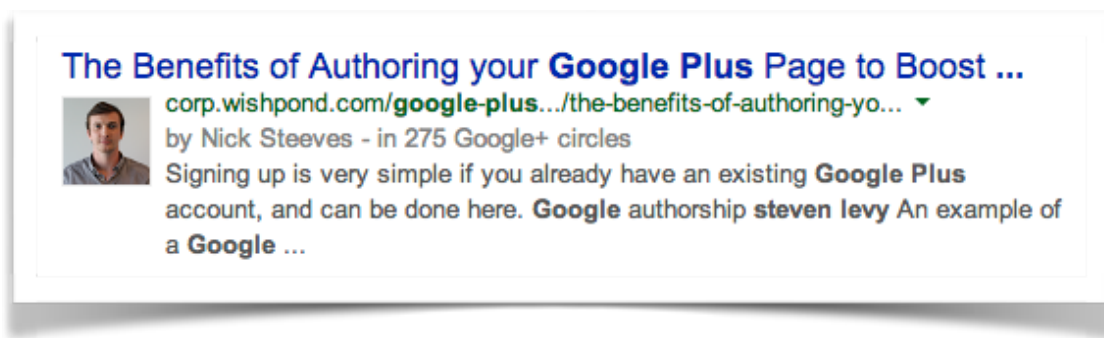


**STAND OUT
FROM THE
CROWD**

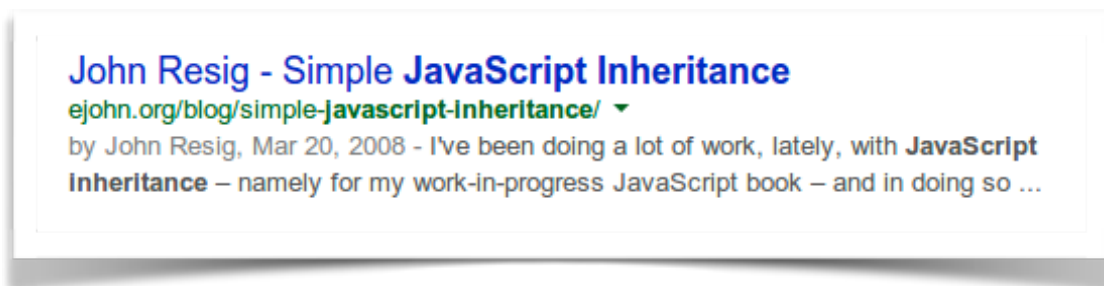
Stand Out From The Crowd

With the recent development of Google ditching the Author photo's from the search results I thought I'd do this quick report on how you can go and enhance your search snippets to make sure you've got a better chance of standing out from the crowd in the search results.

At the moment if you've got the authorship markup verified on your site then your search results might look something like this:



After the change happens and Google drop the images it's going to look more like this:



As you can see, *it doesn't exactly leap out of the page.*

Now, I did a blog post on why Authorship is still important (which [you can read here](#)), so you still want to implement Google Authorship on your websites, but in this report I want to cover something which can definitely help you not only stand out, but also give the search engines some crucial information to help better classify your web pages.

In fact, Bing have actually [come right out and said](#) that what I'm about to show you has increased click thru rates.

I'm talking about rich snippets, and over the next few pages I'm going to be looking at what it all means and how you can get it implemented.

What Is Microdata, RDF's, and Schema.org?

There is a lot of information out there, and Google and the other search engines are certainly doing their best to index it all.

But indexing doesn't necessarily mean *understanding*.

If a search engine could 'understand' what your content was about then it would be able to offer up much more informed search engine results for a users query. It would be able to answer complex questions and provide resources that are directly associated with the query not just by semantical reference but by direct knowledge.

Ok, I am starting to over complicate things here...

What I really want to say here is that: there is another language that Google and the other search engines *understand* that describes your content and that can be added to any page so that they know exactly what it is about. This 'language' is the microdata and schema.org markup.

