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Search Engine Basics: Title And META-Tags

By Marketing Basics

Search Engine Basics: Title And META-Tags by Marketing Basics

Your Title-tag and META-tag are simply lines of text inserted into the HTML code of each of your web pages.

The Title-tag is one of the most important pieces of information for a search engine. The Title-tag should describe exactly what the web page contains. It should contain keywords, but not repeats, of terms you hope to be found for. It should also be as readable as possible. The Title-tag will be the first thing someone sees in a search result.

The Title-tag should be no longer than 70 characters and should contain words and phrases that accurately describe the content of a page. Try to make the Title-tags located throughout your site unique and relevant. Every word in the Title should be contained somewhere on the page they are used for. Research has also shown that a strong call to action will usually produce more clicks than a basic description.

The META-tag is used to store information about a web page but is not actually displayed in a web browser. For example, META-tags provide information such as what application was used to create the page, a description of the page, and keywords that are relevant to the page. Many search engines use the information stored in META-tags when they index web pages.

As I stated earlier, META-tag information is not displayed in a web browser. However, if you view the source code of any web page you will see the HTML code behind that page. To see the code, simply go to any website using Internet Explorer and click "view" then "source."

NOTE: It's okay to view, but please don't steal someone else's source code. Imagine how you would feel, if someone did that to you.

For quite some time now, META-tags have been the focus of a particular field of marketing research known as search engine optimization, or SEO. In the mid to late 1990s,

search engines were heavily reliant on META-tag data to correctly classify a web page.

Webmasters quickly learned the significance of writing META-tags correctly, as it frequently led to higher rankings on search engines—and thus, more traffic to their websites.

As search engine traffic achieved greater significance in online marketing campaigns, SEO's who were well-versed in how search engines perceive a website exploded onto the scene. These SEO's used a variety of techniques (legitimate, and otherwise) to improve search engine rankings for their clients.

Over the last few years, however, search engines have become much less reliant on META-tags, as many webmasters cheated by using inappropriate tactics and keywords to direct as much traffic as possible to their sites.

And while not nearly as important as they once were, some search engines, still take META-tags into some consideration when delivering results.

In addition, search engines have become smarter, penalizing websites that cheat by repeating the same keyword(s) several times in order to get a boost in the search engines.

Make no mistake, cheaters pay a heavy price, indeed. Instead of ascending in ranking, cheating websites actually descend in ranking or, in some instances, are deleted from the search engine's database altogether.

A word of advice: Because search engines are constantly changing their algorithms, don't spend a lot of time on search engine optimization. That should just be one part of your overall marketing strategy. It's much more important to form alliances with businesses similar to yours, and increase the number of links to your site.

Meta Tags

By Clare Lawrence

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Meta Tags are hidden description fields that help search engines to categorise websites. They are also of reduced importance than a few years ago.

Correct use of meta tags is nevertheless a factor in search engine algorithms and worth getting right.

A few considerations:–

- Shorter tags are more focused than longer ones.
- Usually the first phrase has greater weight than later ones.
- The title tag is of most value
- Description and keyword tags are of lesser importance

Over recent years, search engines have become much more sophisticated and are now able to identify the theme of a page by analysing the text.

It is important therefore to write your page copy first, ensuring its content is about your chosen theme. Once written your tags should reflect its content.

e.g. this article is `about' meta tags, a good title would be:–

Title Tag "Meta tags and how to use them" Description "Meta tags, their content use by Clare Lawrence"

Keywords "Meta tags, title tag, description tag, keyword tags, copy text,".

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that meta tags can boost your sites ranking alone.

To get a good search engine result placement or SERPS you need:–

- Good content, relevant to your chosen key phrases.

- Links on related theme sites.
- Meta tags, particular title tags.

Note Tags are third on the list and a long way behind content and linkage.

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