The meta-attribute, short for "metadata attribute," is an HTML attribute used to provide additional information about an HTML element. It does not affect the appearance or behavior of the element, but instead provides data that can be used by browsers, search engines, or other web services.

The meta-attribute is commonly used within the head section of an HTML document and is represented by the <meta> tag. It is typically used to specify information such as the character encoding of the document, keywords related to the content, description of the page, author, viewport settings for responsive design, and more.

For example, the following meta tag specifies the character encoding of the document as UTF-8:

```html

<meta charset="UTF-8">

```

Another common use is to provide a brief description of the page, which can be used by search engines to display a summary in search results:

```html

<meta name="description" content="This is a website about cooking delicious recipes.">

```

The meta-attribute is flexible and can be used to provide various types of metadata, depending on the name and value attributes used. It allows web developers to provide additional information about their web pages, making them more accessible, searchable, and better understood by both humans and machines.