Now this may sound groundbreaking but this has actually been around for years, it's just that very few people use it and support was sketchy... but over the last year all three top search engines got together and officially gave support to this, and introduced schema.org which is now a standard for describing your content to the machines.

Now let's get some terminology out of the way:

- **RDF:** This is the Resource Definition Format, it is a standard way of sharing information across the internet, think of it as a machine readable language for information.
- **Microformats:** These are special tags that you can add to pages to share RDF information.
- **Schema.org:** This is the new standard for Microformats (i.e. HTML tags). It is a shared vocabulary that makes it easier for webmasters to understand how they can markup their pages so that the search engines understand them. This is supported by all the main search engines to one degree or another.
- **Microdata:** The new way of supporting the schema.org vocabulary.

A Real World Example

Let me give you a real world example of Microdata in action from the schema.org site. This example may look a little scary at first but don't worry I am going to make it much easier later on.

Imagine you have a page about the movie *Avatar* - a page with a link to a movie trailer, information about the director, and so on. Your HTML code behind the scenes might look something like this:

```
<div>
  <h1>Avatar</h1>
  <span>Director: James Cameron (born August 16, 1954)</span>
  <span>Science fiction</span>
  <a href="../movies/avatar-theatrical-trailer.html">Trailer</a>
</div>
```

To begin, identify the section of the page that is 'about' the movie Avatar. To do this, add the **itemscope** element to the HTML tag that encloses information about the item, like this:

```
<div itemscope>
  <h1>Avatar</h1>
  <span>Director: James Cameron (born August 16, 1954) </span>
  <span>Science fiction</span>
  <a href="../movies/avatar-theatrical-trailer.html">Trailer</a>
</div>
```

By adding itemscope you are specifying that the HTML contained in the <div>...</div> block is about a particular item.

But it's not all that helpful to specify that there is an item being discussed without specifying what kind of an item it is. You can specify the type of item using the **itemtype** attribute immediately after the itemscope.

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/Movie">
  <h1>Avatar</h1>
  <span>Director: James Cameron (born August 16, 1954)</span>
  <span>Science fiction</span>
  <a href="../movies/avatar-theatrical-trailer.html">Trailer</a>
</div>
```

This specifies that the item contained in the div is in fact a Movie, as defined in the schema.org type hierarchy. Item types are provided as URLs, which in this case is a 'movie' (<http://schema.org/Movie>).

itemprop

What additional information can we give search engines about the movie Avatar?

Movies have interesting properties such as actors, director, ratings. To label the properties of an item we use the **itemprop** attribute.

For example, to identify the director of a movie you can add *itemprop="director"* to the element enclosing the director's name (there's a full list of all the properties you can associate with a movie at <http://schema.org/Movie>).

```
<div itemscope itemtype ="http://schema.org/Movie">
  <h1 itemprop="name">Avatar</h1>
  <span>Director: <span itemprop="director">James Cameron</span>
  (born August 16, 1954)</span>
  <span itemprop="genre">Science fiction</span>
  <a href="../movies/avatar-theatrical-trailer.html"
  itemprop="trailer">Trailer</a>
</div>
```

Note that we have added additional `...` tags to attach the `itemprop` attributes to the appropriate text on the page. `` tags don't change the way

pages are rendered by a web browser, so they are a convenient HTML element to use with `itemprop`.

Search engines can now understand not just that `http://www.avatarmovie.com` is a URL, but also that it's the URL for the trailer for the science-fiction movie Avatar, which was directed by James Cameron.

Embedded items

Sometimes the value of an item property can itself be another item with its own set of properties. For example, we can specify that the director of the movie is an item of type **Person** and the person has the properties **name** and **birthDate**. To specify that the value of a property is another item, you begin a new itemscope immediately after the corresponding `itemprop`:

