

1 metadata.md

Steam Association of Manitoba — Static Site Metadata Specification

This document describes the structure, purpose, and behavior of the `metadata.txt` files used by the SAM static-site generator ("sitegen"). It is written for future maintainers so the system can be understood, extended, and debugged without reverse-engineering the code.

1.1 Purpose of `metadata.txt`

Each directory in the site may contain a `metadata.txt` file.
This file controls:

- the **order** in which files and subdirectories appear
- the **labels** and **descriptions** shown in the generated HTML index
- **headings** and **section dividers**
- whether an entry is **hidden**
- optional **preamble** and **postamble** HTML (in separate files)

Important:

The order of lines in `metadata.txt` is the order of rows in the generated HTML.
The generator never reorders user-authored entries.

1.2 File Format

`metadata.txt` is a simple, line-oriented file.

Each non-comment line has the form:

key: description

Blank lines are allowed and preserved (collapsed to a single blank line).

Comments begin with `#` and are preserved but ignored by the generator.

Example:

```
# Auto-generated metadata

/Forms: Application forms
*Heading:
-:
application.pdf: Application form
waiver.pdf: Liability waiver
```

1.3 Keys

The **key** determines what kind of row is generated.

1.3.1 Normal file

filename.pdf: Description text

Produces a link to the file.

1.3.2 Directory

Directories are indicated by a leading `/`:

/Forms: Application forms

This produces a link to the subdirectory.

1.3.3 Heading (no link)

Keys beginning with * create a heading row:

*Forms:

- No link is generated
- The * is stripped before display
- The description is shown normally
- Multiple headings in a row are allowed

1.3.4 Divider in key column

Keys beginning with - produce a horizontal rule **in the key column only**:

:-

This creates:

```
<td><hr/></td> | <td>(description)</td>
```

1.3.5 Duplicate keys

Allowed and preserved.

This is why metadata is stored internally as a **list of** (key, desc) **pairs**, not a dict.

1.4 Descriptions

The **description** is free-form text, except for one special case.

1.4.1 Divider in description column

If the description begins with -, the generator inserts <hr/> in the **description column**:

file.pdf: -

This produces:

```
<td>file.pdf</td> | <td><hr/></td>
```

1.4.2 Empty descriptions

Allowed:

file.pdf:

1.5 Special Files: preamble.html and postamble.html

If present in a directory:

- `preamble.html