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One Meta Tag You Should Use Carefully - Description Tag

Some say that meta tags have no effect on your placing with the search engines. Well that is almost correct except for one " the description meta tag. Most search engines (including Google) do not in reality take it into account for ranking purposes " yet " many use it in their search results.

Google more often than not uses the description meta tag as the text to exhibit when it shows your website in the search results. We find that it will use this around 70-80% of the time. The rest of the time it will select random text from your home page but commonly it picks up the first 156 characters of text on the page if it does not use the description tag. Make sure your description tags are always 156 characters or less.

To check the length of a piece of text just paste it into a word document and then select the text and then double click the word count box at the bottom of the screen on the status bar.

The meta tags should appear in the head section of the page between the head tags.

Google is a little rascal when it comes to using or not using the meta description tag. When it does use it you can have full control of what is displayed to possible visitors but it will often change what it uses at will with sometimes it just picking up a piece of text from your webpage.

To make sure you have more control over what Google picks out as the text in the search results as well as setting the description tag carefully also make sure that the first 156 characters of text on your page says what you would like to appear in Google.

If you have a flash site or just use pictures with a little text, you have a problem! We have seen Google pick up the alt text from an image and display this when it didn't choose to use our description tag. This will tell you to ALWAYS have some text on your page even if it is only 156 carefully selected characters (including spaces).

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