Recap: Meta tags and Open Graph protocol

Overview

In this reading, you will revisit the concepts of Open Graph protocol and Open Graph meta tags.

What is Open Graph protocol (OGP)?

Open Graph protocol is an internet protocol that was built by Facebook. It's a structured way to describe the content of a web page. Before OGP, there were many ways to turn a web page into a rich object, ready to be shared on social media. The OGP brought about a single, simple technology for making this possible.

A review of meta tags and OGP

Meta tags have many purposes, but the most important are:

- Sharing your web pages on social media

- Improving your website's search engine optimization using your code (often referred to as technical SEO)

Just like regular HTML, Open Graph meta tags can be validated. Most web and IT professionals know that SEO is a moving target, just like most other technologies on the web. However, for the most part, SEO is not directly affected by the use of meta tags. Additionally, meta tags are very important because they allow you to increase conversions because they affect the way that shared content looks on social media sites.

However, keep in mind that poorly formatted meta tags might end up in, for example, a user sharing a link to your web app, but instead of a relevant image showing up in the shared preview, some other image displays. Although this other image still exists on your site, it's different from the one that you'd like to show up when your web app's URLs are shared on social media.

Meta tags examples

Here are a few specific examples of meta tags in use:

description

A meta `description` is a summary of what a given page is about.

```
1    <meta name="description" content="Get all your sports fishing equipment at One Place Fishing. Open M
```

og:title

The `og:title` meta tag is there for you to give a title for your shared link or shared content.

```
1    <meta name="og:title" content="One Place Fishing"/>
```

og:description

A title is usually followed by a description, which is what the `og:description` meta tag is for.

```
1    <meta name="og:description" content="some description here"/>
```

og:image

The `og:image` meta tag specifies the image to serve when a link is shared on social media.

```
1    <meta name="og:image" content="https://example.com/one-place-fishing-store.jpg"/>
```

You can find out more information about the OGP and about how to use the Open Graph tags from the [ogp.me](ogp.me) website.

To re-iterate, meta tags are "tags about HTML tags". In other words, they give some additional information about the web page itself. You might say that the Open Graph tags are a subset of meta tags, with this subset being specifically responsible for formatting previews to your web app's content when its URLs are shared as links. What's so great about the OGP is that it plugs into the existing system of meta tags in HTML5 and allows developers to seamlessly turn web pages into rich objects in a social graph.

Conclusion

You've revisited meta tags and the Open Graph protocol in this reading. You should now be prepared to add meta tags to your project as well as set up OGP.