Introduction: Why Write Abstracts

An abstract provides an overview of the book and makes reading the text easier and more efficient. It saves librarians and researchers time.

Writing an Abstract - How to Begin:
- Find a book which fits with the themes of the MCA project and which corresponds to your field of interest.
- Email the title of the book or encyclopaedia to the MCA team. Once the titles have been approved, read the book or encyclopaedia, and start writing the abstract.

Types of Abstracts:
There are two types of abstracts: informative and descriptive.

Descriptive Abstract: An abstract only outlines the topics covered in a book and is not more useful than a table of contents. It does not fulfil MCA purposes.

Informative Abstract: An informative abstract provides details about the substance of a piece of writing. Abstracts in any discipline typically follow this format:

1) Purpose/Content: The scope of the work / summary. What gap is this research filling or claiming to fill? What is interesting about this book? Does it have an impact?

2) Methods/Procedure/Approach/Organisation: Does it have a method / a special approach?

3) Results/Findings/Shortcomings: What can be learned from this book? What kind of evidence does the author provide? Are there any shortcomings or biases? How is the overall quality?

4) Conclusion: Concise statement of the major points.

Some Advice
- It is important to note that the weight afforded to the components mentioned above can vary by discipline.
Tips for Writing Quality Abstracts:
- The usage of **key words** in an abstract is vital, as in cases where the information is stored electronically, it may allow interested parties to locate the abstract more easily.
- Sentences and paragraphs have to be **concise**. Abstracts are not detailed book reviews; therefore they have to be focused and should establish the scope of the book.
- Take notes as you read, **highlighting the major points** of the piece and outlining the significant details: list the **ideas** that the book communicates.

Other Considerations:
- An abstract should be self-contained and not make vague statements.
- Meet the **word count limit**.
- List keywords

Finally:
Writing an **efficient abstract** should not necessarily be hard work if these few steps are followed. With practice you will not only become a good abstract writer, but also a good communicator as you will be able to put across ideas in a clear and succinct manner. Through your involvement with the MCA, your work will be read by many people and you will have the opportunity to develop valuable academic relationships.