

# META Keywords Tag Falls By The Wayside

By Aaron Turpen

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In times past, every search engine marketer and placement specialist expounded on the importance and value of the META “keyword” tag. The words and phrases contained in this hidden HTML tag were the holy grail of placement and keyword search placement. Not so any more. AltaVista recently dropped it’s support of the tag, leaving only Inktomi (the source of MSN’s editorial results) as the sole supporter of the tag. All other search engines have, since 1997, been dropping support for the META keywords tag.

Two things have contributed to the downfall of the keyword tag. The first is its misuse by overzealous marketers who used it like a list of SPAM words – often using irrelevant and over-popularized keywords (e.g. “free”) in an attempt to get themselves listed in categories and under results they had no relevance to.

The second reason for the keyword tag’s demise is technology. Web crawlers and spiders became more intelligent and the search engines began fine-tuning them to read the actual text on the page – the stuff the site visitor sees – in order to find keyword relevances. As this began to get more and more popular and refined, the relevance of the keywords and phrases within the keywords META tag became lower and lower until they were dropped altogether.

Now that they are rarely used by any of the search engines – Inktomi admits that, though they are the sole supporter of the tag, it has little relevance to their overall rating of a website for rank – I don’t use it on my websites at all. When building a website for someone else, I only include it if they specifically ask for it as it is otherwise a waste of time that would be better spent somewhere else.

So if you are marketing your website or considering ways to raise your ranking in search engines, you’re better off if you ignore the hype surrounding the META keyword tag. When you go through every page on your site and adding  
META keyword=”blah,blah,blah”  
you are definitely wasting effort. Your time would be better spent on more worthwhile marketing strategies such as keyword placement within the pages themselves, your marketing copy, and your sales strategies.

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Aaron is the proprietor of Aaronz WebWorkz, a full service provider of web design, hosting, consultation, and online marketing services. [www.AaronzWebWorkz.com](http://www.AaronzWebWorkz.com)

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