SETTING METADATA IN YOUR JOOMLA! SITE

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presented by
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AGENDA

- What is metadata?

- What are meta tags?

- Why do you need either of them?

- How do you create them?

- Where do you set them in Joomla?

Good morning!

Today we're going to discuss metadata. Over the past few years it has been one of those oft discussed topics, mostly as it relates to search engine results.

Just recently I had a discussion with a client that wanted to better understand what metadata is, why it is needed and where/how to set in his Joomla! site. Today, I'm sharing the results of that conversation with you.

"data that provides information about other data"

–*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines metadata as data that provides information about other data with the first known use in 1983.

WHAT ARE META TAGS?

- Metadata Information

  - Title

  - Description (aka "snippet")

  - Keywords

- Seen in Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs)

So what are meta tags?

Meta tags are metadata information such as title, description or snippet and keywords. They are the pieces of information that you see in search engine results pages. There are many more meta tags that can be set but today we're focusing on those that are set through Joomla.

When inspecting page code, you see then information inside the <head> tags defined inside of <meta> tags

DO YOU NEED META TAGS?

Often when you hear about metadata or meta tags it is in the context of SEO, Search Engine Optimization. At one point they were apart of the Google ranking algorithm, today the description is not but from a user experience perspective, seeing your info on the SERP helps the searcher decide which link they want to click.

When you are working on a site and your conversion goals are to gain more organic traffic, in my opinion, they are a must. When you use SEO audit tools they will look at title, description and keyword tags.

HOW TO SET META TAGS?

Let's take a look at how to set meta tags within a site. We are going to use our group to see how this works.

META TAG: TITLE

Best Practice:

- Descriptive and concise

- 70 characters or less

- Defined on every page

- Avoids keyword stuffing

"Search engines
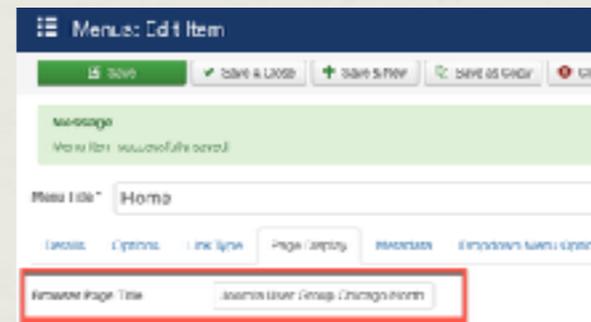do not like duplicate titles"

for more information:
https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35624?hl=en

Global Configuration

Site Settings

Site Name * — Joomla! User Group Chicago North

Menu Item Setting

Google is probably the most used search engine. The question of how to create descriptive titles is a question they've put some thought into answering. The link will take you to their search console help. The search console is the new name for webmaster tools.

In Joomla the meta tag title can be defined for the site in Global Configuration and on individual menu items. If a page does not have page title defined the site name will be used. To set on individual page or menu item:
- Go to that item through the Joomla! menu manager, not your template menu manager if you're using Gantry5 or similar template
- Click on the 'Page Display' table
- Enter your description title in the Browser Page Title field

Remember, search engines do not like duplicate titles

What about H1 tag? When you set the page header, Joomla assigns it an H1 tag. You can double-check this by inspecting the page.

The description or snippet in Google terms is typically one sentence that describes the page. There are 4 places they can be defined in your Joomla Site: Global, Menu, Category and Article

To the metadata description at the global level, go to: System > Global Configuration > Site tab and scroll to the bottom of the page to the Metadata Settings. To set on the menu item level, go to: Menu Manager, select the menu item. Go to the Metadata tab.

META TAG: DESCRIPTION

Category Setting

Article Setting

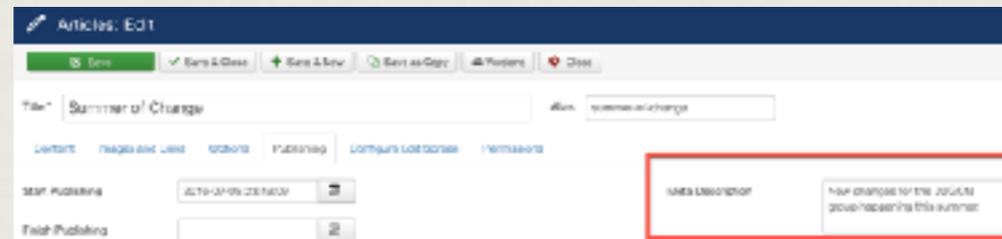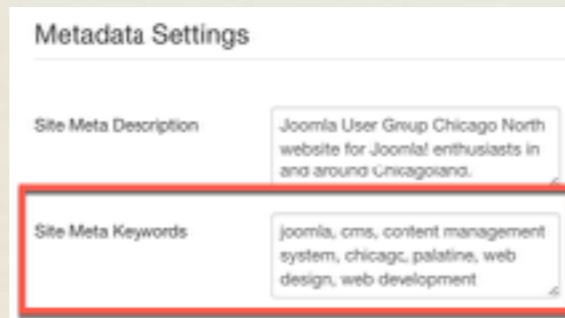To set the description on the category and article levels, the meta description is on the Publishing tab.

