

Metro Publisher SEO



Search Engine Optimization in Metro Publisher: There is no one simple set of things you can do for SEO, it's an ongoing process made up of many details and adjustments. This presentation will show you how and where the Metro Publisher CMS helps your SEO, and where you and your staff can assist that process.

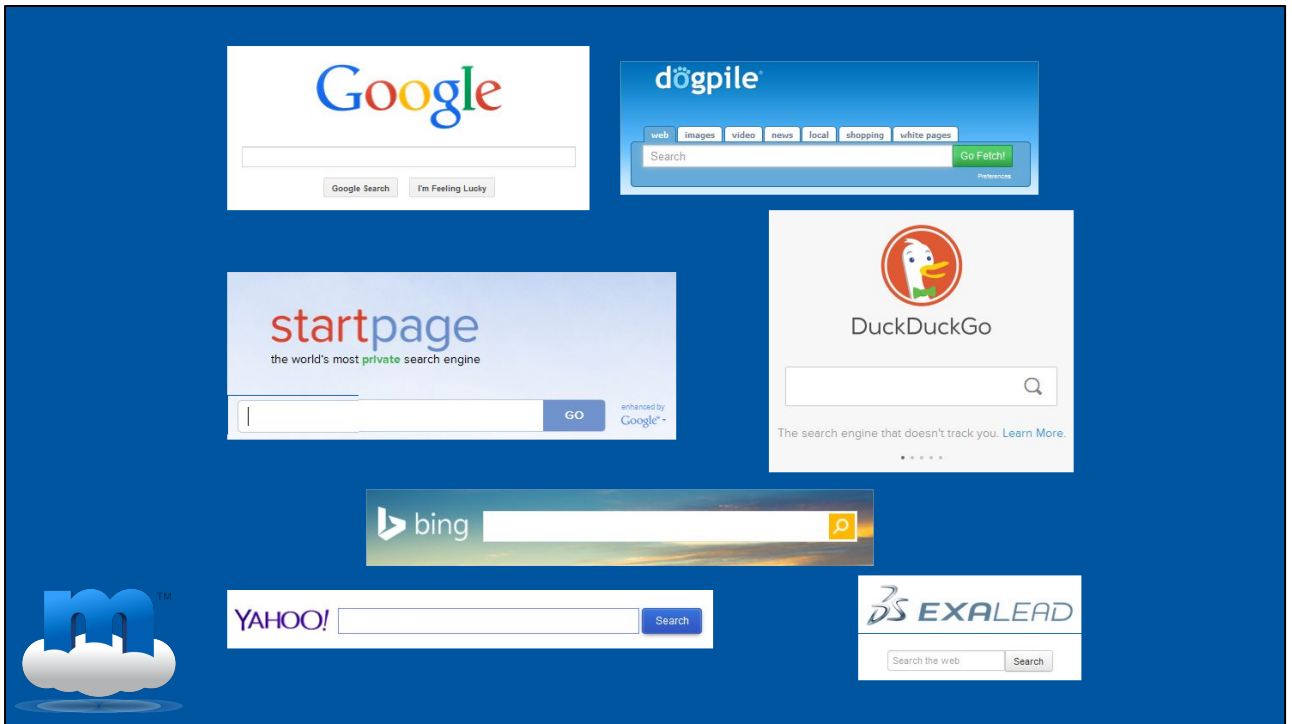
Search Engines

- ❑ crawl (fetch) registered sites
- ❑ match keywords typed by persons
- ❑ search billions of pages
- ❑ follow links to more content
- ❑ index pages



Search engines try to match content to the keywords people type into searches in the hopes of finding what they were looking for on the web. To find that content among billions of web pages (not sites!), search engines use robots like the GoogleBot to crawl web pages, which is just another word for visit or fetch.

Search engine robots first find your site when you register it with Google and Bing, for example, and then continue on through your site by following the links on it to more and more of its content. This is why sitemaps and high quality URLs, so link names, are very important.



Please make sure you don't regard Google as the only search engine out there, because it isn't. You should register your site with other search engines as well, such as Bing and Yahoo. Yahoo Search is currently powered by Bing so you need submit your site through the [Bing Site Submission Page](#) for both Yahoo and Bing. This will automatically list you with some of the other search engines that are based on Bing or Google results but don't track users, like StartPage or DuckDuckGo.

To make crawling more efficient, robots reward web pages that make it easier to understand the content on them. So SEO is about providing the best possible clues for search robots to easily and correctly understand your content.

If your site has been successfully crawled, search engines add it to their index, which just means that Google or Bing are adding your website to their search functions (the list of sites they will try to match people's keywords with). We're using the term website rather than pages here because it's possible that not every page on your site

will be crawled.

Robots read:

- ❑ meta information
- ❑ text & numbers
- ❑ image filenames & alt tags
- ❑ links & sitemaps



p.s. robots are machines



Search engine robots can read meta information, text, numbers, image filenames, image alt tags, URLs (links) and sitemaps, particularly XML sitemaps.

Keep in mind that robots are machines so they cannot intuitively understand nuances in your context or what a random number or text string could be referring to unless you frame that information with additional information that the robots can use to classify what they have crawled.

Organic Traffic

- ❑ is incoming
- ❑ is not from ads
- ❑ is good for SEO

↳ raise quantity & quality



Once your content is indexed by search engines, you can begin to gain more so-called 'organic traffic'. This is all traffic coming to your pages from users who didn't follow an advertisement you paid for to reach your content. For SEO purposes, you want to raise the quality and quantity of that organic traffic.

Quality means people are coming to your site for the content you actually offer and not because keywords they're looking for are getting confused with yours.

What are they looking for?



≠



moz.com

If, for example, Google is sending people to your site because it thinks you're selling Apple computer supplies instead of the farm fresh apples you actually sell, which is a great example from moz.com, then you're not getting quality organic traffic to your site. Visitors need to be finding your site as the correct match for what they're looking for.

If you're getting traffic from people actually interested in your content, then the more visitors the better, which is the quantity part of the organic traffic.

So this is the traffic you want coming in from search results and Metro Publisher not only makes sure your pages and it's content can be easily crawled by the search engines, we also make sure you can influence information about your content that is relevant to search engines.

“We assess the importance of every web page using more than 200 signals and a variety of techniques, including our patented PageRank™ algorithm, which analyzes which sites have been “voted” to be the best sources of information by other pages across the web.”



↳ *Google Corporate Philosophy*

I'd like to highlight the multitude of factors that play into search engine results with a quote from Google's Corporate Philosophy.

<http://www.google.com/about/company/philosophy/>

So there are 200 signals, one of which is PageRank.

Google PageRank

“PageRank is about lots of people with high PageRank linking to your site”

↳ *Matt Cutts*

↳ good architecture, like a tree

↳ important pages 1-2 links away



I'm going to paraphrase Matt Cutts, a Google Search Engineer, to tell you what this PageRank is: .PageRank is the number of links and the quality of those links pointing to your site. He also says to “Make sure you have a good architecture, like a tree, and that your important pages are only 1-2 links away from your homepage so that your PageRank is still high there.”

“PageRank is about lots of people with high PageRank linking to your site”

“The pages that get linked to a lot tend to get discovered and crawled quite quickly. The lower PageRank pages are likely to be crawled not quite as often.”

↳ *Matt Cutts, interviewed by Eric Enge*



Here's a quote about crawling from Matt Cutts, a Google Software Engineer interviewed by Eric Enge of Stone Temple Consulting: “The pages that get linked to a lot tend to get discovered and crawled quite quickly. The lower PageRank pages are likely to be crawled not quite as often.”

Inbound Links

- ❑ are organic traffic
- ❑ are votes of trust
- ❑ are user-friendly
 - ↳ design URLs for readers
 - ↳ create partnerships



In other words, inbound links matter - so in addition to your site work, you need to create partnerships, you want to be seen in your scene!

The reason we're mentioning all this is because the incoming links to your site and the quality of your content including your actual texts, your navigation, your link names, your page titles, and what your meta information etc. says is all completely up to you.

The words you choose for title tags and your descriptions, how well you maintain them on all your content, including their length, by the way, are very important, and these aren't things Metro Publisher can influence.

YOU* + Metro Publisher = SEO

* with inbound links



The reason we're mentioning this is because the incoming links to your site, which are extremely important for SEO, and the quality of your content including your internal links, your keyword use and what your meta tags and descriptions etc. say are completely up to you.