```
<div itemscope itemtype = "http://schema.org/Movie">
  <h1 itemprop="name">Avatar</h1>
  <div itemprop="director" itemscope
    itemtype="http://schema.org/Person">
    Director: <span itemprop="name">James Cameron</span>
    (born <span itemprop="birthDate">August 16, 1954</span>)</div>
  <span itemprop="genre">Science fiction</span>
  <a href=" ../movies/avatar-theatrical-trailer.html "
    itemprop="trailer">Trailer</a>
</div>
```

So that was a pretty in-depth example of Microdata in action but let me tell you why this is extremely important.

First off we get to tell Google what this page is about.

But the kicker here is, we also get to tell Google **what a link is about**.

And boy, have we had some results with this.

Now the above example was just for movies but there is Microdata markup for:

- Events
- Places
- People
- Organizations
- Reviews
- Products
- Offers
- Books
- Recipes
- Ratings
- Restaurants
- Music
- TV Series
- Articles
- News
- Maps
- Photographs
- Web Pages (about us, checkout)

...and there's a hole heap more.

You can find a full list here: <http://schema.org/docs/full.html>

Real World Examples And Results

Now all of this is very exciting but I want to start by showing you some real world examples of companies who have implemented Microdata, the results some companies have had using them.

Let's start with the effect that schema.org markup can have on Google organic listings.



The above listing shows the use of Reviews and Ratings in a web page. This organic listing gets the addition of the stars and if you actually go through to the page you will see that there are four reviews and the average is four out of five.



Stand Out From The Crowd

Now most people think that this is something only large companies like Yelp can do, but if you implement reviews and ratings on your site then over time Google will begin to show these for your listings too.

So that is one example of Microdata in organic listings but I want to show you how they also appear in enhanced AdWords listings:



Currys **Toshiba TVs - Full HD LCD & LED. 32", 37", 42"** Ads
www.currys.co.uk/Toshiba-TVs +1
Free Delivery on all orders.

Toshiba TVs | toshiba.co.uk
www.toshiba.co.uk +1
Regza LCD TV range exclusive of Resolution+ tech for image quality

Buy Toshiba TVs Online | johnlewis.com
www.johnlewis.com/toshiba-tvs - ★★★★★ 351 seller reviews +1
Free Delivery & 5 Year Guarantee on all **Toshiba** TVs at John Lewis
[Toshiba LED TVs](#) - [Toshiba 42" TVs](#) - [Toshiba 46" TVs](#) - [Toshiba 40" TVs](#)

This is a pretty loaded example as it has the star rating, the reviews listed, links to sections of the site and now the Google +1

Think how much more CTR this ad gets in comparison to the other two listings above it.

Now again, you may think that John Lewis has paid extra for the star ratings but they haven't, the page which this ad links to has all the Microdata in and Google is just using this, you can see other companies making use of the same markup and getting an enhanced listing.



Toshiba TVs in Stock
www.pixmania.co.uk +1
pixmania.co.uk is rated ★★★★★
Toshiba LCD TV for Cheap.
Fast UK Delivery! Order Now.

Stand Out From The Crowd

At a recent conference I spoke to a couple of marketers who are in a particular cooking supply niche and they shared some pretty amazing data with me and gave me access to their analytics account to verify their information.

Now before I tell you the story let me show you what a typical recipe listing in Google looks like:



The image shows a screenshot of a search results snippet for Yorkshire Pudding recipes. It contains three entries, each with a title, a URL, a star rating, review count, cooking time, and calorie count, followed by a small image and a short description.

- Yorkshire Pudding Recipe - Allrecipes.com**
allrecipes.com/recipe/yorkshire-pudding/ +1
 ★★★★★ 55 reviews - 1 hr 35 mins - 157 cal
A yummy and traditional addition to the holiday feast. If you intend to make this, the timing has to be juuuuust right. I would suggest preparing the mixture the ...
- Sky High Yorkshire Pudding Recipe - Allrecipes.com**
allrecipes.com/recipe/sky-high-yorkshire-pudding/ +1
 ★★★★★ 268 reviews - 50 mins - 160 cal
