

**What is schema.org?** In June 2011, Google, Bing and Yahoo! announced a joint effort to improve the consistency of the various structured data formats being used on webpages. Schema.org is a website developed by them to set a definitive standard and to educate webmasters on how to properly format their structured data. (<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2011/06/introducing-schemaorg-search-engines.html>)

**What is a structured data set?** We all use structured data such as address information (street, city, state, zip) or movie listings (title, actors, theaters, and times) without much thought during our day. To a search engine however, this information can sometimes be ambiguous and confusing. For example, does the mention of Chicago on a webpage describe a city in the US, a musical band or a famous musical? Through schema.org, the search engines have now endorsed a single format called 'Microdata' that webmasters can use to provide search engines with clear denotative indicators.



For example, if you implemented the coding snippet below, the webpage visitor would only see "The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger". The search engines however, could also detect that "The Catcher in the Rye" is a book title and that "J.D. Salinger" is the author. Using the Microdata format, we were able to label these visual elements with additional information for search engines.

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/Book">
<span itemprop="name">The Catcher in the Rye</span> by <span itemprop="author"> J.D.
Salinger</span> </div>
```

### Why is it important?

- Webmasters are able to provide search engines with accurate, detailed product information
- Search engines can present a richer search experience by providing more details for each listing
- Users are drawn to the enhanced listings, improving click through rates

Here is an example of Amazon.com using Microdata formatting to show reviews, pricing and stock status:

[Amazon.com: Gillette Fusion Manual Razor: Health & Personal Care](#)    
★★★★★ 107 reviews - \$8.99 - In stock  
Gillette **Fusion** Manual - more comfort and less irritation than Mach 3. Gillette **Fusion** Manual **Razor**. Advanced Blade Technology, Precision Trimmer, ...  
[www.amazon.com](#) > ... > [Manual Shaving](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

### Recommendation:

All webmasters should consult Schema.org to determine if their content should include Microdata formatting. In addition, from a search agency perspective, we will be adding the optimized use of these aligned schemas into our recommendations where appropriate.