

INTRODUCTION TO META TAGS AND JAVASCRIPT – by Robert Berdan

Meta Tags are HTML tags that are hidden within the <HEAD></HEAD> tags and are not visible to visitors to your web site unless they choose Page Source to view the code. There are a variety of different META tags, the most important ones are those that assist search engines in finding and indexing your web site.

Below are two META tags that must be inserted into your index page in order for certain search engines to index your site. The tags go into the top of your web page embedded within the <head></head> tags

```
<META NAME="description" CONTENT="A multimedia Web Page Design & Photography Company located in Calgary, Alberta, Canada">
```

```
<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="photography, art, digital imaging, nature, wildlife, wildflower, Rocky Mountains, Calgary, Science, multimedia, web page, design, color printing, Internet business, Internet marketing, macrophotography, photomicrography, scanning electron microscopy, nature photography, wildlife photography, photo retouching, on-line learning, HTML, HTML tutorial, graphics, medical research, snails, embryos, pine wood, bugs, flowers, birds, coyote, geese, national park, Banff, Lake Louise, outdoors, olympus, flash, close-up, filters, extension tubes, Nautilus, logarithmic spiral, form, function">
```

The second TAG is a single sentence description of the contents of the site. This is used by some search engines to index your site.

The third TAG is a list of keywords that describe the contents of your web site. Again these are used by search engines to help folks find your web site. The latter two META tags are very important and should be in the index page of your web site.

Repeating keywords e.g. Calgary, Calgary, Calgary may make your web site show up before others when folks use a search engine, but some search engines will delete your listing if you do this. Also, you can be sued if you use inappropriate key words (e.g. Playboy) when there is nothing on your site dealing with this topic (see links Meta tag lawsuits).

To insert META tags you can copy the example above in red and then change the keywords and description of your web site.

META tags can also be used to automatically refresh your web site or automatically relocate someone to a different web site. META tags can also be used to create banners with changing images.

Another useful meta tag to turn off the print, save box that come up over top of graphics in Internet explorer is:

```
<meta HTTP-EQUIV='imagetoolbar' CONTENT='no'>
```

Another meta tag that can be used to automatically jump to another page is:

```
<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" content="10; url=homepage.htm">
```

10 represents 10 seconds you change both the time and web page

Introduction to JavaScript

JavaScript is an interpreted programming language. That is the browser reads each line of code and then carries out the commands. The language is computer platform independent and will run on Macs, PCs and UNIX computers. A compiled programming language is usually computer platform specific and the code must be converted into machine language (compiled) before the computer can interpret the commands.

JavaScript can be created using any text editor e.g. note pad. It requires Netscape 2.0 or greater or Explorer 3.0 or greater. There are also different versions of JavaScript.

Generally, JavaScript code is inserted within the <HEAD> TAGS of an HTML document. This avoids user triggered errors that can be caused by someone clicking on a button before all the code has been loaded. JavaScript is not JAVA which is a more powerful programming language that requires the code to be compiled first. JAVA is unique in that it attempts to be computer platform independent.

JavaScript is inserted into a web document within the <Script></Script> TAGS and must be typed exactly as it is case sensitive.

Uses of JavaScript

JavaScript is used to enhance the functionality of many web pages. JavaScript can be used to validate forms (make sure they were filled out properly), to create animation, slide shows, roll over buttons, alert boxes and create cookies. Cookies are small bits of text that track your movements on a web site. JavaScript can also be used to create timers and marquees "scrolling messages".

You can type or copy the example below into your web page. The JavaScript code is in red. Viewing this JavaScript requires Netscape browser. So now you know there are different versions of JavaScript. To test the entire document, copy and paste all the code into a new Notepad file, then save the file as java.html and view the document in your web browser.

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>JavaScript Demo</TITLE>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
document.write("Welcome to my site")
</SCRIPT>
</HEAD>
<BODY>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

The <!--Hide script //stop hiding--> Tags are used to hide JavaScript from older browsers that are not JavaScript compatible. Here is example of a Scrolling Message Script copy the code into notepad then modify the msg to make your own custom messages scroll.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Scrolling Demo2</title>
<script language=javascript>
<!--hide from old browsers

myMsg = "Hello there check out my scrolling message"
i=0
function scrollMsg() {
frontPart = myMsg.substring(i,myMsg.length)
backPart = myMsg.substring(0,i)
window.status = frontPart + backPart
if (i < myMsg.length) {
i++
}
else{
i=0
}
setTimeout("scrollMsg()",50)
}
//end hiding message -->
</script>
</head>
<body bgcolor=white onLoad="scrollMsg()">
<P> Here is another example using more compact JavaScript code</P>
</body>
</html>
```

*taken from the reference below.

Reference:

T. Negrino and D. Smith (1998) JavaScript for the World Wide Web, 2nd Edition, Peach Pit press. ISBN 0-202-69648-7 \$24.95.