Here is **recipe** I came up with while cooking roast beef dinner. These Yorkies ...
- Yorkshire Pudding II Recipe - Allrecipes.com**
allrecipes.com/recipe/yorkshire-pudding-ii/ +1
 ★★★★★ 21 reviews - 45 mins - 125 cal
Flour, salt, milk and eggs, along with roast beef pan drippings, make this ...

As you can see it shows the cooking time and the calorie count. Nice. Anyhoo, on with the story.

This couple sell ingredients to a particular speciality segment of the market, so to support that and to get more content on to their site they have been writing a recipe / cooking blog and roughly put out one post a week linking to the ingredients in their store etc.

On average they were getting 600 hits a day on their site except for holiday times where the site obviously had a huge spike in visits. This was before implementing Microdata on their site.

They initially started by implementing the markup for recipes and included the following extra information on each page:

- `cookTime`
- `cookingMethod`
- `ingredients`
- `prepTime`
- `recipeCategory`
- `recipeCuisine`
- `recipeInstructions`
- `recipeYield`
- `totalTime`

There are few extra things they could have added to the page but wanted to keep it simple and as they already had this information on the page most of it was a simple cut and paste job.

Over a long weekend they updated all of their pages (around 110 at the time) with the new data.

Previous to doing this their recipes were showing up on the second to third page of Google when you typed in a particular dish with the occasional one hitting page one.

A week after implementing this they came into the shop and saw that they had nearly 90 more orders to fill from their store than normal, they checked their analytics account and it was just showing up Saturday's data and they had **over 5,000 visitors** to their site, and *to pages that don't normally get a lot of hits*.

Obviously they quickly checked the SERPS and most of their recipes were now showing up in the top spot of Google, all they had done is add Microdata to the pages and Google had picked that up.

What was also interesting was that a third of their traffic was coming from Google Recipe Search (<http://www.google.com/landing/recipes/>).

Because they had put their ingredients in the list, Google was pulling that information out and showing up their recipes on it's site.

A total success and a huge change in their business, they have now closed down their physical shop and just have a warehouse for the raw ingredients and delivery, they currently ship \$200,000 of ingredients a week... all thanks to Microdata markup and the semantic web.

When I spoke to them at the conference I suggested making one change, and that was to add nutritional information to the recipe Microdata which would give them an even more enhanced organic listing.

They went away and did that a couple of days later and then a couple of weeks later once Google had re-crawled their website they noticed **a 12% increase in traffic** and all their listings now contain the calorie count information and they appear higher than any of the competition.

Now that is an extreme example and your milage may vary, but by giving Google more information so that it can make an informed decision about your content can only do you good, and in the last section of this report I am going to show you how you can get started with all of this but for now I want to tell you about another way Microdata can help you.

Microdata and Enhanced Local Listings

This example for us really showed how powerful Microdata can be. Up until this point we had been running tests on Google using Microdata to boost review sites and to get enhanced link juice but a friend of ours came to us with a problem.

His business focusses mostly on local SEO and one of his clients was being seriously outranked in Google Places by a competitor which was located nowhere near to his business.

He had tried everything from getting customers to write reviews, getting entries in all the major directories - everything - but the other guy was still out-ranking despite being nearly 40 miles away from the location.

So we decided to give MicroFormat data a go and added the following to his *'About Us'* page:

