

Blog Post: Why Our Canadian Content Writing Brand Blogs (and Why You Absolutely Should Too)



The 3 reasons why we blog (and why you absolutely should too)

If you know a thing or two about blogging, you know you can't just write a post, publish it, and expect people to flock to it. After all, unless you've got a massive following, people aren't sitting around and waiting for you to publish your next post. So what do you do to drive traffic to your posts? One thing you might do is republish blog posts on another site (e.g., Medium, Huffington Post, or another blog). The problem is that if you publish the exact same post on another site, you'll get hit with a duplicate content penalty from Google. Or will you? Read about the simple way to use rel=canonical to avoid a duplicate content penalty when you republish blog posts.

What is a duplicate content penalty?

Sometimes there's a good reason to publish the exact same content on more than one site. For example, let's say you have an epic recipe for gluten-free cinnamon pecan bread. (Yum!) Maybe you've published it on your gluten-free baking blog for all the people out there who love to bake but can't eat gluten. Now let's say that your bread is so epic that even people who can eat gluten love it. If you publish the recipe only on your gluten-free baking blog, will these people find it? Probably not. So you might decide to republish your recipe on a general baking blog.



Is this spammy? No. You're providing value to a larger group of people than would be possible if you published the recipe on your gluten-free blog only. What would be spammy is if you took your recipe and published it on a bunch of blogs just to boost your traffic and search rankings.

The problem is that search engines, as smart as they are, can't always tell the difference between valuable and spammy duplicate content. So if you republish blog posts on your own blog and on other sites like [Medium](#) and [Entrepreneur](#), you can get hit with a duplicate content penalty, which will tank your search engine rankings. But there is a way to avoid this. How? You can use rel=canonical when you republish blog posts.

Use rel=canonical to avoid a duplicate content penalty

If you're planning to republish blog posts on multiple sites, you can use rel=canonical [to avoid a duplicate content penalty](#). Rel=canonical (also called a "canonical link") is an HTML tag that tells search engines to [treat multiple copies of the same content as a single piece of content](#). When you republish blog posts and include the rel=canonical tag on all duplicate copies of your post, you tell search engines to treat the "original" post as the preferred version, the only one they should [display and rank in their results](#). Because search engines will treat all copies of your post as a single post, you get to combine the SEO juice across your posts and raise the ranking of your "original" post. You also protect yourself from a duplicate content penalty.

Note that the "original" post doesn't have to be the one that was published first. It can be whichever copy you think is the most important version.

The great thing about rel=canonical is that it's recognized by all three major search engines, Google, Yahoo, and Bing. So no matter which search engine people use, you'll be able to protect yourself against a duplicate content penalty when you republish blog posts and syndicate content on other sites.

