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Web Developer Tutorial: SEO with Drupal: Nodewords Module

By [Tyme](#)

We have been exploring four Drupal modules which aid in search engine optimization (SEO). This week we're going to look at the [Nodewords](#), which lets you add meta tags to Drupal pages manually and automatically, based on various settings. In this tutorial I will touch on the more commonly used features.

Configuring the Module

The toughest part about the Nodewords module might be finding the darn configuration settings. They are not listed on the admin page as "Nodewords" but rather as "Meta Tags". Once you find that page, you will see two tabs of options: "Settings" and "Default and Specific Meta Tags".

Settings Tab

Select the meta tag form fields that you want to appear on each content (node) add/edit form. Users with administrator permissions will see all fields, so your choices here will affect all other users with Nodewords add and/or edit permissions.

Meta tags

- Settings
- Default and specific meta tags

▼ Meta tags to show on edit forms

Select the meta tags that appear in the edit forms. Users with admin forms.

- Abstract
- Bing Webmaster Center verification code
- Canonical URL
- Copyright
- Description
- Dublin Core contributor
- Dublin Core creator
- Dublin Core date
- Dublin Core description
- Dublin Core publisher
- Dublin Core title
- Google Webmaster Tools verification code
- Keywords
- Location
- PICS labels
- Revisit after
- Robots
- Yahoo! Site Explorer verification code

You can select what meta tags take precedence, and the default maximum length of the meta tag form field.

▼ Meta tags creation options

These options change the way the meta tags are generated.

- Enable the user profile meta tags
- Repeat meta tags for lists
Some search engines punish sites that use the same meta tags on different pages. Uncheck this option if you want to suppress the repetition of the same meta tags on pages that use the pager - if unchecked, Drupal will only display the meta tags for the first page and not for subsequent pages. If unsure, select this option.
- Use front page meta tags
Check this option if you want to use the meta tags for the front page even if the default front page specified is a view, panel or node - in this case, the meta tags specified for the view, panel or node will be ignored. If you want to use the meta tags for the view, panel or node instead, uncheck this option. If unsure, select this option and specify the meta tags you want on the meta tags for the front page.

Maximum meta tags length: *

350

The maximum length to use for the meta tags form fields.

And, you can specify whether or not meta tags should be generated automatically and the source of that meta tag data. If you create custom teaser text (such as by use



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GENERATE MY REPORT

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of the Excerpt module), you'll want to be sure to select the 'generate from teaser' option.

Meta tags content generation options

These options change how a meta tag content is generated from the node content. These settings apply to specific meta tags.

Do not generate meta tags content

Generate meta tag content when the meta tag content is empty

Generation source:

Generate meta tags content from the node body

Generate meta tags content from the node teaser

Generate meta tags content from the node teaser, or the node body when the node teaser is empty

Replace the tag IMG content with the attribute ALT

Filter the text added by third-party modules in the node teaser:

imagebrowser.module

img_assist.module

Custom regular expression:

A regular expression used to filter the text added in the node teaser from a third-party module. The regular expression uses the [Perl compatible syntax](#).

Default and Specific Meta Tags Tab

Here is where all the magic happens. However, because search engine crawlers, such as Google, discourage the duplication of meta data on each page, defaults should be considered base text that the content writer will modify (if only slightly) for each page. If your content writers tend to leave the default text unmodified, you should monitor your search rankings to see if your pages take a hit for this redundancy. If they do, rather than use default text, you might be better served by leaving these fields blank (forcing manual input) or [enabling](#) the automatic generation of meta data option. (The second option is likely best, if the first sentences of content are keyword-rich.) That being said, it definitely makes sense to set defaults for the front page, since the redundancy issue is moot. And, by all means, enter the default **Copyright** notice.

GENERAL DEFAULTS

The **Description** is the text that typically displays in a search engine results page (SERP), so this is an important field to populate. Dynamically-generated meta data from custom teasers is the winning combination. It gives your content creators a head start, providing unique text for optimizing the Description for specific pages.

Google no longer uses meta tag **Keywords** in page rankings, but you might as well set some defaults for other search engine crawlers that do. On the node add/edit form, content creators can supplement this list with more specific keywords relevant to the subject node. (TIP: Add the specific keywords at the beginning, so that any keywords ignored as excess will be the more general ones.)

You will not likely need to increase the "**Revisit After**" days option unless you have a minimal amount of bandwidth, upon which search engines will encroach.

The **Robots** options "NOINDEX" and "NOFOLLOW" are useful for helping to protect sensitive content. If you have a private section of your website or your site is an intranet, you might want to set these as defaults. But, in most cases, you would enable these on a node-by-node basis. These also would be used if you perform "page rank sculpting". (See [Google](#) blog post for a [spirited discussion about page rank sculpting](#).)

In addition to the global defaults, you can set unique defaults for the front page, and defaults for "Other pages" such as Views-generated pages.

Meta tags

[Settings](#) | **Default and specific meta tags**

[Default values](#) | [Error 403 page](#) | [Error 404 page](#) | [Front page](#) | [Tracker pages](#) | [Other pages](#)

On this page you can enter the default values for the meta tags of your site.

Abstract:

Enter a short abstract. Typically it is one sentence.

Copyright:

Enter a short copyright statement.

Description:

The Overseas Press Club of America was founded in 1939 in New York by a group of foreign correspondents. The OPC seeks to maintain an international association of journalists working in the United States and abroad; to

Enter a description. Limit your description to about 20 words, with a maximum of 350 characters. It should not contain any HTML tags or other formatting.

