

Google Updates Robots Meta Tag Document To Include AI Mode via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

Google has updated its Search Central documentation to include details about AI Mode in its robots meta tag specifications.

This update coincides with the rollout of AI Mode via Google Labs.

Document Updates For AI Mode

The updated document now specifies that you can control the appearance of your content in Google's AI-powered features, including AI Overviews and the new AI Mode.

Key additions to the document include:

Nosnippet rule expansion

The nosnippet directive “applies to all forms of search results (at Google: web search, Google Images, Discover, AI Overviews, AI Mode) and will also prevent the content from being used as a direct input for AI Overviews and AI Mode.”

Max-snippet controls

The max-snippet rule specifies that limitations apply to “all forms of search results (such as Google web search, Google Images, Discover, Assistant, AI Overviews, AI Mode) and will also limit how much of the content may be used as a direct input for AI Overviews and AI Mode.”

What Is AI Mode?

AI Mode is an experimental feature initially available to Google One AI Premium subscribers. It leverages a custom version of Gemini 2.0 to deliver a search experience fully powered by AI.

The feature employs a “query fan-out” technique that issues multiple related searches across subtopics and data sources before synthesizing a comprehensive response.

Google highlights the following advantages of AI Mode over standard AI Overviews:

- Handles complex, multi-part questions that might otherwise require multiple searches
- Supports follow-up questions for continued conversations
- Synthesizes information from multiple data sources simultaneously
- Provides multimodal interaction capabilities through voice, text, or images

What This Means For Your Website

Publishers rely on website traffic to generate revenue through ads, subscriptions, or conversions. However, people may be less inclined to visit the original site when AI features summarize the content.

To counter this, you can use the “nosnippet” tag to block content from AI responses or use “max-snippet:[number]” to limit the amount of text displayed, motivating searchers to visit the site for complete information.

Looking Ahead

The robots meta tag controls offer ways to manage content in traditional search results and AI experiences.

Google's cautious rollout of AI Mode shows that the company is aware of publishers' concerns about content use in generative AI applications.

This update reflects Google's effort to balance new features with publishers' control over their content.

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