The words you choose for title tags and and how well you maintain your descriptions, and also their length, by the way, are very important, but those aren't things Metro Publisher can influence.

Our job is to maintain your SEO on the technical side, which is what we're here to tell you more about today. We know that many aspects of SEO are NOT intuitive and are particular to the ever changing requirements of search engines, which grow dynamically with the web.

Metro Publisher SEO

- ❑ Customizable meta information & URLs
 - ❑ root/home page
 - ❑ sections & subsections
 - ❑ content & images
- ❑ Specialized content types & micro data
- ❑ Customizable site structure
- ❑ Dynamic & complete sitemaps
- ❑ Customizable 404 pages
- ❑ Automatic 301 redirects



All Metro Publisher sites include these SEO features.

We'll go down this list in more detail now.

Root & SubSections & Content

Customizable

- ☐ meta titles
- ☐ meta descriptions
- ☐ meta keywords (tags)
- ☐ URL names



With Metro Publisher, you have the option to simply enter **meta information** directly into form fields on the respective setup pages to describe what your magazine and all it has to offer is about. Those fields automatically populate the corresponding meta tags in the HTML code so that they can be read by the search engine robots.

Root/Home Page

Admin > Settings > General

- ☐ meta title
- ☐ meta description
- ☐ meta keywords
- ☐ site name



So at the top level, in your general settings, you can enter meta information for your site, which actually just means the root page, or homepage, since your sections and individual content pages and even images will and should (!) all have their own meta information.

The screenshot shows the Metro Publisher Admin interface. At the top, there's a blue header with the Metro Publisher logo (a stylized 'm' on a cloud) and the text 'DESIGN metroPUBLISHER'. To the right of the logo are links for 'Metro Publisher Support', 'Admin' (with a dropdown arrow), 'Manage Users', and 'Support'. Below the header is a navigation bar with tabs: 'General' (selected), 'Header & Footer', 'Geolocation', 'Content', 'Default Texts', 'Directory', '3rd Party', 'HTML Embed', and 'Beta Features'. On the right side of the navigation bar are three buttons: 'Sections', 'Files', and 'Settings'. The main content area is titled 'General'. It contains a link 'Need help? Watch this' followed by a 'Video Tutorial' button. Below this are four text input fields: 'Home Title' (containing 'Family Magazine'), 'Meta Description' (containing 'Write a general description of your magazine here.'), 'Meta Keywords' (empty), and 'Site name' (containing 'Family Leisure'). A note below the 'Site name' field states: 'This field is appended to any MetaTitles on Content Pages.'

The Home Title is the <meta title> for your site. Meta titles always appear as the top line in search engine results, if yours is one of the returned pages.

Please don't enter "Home" for your homepage here. You want to give a brief descriptive title, not too long to be cut off in the line of space available for it in search engine results, but not too short and general either. It's a bit like writing a tweet, ideally shorter than that, though.

Root Page - Home Title

- ❑ site meta title
- ❑ should be:
 - ❑ brief
 - ❑ descriptive
 - ❑ not “Home”

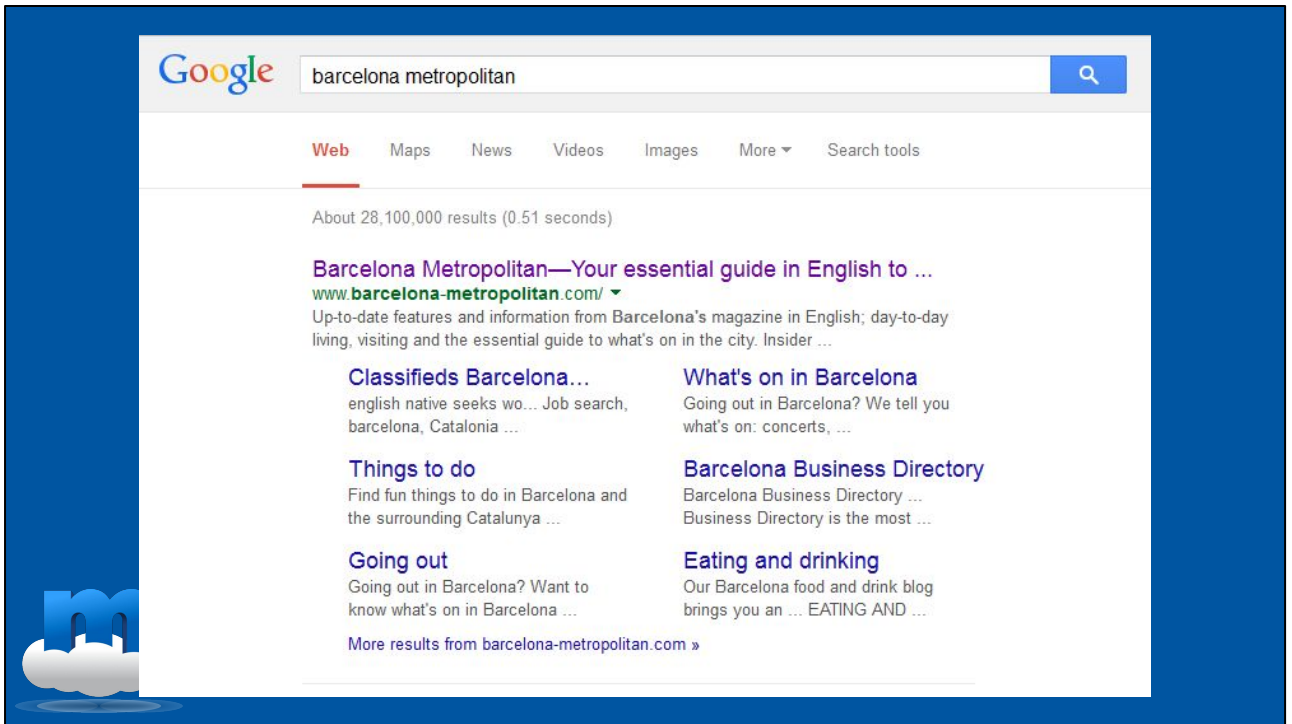
“ExampleSocialSite, a place for people to meet and mingle.”



↳ Google

The example Google gives is: *“ExampleSocialSite, a place for people to meet and mingle.”* Please note that they’re not including a location because this example isn’t for a local website!

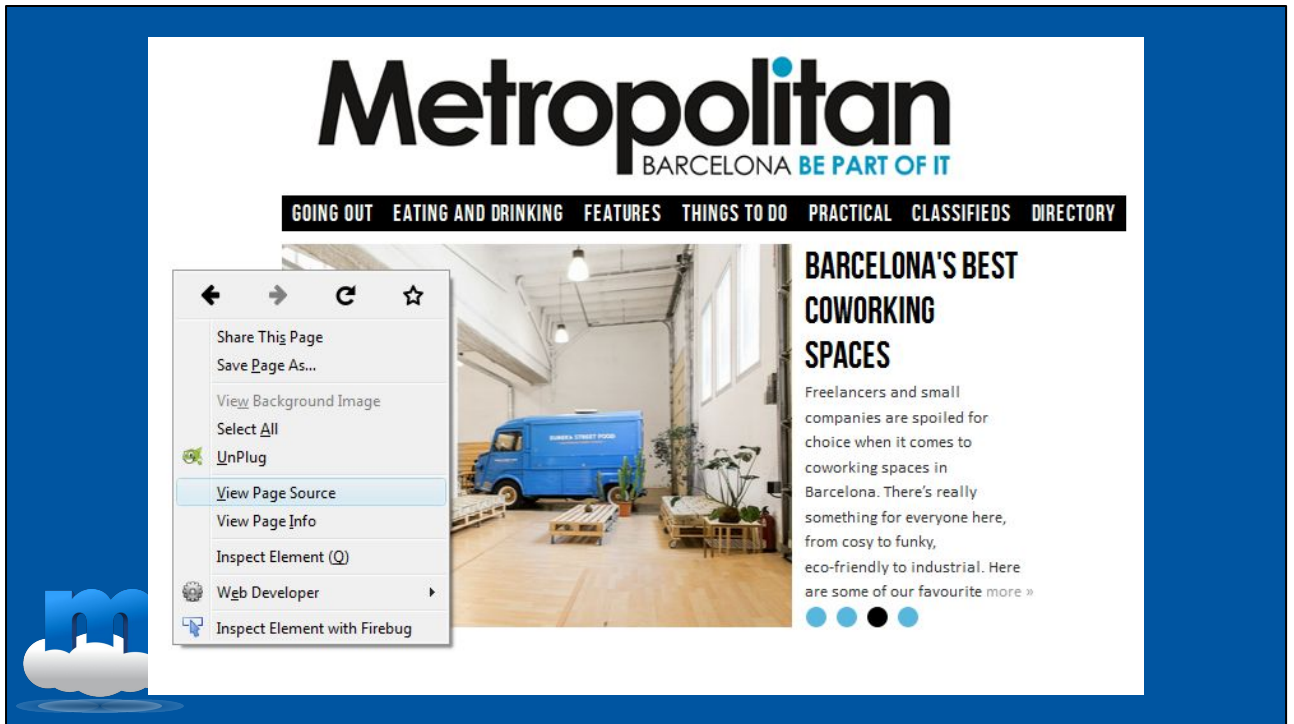
Let’s see what that top line looks like for one of our clients - Barcelona Metropolitan