```
<div itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/LocalBusiness">
  <span itemprop="name">His Business Name</span>

  <div itemprop="address" itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/
  PostalAddress">
    <span itemprop="streetAddress">Address 1</span> <br />
    <span itemprop="streetAddress">Address 2</span> <br />
    <span itemprop="addressLocality">Address Town</span> <br />
    <span itemprop="addressRegion">Address County</span> <br />
    <span itemprop="postalCode">Address Post Code</span> <br />
  </div>
</div>
```

This added his business name and full postal address to the page in both human readable and machine readable format.

Bingo!

It took about a week but he is now top spot in the Google Places listings - a simple and effective fix which only took a couple of minutes to implement.

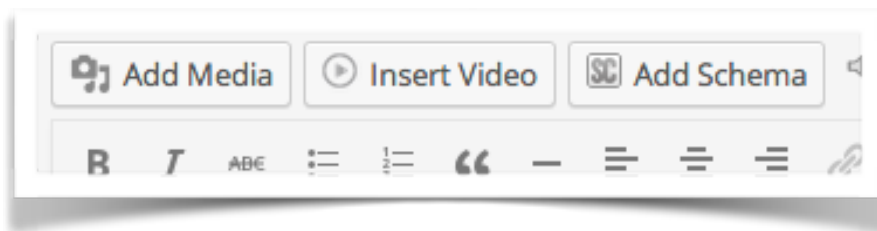
So if you are in the local space, have a local physical business, and want to make sure that Google lists you properly then make sure you put your machine readable information on your *'About Us'* page etc.

Putting This To Work

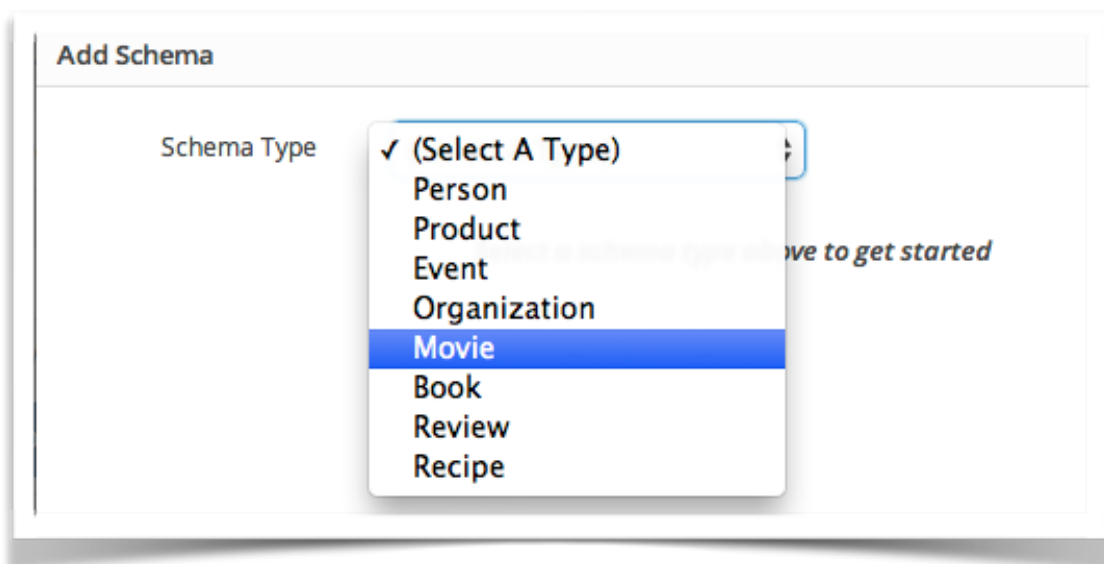
So by now I am sure you are itching to get started with this and the easiest way is to use a WordPress plugin.

There are a few different plugins available, and the one which jumps out for me is called *Schema Creator* and you can grab it in the WordPress plugin repository for free here: <http://wordpress.org/plugins/schema-creator/>

