

ModX – Optimizing your content for search engine optimization AND site visitors

Why it's important:

Not only does following this guide make your site more search engine friendly, but it will help real people to navigate your site as well. Most people don't realize that search engines are just trying to help people what they are looking for, so they follow some best practices to try to accomplish this.

For example, not including good, unique titles for each of your pages, that accurately describe that page, will make it impossible for people to use their history, bookmarks, to find what page they were recently on. Additionally, it probably won't be able to appear in the search engines.

This does not cover all points such as how to link your pages together, or giving your images meaningful names, ALT tags, etc... but it does focus on the essentials. You can also learn more about [writing optimized content](#) if needed.

How to use the fields:

Basically there are 5 or 6 fields that you need to pay attention to. We have configured your CMS in a special way to make it easy for you to add META tags and such. If you want to learn more, use Google. The META tag fields are really optional, and are dying out in general. I always prefer to include them than not. MSN search engine for example still uses them, but Google does not.

The example screenshots below show where each of these fields will appear on a website. You will soon discover that the TITLE, Heading, and filename are very similar in most cases

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TITLE:

This will become the title of the webpage. It is one of the most crucial pieces, so name it accurately.

The TITLE also appears as the text of the link when your site shows up in the search engine results.

ALIAS:

will be the actual name of the file

LONGTITLE:

usually we set this up to become the main heading of the article. This way, it always uses a heading tag (H1) so that it looks the same on every page, is easy to do, and be optimized for search engines*.



Important tips:

- It is best to use hyphens in the filename (Alias) to separate words; and not spaces or underscores. Search engines and browsers don't like spaces and underscores.
- Keep the filename shorter though—3 or 4 words at the most
- NEVER use uppercase LETTERS anywhere in the file name.

The META tags do not show up on the web page for a human visitor to see, but instead occur inside the code behind the web page for search engines to see. These fields can help a couple of the smaller search engines to better understand what that page is about:

SUMMARY:

become yours META DESCRIPTION

INTROTEXT:

becomes your META KEYWORDS

* A note about headings and Longtitle

Even if we did not use the Longtitle this way on your site, you can accomplish the same thing. By highlighting the text you want to make into a heading, and clicking "Format" from the editor toolbar, then choose the heading type (in this case, Heading 1).

You should also use heading tags throughout your content as needed. In other words, think about it just like you would if you were making a Microsoft Word document. In fact, this very Word document uses a main heading (H1) and two sub-headings ("Why it's important" and "How to use the fields")

Wouldn't you want to use "Heading 1" as the style for the title of your document, and if you had sub-sections, you would use "Heading 2?" And if you had sub-section under a "Heading 2", then you would want a "Heading 3?" Search engines as well as people use that to help them determine what your web page is account. As a bare minimum, a main heading should exist.

Oh, and you shouldn't skip from Heading 1 to Heading 3. If you don't like the appearance of it, you can ask us to edit your stylesheets to give them a different look.