The very top line is their site Meta Title, but Google is cutting off some of the words in the view on my screen, so let's look at their page source to see what they have as their meta title.

```
<title>Barcelona Metropolitan—Your essential guide in English to living in and visiting Barcelona</title>
```

```
<meta name="description" content="Up-to-date features and information from Barcelona's magazine in English; day-to-day living, visiting and the essential guide to what's on in the city. Insider knowledge about Barcelona from English-speaking residents"/>
```



Right click on a website's homepage and then select 'View Page Source' to see what other sites with great SEO are using as their home titles and meta descriptions.

```

1 <!DOCTYPE html>
2 <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"
3   lang="en-us">
4 <head>
5
6 <title>Barcelona Metropolitan—Your essential guide in English to living in and
7   visiting Barcelona</title>
8
9 <script type="text/javascript">
10   if (window['JSON'] === undefined) {
11     jQuery.getScript('https://d2az0yupc2akbm.cloudfront.net/vanguardistas.publicview/2.14.38/
12   </script>
13
14 <meta name="description" content="Up-to-date features and information from Barcelona's
15   magazine in English; day-to-day living, visiting and the essential guide to what's on
16   in the city. Insider knowledge about Barcelona from English-speaking residents"/>
17

```

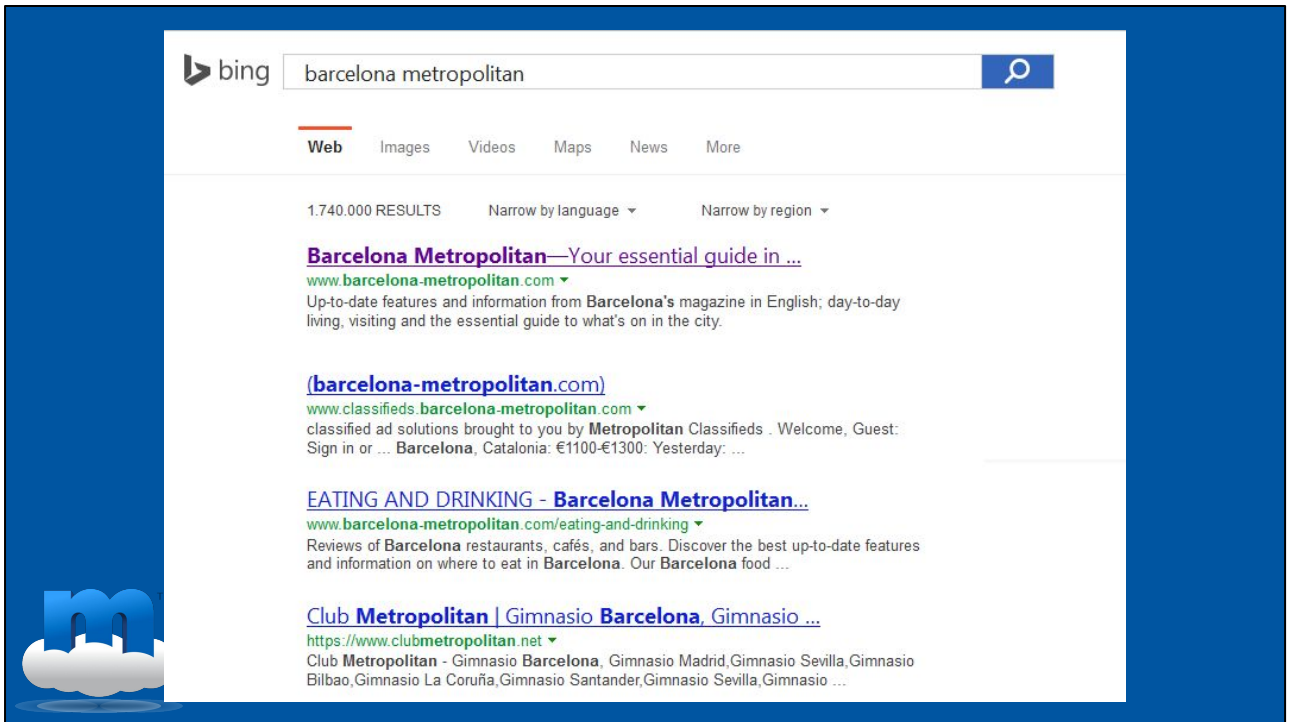


For example, this screenshot shows the page source for Barcelona Metropolitan's homepage, so the code responsible for the text snippets showing up in the search engine results we just looked at:

`<title>Barcelona Metropolitan—Your essential guide in English to living in and visiting Barcelona</title>`

`<meta name="description" content="Up-to-date features and information from Barcelona's magazine in English; day-to-day living, visiting and the essential guide to what's on in the city. Insider knowledge about Barcelona from English-speaking residents"/>`

Please note that we are not discussing meta keywords for this example because by current SEO standards your keywords should be highly limited and relevant. We will explain those concepts later.



Here's the same search we carried out with Google earlier as displayed in Bing, which has even less space for the title line.

Both Google and Bing are highlighting matches to the keywords I typed in with **bold** by the way, in any part of this so-called snippet, including the URL, which means the reader can quickly scan the results to see if the words have been matched in a reasonable context.

Remember the meta title and description we just saw in the page source:

```
<title>Barcelona Metropolitan—Your essential guide in English to living in and visiting Barcelona</title>
```

```
<meta name="description" content="Up-to-date features and information from Barcelona's magazine in English; day-to-day living, visiting and the essential guide to what's on in the city. Insider knowledge about Barcelona from English-speaking residents"/>
```

