

STRUCTURED DATA DEMYSTIFIED

-CHEAT SHEET

Rather than being a specific subset or variety of data, when we refer to 'structured data' we are talking about an organisational construct of data. For example, while prose conveys information, it does so in an organic way - in a looser, human manner; however, if you studied the prose and distilled its meaning into a table, this would represent 'structured' data.

The two data sets are essentially the same information, but with the table an easier to digest format. Where search engines are concerned, it is easier for an algorithm to parse information if it is offered within a scaffold or framework of structural information. This is generally done using HTML, microdata or JSON-LD cues that provide the search engine with additional pointers that it can use to contextualise and 'understand' the nature of the data it is processing. The below example is of a travel website - but a similar process is available for most industries.

Your Travel Website

Without structured data, your website is effectively a standalone node in a network - it can be accessed, data can be extracted, but it exists without context. While Google is getting better at understanding this data, it is far from perfect.

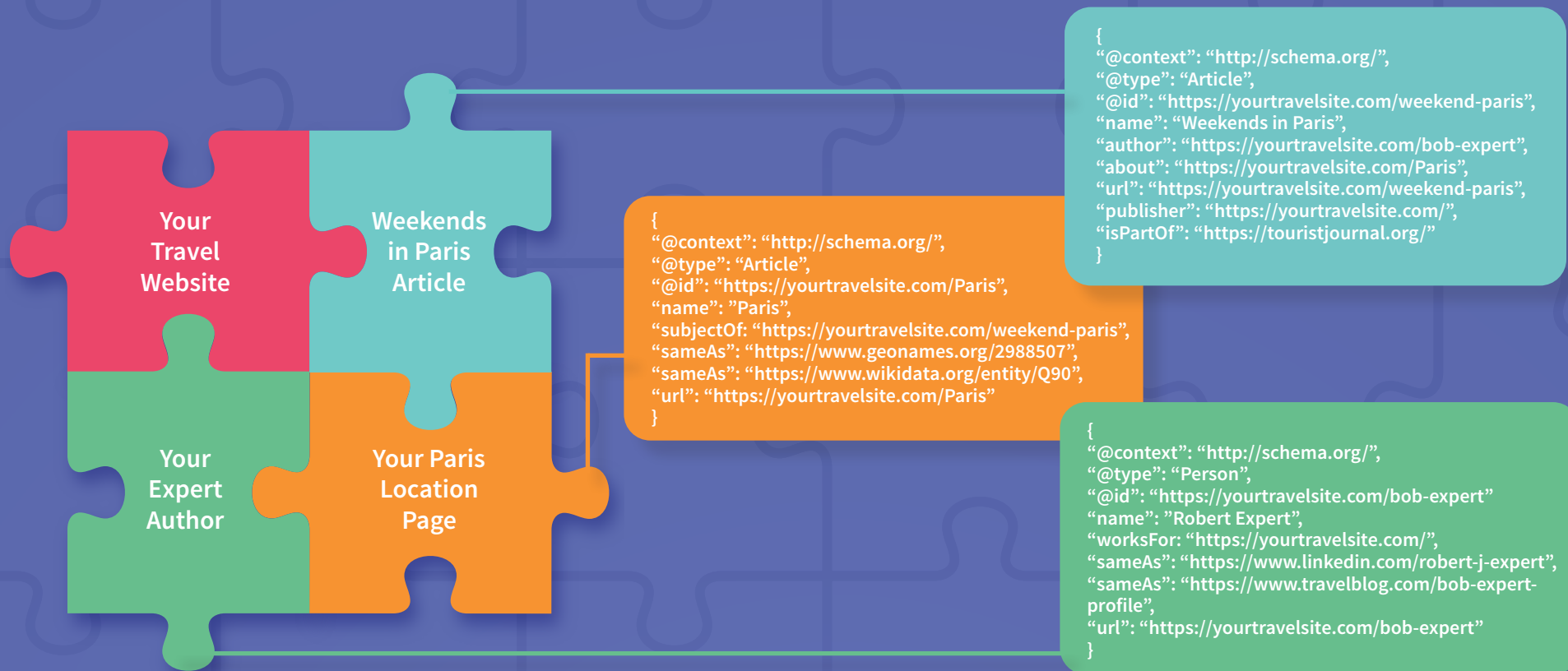
Weekends
in Paris
Article

Schema acts as a way to connect pages of data with machine readable context, allowing search engines to better understand the relevance of your site to user queries.

```
{
  "@context": "http://schema.org/",
  "@type": "Article",
  "name": "Weekends in Paris",
  "author": "https://yourtravelsite.com/bob-expert",
  "about": "https://yourtravelsite.com/Paris",
  "url": "https://yourtravelsite.com/weekend-paris",
  "publisher": "https://yourtravelsite.com/"
}
```

The above section of schema connects the article to two further pages on your site, providing further context for the information the article provides - it links to the page on your site about Paris, it links to the page about your expert author.

This contextualises the data on your site in relation to your other pages - it reinforces the expertise of your author and adds context to the subject of the article by referring to a location specific article. However, it's possible to use the same structured data to connect it to the wider 'knowledge graph' of the web.



With these schema entries what we have done is to improve the ability of search engines to contextualise and understand our data by linking out to authoritative sites which allow for connections to be drawn between your content and the wider knowledge graph, reinforcing the authority of your own content as a result by allowing search engines to see exactly where your content fits in the wider network of meaning ('schema' or 'ontology') and information.

These snippets are added to the <head> section of your website between <script type="application/ld+json"> and </script> tags, or by using one of a number of plugins (such as Yoast). Similarly, you can generate much of the script using the same, or a specialised tool such as Inlinks, which has entity detection and can help to speed the process up considerably.

```
<script data-schema="Organization" type="application/ld+json">
  {"name": "The Guardian", "url": "http://www.theguardian.com/", "logo": {"@type": "ImageObject", "url": "https://uploads.guim.co.uk/2018/01/31/TheGuardian_AMP.png", "width": 190, "height": 60}, "sameAs": ["https://www.facebook.com/theguardian", "https://www.instagram.com/theguardian", "https://www.linkedin.com/company/theguardian", "https://www.pinterest.co.uk/theguardian", "https://www.youtube.com/theguardian"]}
</script>
<script data-schema="WebPage" type="application/ld+json">
  {"@id": "https://www.theguardian.com/uk", "potentialAction": {"@type": "ViewAction", "target": "android-app://com.guardian/https/www.theguardian.com/uk"}, "@type": "WebPage", "@context": "http://schema.org"}
</script>
```

Source: The Guardian