The uses of Metadata - what, why and how

Metadata is essentially extra information about existing data. With regards to HTML, this information will not be displayed on the webpage but is machine parsable (can be read/ interpreted by a computer). Metadata is used specifically in HTML to specify keywords, authors, last modified details and page descriptions. This data is used by browsers, search engines and general web services.

Metadata is implemented via the <meta> tag and must always be within the <head> element. The <head> element is used to provide information about the webpage, and it is here that sets website accessibility and search engine optimization (SEO). SEO is vital to web developers and clients as they require their website to be easily found by customers and within the first few results of the search engine. Metadata aids the workings of bots to help them understand the nature and type of content on ones’ page. If metadata characteristics are used effectively this will ease the workings of bots and make the website more accessible.