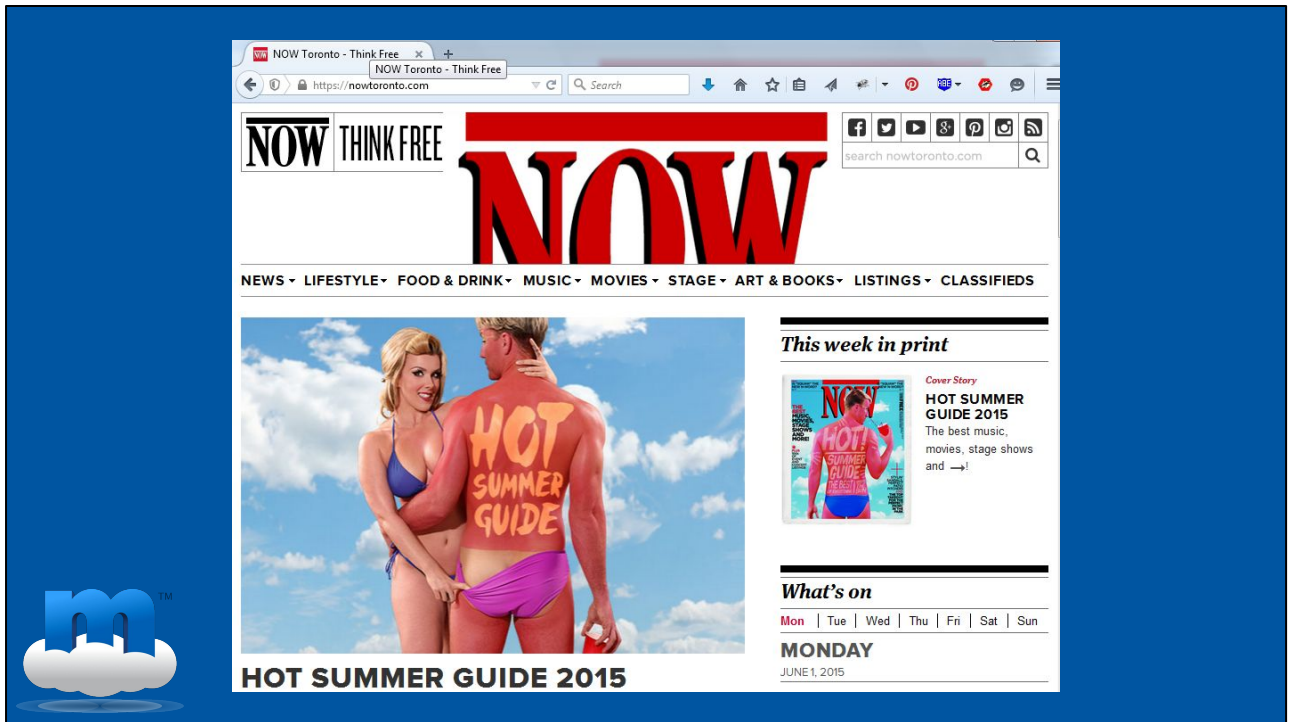
Root Page - Site Name

- ❑ home / meta title alternate
- ❑ short version
- ❑ appended to section & page titles
- ❑ best practice:
 - ❑ do not use root meta title on all pages

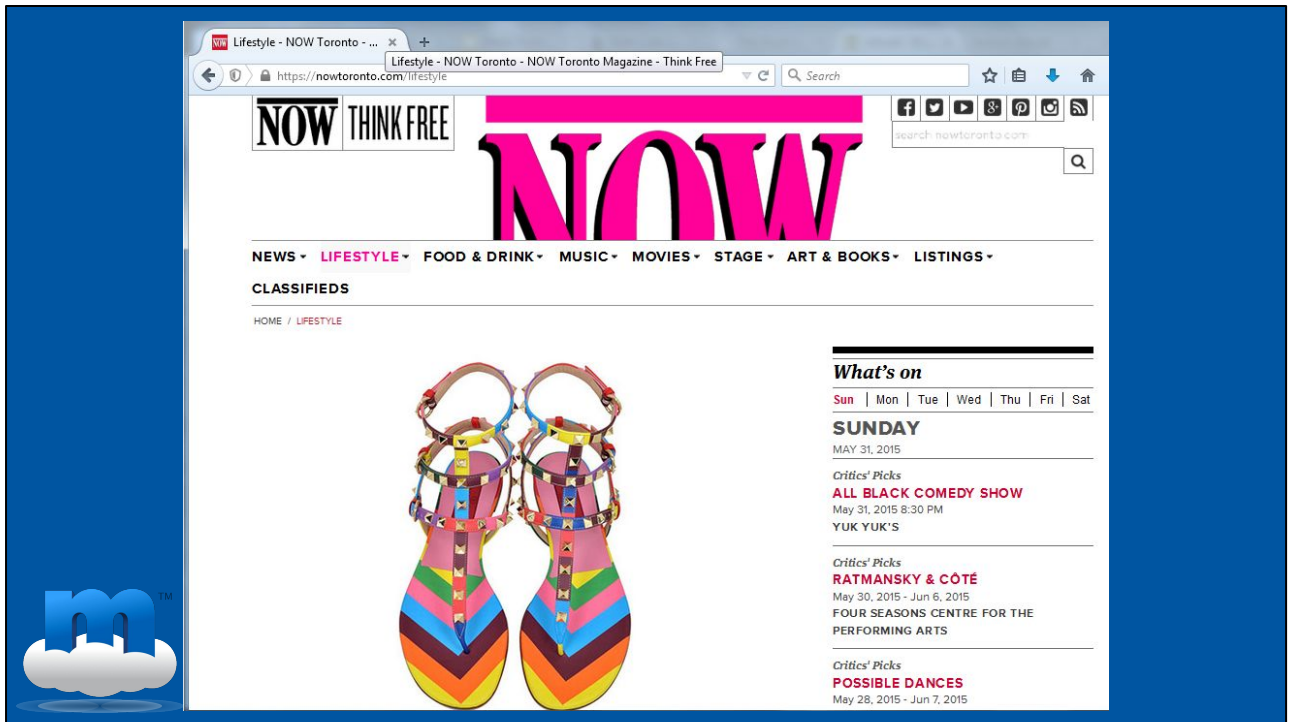


In Metro Publisher you also have a separate field called the Site Name, which is a kind of alternate title to your root homepage meta title and which will be tacked on to the end of your individual page meta titles and can be seen by users when they hover over the page title tab in their browser.

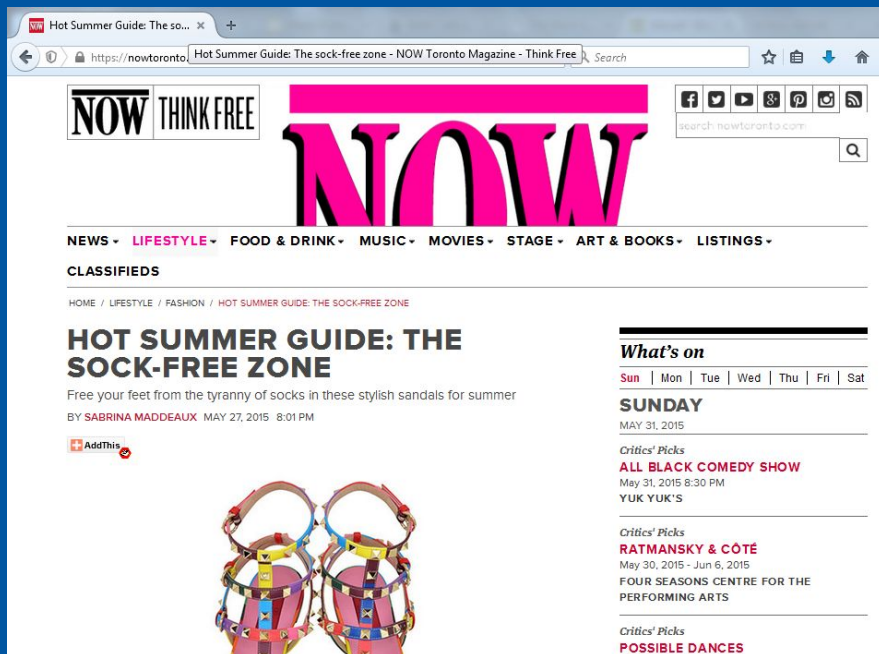
This should be a short version of your home page meta title, and we provide it because both common sense and Google say not to use that whole descriptive home meta title for each page of your site - the focus is on user-friendliness here, and of course also on getting your point across as concisely as possible.



When you mouse-over the title tab at the top of the browser on a website such as NOW Toronto you can view the complete text they entered. 'NOW Toronto - Think Free' is the Home Title



At the section level, you can see that the alternate site name they have chosen to be appended is 'NOW Toronto Magazine - Think Free'



At the page level you will see the same site name appended: 'NOW Toronto Magazine - Think Free'

Root Page - Meta Description

- ❑ description of magazine
- ❑ 2 - 3 lines*
- ❑ not shown on public pages
- ❑ can show in search results
- ❑ do not recycle



*location

The meta description field in your general settings is for a general description of your magazine / homepage. This also should not be an entire paragraph, 2 or 3 lines at the most here. Remember to include words that state your location or market region if that is of importance to your publication.

This meta description generally isn't shown on the public pages, so visitors don't see always see them, but they can appear in search results and can have a large effect on your organic traffic, so take the time to fill them in for every page, not just in your general settings.

You won't get rewarded for recycling your homepage description by the search engines, instead, make sure each page has it's own unique description.

So the meta description in your general settings is at the site-level, next would come your section and subsection levels, so don't forget about those, and then come your page-level descriptions.

Meta Keywords

...



Once you have worked out some clean and concise copy for your root page title, the site name appendix you'd like for all your other pages, and the root page meta description you're left with the keywords field. I have three quotes from the three major search engines for you on that to illustrate that much less is more in this case.

Meta Keywords

“Our web search disregards keyword metatags completely. They simply don't have any effect in our search ranking at present.”

↳ *Matt Cutts, Google Search Engineer*



“While we still index the meta keyword tag, the ranking importance given to meta keyword tags receives the lowest ranking signal in our system.