Keywords:

Enter a comma separated list of keywords. Avoid duplication of words as this will lower your search engine ranking.

Revisit after:

 day(s)
The meta tag REVISIT-AFTER defines how often a search engine or spider should come to your website for re-indexing. This tag is used for websites that change their content and on a regular basis. This tag can also be beneficial in boosting your rankings if search engines display results based on the most recent submissions.

Robots:

NOARCHIVE

NOFOLLOW

NOINDEX

NOODP

NOSNIPPET

NOYDIR

The meta tag ROBOTS offers a simple mechanism to indicate to web robots and crawlers whether the page should be indexed (NOINDEX) and whether links on the page should be followed (NOFOLLOW).

FRONT PAGE DEFAULTS

As mentioned above, front page defaults are good to set because a home page is given special importance in SEO rankings, and redundancy will not be an issue. The same meta tag options as the general defaults are available on this configuration page, in addition to form fields for **Site Verification Codes**. This is a field that (on the Settings tab) you would want to enable for [HTML](#) output but not for inclusion on the node add/edit form since one code covers the whole of the site. Enabling this field gives your clients flexibility to add the verification codes without needing FTP access to upload a verification HTML file, which is the alternative to entering it in the meta data.

Meta tags

Settings | Default and specific meta tags

Default values | Error 403 page | Error 404 page | Front page | Tracker pages | Other pages

On this page you can enter the meta tags for the front page of your site.

Use the default value
The default value is currently not set.

Dublin Core title:

 Enter an alternative title. Do not use the value already used for the HTML tag TITLE, or you will probably get warning reports about duplicated titles from the search engines.

Location coordinates (latitude, longitude):

Bing Webmaster Center verification code:

 Bing Webmaster Center will ask you to add a meta tag in order to verify you have write access to the pages of the web site you registered with their services.

Google Webmaster Tools verification code:

 Google Webmaster Tools will ask you to add a meta tag in your web site to provide you with an easy way to make your site more Google-friendly.

Yahoo! Site Explorer:

 Yahoo! Site Explorer will ask you to add a meta tag in your web site to allow you to explore all the web pages indexed by Yahoo! Search.

Practicing Good SEO

As a content creator, it is easy to be lazy and ignore these extra SEO measures. After all, well-written and informative copy will produce the best results. But, use of the meta tag data might give your [Web](#) pages a competitive edge. You'll have to decide whether it is worth the extra time. But, if you decide that it is, the Nodewords module will help make that process more efficient.

The meta tags that you selected on the configuration page will appear on the node add/edit form like so:

- > URL path settings

▼ Meta tags

Abstract:

 Enter a short abstract. Typically it is one sentence.

Canonical URL:

 Canonical URLs are used from the search engines, and allow them to not report duplicate titles for HTML pages that are accessible from different URLs. Use a relative URL without the initial slash; canonical URLs that point to a different domain are normally not accepted.

Copyright:

 Enter a short copyright statement.

Description:

 Enter a description. Limit your description to about 20 words, with a maximum of 350 characters. It should not contain any HTML tags or other formatting.

Keywords:

 Enter a comma separated list of keywords. Avoid duplication of words as this will lower your search engine ranking.

Revisit after:

 day(s)
 The meta tag REVISIT-AFTER defines how often a search engine or spider should come to your website for re-indexing. This tag is used for websites that change their content and on a regular basis. This tag can also be beneficial in boosting your rankings if search engines display results based on the most recent submissions.

Robots:

NOARCHIVE
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 NOYDIR

The meta tag ROBOTS offers a simple mechanism to indicate to web robots and crawlers whether the page should be indexed (NOINDEX) and whether links on the page should be followed (NOFOLLOW).

Use the default value
 The default value is currently not set.

In this screenshot, all of the available fields are displayed; but, you will not likely select all of those for your non-admin users.

For truly effective use of meta data, each node needs thoughtful input, particularly for Description. Use the **Canonical URL** form field if you change the URL Alias for the particular page; enter the former name in the Canonical URL form blank. This way, the search engine will not index the same content page by the old name and the new name.

For example: Let's say that a page originally was created with a URL Alias of "web services". After a period, during which that page would have been indexed by search engines, you decided to change the URL Alias to "web-services" -- because this way the two words will be recognized easily (by users and search engines) as keywords. By entering "web services" as the Canonical URL, you provide the crawler with a page cross-reference, and search engines that recognize canonical URLs (such as Google) will not count that Web page count as duplicate content.

Summary

Providing meta data can improve your ranking on search engine results pages (SERPs). At the very least, thoughtful and detailed page Descriptions can improve your click-through rate, as they typically are used as the summary text on the SERP listing. Remember, you are competing with many other websites on these listings. Give viewers a good reason to click your link. And consider how you, as a Web user, appreciate accurate search results listings.

The key to the Nodewords module is getting your content creators to use it...or for them to write well-optimized teasers and let the module do the rest! But, even if your content creators never create custom meta data for content nodes, the Nodewords module is worth the install for front page meta tag defaults, a copyright notice, and site verification code. Shout out to module [developer](#) Dave Reid for this fine contribution.

NOTE: This module is being completely rewritten, as Meta Tags, for Drupal 7.

To [learn](#) more about search engine optimization (SEO), read [Google's Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide](#).

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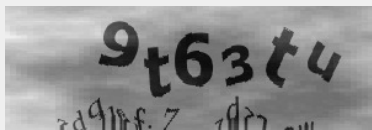
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