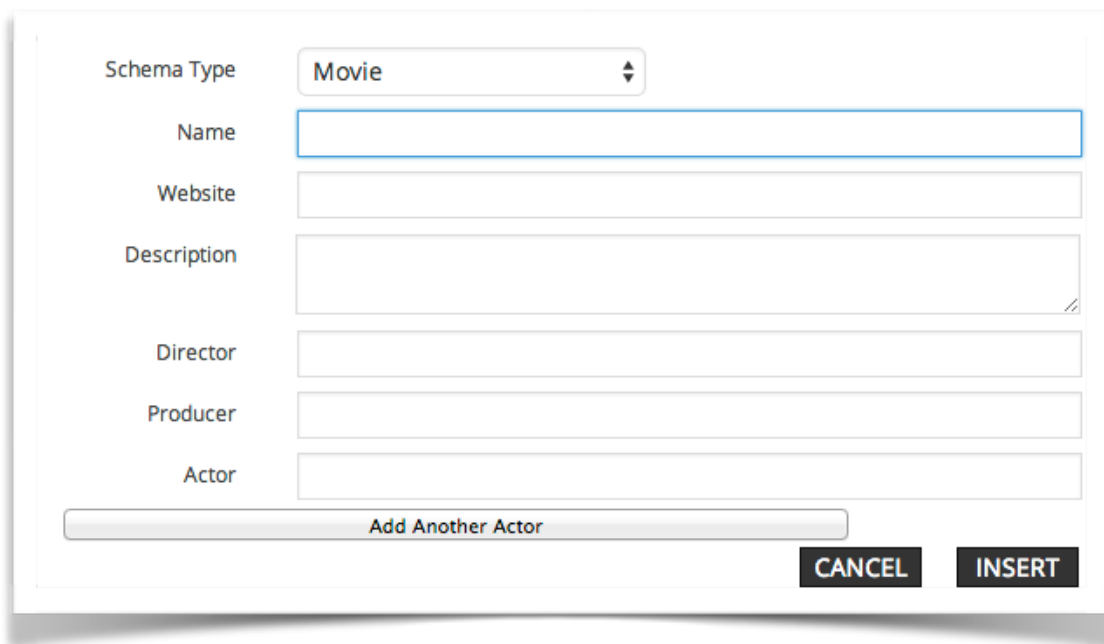
Now I'm not going to go through the whole set-up for this plugin as it is pretty self-explanatory, but as a brief overview when you activate the plugin you get and 'Add Schema' button above your post / page editor box:



Then in the pop-up you select the Schema Type from the drop down list:



Then you just fill out the fields and click on the *'Insert'* button once you're all done:



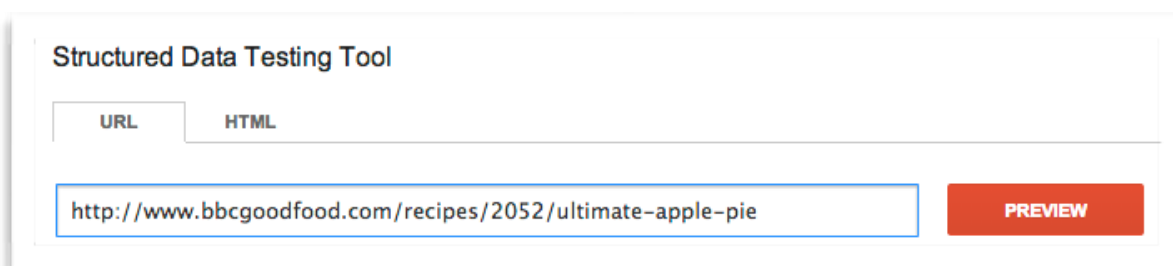
The image shows a form for adding a movie schema. The form is titled "Schema Type" and has a dropdown menu set to "Movie". Below this are several input fields: "Name", "Website", "Description", "Director", "Producer", and "Actor". At the bottom of the form, there is a button labeled "Add Another Actor" and two buttons labeled "CANCEL" and "INSERT".

The plugin then inserts some short code into your post / page edit box, and then when you publish your post / page you get the proper schema markup added to your webpage.

Testing Your Snippets

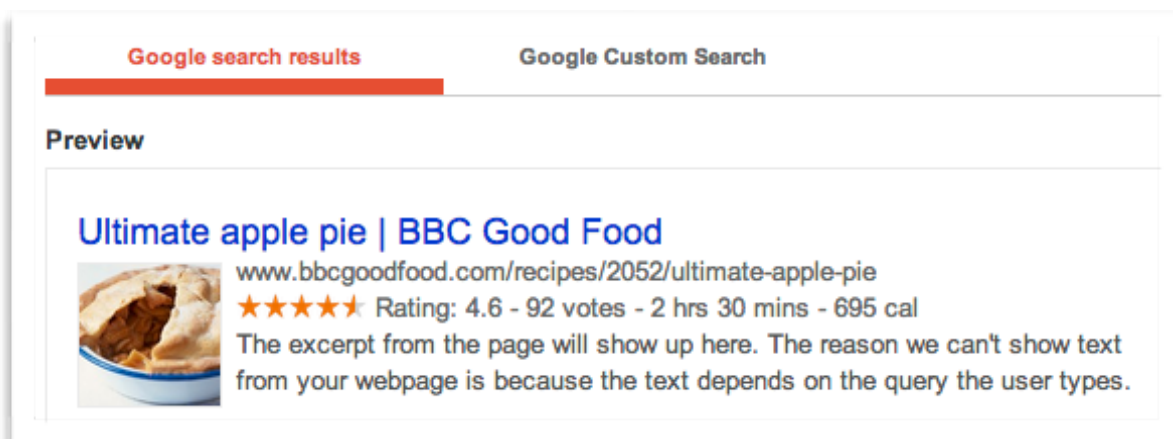
One of things you are going to want to do once you have implemented some of the Microdata code on your site is to test whether it is marked up correctly and that Google can read it. They have provided a tool for this here: <http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/richsnippets>

To use the tool just paste in the URL of the page you want to check and then click on the 'Preview' button:



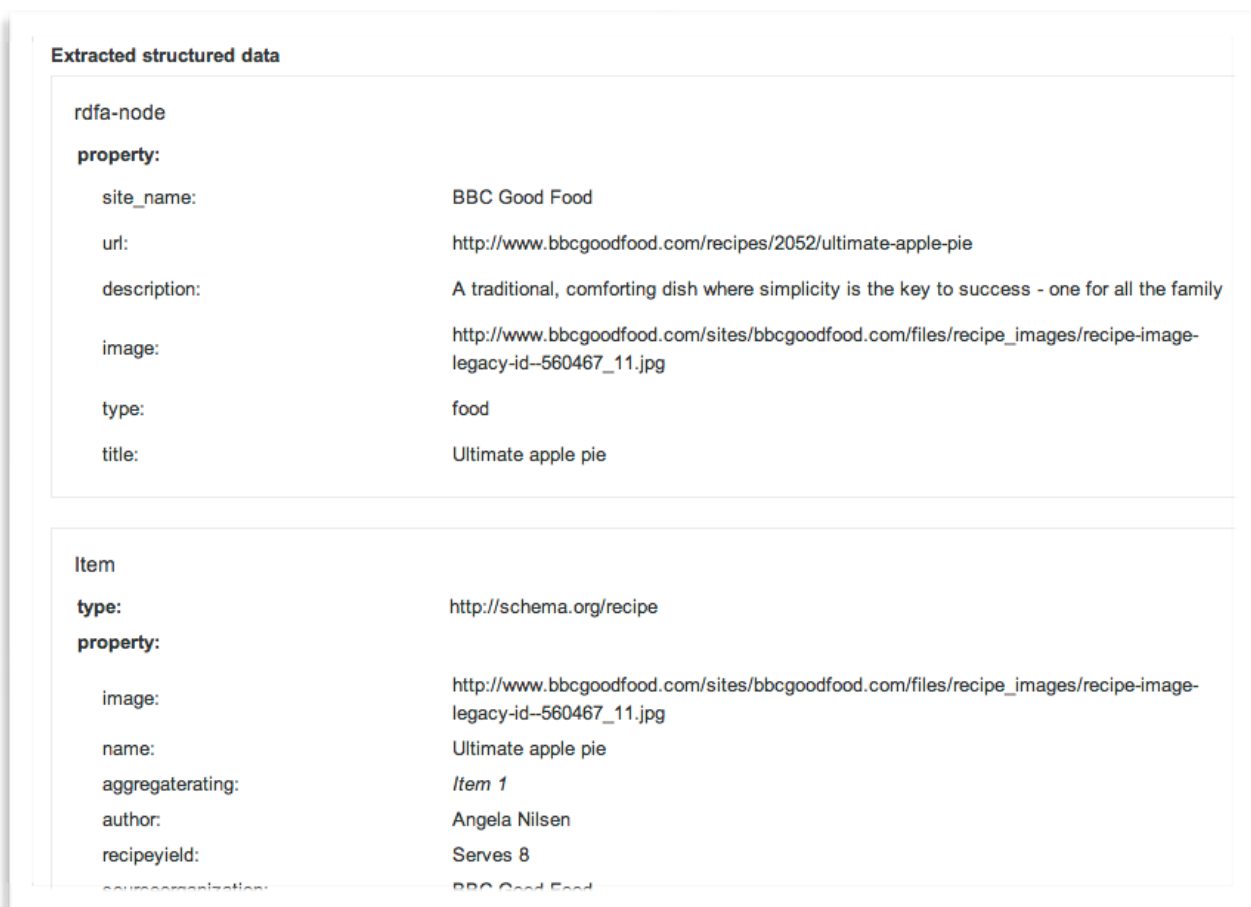