Keywords are what users type into their search engine. Heard the phrase, "long-tailed keyword"? I describe them as search phrases. Nowadays people search by typing phrases or issuing voice commands. You want to capture those for your pages.

To set at a global level, go to: System > Global Configuration and scroll down to the Metadata Settings section.

To set at the menu level, go to: Menu Manager, select menu item and click on Metadata tab

META TAG: KEYWORDS

Category Setting

Article Setting

To set the keywords on the category and article levels, the meta description is on the Publishing tab.

HOW DO I COME UP WITH THE META TAG INFO?

- Meta tag generators

- Keyword tools

- Set based on content and tweak based on metrics

Starting out, setting meta tags is sometimes difficult. There are meta tag generators that can. For instance using an extension like OSMeta from JoomlaShack/OSTraining, attempts to generate the title and description for you. You have the option of copying the article title to the page title and generating descriptions with click of a couple of buttons. You can edit the results of the generation. This works for articles and article categories and brings them all into a single dashboard.

The Google Keyword Planner is no longer standalone but is now apart of Google Adwords. Because of this, other tools have become available that are free, at least to start such as keywordtool.io and http://www.wordstream.com/keywords

When looking for a tool, I'd suggest going to Search Engine Journal or Search Engine Watch for a current listing.

DOES META IN THE MENU ITEM OVERRIDE META IN THE ARTICLE?

Simple answer is, NO it does not. Joomla article meta data takes highest precedence.If you entered meta data in the menu item and in the article itself, the article meta data will always display.

Furthermore, article meta data even overwrites Joomla global meta data fields as well. Now don't count the menu item meta description and keywords out just yet. Menu item meta data is very useful because you can create menu links for auto generated layouts in Joomla that technically aren't real pages, they're really just layouts or displays.

So how would you create meta data for pages that don't exist you say? Enter, menu item meta data. Let's say you setup a category blog menu item to display your Joomla blog. You'll definitely want to assign meta data to this new autogenerated layout for SEO purposes.

What you need to understand is that there is no actual blog page that acts as your blog homepage e.g. yoursite.com/blog/. This is why having the ability to add meta data to a menu item is so important. By adding the blog's meta data into the menu item this allows Joomla to display meta data on your blog layout.

Meta data structure

- Article - Highest priority

- Category

- Menu

- Global - Lowest priority

Also keep in mind if you don't have article meta data set for the article it will trickle down the hierarchy to look for meta data to display. So if there if Article A itself has no meta data, no category or menu meta data, it gets the Global by default.

This was a question that was in our 'Ask Nick' column, *Does meta in the menu item override meta in the article?*
Here's Nick's answer: Simply No.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER META TAGS?

- There are several tags that can be set. You can use structured data testing tool to test and get suggestions
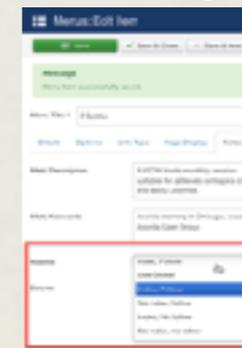
  https://search.google.com/structured-data/testing-tool

WHAT ABOUT ROBOTS?

- Robots "crawl" the site

- Index, Follow

- Can Address duplicate content

Global Configuration

Menu Item Setting

for more information:
https://docs.joomla.org/Robots.txt_file
https://moz.com/learn/seo/robotstxt
https://joomlaseo.com/checklist/robots-txt-for-search-engines

You can set how the robots crawl your site on a global, menu, article level. You can also set directly by editing the robot.txt and/or .htaccess files. Those are more advanced discussions for another time. But at a high-level, each Joomla installation comes with a basic robots.txt that disallows access (crawling) of images, administrator, components, scripts and other directories one per line.

On menu item aliases, I usually set to "no index, no follow" so that the content is not seen as duplicate. This is also help when you have similar pages with largely the same content. Duplicate content becomes a mark against your site in the search engine algorithm

The options for setting are:
- Use Global (not available in global settings)
- Index, Follow
- No Index, Follow
- Index, No Follow
- No Index, No Follow

LET'S WORK ON METADATA FOR JUGCN