Words that appear in any other part of documents, including the body, title, description, anchor text etc., will take priority in ranking the document.”



↳ Yahoo

Meta Keywords

“I’ll make this statement: meta keywords is a signal. One of roughly a thousand we analyze. Getting it right is a nice perk for us, but won’t rock your world. Abusing meta keywords can hurt you.”



↳ *Duane Forrester, a Project Manager for Bing*

Note that he said 1000 signals they analyze. Those are different for each search engine as these quotes show, and that’s something you can test just by typing the same search terms into several different search engines.

What he means with “abusing meta keywords” is keyword stuffing - so listing all words from closely to remotely related to any possible piece of your content, rather than only the directly relevant ones that would be considered in keeping with your mission statement. So just because you have a pet store on one of your location searches, doesn’t mean you should list pets or puppies or cat food in your site meta keywords fields.

Topics Pages*


Customizable:

- ☐ meta title = tag title
- ☐ meta description = tag description
- ☐ URL
- ☐ person tags = first & last name



On Content, tags are the meta keywords since this is a different type of page than the homepage, but keep this in mind when choosing keywords. What would your readers be typing into the search bars that would return your content as a correct match to what they are looking for?


On Topics Pages the tag title is the meta title and the tag description is the meta description, so keep this in mind when creating tags and remember that this information, as well as the URL for tags, is also customizable in Metro Publisher.



TagsCategories

Edit Out & About

Need help? Watch this [Video Tutorial](#)

☐ This tag is a person 

Title*
Out & About

URLName
out-&-about

Relative URL
/topics/out-%26-about/

State
published

Description
(250 characters left)

Categories
[Add to Category](#)

Usage
Content: 1

Here's one I started setting up and it's a perfect example of where you might want to override the automation - the ampersand (&) symbol won't appear in an URL because the character isn't allowed, which you can see in the Relative URL field, so I should consider replacing the symbol with the word 'and' instead.

Content - Meta Title

- ☐ is copied from title (h1)
- ☐ can be changed
- ☐ shows in snippet
- ☐ should be:
 - ☐ topic of page
 - ☐ unique
 - ☐ highly descriptive



Metro Publisher provides the same straightforward form fields you have for your root page meta information on content too of course. To turn on meta info on your site:

Admin > Settings > Content.

The meta title is copied from the article title by default but you can change it for SEO purposes if you wish. The original article title actually turns into an h1 header in the HTML code, which are sometimes mentioned as SEO-relevant. Please know that page titles are much more important and that compared to inbound links the weight of the h1 diminishes even further.

What you type into that meta title tag isn't only important for users, it's also what shows up in the first line of a search result if your piece of content is found by the search engine for a keyword search. So the meta title needs to be the topic of the page - it's your individual page title, so you want it to be unique and highly descriptive for your readers and the search engines to easily understand and categorize.

The **subtitle** is an optional field that also can be turned on Admin > Settings > Content but it is minimally important in terms of SEO. Subtitle text is seen just as an additional amount of body content by a search robot.

Traditionally you can only have one h1 header per page, and news sites have far more stories on the homepage and section pages than on an article page. Deciding what the h1 header should be on the homepage or section page therefore becomes very difficult. The Guardian uses their first story (even though there can be more than one headline story), but other newspapers such as The New York Times don't use H1 headers there at all.

Content - Meta Description*

- ☐ is copied from description
- ☐ can be changed
- ☐ might show in snippet
- ☐ should be:
 - ☐ informative
 - ☐ gripping



*micro data allowed

Metro Publisher copies the meta description from the description you enter.

Google sometimes uses your meta description as the snippet, so the teaser text that shows up for your page in search results - usually that happens if there is no good match in any of the visible text of your content to the search words. The snippet that people see is what generally makes the 'to click or not to click' decision for them, and remember this is organic traffic that you want.

Content - Meta Description

Micro Data

- ❑ author, editor, issue date, ISBN, etc.
- ❑ delimit with punctuation

Author: A.N. Author, Illustrator: P. Picture,

Category: Books, Price: \$17.99, Length: 784 pages



What many people don't know is that the meta description doesn't have to be a sentence. Pay attention to this cause it's the icing on the cake!

You can enter micro data like author or editor, issue date, an ISBN, things like that. You want to make sure you indicate what each piece of information is and delimit it with punctuation. Here's an example Google gives that you could enter for an article centered around a new book that isn't a review, such as an interview.

So make sure the meta description is highly informative and as gripping as possible.

Now this could seem too cumbersome - that being so careful for all content slows down the workflow. If you absolutely don't want to make time for this, you should at least make sure you do so for more important articles and evergreen content first, and then over time add this to other pages throughout the site.

Specialized Content

Specialized Information (Micro Data)

- ❑ events
- ❑ business listings
- ❑ reviews
- ❑ locations
- ❑ etc.



This kind of rich micro data that you can enter into meta descriptions is exactly what Metro Publisher already presents to the search engines on all the specialized content types we offer. These are events, business listings, reviews, locations, product info, etc.

The idea is that on specialized content you typically have specialized information: addresses, event start and end times, the fact that a piece of content is a "Review," etc. Metro Publisher wraps those with micro data tags that tells the search bots exactly what each bit of information is. That is much easier for the bots to index, because we are telling them what the phone number is, for example, and this ties in with the meta description tip from Google we just talked about.

This is preferable to a random set of numbers (that seems like a phone number or address) somewhere in the page among the content. The search bot doesn't have to decipher a number as a phone number by crawling the rest of the content. It avoids mistakes too. In Metro Publisher creating these types of content is easy, therefore editors should be in the habit of doing so.

Content - URL

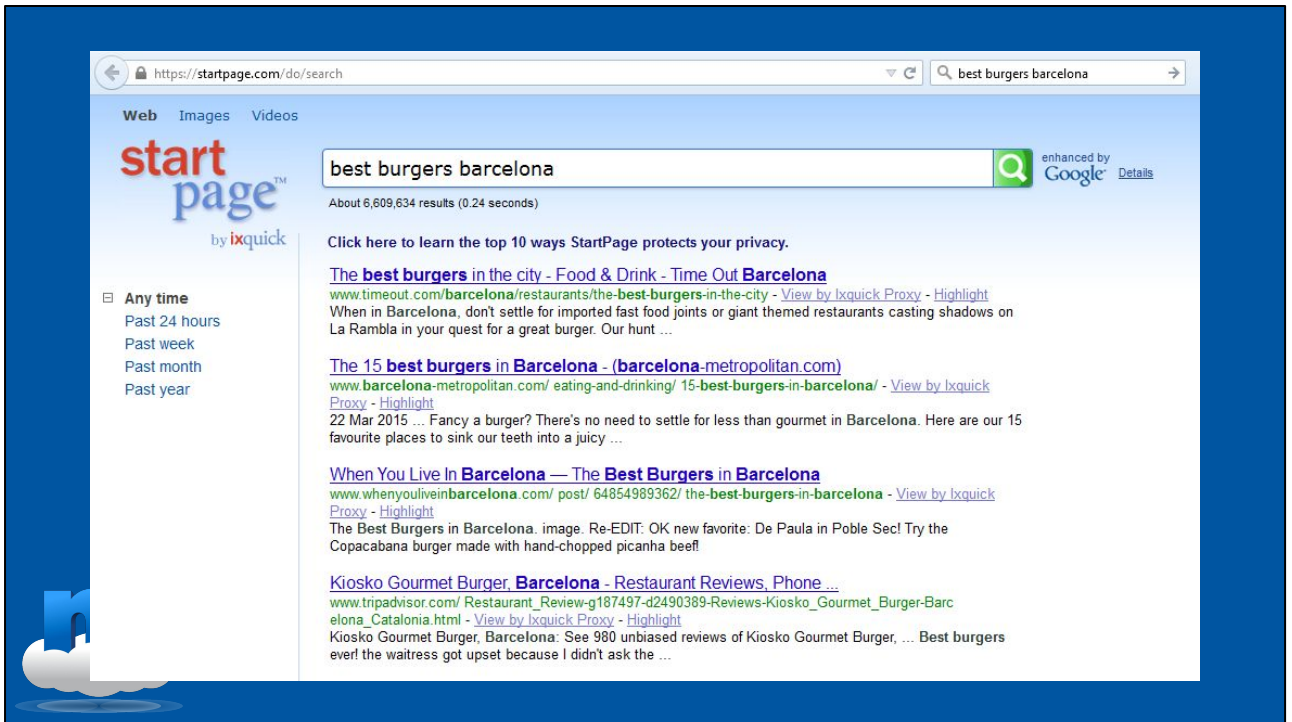
- ❑ is copied from the title
- ❑ can be changed
- ❑ shows under snippet
- ❑ with **keyword** matches
- ❑ should:
 - ❑ be user-friendly
 - ❑ use hyphens (-)



Content URLs are created from the title as human-readable URLs but can be customized for SEO reasons.

