

Search Engine Optimization for WP e-Commerce



In my mind the best shopping cart solution available for integration with WordPress is [WP e-Commerce](#). Unfortunately, the developers haven't had a lot of time to focus on optimizing it for search engines. If you want the items in your WP e-Commerce site to show up in the search engines, you are going to need to do a little work. This short manual, written for programmers and non-programmers alike, should help to improve your Web site's store rankings; however, read the [disclaimer](#) at the end of the manual prior to implementing any of these solutions.

Title Tag

The title that WP e-Commerce displays is causing 85% is probably responsible for 85% of WP e-Commerce's search engine optimization deficiency. If you fix nothing else you should fix this issue. My solution is to work with the title tag which actually resides not in the WP e-Commerce plugin files but instead is located in your theme's header.php file. To find it you'll need to have access to your WordPress files on your hosts server. The path will look like wp_content/themes/yourtheme/header.php (where your theme is the actual name like "Classic").

Make sure you save a copy of your header.php file, before you modify it, to your computer. This way if anything goes wrong you'll be able to simply upload the original file and revert back to status quo.

Open the header.php file and find the title tag which will look something like this:

```
<title><?php bloginfo('name'); ?><?php wp_title(); ?></title>
```

Copy and paste the code on the following page in its entirety directly over your original tag from <title> to </title>.

```

<title><?php
function oGetProductName( $meta ){
    global $table_prefix;
    $query = "SELECT product_id
        FROM ".$table_prefix."wp_sc_productmeta
        WHERE meta_value = '".$meta."'";
    $result = mysql_query( $query );
    $row = mysql_fetch_array( $result );
    $productid = $row[0];

    $query = "SELECT name
        FROM ".$table_prefix."product_list
        WHERE id = ".$productid;
    $result = mysql_query( $query );
    $row = mysql_fetch_array( $result );
    $productname = $row[0];
    return $productname;
}

function oGetCategoryName( $nicename ){
    global $table_prefix;
    $query = "SELECT name
        FROM ".$table_prefix."product_categories
        WHERE `nice-name` = '".$nicename."'";
    $result = mysql_query( $query );
    $row = mysql_fetch_array( $result );
    $categoryname = $row[0];

    return $categoryname;
}

if( is_page() && trim(wp_title (',false )) == 'Products Page' ){
    $pparts = explode('/', trim($_SERVER['REQUEST_URI'],'/'));
    if( $pparts[2] != " ){
        echo oGetProductName( $pparts[2] );
    }
    else if( $pparts[1] != " ){
        echo oGetCategoryName( $pparts[1] );
    }
    else{
        wp_title (""); echo ' at Your Site Name';
    }
}
else{ if ( is_single() ){ wp_title(""); }elseif (is_404()){ echo 'Your Site Name - 404 Error';
}elseif (is_category()) { echo single_cat_title(); echo ' at Your Site Name'; }elseif
(is_page()) {
    wp_title (""); echo ' at Your Site Name'; }else{ echo 'Your Site Name'; }
}
?></title>

```

That's it. Save the file and you've improved the seo on your shopping cart by a good eighty-five percent. *Note the above was worked out on the 3.6 Beta 12 release and may or may not work in other versions.

Search Engine Friendly URL's / Permalinks

Earlier versions of WP e-Commerce didn't support keyword rich URLs. It is unknown what if any effect this plays in getting your site ranked higher in the search engines. However, your URL is known to be an important factor in people clicking through to your site from the search engines. Also the solution is very simple so you might as well implement it.

Within your WordPress admin area you will want to navigate to "Options" if you are using a pre 2.5 version of WordPress and "Settings" if you are using WordPress 2.5+. From either of these you will want to navigate to "Permalinks." Scroll down the page and click the "Custom Structure" radio button and enter the following:

`/%category%/%postname%/`

I recommend you do this prior to setting up any category or product in your shopping cart as more than one WP e-Commerce user has found that they had to go back and do a fresh install of WP and / or WP e-Commerce when they didn't do this option first. In fact you may want to do it prior to activating the plugin. **WARNING** - if you already had content on your blog or site but haven't been using this option you will want to carefully consider how to move forward as changing now will change the URLs, cause you to have 404 errors, and lots of other problems. You do have other options. You can have more than one install of WordPress on a site, you can do 301 redirects, etc, but any of these may be a bigger headache than they are worth depending on your knowledge and comfort with any of them.

Modifying Category Pages

One of the annoying and seo unfriendly things that happens on the category pages of WP-eCommerce is that it shows all the categories. This means if you are clothing store you could get, blouses, trousers, shoes and more all showing up on the category page in anchor link text. This can confuse the search engine about what the page topic actually is and lead to lower rankings.

To get rid of the word "Category" and the list of categories that appears on individual Category pages remove this code:

```
//include("show_cats_brands.php");
if (get_option('cat_brand_loc') == 0) {
    show_cats_brands();
}
```

from the products_page.php. The full path of which is wp-content/plugins/wp-shopping-cart/products_page.php.

The default menu set up for WP e-Commerce shows in your "Pages" menu, and looks like:

- [Catalog](#)
 - [Verify your Order](#)
 - [Transaction Results](#)
 - [Your Account](#)

From an SEO perspective this is very weak. Here there is already a solution provided by WP e-Commerce. Navigate to your "Widgets" within WordPress. This will be found under

"Presentation" in pre WP 2.5 versions and under "Design" in 2.5 and above. There is a Categories and Brands widget and you can either drag this into your sidebar in the pre 2.5 WP or click Add in the post 2.5 versions.

Menu Header Title

This next piece may be a small SEO matter, but it is also a personal preference on presentation. The menu item using the above widget will read "Categories and Brands" in the header. You may want to rename it. I would. To do so navigate to the "languages" folder in wp-shopping-cart. wp-content/plugins/wp-shopping-cart/languages. Now find the file En_en.php open it and go down to the line that reads `define('TXT_WPSC_CATSANDBRAND', 'Categories & Brands');` You can edit the word "Categories" "Brands" to read whatever you like. Just make sure that if you are trying to use the ampersand "&" that you leave the "&" and that you leave in place the single quotation marks.

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