Social media cards

Before Facebook introduced the Open Graph Protocol (OGP), search engine web crawlers, including social media websites, used the internal heuristics of a website to make the best possible guess in terms of the title, description, and preview images to be used for the content. This often led to social networks not completely successfully interpreting the post or information shared in the URL provided. Even today sometimes when you open a link for a website, the preview generated will be an out-of-scale image or a random image that is possibly embedded somewhere within the web page. This is where meta tags come in to help the end-user take better control of their content.

Over the years, the successful implementation of OGP has led to other social media giants, including sister companies owned by Meta, to adopt the protocol to improve the user experience. These platforms have their own meta tags that prefix and replace ‘og’ that you have encountered earlier in the course.

**Need for social media cards**

With the number of users and the use of internet marketing on the rise, user attention is the currency. It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words and the internet is a living proof of it: a caption and image can drive users towards or away from a website. The title and description shared with an URL should summarize the contents of a web page. In some cases, it may refer to generic information about the entire website. While for others you may tailor the social media (SM) card for a specific page on a website that you’re sharing. ‘type’ is an important OGP tag in SM cards that help describe the details of a link such as if it’s a book, article, movie and so on, and provide more detailed metadata for specific types. For example, in case of the music type, you can add details for the song, album, duration or any other information about the song. For a regular user scrolling through social media, the link provided with the image preview has only one chance and a moment’s attention to make a good impression. In such cases, the role of social media cards becomes very important.

The extra time spent by a developer to add social media tags is worth the effort!

**Social media cards and SEO**

The internet today is an interconnected graph that is internally a web of URL links, web crawlers, and search engine optimization tools. Together, a web page’s image and title are the store front to invite the user. But the social media cards also play an important role in boosting the rankings for the web crawlers used by search engines. They provide the crawlers with the necessary information to build metadata that eventually helps in ranking websites. Additionally, it also helps track traffic to your website.

While it’s advised to stick to the required tags in social media cards, a developer can also use auxiliary tags that may be suitable. For example, the use of the video tag that helps to play in-line when displayed on social media websites like Meta.

Meta also has a dedicated page to assist developers that you can find in the additional resources for this section.