

# Welcome to the Meta Tagger App for Shopify

## Introduction

Meta Tagger App was the result of applying some coding experience gained with the concept of Shopify metafield resources. Most of your shop resources like **products, variants, collections, pages, blogs** and even the **shop** itself can have metafield resources attached to them. As long as you do not delete these metafields they will persist with their parent resource, even if you uninstall the App. The Meta Tagger Shopify App works by attaching metafields to the products, pages, collections and blogs in your shop.

You can export your entire inventory in a CSV text file and add your SEO data using your favorite text editor or spreadsheet program. The columns of interest for this are:

| Resource | ID | Handle | Title | Keywords | Description |
|----------|----|--------|-------|----------|-------------|
|----------|----|--------|-------|----------|-------------|

The resource is simply a pointer to a product, page or collection.

The ID is the actual resource ID. This identifies the product, page or collection.

The handle is just a more human friendly way of displaying what the resource is to help in editing SEO data.

The title, keywords and description are initially empty if you have not used the App before. They might show up in your text editor as a pair of quotes "". You can ignore the quotes or fill in your SEO between them.

The reason the quotes are important are to encase and commas you may use, for example to separate keywords. If you do not use quotes in a text editor, you will bust the Import for sure, and it will fail.

Most spreadsheet programs like Excel or Open Office have an option to automatically quote CSV data. Thus if you edit with a spreadsheet you may never see the quotes.

## !! NOTICE !!

When you press the Export button, the App will go through all the resources in your Shop, build the CSV and then email it to you as an attachment you can edit. The only email address the App has to use for this purpose is the one setup in your Shop under general preferences. Please ensure this email address works or you cannot use the import/export feature easily.

Importing a spreadsheet is done once you've edited your CSV. You can

choose the file from your hard drive, and the importer will transfer the file to the App for processing. Each resource in your CSV will be updated with the data found in the spreadsheet. This means you can quickly update just a few resources, or all of them. It is up to you. It can take time to accomplish an update of a lot of resources, so you will receive an email once the process has completed.

## **SEO in a Nutshell**

There are billions of websites. If someone wants to find something at any one or more websites, there needs to be a pretty standard way of organizing them so they can be searched efficiently in order to report back the results. All the search companies like Google, Microsoft and Yahoo invented their own algorithms for this, but for the most part they are all the same. SEO is a task for website owners to do, and it involves some very simple rules. Make sure you have something in text to say. Images do not help if you want to be found. If you say something in text, say it correctly. Use title elements, header elements and paragraph elements as necessary. Submit a site map to the search engines and then they know you exist, and they will check you out. Of course you can argue that there is enough else to do that it takes a specialist and lots of money to go further, but for the most part, even this little bit of work should go a long way. Turns out Shopify handles the site map for you. So that leaves your real work to be figuring out your text content, and describing your Products so that you're found ahead of the competition. So cheat, find your competition, take apart their strategy and copy. The sincerest form of flattery right?

One aspect of most Shopify themes that is frighteningly consistent and that gave me confidence that this App was appropriate to support and develop, was the poor job theme developers have done when it comes to basic SEO. A prime example is the way meta elements are created, like the title, description and keywords for a Product. Almost all themes rely on cherry picking the Products description, removing all the HTML that may be in there, and then truncating it after 30 words or something random like that.

Lets imagine we are the Google search engine, with the one of the world's most complex algorithms in place to learn all about a site's offerings. It finds a Product and slurps up the available meta description, title and keywords. Turns out that if they are the same as the description text in the body of the site, there is no real added value for SEO. What if the meta description, title and keywords were actually special, crafted just for the purpose of catching the attention of the search engine's algorithm? That is the exact supporting purpose of the Meta Tagger App.

Once you've added the Meta Tagger App to your shop, you add a Liquid snippet to the theme, and merge/eliminate all the old SEO meta elements and title code from your existing theme. The Liquid snippet checks for meta data you have added with the Meta Tagger App. If it finds some, it renders it

along with the usual product or page information. If none is found, the Liquid simply renders the same old titles and descriptions as came with your theme, if you want that.

When you are editing a Product, you are crafting all the right words for the title, the handle, the description. It is one way to look at your product. With Meta Tagger App in place, you have the additional options of setting custom meta element information, with one click. You can slightly change the title if you want, you can really make the description special for search engines compared to randomly selecting 30 words, and you can also set keywords if you want. As soon as you save the data you provide, it is attached to Metafield resources that will persist as long as the Product, Page or Collection exist. If you copy a Product, Page or Collection, the Metafield resources ARE NOT copied, so you will have to work on each resource independently.

The key to easy Meta Tagger installation is recognizing that many Shopify themes come with a theme settings menu option presenting SEO options to fill in. If there is a Meta or SEO link for the theme, there is usually a text box where you can type in a title and a description for the site. The limitation of this approach is obvious. You get one title and one description for your entire site! The gists I have created on github are suited for easy editing to allow you to not only use these settings in cases where nothing else has been added to a Product, Page or Collection, but you can also choose to just ignore these settings.

Shopify lets us know the exact page of the shop being rendered by checking the value of a setting called the template. In each case of a Product, Page, Collection or the Home page, a Blog article or other, you can easily show appropriate meta element data. There is no need for the Meta Tagger App to provide for the homepage for example, since there is only one of those, hence we just edit the Liquid snippet for that.

Future enhancements may be directed at subscribers that choose a different plan. Examples are the ability to bulk import all your custom SEO per product and page using a spreadsheet.

## Installation Procedure

1. create a new snippet called meta-tagger
2. download the code from <https://gist.github.com/1216871> called **meta-tagger.liquid** (note that there is a second snippet there, and it is full of comments, so you can learn from that if you need to about what exactly is going on with all that Liquid code!!)
3. paste the code into the newly created empty snippet and save it
4. edit your **theme.liquid** and delete all the existing <title>, <meta> description and <meta> keyword elements from your theme (you can paste all that code into a text editor as a temporary storage if you want to re-use some of it)

5. add the liquid include command `{% include 'meta-tagger' %}` in the `<head>` element where the CSS and Javascript resources are loaded (and the other meta elements you may have, like for Facebook for example)

Now you can open your shop's homepage or other page in a browser tab and make sure your shop is all working. Use the **View Source** feature all browsers come with to examine your SEO data. You might not be happy with the homepage SEO. To quickly edit your homepage SEO examine the meta-tagger snippet and look for the line with the code **template contains 'index'**. (you may have more than one, so we look for them all!)

By default the homepage SEO might be:

```
<title>{{ shop.name }} - Welcome</title>
<meta name="description" content="My store is very special, and this is
the homepage!" />
```

You should see something like that if you have done nothing else. Edit those two lines and you should see your changes immediately. You are well on your way now.

Pick a product, page, collection or blog next, and edit the meta data using the provided link labelled **Set Meta Data** on the Shopify admin page for your site. You will be transferred to the Meta Tagger App. The first time you visit the App you may be asked for your shop name. Provide that and you're then authenticated to use the Meta Tagger App for a session that lasts as long your browser remains open. Save your SEO and re-visit your shop and use your browser's view source on the reloaded page to see all the changes you've made. You will notice a new SEO title in the browser tab and the description and keywords too. You're an expert at this point and have your shop SEO under total control! Continue with all your products, pages and collections, and use tools like Google's Analytics to see how it all contributes to more traffic and more sales at your online shop.