

Metadata and BISAC Categories

Notes for Indie Publishers, March 2016

Background: About Metadata

Metadata = information that helps readers find your book.

A book entry on Amazon or a POD vendor requires this information. Create and edit a Metadata Plan to ensure:

- Quick entry in online forms
- Easy editing later, to improve findability
- Not inventing the same information more than once!

Metadata includes, at a minimum:

- **Title** ... and **subtitle**
- **Description**
- **Cover art**
- **BISAC category**
- **ISBN number**
- **Keywords**
- **Author Bio**
- **Editorial reviews**

Example of a book's metadata

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Digital History
A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web
Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig
328 pages | 6 x 9 | 45 illus
Paper 2005 | ISBN 978-0-8122-1923-4 | \$28.95 | \$19.00 | [Add to cart](#)

"The definitive introductory guide. . . . In an online world marked by ephemerence, this book will long remain a wade mecum for dedicated amateurs and professionals."—*Choice*

"This is an important book that fills an important niche: a careful and comprehensive report to the field on the development and possibilities of online history, enhanced by a thoughtful set of conceptual and technical recommendations for novice online historians showing them how they might go about launching, sustaining, and preserving an online digital history project. The team that produced this manuscript at the Center for History and New Media is arguably the most advanced group working on digital history in the United States today."—Stephen Inzer, The Graduate Center, CUNY

Selected by *Choice* magazine as an Outstanding Academic Title

Search the full text of this book: [Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web](#) provides for the first time a plain-spoken and thorough introduction to the web for historians—teachers

Resources:

- **Background info on Book Metadata** — <http://bit.ly/1KCYOIS>
- **“How to Get Your Book in the Right Categories”**
Louisa Locke — <http://bit.ly/1HIsCF7>

ISBN and BISAC Categories

The ISBN is another piece of metadata to track wherever you present your book details. This plan assumes that you will use the ISBN assigned by your Print-on-Demand vendor. You might also choose to use [Bowker](#).

BISAC Categories:

The BISAC category tells the bookstore what shelf to place your book—physical or online “shelf.”

To determine the BISAC category, you can:

- Select from the POD vendor’s online list of categories.

OR

- Enter a category identifier from the BISAC website.

<https://www.bisg.org/bisac-subject-codes>

Example of BISAC selections in CreateSpace UI:

BISAC Category *
[What's this?](#)
→ [Enter a BISAC code](#)

Methods > | Heart
Holiday | Low Cholesterol
History | Cancer
Health & Healing > | Diabetic & Sugar-Free
Essays & Narratives | **General**
Entertaining | Allergy
Courses & Dishes > | Low Carbohydrate
Beverages > | Gluten-Free
General | High Protein

BISAC Category *
[What's this?](#)
→ [Enter a BISAC code](#)

Methods > | Cakes
Holiday | Bread
History | Breakfast
Health & Healing > | **General**
Essays & Narratives | Appetizers
Entertaining | Sauces & Dressings
Courses & Dishes > | Soups & Stews
Beverages > | Casseroles
General

You can copy from BISAC Online Lists

FIC042030 FICTION / Christian / Historical
FIC042040 FICTION / Christian / Romance
FIC042060 FICTION / Christian / Suspense
FIC042070 FICTION / Christian / Western
FIC004000 FICTION / Classics
FIC043000 FICTION / Coming of Age
FIC044000 FICTION / Contemporary Women
FIC050000 FICTION / Crime
FIC051000 FICTION / Cultural Heritage
FIC055000 FICTION / Dystopian
FIC005000 FICTION / Erotica
FIC010000 FICTION / Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, Legends & Mythology
FIC045000 FICTION / Family Life
FIC009000 FICTION / Fantasy / General
FIC009040 FICTION / Fantasy / Collections & Anthologies
FIC009010 FICTION / Fantasy / Contemporary

NOTE: CreateSpace allows entering only 1 category, but Amazon allows more than that.

Write to CreateSpace Help and ask them to add other BISAC categories.

Metadata Plan for <Your Book>

Complete these fields to use for entry wherever you must specify your book's metadata — publishing sites, your website, and so on. Delete the tips whenever you like.

In this plan:

- Book Title (as metadata)
- Online Description for Publishing Sites
- Book Cover Text and Art
- BISAC and Identifiers
- Keywords
- Author Name and Bio
- Social Media, Key Data, and Links
- Optional Metadata (for Web, PR, ...)
- Editorial Reviews

Tip #1. Always copy-&-paste from your Metadata Plan, so the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are always the same.

Book Title (as metadata)

Title: <Type here>

Subtitle (if any): <Type here>

Series Title (if any): <Type here>

Tip #2. Search online for your title — is there anything similar that means you need to refine your title to prevent reader confusion?

(It's OK to have the same title as another book; just know about it!)

Tip #3. Avoid cramming information such as a lengthy subtitle into the title. Bowker, for example, will trim excess information.

Online Description for Publishing Sites

Tip #4. You can use more words than on the back cover, but be brief and concise in the first 2-3 sentences (people might read no further...).

1-sentence hook

2nd paragraph—expand on the hook, emphasizing Character, Setting, Problem

What kind of book, for what kind of readers?

If desired: 1 sentence about the author or link to author's website

<Type here>

Book Cover Text and Art

Cover basics

Share this precise information with your cover design artist.

Tip #5. This is identical to the content in the Title metadata section.

