



ABC's of RSS

Implementing RSS (**Really Simple Syndication**) can be useful by an understanding of the terms relating to RSS. Learn the ABCs of RSS:

A - AutoDiscovery

Auto Discovery is code that is inserted into the header of an HTML web page, which then indicates to readers that an RSS feed is available for the content.

B - Blogs

Blogs are web logs that are updated regularly, usually on a daily basis. Blogs generally contain information related to a specific topic. In some cases, blogs are used as daily diaries about people's personal lives, political views, or even as social commentaries. Blogs can be shaped into whatever the author wants them to be. While initially thought of as diaries or online journals, blogs have evolved into the latest fresh web content.

C - Cache

Cache is a temporary storage area for frequently-accessed or recently-accessed data. Having certain data stored in a cache area speeds up the operation of the computer. Using a cache with RSS feeds will help minimize bandwidth and display an RSS feed's content quicker.

D - Display

RSS Many webmasters post the content of an RSS feed on their website. They use either PHP, ASP, or javascript for such purposes. If done properly, the feed's content will dynamically update as the content of the feed changes.

E - Elements

Within an RSS feed, there are various feed elements. The elements of an RSS feed are defined by tags.

F - Filter

Many RSS feeds contain duplicate or similar content. Publishers can filter RSS feeds so that they only see content that they wish to see, by filtering out duplicate postings.

G - GUID

GUID stands for Globally Unique Identifier. The RSS specification strongly suggests that each RSS feed item have a unique GUID. If you are creating feeds, a GUID is important because GUIDs are often used by feed readers and aggregators to determine if a feed item is new or simply an existing item that has been updated. Each item in the RSS feed should have a unique GUID.

H - HTML

HTML, which is the acronym for HyperText Markup Language, is frequently used to design websites.

I - iTunes Namespace

The iTunes Namespace allows the user to add the information necessary to have a podcast listed on the Apple iTunes Music Store (ITMS).

J - JavaScript

Javascript can be used to display the content of an RSS feed.

K - Keywords

Keywords should be integrated into the RSS feed to help search engines determine what the RSS feed is about.

L - Links

Links are used to direct RSS readers to the original webpage containing information that directly relates to the feed.

M - Mashup

A mashup is a combination of multiple RSS feeds that have been merged together to create a new, single feed.

N - Namespace Extensions

The RSS specification allows you to create and use your own custom elements (tags) in any RSS feed by declaring your own namespace. Doing this is 100% in line with the RSS specification and the feed will validate. However, you should have a specific and well-planned reason to do so. No RSS readers or other RSS processing applications will be able to use your custom info for any purpose. Adding elements (tags) would typically be used only in an in-house situation where both the writing application and the reading application have prior knowledge of the new tags.

O - OPML

OPML, or Outline Processor Markup Language, is a file format standard that can be used to exchange subscription lists between programs. OPML is used as a standard to import or export groups of RSS feed subscriptions. OPML was initially designed by Radio UserLand as a file format for outlines. The purpose of this format is to provide a way to exchange information between outliners and Internet services. OPML has since been adopted for other uses, the most common being to exchange lists of RSS feeds between RSS aggregators. OPML is an open format, allowing other services to extend the format. While OPML was not initially designed as a vehicle to share RSS feeds, it has become the de facto standard. OPML, like RSS, is based on RSS, and because of the similarities, those familiar with RSS have embraced OPML as a way to share RSS feed collections

P - Podcasting

Podcasting is online audio content that is delivered via an RSS feed. Many people equate podcasting to radio on demand. However, podcasting gives the listener far more options than radio does, in terms of content and programming. In addition, podcast listeners can determine their own time and the place for listening, meaning they decide what programming they want to receive, and when they want to listen to it. Listeners can retain audio archives to listen to later at their leisure.

Q - Query

Webmasters can create RSS feeds based on search queries for their websites.

R - RSS

RSS is a standard format for syndicating content on the Internet. The content can be anything. Information contained in an RSS feed is often syndicated on other sites, which expands its reach. Website visitors love RSS because they choose which feeds they wish to subscribe to. If at any point they are unhappy with the content contained in the RSS feed, they simply unsubscribe and no longer receive notification of feed updates. RSS is really a win-win for both subscribers and publishers. In order to get a better understanding of how RSS works, download an RSS reader or use a web aggregator and subscribe to an RSS.

