How to add Meta Descriptions to PDFs on your website

Ben Kelly - 2025-08-19 - Comments (0) - Content population

Search engines such as Google can index PDF files hosted on your website. When this happens, Google may generate a title and description for the PDF in search results.

What you should know

- **Google controls the output –** You have limited influence over what appears in search results. Google increasingly rewrites titles and descriptions based on what it thinks is most relevant to the searcher, their location, and context.
- **Metadata helps but isn't guaranteed –** Adding document metadata can improve your chances of a better-looking search snippet, but Google may still choose to ignore it.

How to edit PDF metadata

The best way to set metadata is within the PDF itself:

1. Open your PDF in **Adobe Acrobat** (or another editor that supports metadata editing).
2. Go to **File > Document properties**
3. Under the tab, complete the following fields:
    - Title – Often used as the display title in search results.
    - Author
    - Subject
    - Keywords
4. Click **Additional Metadata** to access more fields, including **Description** . Fill in as much detail as possible.
5. Save the file and re-upload it to your website.

 On Windows and Mac, menus may vary slightly, but the process is broadly the same.

Things to keep in mind

- **Indexing is up to Google -** Adding metadata doesn’t guarantee it will be used in search results.
- **Content matters most -** Google often generates descriptions directly from the text in the PDF. Clear, well-structured copy is just as (if not more) important than metadata.
- **Accessibility & SEO -** Ensure your PDFs are text-based (not just scanned images) so they can be crawled and indexed effectively.

Prefer watching over reading?

Watch a short video guide here.

Struggling with something? If you have any further questions, please contact our a member of the team.