SEO Desk - Don’t let Google decide your page title

The <title> element has a strong correlation with how Google displays your site’s title link in SERPs, but it is ultimately up to the search engine to decide what to use. Do you want to lose control of your marketing message? If not, pay attention to what Google or other search providers value in title content.

According to Google as of 10/15/21 <<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/advanced/appearance/title-link> >, the following sources are used for determining title links. Their goal is to provide the most accurate title based on the content of the page.

• Content in <title> elements

• Main visual title or headline shown on a page

• Heading elements, such as <h1> elements

• Other content that’s large and prominent through the use of style treatments

• Other text contained in the page

• Anchor text on the page

• Text within links that point to the page

The reasons that Google might not use your title element vary but are largely caused by titles that are:

* Incomplete: Titles are half-empty or missing any kind of descriptive text. Example: <title>| Site Name</title>
* Obsolete: The title has not been updated to reflect an update to the main content. This discrepancy could occur on something like yearly roundup article that uses the same URL year after year.
* Inaccurate: The title element doesn’t accurately reflect the main content.
* Micro-boilerplate text: There’s repeated boilerplate text in the <title> elements for a subset of pages within a site.

No matter if Google uses your actual <title> element or creates content from your page for a new title, your title element will still be used for search engine ranking. Therefore make it clear, and descriptive.

Google’s best practices are:

* Make sure every page on your site has its own title specified in the <title> element.
* Create unique titles for each page and avoid boilerplate text.
* Keep titles concise and avoid unnecessarily long text.
* Write descriptive titles and avoid vague text such as “Home” for the home page.
* Don’t repeat text in titles for the sake of adding more keywords.
* Brand your titles when appropriate by appending the name of your site to the front of them.

*For example:*

<title>ExampleSocialSite, a place for people to meet and mingle</title>

This is one of the first things users will see as search engine results, make sure your title is well thought out, accurate, and engaging.