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How to Use Your Google API key as Your Secret Weapon: Part Three

By Tinu Abayomi-Paul

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This is the third installation in a three part series that shows you how to use your Google API key as your secret traffic weapon. You can read part one here:

<http://www.freetrafficdirectory.com/apikey.shtml> – part two is here:

<http://www.freetrafficdirectory.com/apikey2.shtml>

This brief overview will show you how you use a combination of RSS tools and Google API implementations to enhance your own site, which, as I've outlined in the first part, are all available at no cost. I'll be covering a more detailed step-by-step guide in the June update to my book, which you can read about here – <http://www.freetrafficdirectory.com/book> .

There's also an appendix of information links on the entire process available in PDF format for subscribers to my newsletter that will be of help to beginners who need more background information and more technically-inclined readers who need more in-depth data from the programmers perspective.

The first thing you'll want to do is find a way to get other people's RSS feeds on your There's software that will help you display other news feeds on your site. There's a free one you can use here:

<http://www.2rss.com/software.php>

Web Reference also has some great scripts that will help you integrate RSS into your site in some innovative ways. You can find them here:

<http://www.webreference.com/scripts/>

Next, you'll want to find the feeds that are best suited to your site's topic, and begin to include them at your site. If the site you'd like to feature does not have an RSS feed, you can have one made free at www.myrss.com – it's a good idea to make sure this is okay with the site owner if you have any doubts – they may also have a feed you didn't see.

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Many sites with existing feeds are available as well. You can go to Google and start searching, and also find some RSS feed directories and start digging that way. (There's a list of RSS feed directories to find feeds as well as submit to in the appendix file.)

This method can be somewhat taxing, as you'll often find what you think would be a great feed, only to realize that it has stale information, or isn't right for inclusion at your site. It will often take a lot of research to consistently come up with a search that provides the results you want.

You may be tempted to forego the Google searching and proceed to RSS feed directories to get some of the news. However, you want to get as much good news that no one else has as possible, instead of just regurgitating content that already exists.

Remember the point is to have a high-quality resource, to be the top in your field.

There's no real remedy for the sorting process but hard work – you'll have to get a feed reader and check out the ones you have selected for about a week. (Again, see the PDF appendix for more links.) The good news is, you can get one of the most powerful implementations of the Google API to cut this work in half for you.

My favorite site using the Google API is www.googlealerts.com – its award-winning features let you collect and track information from Google's database via email. Once you've found a refined Google search that produces the type of feeds you want, you can then open an account at Google Alerts and let them find more sites for you.

Once a week, you can combine these with the ones you found at RSS directories, and either create a whole new feed from the news you found, or add all the best new RSS feeds you have found to the collection available at your site.

If you're more technically inclined, you can skip that middle step using another Google API implementation, Google2RSS. This tool turns Google searches into RSS feeds.

It's a little bit harder to understand, but once you get it, this is relatively simple to use program that will reduce the two-part process of converting an RSS feed to one easy step.

You can download it here:

<http://www.razorsoft.net/weblog/stories/2002/04/13/google2rss.html>

Please note that you cannot use this method with Google News, as it is against their Terms of Service.

If finding a way to display the feeds, in addition to finding good ones seems like too much work, you might want to consider getting a Content Management System (CMS) installed at your site that already includes a feed from your site, and gives you the option to add as many feeds as you like, by inputting links manually on the database side.

The best one I know of for this function is at <http://phpnuke.org> – again, you could use this to manage the current content at your site OR create a special members section.

With PHP Nuke, the feeds are displayed in the member's account section – you'd have to create the content blocks to show additional feeds manually. This is the method I use at my site, as it allows me greater control over the content and also gives members the options of reading their favorite news feeds at my site.

You can also use the CMS distributed at <http://www.myphpnuke.com> will also help you display the headlines on your site automatically– this is better for the person who prefers ease of use. They're both free.

Now, all you'll have to do is get your site spidered by Google as quickly as possible to get the word out, which will also get you targeted visitors.

To get a continually updated listing of all the free Google API applications I find in my travels, subscribe to my free newsletter, or the newsletter RSS feed. The welcome issue will let you know how to access the PDF file.

That's it. Enhance your site with news from your particular niche and your site will become a premier destination for your category,

Beyond the box with Google's Web API

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<http://www.sitetube.com>

Google, the most popular, and many say best, search engine, offers searchers many options to help them zero in on just what they're looking for. Although these search modifier features are documented on own site, many searchers, including experienced marketers and technically savvy people, simple don't know these features are available. But these features, along with the Google search box, are only available to human searchers, who can type in their search parameters, and perhaps some keyboard scripting programs as well. But there is a way for programmers and web site designers to access Google's database from their own sites, in the exact way they need. This is done by using Google's Web API (Application Program Interface).

With the API, programmers can use most any web programming language, such as PHP, ASP, Perl, .NET, and Java. Google's Web API provides "data hooks" that allow a remote program to access certain portions of Google easily.

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You must be very aware of the Google Web API Terms of Service. You must obtain a developer key that you will include in each API use, you are allowed only 1,000 automated queries per day, and perhaps most important, you may not use the Google API for commercial purposes. It is only for your personal use, and you of course may not violate any laws or copyright protection.

Google provides a developer's kit to help you get started. Data is interchanged between Google and the application program using an XML structure, so the results from Google should be relatively easy to parse even for only moderately experienced developers. If you have problems or questions, Google offers Getting Help, Reference and FAQ links, and you will find help and discussions on any of several forums should you need more help. Just search Google – from the search box!

Jakob Jelling is the founder of <http://www.sitetube.com>. Visit his website for the latest on planning, building, promoting and maintaining websites.



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