



Highlands Regional Library Cooperative

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Wondering About RSS

What is it? What does it do?

- RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary. It depends on who you ask. An RSS feed may also be called RDF feed, XML feed or an Atom feed.
- Users subscribe to RSS feeds using an aggregator.
- The aggregator checks those feeds for new content periodically and collects it for the user.
- Users no longer have to check a website to see if new information is posted. It is delivered right to them and is all in one place.
- RSS feeds are typically associated with blogs and it is true that most blogs have RSS feeds, but so do other sites such as *The New York Times*.
- RSS feeds are not just limited to text; some podcasts also provide RSS.

About Aggregators

How do they work

- Aggregators can be online or downloaded and installed on a computer.
- Once users locate a page's RSS feed, they copy the link and paste it into their aggregator to subscribe.
- Some aggregators provide a link that can be added to the web browser's Favorites and be used to locate and subscribe to a page's feed.
- Aggregators may offer lists of feeds arranged by subject for users to browse through. There is even a search engine, www.feedster.com, which just searches RSS feeds.
- Users can save articles in their aggregator.
- Some popular aggregators include Bloglines (www.bloglines.com), Rojo (www.rojo.com), and SharpReader (www.SharpReader.net)



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RSS Feeds in the Library

How can libraries use RSS?

- RSS is another way to let people know what the library offers.
- Libraries that have blogs typically offer an RSS feed for that blog. Most blogging software has the ability to create RSS feeds.
- But even without a blog it is possible to use RSS to inform users of events, new books, and web updates.
- Although it looks daunting, creating an RSS feed is not especially difficult and there are many online tools that can help.

Further Reading

- About RSS Feeds
 - “RSS” in the February 2004 issue of *Computers in Libraries*
 - “Reaching Out to the Remote User” in the October 2004 issue of *Computer in Libraries*
 - “What is RSS”
<http://www.xml.com/pub/a/2002/12/18/dive-into-xml.html>
 - “RSS for Non-Techie Librarians”
<http://www.llrx.com/features/rssforlibrarians.htm>
- About News Aggregators
 - “Web News Wranglers” in the August, 2006 issue of *PC World*
 - *Top 10 Windows RSS Feed Readers and News Aggregators*
http://email.about.com/cs/rssfeedreaders/tp/top_rss_windows.htm
- Creating RSS Feeds
 - *Make RSS*
<http://www.make-rss-feeds.com/>
 - *RSS Specifications*
<http://www.rss-specifications.com>