S - Syndication

Syndication is the supply of material for reuse and integration with other material.

T - Template

Many webmasters use templates to layout the contents of their RSS feed and make it match their website.

U - URL

URLs can be embedded into the description of the RSS feed items, so that when the feed is syndicated, the content originator gains back links.

V - Validate

Feed validation is important. If a feed is not properly formed, it will not always be valid for reading.

W - Website

Updates RSS feeds can be set up to notify visitors when a website changes.

X - XML

RSS is a subset of XML, or eXtensible Markup Language.

Y - Yahoo Answers

Yahoo's interactive system of questions and answers can be tracked using RSS feeds. You can create keyword or category feeds for anything in Yahoo Answers.

Z - Zero Feeds

Not having RSS feeds for your website puts you at a competitive disadvantage. RSS feeds bring traffic and help the stickiness of your website.

Unique RSS Tools

As the masses have adopted RSS as a more mainstream communication medium, Web 2.0 businesses and publishers have adopted unique and unusual tools to manipulate RSS content. Here are just some of the various RSS tools that are currently available:

RSS To PDF

Feedbooks, a free RSS aggregator, takes in RSS feeds and converts them into compiled PDFs. The PDF even include a table of contents. Feedbooks is free to use and registering will provide access to more options. A similar alternative is RSS2PDF, which is also a free online service that lets you turn an RSS or OPML newsfeed into a PDF.

FeedBooks - <http://www.feedbooks.com/news>

RSS2PDF - <http://rss2pdf.com/>

RSS To Image

RSS2Gif is a service that converts RSS feeds to images. The conversion service is a free web-based service.

RSS2Gif - <http://www.navi-gez.de/rss2gif/>

RSS To Email

RSSFwd is a free web-based service that allows visitors to subscribe to RSS content via their email address. The service polls the subscribed RSS feeds, converts them into HTML-formatted email messages and then delivers them directly to the subscriber's email inbox.

RSSFwd - <http://www.rssfwd.com/>

Email To RSS

MailBucket is a public email-to-RSS gateway. Simply forward your email to your-user-name@mailbucket.org and subscribe to the news feed at: mailbucket.org/your-user-name.xml. The generated RSS feeds are public and not permanent, so keep that in mind.

MailBucket - <http://www.mailbucket.org/index.html>

Database To RSS

The SQL2RSS.PHP script allows you to easily create RSS feeds from an SQL database. The script currently supports the conversion of MySQL databases to RSS feeds. When using the SQL2RSS script, the publisher has complete control over the content in the resulting RSS feed. Administrators and publishers control the database query, which allows them the flexibility to determine what data is inserted into the RSS feeds from the database. The SQL2RSS script allows users to easily convert information that is stored in a database into an RSS feed for syndication and distribution.

SQL2RSS - <http://www.sql2rss.com>

RSS To Database

The RSS2SQL.PHP script allows you to easily create SQL databases from RSS feeds. The script currently supports the conversion of RSS feeds into MySQL databases. When using the RSS2SQL script, the publisher has complete control over the content in the resulting database. Administrators and publishers control which RSS feed fields are used in the database, giving them the flexibility to determine what data is inserted into the database.

RSS2SQL - <http://www.rss2sql.com>

Twitter

TwitterFeed is a service that will automatically "twitter" any post that you publish on your blog.

TwitterFeed - <http://www.twitterfeed.com/>

RSS To SMS

RSS to SMS is a free service that sends messages to a mobile phone for every new item posted to an RSS feed. Keep in mind that normal text messaging fees from your cell phone provider apply, so this may not be ideal if a large volume is involved.

Yahoo- http://alerts.yahoo.com/edit_feedalert.php?.done=http://alerts.yahoo.com/myalerts.php

Convert Text To Speech

SpokenText automatically converts RSS feeds into speech. While this service is particularly helpful to visually impaired individuals, it can be used by anyone.

SpokenText - <http://www.spokentext.com>

