

"How You Can Instantly Tap Into an Unlimited Source of Content, for Free!"

Are you looking for dynamic, automatically refreshing, sticky content to spice up your website?

If you are a webmaster, you'll know how difficult it is to create fresh content to attract your subscribers and new visitors to your website. Paying freelance writers can cost you a fortune when you are just starting out and don't have site revenues to fund expenses, and writing the articles yourself takes way too much time and takes you away from other important tasks (like actually running the site and making sales happen).

Luckily, there's a little-known but extremely easy tool that you can use to instantly jazz up your website and provide your traffic with valuable information. In fact, you might have heard of this tool before. Headline syndication, aggregators, XML format?

Sound familiar?

Yup, I'm talking about RSS Feeds.

If you haven't heard about RSS Feeds, or what they are, I strongly urge you to print out this article, go to a quiet corner where you won't be disturbed and literally devour every word of the rest of this article. Not only will it probably save your business, but it will revolutionize the way you think about the Internet.

And if you've come across RSS feeds before or used them, then skim through the next section to refresh your memory (seriously, there is a lot of useful information that you might be missing out on) and then dive into the meat of this article, which will show you how to set up RSS feeds on your website to display dynamic, self-updating content with very little effort.

What Is RSS?

RSS stands for "Rich Site Summary", although other terms such as "RDF Site Summary" (which emphasizes the file format) and "Really Simple Syndication" (which highlights the main selling point of RSS) are also useful in defining RSS by the book.

However, bookish definitions don't always explain things very well. What really is RSS?

RSS is a platform over which a webmaster can instantly deliver summarized information about the latest / most important content on his website. This summary is usually a list of headlines and snippets – the headline will instantly inform the reader of what this new article or page contains and the snippet (usually the first few lines of the article) is to further entice the reader into visiting the website, or to simply give the reader more information. RSS has evolved into a commonly accepted XML standard, and many websites now use RSS Feeds (XML files containing the summaries) to publish "updates" about themselves.

From the webmaster's point of view, an RSS feed is meant to allow visitors and subscribers an easy way to keep themselves abreast of fresh content on their website (without having them visit the website first). Additionally, an RSS Feed also allows the reader to "preview" this fresh content, thus letting them decide immediately if the new article / content is interesting to them or not. All in all, RSS Feeds have the main purpose of enhancing user experience.

Keep that last point as we go through the rest of this article – it is an underlying mindset to making RSS Feeds work effectively.

Using An RSS Feed

As an Internet entrepreneur, one of your most valuable tools can be an RSS Reader. This is essentially an aggregator – a collection of RSS Feeds (that you can add or remove) from different websites that you are interested in. A typical RSS Reader would include RSS Feeds from news sites, sports sites, and perhaps a few niche sites (such as SEO forums, blogs on SEO, etc.). The main purpose of this software is to keep you informed of the latest news and content on websites that you are interested in.

If you have used [My Yahoo!](#) or [Bloglines](#), you've probably used RSS Feeds already. These are online RSS aggregators – you get to choose from numerous websites and within minutes you can have your own launch-pad for knowing everything that's happening in your niche, in the world, or in sports.

As a first step to understanding how RSS Feeds work, I'd suggest that you use at least one RSS Aggregator – either an online RSS tool or RSS reading software like [SharpReader](#) – and subscribe to a few RSS Feeds to learn how it works from a user's perspective.

Marketing and RSS

Using RSS Feeds, websites can:

- Attract more customers / visitors.
- Keep subscribers informed of new developments
- Allow subscribers to instantly learn of new articles, content and products on their website.
- Reduce the load on the subscriber's inbox by reserving newsletters for important news, special product offers, etc.

As a webmaster, you can use RSS Feeds to your advantage. Since blogging became insanely popular over two years ago, RSS Feeds have become mainstream. In other words, no matter what your niche, there's a good chance that you'll be able to find a few authority sites that publish RSS Feeds, thus syndicating their latest headlines.

How can you use this?

By providing your visitors relevant, self-refreshing content in the shape of the “latest news” by using RSS feeds from niche-relevant websites.

Now I'm not saying that you should cover your whole website (or even one whole page) with RSS Feeds. Such practice is frowned upon by search engines and will actually get your website banned from every single search engine index! RSS Feeds are meant for headline syndication, not for content scrapping.

Instead, you could use headlines from the top 3 forums in the weight loss niche to show the latest discussion threads on one side of the “News” page of your own weight loss website. The rest of the page would, of course, be covered with information (i.e. latest news) about your own website.

Or you could put a news ticker on your politics blog to not only give your blog a look of “being updated” but to also provide your readers with relevant, useful information.

If you sell sports goods and own an online store, you could run a “sports news” feed on your main page to attract the attention of your visitors and give your website a more authentic look and feel.

There are many different ways you can use RSS Feeds to add value to your website. Make sure though, that you are merely using these Feeds as “icing on the cake”, and not as the whole cake itself.

Finding RSS Feeds

Finding RSS Feeds is easy; there are several RSS-specific directories and niche search engines for you to browse through. However, the surge of blogging in the last two years has meant that any RSS search tool is inundated with blog spam. This makes it a bit harder to find RSS Feeds that you can actually use.

I've listed a few resources below that can help you get started in your search for finding relevant RSS Feeds.

- [Bloglines](#)
- [BlogPulse](#)
- [Daypop](#)
- [Feedster](#)
- [Findory Blogory](#)
- [Gigablast Blog Search](#)
- [IceRocket Blog Search](#)
- [PubSub](#)
- [Technorati](#)

Once you've found the RSS Feeds of your choice, it's time to find out how to set them up on your website.

Setting up an RSS Feed to Display on your Website

Internet Marketers are a particular breed; we're always looking for an "easier" or "quicker" way of doing things; not necessarily shortcuts, but just ways to work smarter. It's the same with RSS. When I first came across it, I immediately went to Google and not only picked out a tool that could help me syndicate my own website (so I wouldn't have to spend time learning XML), but I also found several tools that I could use to display RSS Feeds from *other* websites onto mine!

These tools are ridiculously simple, and I'd fully suggest that you try them before venturing into learning how to display RSS Feeds on your webpages through code.

If your website is in PHP, you can use the following software:

[CaRP](#)

This software also has a free version, which displays a simple ad in the middle of the news display saying something like "these news headlines brought to you by CaRP". Try it out; it's easy to use, and will teach a lot about managing RSS Feeds.

There are JavaScript alternatives available as well (in case your website uses plain HTML).

[Jawfish](#)

Like CaRP, Jawfish also has a free trial, which is once again easy to setup if you can follow step-by-step instructions.

[FeedRoll](#)

Another JavaScript alternative is FeedRoll – this is perhaps the easiest to use of the three mentioned here, but it offers less flexibility and choice of feeds compared to the others.

Of course, if you want more options (or have ASP or something on your website), go to your search engine of choice and type in "How to display RSS Feeds on my website" to get a quick listing of articles, tutorials and more tools to help you out.

More RSS

RSS is an amazingly versatile platform that can be used from anything as simple as running a news ticker to something as topical and time-sensitive as providing weather alerts to affected areas. In fact, any information that is:

- regularly updated
- time sensitive
- new

can be a good candidate for an RSS Feed. The key here is to remember that there are always new uses for information and technology... it's just a matter of pinning them down.



Brad Callen
Professional SEO
<http://www.seoelite.com>