The screenshot shows the 'Structured Data Testing Tool' interface. It has two tabs: 'URL' (selected) and 'HTML'. Below the tabs is a text input field containing the URL 'http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/2052/ultimate-apple-pie'. To the right of the input field is a red button labeled 'PREVIEW'.

Google then fetches the page, checks the markup and shows you the rich snippet created from the schema markup:



The screenshot shows a Google search results page. At the top, there are two tabs: 'Google search results' (selected) and 'Google Custom Search'. Below the tabs is a 'Preview' section. The preview shows a rich snippet for 'Ultimate apple pie | BBC Good Food'. The snippet includes a small image of an apple pie, the URL 'www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/2052/ultimate-apple-pie', a star rating of 4.6 (represented by five stars), and the text 'Rating: 4.6 - 92 votes - 2 hrs 30 mins - 695 cal'. Below the snippet, there is a message: 'The excerpt from the page will show up here. The reason we can't show text from your webpage is because the text depends on the query the user types.'

As well as the previewer Google also shows you what data it's extracted from the page so you can double check to see if everything you've added is being picked up:



The image shows a screenshot of the 'Extracted structured data' section from a search engine previewer. It contains two main sections: 'rdfa-node' and 'Item'. The 'rdfa-node' section lists properties such as site_name (BBC Good Food), url, description, image, type (food), and title (Ultimate apple pie). The 'Item' section lists properties such as type (http://schema.org/recipe), image, name (Ultimate apple pie), aggregaterating (Item 1), author (Angela Nilsen), recipeyield (Serves 8), and sourceorganization (BBC Good Food).

rdfa-node	
property:	
site_name:	BBC Good Food
url:	http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/2052/ultimate-apple-pie
description:	A traditional, comforting dish where simplicity is the key to success - one for all the family
image:	http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/sites/bbcgoodfood.com/files/recipe_images/recipe-image-legacy-id-560467_11.jpg
type:	food
title:	Ultimate apple pie

Item	
type:	http://schema.org/recipe
property:	
image:	http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/sites/bbcgoodfood.com/files/recipe_images/recipe-image-legacy-id-560467_11.jpg
name:	Ultimate apple pie
aggregaterating:	<i>Item 1</i>
author:	Angela Nilsen
recipeyield:	Serves 8
sourceorganization:	BBC Good Food

There are a lot of options for adding this markup to your websites, and depending on what you are currently working on adding schema.org data anywhere on your site is only going to help your search listings.

The absolute kicker is that at the moment there are less than 1% of websites who are integrating this type of data, so if you add it then you can steal a march on your competition and it will help you stand out from the crowd.