We purposely separate individual words with hyphens (-) instead of underscores (_), as recommended for search engines.

Metro Publisher also copies the title words rather than creating a random string of letters and numbers, like an ID, so that when other pages link back to your site, the link words let users and search engines know what your content is about, making the link much more relevant. Not everyone uses anchor texts, and if they do, then your link text can provide the words for them.



As you may remember, when Google returns a search result the page URL is shown under the document title and snippet, and any keywords the user typed in that are matched by the URL show up in bold. Always think about the words users might be entering to match your content and make sure you don't try to match your content when it's not what the reader is truly looking for.

That would be detrimental to the organic traffic you want so don't assume that any exposure of your content is good for SEO. It should always match what the user was searching for as closely as possible.

URLs

✓ chicagomagazine.com/restaurant-reviews/ginos-italian-restaurant

✗ northside.com/articles/ginos

✗ visitsydney.com/sydneyoperahouse/berlinphilharmonicorchestra



Consequently, something like 'berlinphilharmonicaplayingsydneyoperahouse' is not a good link text! Individual words should be separated so that they can be recognized as terms. Users do not type in words without spaces and search engines are looking for words as found in dictionaries.

This doesn't generally apply to the site URL simply because your meta information is there to describe what your domain name is about. A catchy website domain is a good thing, so don't worry about its exact text. Focus on the section and content URLs in addition to your meta information.

As another example, the human-readable URL:

chicagomagazine.com/restaurant-reviews/ginos-italian-restaurant is infinitely better than northside.com/articles/ginos

Even though the latter link is well structured, no reader will be entering the search term 'article' along with 'Ginos' to find an italian restaurant review. Always ask yourself what the readers will be typing into the search bar to find what they are looking for.

Images

- ❑ filename is URL
- ❑ file title is <alt> text
- ❑ file sizes are specified
- ❑ photographer / illustrator micro data



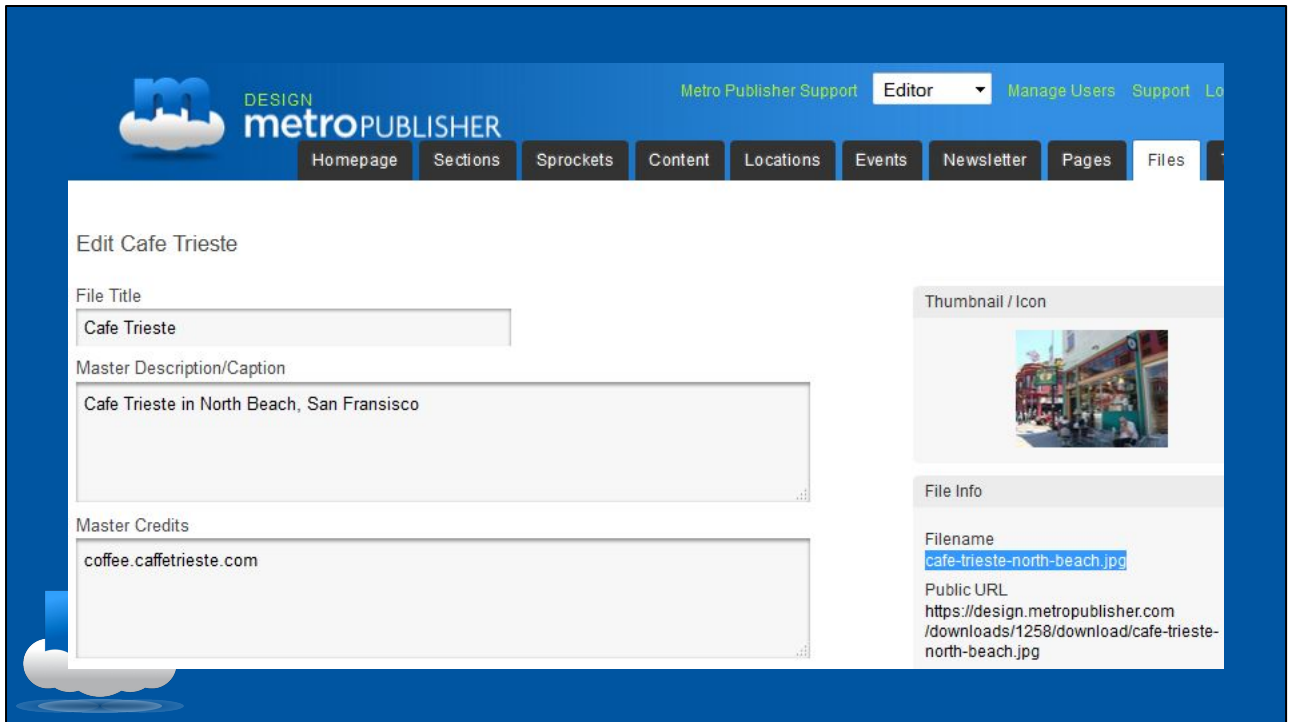
Now for **images**, the most important SEO factors in Metro Publisher are:

- the filename that you create before you upload the image to metro publisher turns into part of the link name
- the file title, which becomes the alt tag text
- the file size

Metro Publisher sets and states the height and width or percentiles of images once the images are placed on content which is useful to browsers when your page is being loaded.

The browser knows which space to save for the image and can load the text around that space, meaning nothing has to be shifted afterward. Your pages load faster this way. Please make sure you follow our image size recommendations listed on the Metro Publisher Support Site for optimal display and loading.

And there is additional information you can provide in the micro data fields.



Highlighted on the right is the filename I gave my image when I uploaded it - I tried to come up with an appropriate name that would make good sense.

Images - Filename

- ❑ becomes web address
- ❑ is crawled
- ❑ included in sitemap
- ❑ can show in snippet

✓ botanical-gardens-berlin.jpg

✗ IMG123456.JPG



naming
convention

location

The file name should be descriptive of the image content, for example 'botanical-gardens-berlin.jpg', because it turns into the web address, so the URL, of your image, which is also crawled by search engines. Avoid those IMG12345.JPG filenames!

If Google can't find a good text match on your page for the snippet when it's trying to return it as an image search result, it will show the image filename as the snippet, as we mentioned earlier for the meta description. So the filename is important since it's a potential keyword match and a potential image snippet!

The same holds true for any linking to your images from external sites. And if it relates to the image content you'll have a much easier time finding it in your Metro Publisher file center too, of course.

We specifically include images in the sitemap.xml file we generate for you for SEO purposes, by the way, which is an advantage we give you over sites that don't.

It might be a good idea to require your photographers and editors to provide informative file names. Some companies provide everyone with a style guidelines or

naming conventions for these kinds of things, which also helps everyone find the images again.

Images - File Title <alt>

- ❑ coded into HTML
- ❑ mouse-over info
- ❑ text alternative to image
 - ❑ screen readers
 - ❑ text browsers
 - ❑ images off



p.s. robots can't read pictures

The image file title is used as the <alt> tag text - that's the text that appears when a visitor hovers over the image with a mouse and which is coded into the HTML. This is essential as a text alternative to the image for people using screen readers (because of visual impairment) or text browsers, or readers who just have images turned off for other reasons, like low bandwidth connections, for example. Google uses the <alt> tag as the subject of your image and that helps decide the image that best matches a user's search.

This is another situation in which location information is helpful. 'Fish market' is fine, but 'Boston fish market' is better. Most of you are trying to reach local readers so please keep this in mind for all your SEO and be specific so your file stands out from thousands of fish market links.

And keep in mind that any text inside an image is neither readable by search engines nor by people with visual impairments, so provide that text elsewhere as well.

Images

```

```



Here's what a good combination of file name and title would look like:

```

```

Recap

- ❑ crawling
- ❑ organic traffic
- ❑ seo signals
- ❑ PageRank
- ❑ inbound links
- ❑ content quality
- ❑ consistence
- ❑ page & home title
- ❑ site name
- ❑ meta keywords
- ❑ meta descriptions
- ❑ URL names
- ❑ images
- ❑ micro data



This is what we have covered so far.

