Introduction to meta tags

Technology, Computer

Meta tags are small bits of text that will describe the page content; the tags do not appear on the web page itself, but only in the page code. They help search engines to determine what a web page is about, which further helps with search engine optimisation. The tags are only visible to search engines and not to the user/client.

There are 4 types of Meta tags:

Meta Keywords Attribute

These keywords are relevant to the information on the page. The pros to this are that they allow to direct traffic that are searching for specific things, towards particular pages. The cons of this is that one, they don't work anymore, and two, it allowed people to put random tags *unrelated* to their page into the HTML and essential " Pirate" traffic for other pages.

Title Tag

This is the title of the page that will appear on the search engine. It is one of the most important tags as this has the most impact on search rankings, and are visible to the users of the search engine. This will be the first thing users will see for themselves that will tell them what the page is about. Pros of this is it tells users what the page is about immediately, however the cons can be that if the wrong title is used or not specific enough, it can effect search engines results massively but showing the titles of the wrong web pages on search engines when the user is searching for a different unrelated web page.

Meta Description Attribute

This gives a description of the page. It gives a brief description of the page below the title tag in the search engine results. The advantages are it can entice users to click on the webpage after reading the description and being interested. The disadvantages are that this does not affect the search results ranking of the page.

Meta Robots Attribute

This is an indication to the search engine bots what should happen to the page when opened. These can give two commands:

Index/NoIndex:

This tells the search engine whether the page should be shown in the search results or not.

Follow/NoFollow

This tells the search engine whether the links to the page should be followed or not, depending whether or not it is safe.

Newsgroup and forums

Advantages of newsgroups and forums are that it allows people to express their own opinions freely with other people. It lets people with similar opinions to conjugate and this means information about an organisation can spread fast, whether it is a good or bad point and regardless of whether it's true or not. This is a disadvantage of forums as it allows false information to travel fast and rumours spread quickly however forums and newsgroups are commonly monitored by the company or by the site owners to make sure false information is kept to a minimum.

Banners and Popups

The advantages of banners and popups are they allow for intrusive advertisement, which means it is hard for people to miss the advertising and can sometimes mean people visit an organisations' webpage may enjoy the content of the webpage.

The disadvantage of this type of promotion is that it can irritate people because it is intrusive so may annoy more customers and cause more trouble than it's worth if it is done on mass.

Spam

The advantages of spam are similar to banners and popups as it is also intrusive, it means people will find it hard to avoid it and because spam is sent via email, it means promoters can send it to hundreds of thousands of emails every minute, every day to maximise the chances of someone clicking on the link to a webpage.

The disadvantages of this is that most email providers will filter out spam into separate inbox folders or just delete it all together so only a small percentage of spam sent reaches the target.

Site Name

The advantages of a site name are that, if named correctly, they can intrigue people to visit a site even if it is not what the client originally wanted, they will allow for subtle advertising that a customer may not even realise which makes it less intrusive to the customer.

The disadvantages of a site name are that, if they are not named correctly, they can damage promotion, as the customer may not think that the site is not what they are looking for or will not intrigue people to visit at all. An example of this can be a website which sells both beds and headboards but if the site name only advertises beds and not headboards, a customer may think this site does not sell headboards and move onto another site.

Direct Marketing

The advantages of direct marketing are customers can get information about the product being offered easily and can place orders for delivery their house or place of work. It also allows customers to ask questions directly to the organisation/company via telephone. Online direct marketing can allow social media sites to increase the amount of exposure people have to direct marketing.

The disadvantages of direct marketing are that organisations/companies can send unwanted junk mail to people with no interest in the products. Unwanted calls to people can mean a company will sometimes be trying to convince people to buy products they do want and annoy the customer.

Bibliography

http://www. wordstream. com/meta-tags