



Google's Semantic Web Push: Rich Snippets Usage Growing

Written by [Richard MacManus](#) / June 24, 2010 2:50 PM / [5 Comments](#)

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At the [Semantic Technology conference](http://semtech2010.semanticuniverse.com/) (<http://semtech2010.semanticuniverse.com/>) in San Francisco today, Google gave an update of its [rich snippets](http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/search_options_google_search_evolves.php) (http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/search_options_google_search_evolves.php) initiative - which adds extra information to Google search results. For example, showing restaurant review ratings. It's an experimental Semantic Web feature, but today's update shows that usage is increasing and Google wants to ramp it up significantly.

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Rich snippets was announced in May last year and began to be seen in results around October. At the SemTech panel today, Google's Pravir Gupta noted that rich snippets impressions have grown four-fold globally since October 2009, with a two-fold increase on the US/English Web. Rich snippets is available in more than 40 languages.



Gupta told the SemTech audience that there are now more than 50 reviews sites using rich snippets, for example sites that offer restaurant reviews. Also there has been uptake on social networking sites, like Facebook and LinkedIn.

The most common use cases are events (which was [added in January](http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/google_search_just_got_a_little_bit_smarter_highli.php) (http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/google_search_just_got_a_little_bit_smarter_highli.php)) and recipe formats. Google is adding support for more formats, such as video, local businesses and shopping.



lasagne

About 9,560,000 results (0.23 seconds)

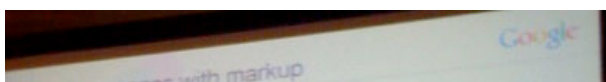
- Everything
- Images
- Videos
- More

Any time
Past 3 weeks
All results

[Lasagne - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#) ☆
Lasagne (or lasagna) is a classic Italian pasta casserole dish which consists of alternate layers of pasta, cheese, a sauce, and often other ingredients. ...
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lasagne - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[World's Best Lasagna Recipe - Allrecipes.com](#) ☆
★★★★★ 4,084 reviews - Prep time: 30 mins - Cook time: 2 hrs 30 mins
This truly is the best lasagne. I made it for a family party and everyone raved! ... This will definately be my regular lasagne recipe! ...
allrecipes.com/recipe/worlds-best-lasagna/ - [Cached](#)

Google is using structured data open standards such as microformats and RDFa to power the rich snippets feature. As the below chart shows, microformats is more common than RDFa for this feature.



Adoption page

One million web pages sampled from the internet

	Microformats	RDFa
Total pages	40,091	2,514
hCard / People	33,675 (13%)	1,160
Reviews	1,950 (85%)	872 (99%)
Recipe	152 (33%)	—
hCalendar / Event	126 (41%)	—
Products	519	77

Google spent a good deal of today's panel continuing its drive to get webmasters to adopt rich snippets. It has a tool called the **Rich Snippets Testing Tool** (<http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/richsnippets>), which helps publishers utilize rich snippets.

Finally, Kavi Goel from Google talked about how Google can accelerate growth of the ecosystem, noting that less than 5% of webpages currently have semantic markup. Google wants to see this rise to 50% or more. It is looking for critical mass, which includes adding more formats and encouraging more "beneficial peer pressure" for companies to support rich snippets. Goel cited restaurant review sites as an example - it's not just Yelp which supports it, but other restaurant review services too.

Rich snippets is an example of how the Semantic Web is being adopted by large and powerful Internet companies, so it's encouraging to see that Google is pushing for rapid adoption.

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1. Are the RDFa stats lower because they are indexing the official Google Rich Snippets vocabularies only? I read that support has been added for FOAF - any others like Good Relations or *cough* SIOC?

Posted by: [John Breslin](#) | June 24, 2010 3:07 PM

2. Google Snippets are very limited and mainly microformats which is a dead end. Nothing I see here tells me they are advancing snippet support for RDFa.

On the otherhand surprisingly Facebook are extensively supporting RDFa in the OpenGraph Protocol

"We've added the Open Graph Protocol markup to every public Page on Facebook. Check out <http://www.facebook.com/Starbucks>, <http://www.facebook.com/WhiteHouse>,

And also listening to the community to make it more standardised

http://groups.google.com/group/opengraphprotocol/browse_thread/thread/cc03368ef0d12c1a

P.S I really hope Twitter annotations support RDFa.

Posted by: [Sam Sethi](#) | June 24, 2010 3:48 PM

3. @John: yes, you're right.

@Richard: I guess the Google chaps should catch up on Sindice; here are some other figures:

- + RDFa documents indexed: 25 millions [1]
- + Microformats documents indexed: 20 millions [2]

Cheers,
Michael

[1] <http://sindice.com/search?q=format%3ARDFA&q=term>

[2] <http://sindice.com/search?q=format%3AMICROFORMAT&qt=term>

Posted by: mhausenblas.myopenid.com | June 25, 2010 2:11 AM

4.

We could add rich snippets to site, but there is no guarantee that Google use it. As a main provider of reviews through aggregation we could produce snippets for any language regarding product reviews.

See that on <http://www.peryskop.pl/produkt/808/CANON-PIXMA-MX850> for one product.

Rgs, Jakub

Posted by: [Jakub Poleć](#) | June 25, 2010 2:22 AM

5. Very interesting

I spoke to several googlers and they are very sceptical about Semantic Web initiative. They believe semantic web search will be always inferior to google search.

But Google found how to use Semantic Web in a very limited way - to generate snippets instead of improving search

Posted by: December | June 26, 2010 11:25 AM

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