I learned no detail was too small. It was all about the details.

~ *Brad Grey, CEO Paramount Pictures*



We will round this part of the training off with a quote on the importance of details and move on to sitemaps.

sitemap vs. Sitemap

sitemap

- ❑ user-friendly
- ❑ hand-made
- ❑ hierarchical list of pages
- ❑ not dynamic



Sitemap

- ❑ bot-friendly
- ❑ XML index file
- ❑ hierarchical list of pages (and images)
- ❑ dynamic

There are two kinds of sitemaps, one is the user-friendly kind some sites make available to their visitors to help them find what they're looking for that looks like a family tree - however, since this is a hierarchical list of the pages on your site there's no way you can make this useful on a highly dynamic site as magazines are. If you've organized your navigation well and named your sections in an informative manner, your readers will find what they're looking for.

The other kind of sitemap is the **XML Sitemap** file that is written in code, so it's a background file that is registered with the search engines, and we provide this file for your site(s).

Metro Publisher Sitemap

- ❑ automatically generated
- ❑ includes all images
- ❑ detailed, dynamic map
- ❑ technical requirement for SEO



The XML Sitemap is an index file with links of all your pages for the search engines to follow and Metro Publisher also includes images, so the links to each one of your images, for SEO purposes. As we mentioned earlier, not all sites do this so you have an advantage with Metro Publisher here as well.

Metro Publisher Sitemap

Sitemap.xml

↳ for search engine indexing

Sitemap_news.xml

↳ for Google News indexing

<https://design.metropublisher.com/sitemap.xml>

https://design.metropublisher.com/sitemap_news.xml



Metro Publisher automatically generates a dynamic sitemap.xml for general search engine indexing and a sitemap_news.xml for Google News (if you've registered there), meaning the sitemap changes as your site changes to make sure your content is found and indexed. For Google News that's only updated content from the last two 1-2 days.

This serves as a detailed map of your website for search engines to follow, and is a basic technical requirement for SEO.

“A Sitemap is an XML file that lists URLs for a site along with additional metadata about each URL:

- ❑ when it was last updated,
 - ❑ how often it usually changes, and
 - ❑ how important it is relative to other URLs in the site
- so that search engines can more intelligently crawl the site.”

↳ *Sitemap.org*



Sitemap.org is the standard for these XML indexes, and this is how they explain the purpose of the Sitemap file:

“In its simplest form, a Sitemap is an XML file that lists URLs for a site along with additional metadata about each URL (when it was last updated, how often it usually changes, and how important it is, relative to other URLs in the site) so that search engines can more intelligently crawl the site.”



For this sitemap to work well with the search engines, you want to make sure you have a very clear site structure, so a hierarchy, and try to make sure each page can be reached through at least one static text link. That hierarchy also let's Google know which areas of your site you consider most important and tells it where each piece of your content fits into the grand scheme of your site.

Along with the site structure, you can create web addresses for your sections using keywords that people actually look for on search engines, so both human and search engine readable URLs, like we discussed earlier.

And with Metro Publisher you can organize and modify the structure of your site (sections and subsections) as your SEO efforts evolve and you gather new insights into the behaviors of your readers - the sitemap.xml file will automatically change with it, so you can move popular areas into the spotlight.

You also want to make sure people aren't hitting a 404 'page not found' if they truncate (shorten) your URL backwards from one forward slash to the next, but that goes for all links on your site ideally of course.

“My overall advice is that it helps enormously if you can fix the site architecture upfront, because then you don't have to worry as much about duplicate content issues and all the corresponding things that come along with it.”

↳ *Matt Cutts, Google Engineer*



Here's another quote from Matt Cutts, the Google Engineer:

“My overall advice is that it helps enormously if you can fix the site architecture upfront, because then you don't have to worry as much about duplicate content issues and all the corresponding things that come along with it. You can often use 301 Redirects for duplicate URLs to merge those together into one single URL.”

Metro Publisher 301 Redirects

- ❑ migrating from an existing site
- ❑ moving sections or subsections
- ❑ moving content
- ❑ changing section or subsection names
- ❑ changing content URLs



For new customers migrating from an existing website, and whenever you move sections or content around, Metro Publisher has a robust redirect tool that automatically creates 301 redirects. This helps transfer search rankings of existing content from your old location to the new one.

HTTPS Status Reports

200 = Success: page reached

301 = Moved permanently with link juice

404 = Page not found: invalid page

500 = Server error: ?



In case you're unfamiliar with these numbers, they're so-called HTTP status codes:

- 200 - Success: This is what usually and hopefully happens; the page requested of the server by visitors is found and is ok.
- 301 - Moved Permanently: Visitors are redirected from the page they were trying to reach to a new page, and link juice - previous search ranking - is carried over
- 404 - Page Not Found: This is a client error meaning the page on your site isn't valid for whatever reason, usually a broken link.
- 500 - Server Error: The server didn't carry out the request for whatever reason so this is something that has to be debugged.

As you understand how people find and use your site, the 301 redirects allow you to re-organize your menu and content without fear of users finding 404 pages.

404 Page Not Found

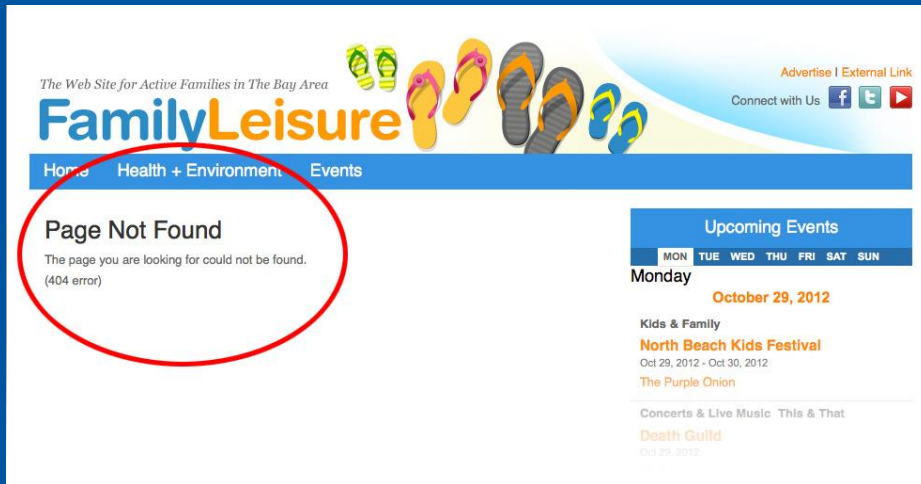
- ❑ typing or spelling mistake
- ❑ outdated bookmark or favorite
- ❑ outdated search engine link
- ❑ broken link on the site



Great 404 pages are important too. Usually, visitors will land on a 404 page because of:

- a mis-typed URL
- an out-of-date bookmark/favourite
- a search-engine link that is out-of-date
- an internal broken link that the webmaster hasn't noticed

Default 404 Page



This is the default 404 page in Metro Publisher. As is best practice, it doesn't inherit ads (too many calls to the server from this page can cause errors). But in general, you actually do NOT want a 404 page that just says 'page not found'. Of course you should let them know that the content they were trying to reach isn't available where it once was. But you always want to give your readers the option to reach other content from the page, it should never just be empty.

[HOME](#)

PAGE NOT FOUND

Sorry, the page you are looking for could not be found. Please use the site search at the top right or click one of the sections below.

EDITORIAL

NEWS

Fearless and irreverent Toronto news, analysis and live content focused on City Hall, Queen's Park, the TTC, the environment, activism and more.

LIFESTYLE

Toronto fashion and design trends, environment tips and product reviews from Ecoholic Adria Vasil, Freewill Astrology by Rob Breznsky and Dan Savage's sex column Savage Love.

FOOD & DRINK

What's new and delicious in Toronto's restaurant and food scene. Sarah Parniak brings you the best of Toronto's dives, cocktail bars, craft beers and what's on offer at the LCBO.

This week in print



Cover Story

**HOT SUMMER
GUIDE 2015**

The best music, movies,
stage shows and →!

What's on

Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
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FRIDAY

MAY 29, 2015

Critics' Picks



Custom 404 with Pages



Pages Gallery

Need help? Watch this [Video Tutorial](#)

Page 1 of 1 prev 1 next



CSV

You can save a database as comma-separated values (CSV) and make it available for download. The file name would have the .csv extension at the end.