Title: <Type here>

Subtitle (if any): <Type here>

Series Title (if any): <Type here>

Author: <Type here>

Front-cover blurbs or call-outs to be cited on front cover

<Type here>

Back-cover blurb

Tip #6. Be brief and concise. Use hard, action verbs.

Tip #6. The hook or theme pull-quote is usually at the top of the back-cover text.

<Type here>

Endorsement blurb:

Tip #7. if someone significant or famous —or any other writer or reviewer — wrote a notable blurb for you, quote a sentence (with their permission) ...

<Type here>

BISAC and Identifiers

Your selections from BISAC site: <Type or paste here>

ISBN (yours or as assigned by your vendor): <Type or paste here>

ASIN assigned by Amazon: <Type or paste here when known>

Keywords

<Type here; separate phrases with commas>

List 5 to 7 keywords—words or phrases that readers might search on and luck upon your book. Different sites have different limits on number and length of keywords. Check the Amazon help site for information about excluded keywords.

Tip #8. Expect to spend a half-day or more to create your first selection. Then revisit every few months to find new, better fit for keywords.

*Tip #9. Do **not** include other book titles or other authors' names.*

*Tip #10. Keywords are **strings**, usually not lone words: You'd search on "mystery in Seattle Washington" ... not just "Mystery" or "Seattle"*

*Tip #11. For fiction, include keywords for **genre subcategory, theme, character, setting, era, and mood.***

*Tip #12.. For nonfiction, include keywords for **location, era, character roles, cultural or professional terms, and causes / results.***

Tip #13.. Check other genres and subcategories for possible phrases.

From Amazon: "To list your title in certain sub-categories for Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk, you'll need to add Search Keywords in addition to the categories you choose for your title.

Keyword Resources:

- KDP keyword requirements:
<https://kdp.amazon.com/help?topicId=A200PDGPEIQX41>
(You need to have a KDP account for the link above to work.)
- Google Trends—for checking trends in search terms:
<http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/tools/google-trends.html>
- The Importance of Keywords to Ranking Your Book on Amazon
<http://www.thebookdesigner.com/2016/02/importance-of-keywords-to-ranking-your-book-on-amazon/>
- How to Choose the Right Kindle Keywords
<http://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-choose-kindle-keywords/>

Author Name and Bio

Tip #14. Specify your name in the exact format that will be entered everywhere.

Author Name

<type here>

Tip #15. If you use initials, leave no space between the initials:

E.A. Stewart

Author Bio

This is up to 250 words to paste in Amazon and POD vendor Author box.

Tip #16. Consider these guidelines:

- Write in 3rd person
- 1st line states your name, what you do, and (often) where you live.
- How many books you've published, how long you've written?
- Won any awards, or been on any bestseller lists?
- Are you working on other books?
- Don't reveal too much that's personal.

Bio for publishing sites

<Type here>

Bio for social media

<Type here>

Tip #17. You might create a longer bio to use on social media sites:

- Your website
- Amazon Author Central
- Goodreads, and so on ...

Social Media, Key Data, and Links

Tip #18. Cross-linking among social presences increases “findability” for possible readers who search on the web.

Search engine optimization (SEO) is beyond the scope of this simple plan. SEO mostly focuses on searchable text in Headlines + 1st 100 words on web pages.

Your Author website

<Type or paste here>

Your Author page on Amazon

<Type or paste here>

Tip #19. Create this page as soon as your ebook is live.

<https://authorcentral.amazon.com>

Your social media home pages

List the addresses of other social presences you create, such as:

- Goodreads
- Twitter
- Facebook
- and so on ...

<Type or paste links and site names here>

Optional Metadata (for Web, PR, ...)

Audience (geographic, age range):

<Type or paste here>

Tip #20. Age Range info from Amazon.

<https://kdp.amazon.com/help?topicId=AF9XK4TA1PSBV>

Narrow age ranges work best—limit your age ranges and grade levels to a span of 3-4 years to make sure the most appropriate customers are seeing your books. ... Make sure your books' age bands are as narrow as possible.

Age; Grade Level; Description

- 0 – 2; N/A; Board books
- 3 – 5; Pre-school; Picture books
- 6 – 8; Kindergarten – 2nd grade; Early-level readers, first chapter books
- 9 – 12; 3rd grade – 6th grade; Middle-grade chapter books
- 13 – 18; 7th grade – 12th grade; Teen and young adult chapter books

Genres (as list):

<Type or paste here>

Topic:

<Type or paste here>

Timeframe:

<Type or paste here>

Setting or Location:

<Type or paste here>

Language:

<Type or paste here>

Publisher, Status, Availability:

<Type or paste here>

Format, Publication Date, Price, Supplier:

Number of words, number of pages, file size:

<Type or paste here>

Bestseller listing:

<Type or paste here>

Library of Congress and Dewey #s (if identified):

<Type or paste here>

Editorial Reviews

Tip #21. You cannot republish Amazon reviews without permission from the reviewer.

Tip #22. You can include review mentions from magazines and major review sites on your web.

The methods for entering and including editorial reviews differ on each publishing platform.

CreateSpace Guidelines: <https://wwwcreatespace.com/Help/Index.jsp?orgId=00D300000001Sh9>

Amazon: Add in Editorial Reviews section on Author Central— in each Author Central for each country where the book is distributed.

<https://authorcentral.amazon.com/gp/help?ie=UTF8&topicID=200649600>

Media mentions:

<Type or paste here>

Key review journal recommendations:

<Type or paste here>