

- Generally, one level of sub-entry should be enough; however, if you need to use sub-sub-entries, these should be run on from the sub-entry between semicolons, not given a further indent; thus:

references
        list of  167; in multi-author books  135

- It is not necessary to put a comma between entry and page number. (The typesetter will insert extra space between the end of the entry and the start of the page references.)

- '*See*' and '*See also*' cross-references can be used to add more access points for the reader, especially for acronyms/full names of organizations.

data description  25, 33, 42 (*see also* metadata)
DCC *see* Digital Curation Centre

- Do not start an entry with a capital letter unless it is a proper noun, e.g.:

binding  93
Birmingham Polytechnic Library  135
Birmingham University  136
book acquisition  64-77

Capitalization should follow the style of the text.

- Insert a line of space to indicate the division between letters of the alphabet:

non-book materials  68
non-conventional literature  84

online databases  29
operational planning  258-9
organization theory  170

performance indicators  203

- Check the alphabetical order of entries. Entries should be alphabetized letter by letter (not word by word).

- Pairs of page numbers should be elided as far as possible, except for 11 to 19 in each hundred, which keep the 'tens' figure, e.g.:

42-6, 250-4, but 111-13, 414-15

**Please supply the index electronically, (preferably as a Word file) at the same time as submitting proof corrections.**

**Direct any queries to your project manager who will be on hand to assist you during the proofing and indexing process.**