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**RSS: News You Choose**

**By S. Housley**

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Why is RSS So Magical?

The answer is simple: RSS is news you choose.

How Does it Work?

Publishers and webmasters provide content and news in an RSS feed. Users view the content of interest in an RSS reader or news aggregator. The aggregator or reader contains the collection of feeds that are of interest to the user. As the RSS feed is updated the content in the reader or aggregator updates with the new information. At any point, users can remove a feed from their aggregator or reader and no longer receive information from that source. Ultimately, the user is choosing the news and content they wish to view.

As RSS has increased in popularity more and more webmasters and publishers have adopted RSS as an alternative communication stream. Webmasters use an RSS graphic to indicate the content is available via RSS.

RSS Aggregators and News Readers

Generally, there are three types of RSS readers that users use to view feeds that they've subscribed to. Feeds can be viewed in a desktop application, web-based aggregator, or plug-in aggregator.

Desktop RSS Readers

Standalone desktop applications generally run in the background, similar to an e-mail client, automatically refreshing headlines as newfeeds are updated. The RSS readers collect the feeds and refresh items in the feeds each time they are updated. An example of a popular standalone desktop RSS reader is: FeedDemon – <http://www.feedException.com>

Web Based Aggregators

Web-based news aggregators are online services. In simple terms, you can personalize a web page. Each time that page is accessed or each time you login to the service, the web page news headlines from feeds that you have selected will refresh. Examples of popular web-based RSS aggregators are:

SurfPack – <http://www.surfpack.com> , FeedScout – <http://www.feedscout.com> or ActiveWeb Reader – <http://www.deskshare.com/awr.aspx> . My.Yahoo even has the option of including RSS feeds on My.Yahoo start pages.

### Plug-in Readers

Plug-in news aggregators expand the functionality of existing applications to allow users to view RSS feeds from within an existing program. Some plug-ins work with web browsers; others work with e-mail clients. An example of a plugin is: NewsGator Outlook – <http://www.newsgator.com/outlook.aspx>

Websites containing RSS feeds usually have a colorful graphic indicating the availability of an RSS feed. The graphic is usually marked 'RSS' or 'XML'. Simply click the graphic and enter the URL of the file into the reader. Regardless of the RSS reader or news aggregator used by web surfers, the

process of adding feeds is generally simple. Web surfers need only to enter the URL of the RSS feed that they wish to view into their news reader. Each time the reader refreshes the feed the information contained within the feed is updated and new content in the feed will appear in the RSS reader.

### Finding Feeds

In order to find topic-specific feeds, conduct a search on the RSS search engines available at RSS Specifications – <http://www.rss-specifications.com/rss-directory.htm> or try RSS Locator – <http://www.rss-locator.com> .

About the Author: Sharon Housley manages marketing for FeedForAll <http://www.feedforall.com> software for creating, editing and publishing RSS feeds and NotePage, Inc. <http://www.notepage.net> a wireless messaging software company.

## **Introducing Really Simple Syndication in ASP.NET**

**By Balaji**

### **Introducing Really Simple Syndication in ASP.NET by Balaji**

#### Introducing Really Simple Syndication in ASP.NET

Really Simple Syndication (RSS) is an XML standard for declaring content entries for small content feeds. The RSS format has gained popularity over the years due to its simplicity. The XML file formatted according to the RSS specification is either found as a physical file or is obtained via a Web site that handles the request and sends the content over the Internet to the client. The RSS format is as given below

The XML format for RSS declares that the XML must have a root element of `<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8" ?>`, which identifies the document. This is shown in the following sample snippet. The element contains one element and then many elements that hold the element.

## RSS: News You Choose

Most of the elements declared by the RSS specification are optional. However, some elements need to be declared to make the code functional.

The element should contain the following children:

- Item (at least 1)
- Title
- Link
- Description

The tag should contain the following children:

- Title
- Link
- Description

Each RSS channel can contain up to 15 items and is easily parsed using Perl or other open source software. After you complete the creation and validation of your RSS text file, register it at the various aggregators. Now, any website can grab and display your feed regularly, driving traffic your way. Update your RSS file, and all the external sites that subscribe to your feed will be automatically updated.

RSS can not only display your news on websites and headline viewers but also display data in products and services like PDAs, mobile phones, email ticklers, and voice updates. RSS also enables you to automate email newsletters easily. In addition, affiliate networks and partners of like-minded

sites can access each other's RSS feeds and automatically display the new stories from the other sites in the network, which as a whole drives more traffic. Plenty of RSS aggregators are available that automatically grab RSS files from the content providers and present the news in a many ways.

To access online version of the above article, go to <http://www.dotnet-guide.com/rss.html>

Visit <http://www.dotnet-guide.com> for a complete introduction to .NET framework. Learn about ASP.NET, VB.NET, C# and other related technologies.



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