How can I increase the relevancy ranking of my page for search engines? (metatags and keywords)

Q: How can I increase the relevancy ranking of my page for search engines? (metatags and keywords)

Answer

On this page:

Using Meta Tags at MIT
Keywords and Description

Using Meta Tags at MIT

Meta tags are HTML elements that allow you to specify metadata (information about what makes up your document) within an HTML file. There are many kinds of metadata, some of which can help search engines index your documents more accurately.

Meta tags belong within the <HEAD> section of a document. They do not take a closing </META> tag. You can use many meta tags within a single document. (View the source of this
document to see how we've used them ourselves.)

We will only discuss a few of these meta tags here. For more information on the topic, please see the World Wide Web Consortium's notes on [helping
search engines index your site|http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html40/appendix/notes.html#recs] as well as information about the Dublin Core set of meta tags.

Keywords and Description

You can specify keywords related to your document that may help search engines rank you within their listings. You can also specify a brief description of your document.
These tags take the following format:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="meta tags, HTML, WCS, FAQ">
<meta name="description" content="WCS FAQ about using meta tags at MIT">
{code}

Keep your descriptions accurate but short. Because some HTML authors have abused meta tags (e.g., by
using hundreds of keywords, only some of which relate directly to their site), a few search engines
ignore meta tags when weighting their rankings (most notably, [Excite|ttp://www.excite.com]. Please
don't contribute to this problem!

h3. Document Author

You can specify a name and email address for the person responsible for the content of the document.
Regardless of whether search engines now pick up this information, it's a good idea to include it.
```

<meta name="Author" content="Deborah Levinson">
<link rev="made" href="mailto:web-request@mit.edu">

```
h3. Document Language

If you have versions of your HTML document available in other languages, you can specify this in a
meta tag. This will help search engines provide the right version of the document to people searching
in non-English languages.
```

<link rel="alternate" type="text/html" href="mver-french.html" hreflang="fr" lang="fr" title="Ma Vie en Rose">

```
h3. Robot Indexing Instructions

Sometimes you may have data on your pages you do not want indexed by a search engine. One way to
prevent robot "spiders" from following all the links on your page is to use the following tag:
```

<meta name="robots" content="noindex, nofollow">

```
h3. Setting an Expiration Date

In cases where your data changes on a regular basis (or even an irregular basis), you should consider
using a meta tag to tell the browser when to look for a new copy of your document. The date, expressed
as a two-digit day, three-letter month, and four-digit year, represents the day on which the browser
should reload a fresh copy.
```

<meta http-equiv="expires" content="01 Jul 1999">

```
h3. Automatic Redirection to Another Document (Meta Refresh Tag)

A special meta tag allows you to automatically redirect users to a different page of your web site.
This tag is helpful in cases where an URL has changed and you need a quick way of letting people know
about it.

The meta refresh tag takes the following form:
```

<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="0;URL=www/index.html">

- The number before the semicolon is the time measured in seconds before the browser loads the specified URL. Using "0" will cause a near-instantaneous redirect to the other page.
- Since some older browsers do not recognize this tag, it's important that you also place an actual HTML link to your new file on the redirection page.

This tag is especially useful if you have stored your files in a www subdirectory but people look for your site at the top level (e.g., at http://web.mit.edu/foo/ instead of http://web.mit.edu/foo/www/). If you do not have a file called `index.html` at the top level of your directory, people will be able to see the contents of that directory, which you may not necessarily want to be public. (To see this in action, try accessing your personal account as http://web.mit.edu/username/)

The document template we've supplied below is a simple redirection page you can use as an index.html in your top-level directory to point people to your www directory. You can cut and paste this into a text file. Simply replace the URL in the meta tag with the document you want people to point to, and replace the XXX with the name of your locker.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 3.2//EN">
<html>
<head>
<title>
The office you are looking for is at</title>
<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="0;URL=www/index.html">
</head>
<body>
<a href="http://web.mit.edu/XXX">URL goes here</a>
<P>
You are being automatically redirected to that site.</P>
```

```
</body>
</html>
```

Once you've created this page, you will need to change permissions in your top-level directory to make it world-readable. If you need help doing this, please contact the webhelp@mit.edu