How to use rel=canonical when you republish blog posts

So now you know why it pays to use rel=canonical, but how exactly do you use it? First, identify the version of your post that you want to treat as the "original" (or canonical) version. Like we mentioned above, this should be the version you think is the most important version. On all other versions, add the rel=canonical tag [to the <head> section of the page](#). It'll look something like this:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="URL of original version">
```

The URL in the tag is the URL of the "original" or canonical version of your post. So if the URL of the original post was "<http://www.inpressionblog.com/2016/11/27/9-blog-title-generator-tools/>", the rel=canonical tag on all of the other pages would look like this:

<link rel="canonical" href="http://www.inpressionblog.com/2016/11/27/9-blog-title-generator-tools/">

Even when you use rel=canonical, it's best practice to include a statement and link on all noncanonical posts that [direct people to the canonical version](#). For example, add a line that looks something like this on all noncanonical versions of your post:

“This post was originally published on <name of site>.”

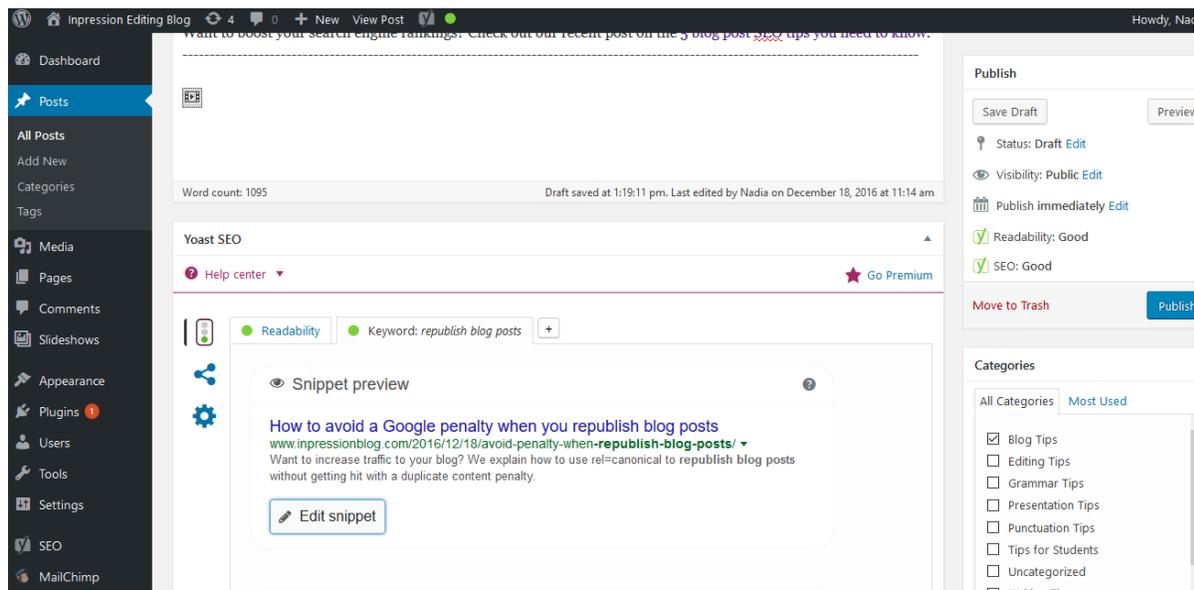
You also don't want to use rel=canonical too often. Use it for high-quality content that's worth sharing with multiple audiences. Some people suggest using it for [no more than 1 in 20 posts](#). Even though the rel=canonical tag can help you avoid a duplicate content penalty when you republish posts, you can still get penalized if you misuse the tag.

Want to know more about using rel=canonical to identify republished posts or syndicated content? Watch this [video by former Google engineer Matt Cutts](#).

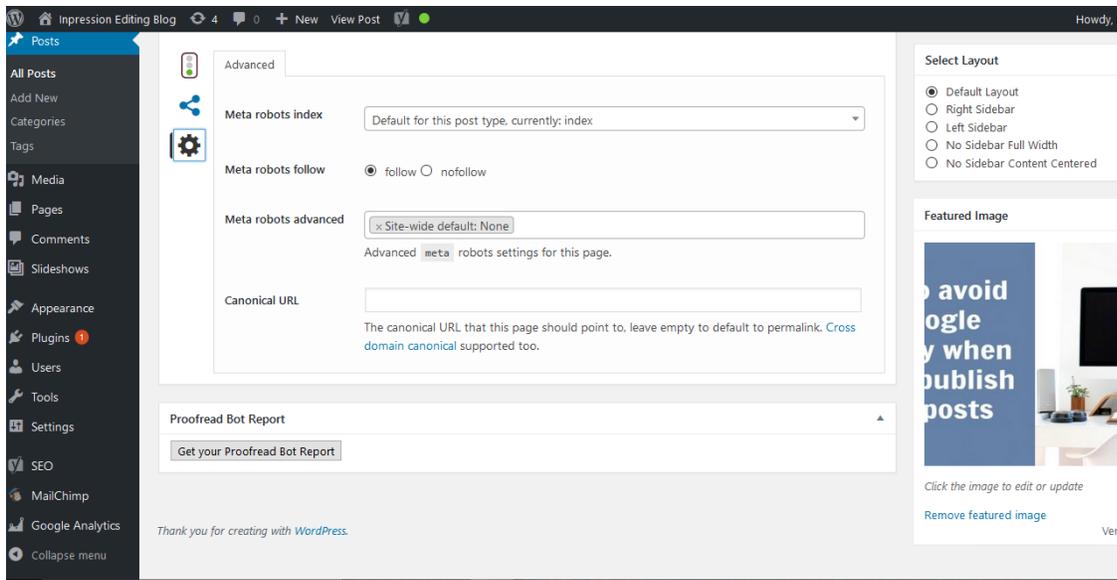
How to use rel=canonical on WordPress and Medium

WordPress

If you republish blog posts on a WordPress site, you can use the [Canonical SEO Content Syndication WordPress plugin](#) or the [Yoast SEO plugin](#) to add a rel=canonical tag. With the Yoast plugin, scroll down to the plugin portion of the post or page editor page. Then [select the “advanced” tab](#) (the gear symbol on the left):



In this tab, you'll find a field for entering the "Canonical URL":



Of course, you can also add the tag to the <head> section of the page manually.

Medium

If you republish blog posts on Medium and want to direct search engines to another version of the post, you can [use Medium's "import story" feature](#) to add the rel=canonical tag. Follow the prompts to import your post and Medium will automatically add a rel=canonical tag to the post. Check the source code for the published post and you'll see it there. The [Medium WordPress plugin](#) will also let you add a rel=canonical tag for a post that you want to [republish on Medium from WordPress](#).

Summary

Republishing blog posts doesn't have to be spammy. And it doesn't have to make you the target of a duplicate content penalty either. Use rel=canonical to show search engines that multiple versions of a post are, in fact, the same. If you use it properly and in moderation, you'll be able to reach new audiences without ending up in Google's bad books.

Want to boost your search engine rankings? Check out our recent post on the [5 blog post SEO tips you need to know](#).

About us

At Inpression Editing, we help brands make the best impression possible on customers and investors. We do this by providing copywriting, copyediting, and writing coaching services for brand content, website copy, marketing materials, and much more. Located in Toronto, Canada, we provide all of our services in both Canadian and US English. Check us out on our [website](#) or on social media (see buttons in footer).