[Add](#)



Freeform HTML

A completely blank page where you can insert any HTML you like. It does not inherit the navigation or any site elements. Ending of this page should be .html.

[Add](#)



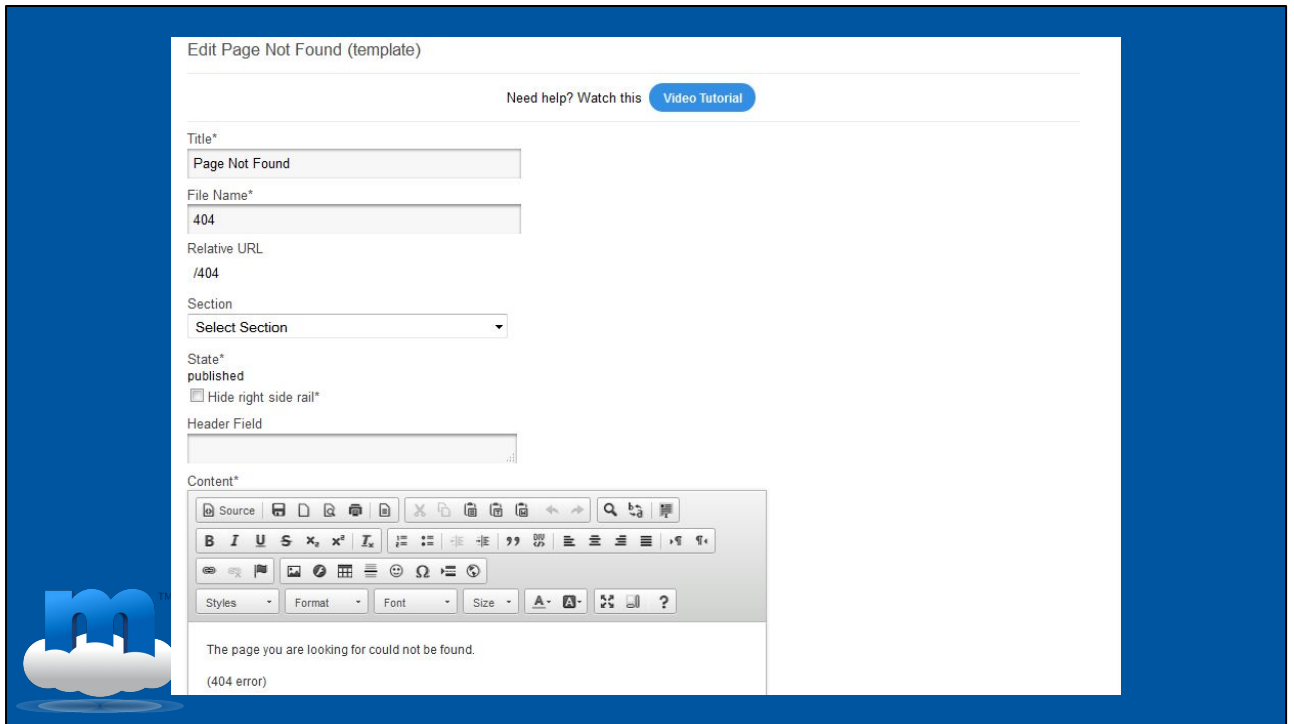
Template HTML

An HTML page in continuity with the site's current design. If you are using iframes the maximum width is 620 pixels. Ending of this page should be .html.

[Add](#)

If you would like to have a customized 404 message, use Pages to create one.

1. Log in as an editor and click on "**Pages**" from the main navigation and add either "**Template HTML**" or "**Freeform HTML**."



This is the editor for the standard 404 page in Metro Publisher.

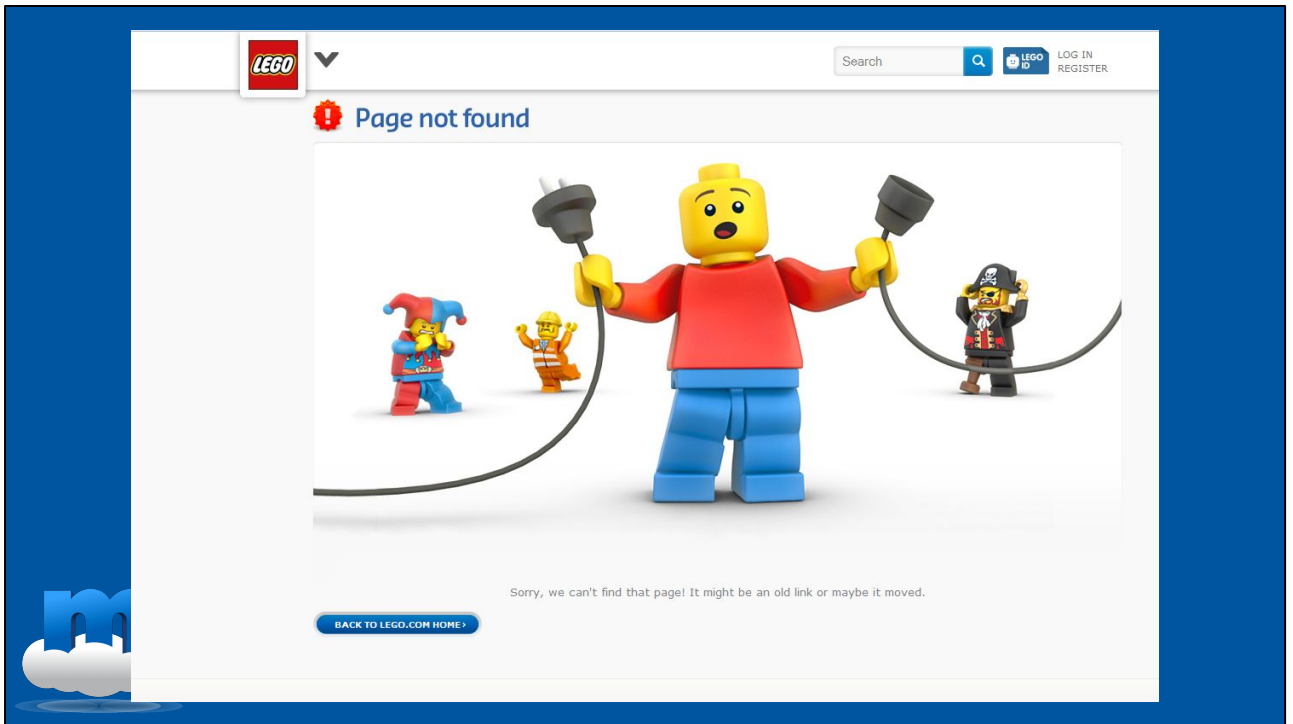
Custom 404 with Pages

- ☐ Title: "Page not found" or similar
- ☐ Name: 404
 - ↳ no more, no less
- ☐ No section / subsection
- ☐ Hide right rail
- ☐ Add content & tips



- The title will display at the top of the page you create. Name it something like "Page Not Found" or similar.
- Name the new page simply "**404**", do **NOT** add an extension such as ".html."
- Do **NOT** assign it to a section or subsection. You might want to check the hide the right rail option to keep this page light-weight and have it load as quickly as possible, as is best practice.
- Add whatever text or HTML code you think is more informative than the default 404 message and **Save**

That's it. Wait a few minutes for your new page to clear the cache. The cache is a functionality that stores recently used information so that it can be called-up more quickly later. So your browser will have your site stored as it was a few minutes ago.



If you're a company like Lego you can do something cute:

<http://www.lego.com/404notfound>



ERROR 404

Page not available. But Justin is.

Justin is a Mint developer who likes slow cars, sharp crayons, reheated pizza and awkward silence. Email him at [justin \[at \] mint.com](mailto:justin[at]mint.com).

But if you're more interested in personal finance than in Justin, try the links below:



Personal Finance
Solution
[Mint.com](#)



Personal Finance
Mobile Apps
[Overview](#)
[iPhone](#)
[Android](#)
[iPad](#)



Personal Finance
Blog
[MintLife](#)



We'll close with the best example of a 404 site I've ever seen, from a personal finance site called Mint - they turned theirs into a humorous dating profile of one of their staff members and cleverly supplied a working email and of course links to alternate content with it .

Thank you!



This ends the SEO portion of our training. Next up are Roundups, which tie in with SEO because they are ideally suited for users and search engines alike.