

## RSS FEEDS AND LIBRARY SERVICES

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### **Abstract:**

*RSS Feeds are an excellent delivery vehicle for news content. “Even if it is something as simple as putting your press releases in an RSS feed, marketers will benefit from early exposure to disturbing information via RSS feeds. “Forrester Research, RSS can be applied to some of the following Library & information services. Current Awareness Service, Dissemination of Information, Bibliographic service, Bulletin Board Services, From the libraries ‘Web site, you can keep up-to-date of new items available in our collection by subscribing to RSS feed. RSS provides an efficient way for students to keep in touch with faculty, stay informed about coursework and other academic activities, and follow developments in their fields of study, which for many will be an important skill in their professional lives. In this paper brief study of Use of RSS feeds in Academic Library. It also highlights the Merits and Demerits of RSS technology.*

### **Introduction:**

RSS stands for Really simple syndication. Also called Web feeds, RSS is a content delivery vehicle. It is the format used when you want to syndicate news and other web content. When it distributes the content it is called a feed. You could think of RSS as your own personal wire service. RSS is the format for distributing news and other web content. When you put content into other RSS and send that content to other people or websites, it’s called a feed.

Feeds are very powerful. They attract the interest of the search engines and they reach new audiences. RSS is an XML based format that allows the syndication of lists of

hyperlinks, along with other information, or metadata, that helps viewers decide whether they want to follow the link. Think about all of the information that you access on the Web on a day-to-day basis; news headlines, search results, “What’s New”, Job vacancies, and so forth. A large amount of this content can be thought of as a list; although it probably isn’t in HTML elements, the information is list-oriented.

RSS Feeds are an excellent delivery vehicle for news content. “Even if it is something as simple as putting your press releases in an RSS feed, marketers will benefit from early exposure to distributing information via RSS feeds. “Forrester Research.

However, a web feed can be used for pretty much any content on your website or blog.

- Recent changes on a page of a website
- Tech support updates
- Announcements
- Job vacancies
- News-press release
- Educational articles
- Videos
- Destination information
- Tech support updates
- New listing for a t realtor

The list is almost endless. Every business has several types of content they can put in an RSS feed.

RSS feeds can be read using software called an “RSS reader”, “feed reader”, or “aggregator: \_ which can be web-based, desktop-based, or mobile-device-based.

The user subscribes to a feed by entering into the reader the feed’s URI or by clicking a feed icon in a web browser that initiates the

subscription process. The RSS reader checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new work, downloads any updates that it finds, and provides a user interface to monitor and read the feeds. RSS allows users to avoid manually inspecting all of the websites they are interested in, an instead subscribe to websites such that all new content is pushed onto their browsers when it becomes available.

To use RSS, you need a feed reader. A feed reader is an aggregator – that is, a program or webpage that pulls content from many different sources and puts them in one place and one format for your reading or viewing pleasure. Most sites that regularly add content have at least one RSS feed these days; many have multiple feeds that you can subscribe to. Look out for the orange rss icon on your favorite or most frequented sites.

A number of RSS readers are freely available on the Web. Some can be accessed via the Web, such as:

**Blog lines, MyYahoo! Google Reader etc.:**

The RSS feeds on the Library Web site display buttons that add the feed to the Web-based readers listed above:

Others can be downloaded, such as: Feed Reader (for Windows), Net Newswire (for Mac, iPod or iPhone)

Finally, Reworks, a Web-based to bibliographic manager available to Concordia student, faculty members and staff can also be used an RSS reader.

**How do RSS feeds work:**

RSS feeds really a couldn't be simpler. They're basically simple text files that, once submitted to feed directories, will allow subscribers to see content within a very short time after it's update (sometimes as short as 30 minutes or less; it's getting faster all the time.)

This content can be aggregate to be viewed even more easily by using a feed reader. A feed reader, or feed aggregator, is just a really simple way to view all your feeds at one time via one

interface. For instance, I have a Blog lines feed. I have all sorts of good stuff in there. Can you imagine how much time it saves me to have all these topics sent to me in one place rather than me searching it out?

In addition, all these People who have their sites syndicated on my Blog lines roll are enabling their content to be seen by me and other people who wouldn't necessarily find them in the search engines or directories. RSS feeds are a wonderful resource, and the uses for RSS are only just beginning to be realized; not only for search engines and searching, but in how we optimize our sites.

**Advantages of RSS feeds:**

Using RSS feeds is a great way to keep students updated on key information from blogs and news sites. Information, and pulled into the Module block as it is created and students can click on links to new information as they appear.

Your Module course becomes a link portal to new and relevant information, and a starting point for exploration of a subject elsewhere on the web.

RSS is easier to use than providing students with a link to search engine or email list subscription. Students do not have to enter their details or choose relevant search queries.

Useful blogs or even teachers blogs can be used to populate RSS blocks. RSS feeds can be created by teachers to contain very targeted information that can cut down on the sheer mass of blogs, news etc. available on the web. This can make RSS a very efficient use of resources and cut down on the workload for students who may be suffering the web for irrelevant or out of date material.

**Disadvantages of RSS feeds:**

To take advantage of RSS feeds, users must locate online sources they trust, which can be a time-consuming task. Even if a site is deemed reliable, it may not offer RSS feeds. Moreover, because using RSS depends on making specific

choices about which content you see, users who limited their Internet usage to reading RSS feeds will miss the serendipity of pulling up a site's home page just to see if something catches their attention. The flipside of placing limits on the overflow of online information is that you cut yourself off from resources that might prove valuable.

Not all content is appropriate for RSS, such as a published article that is not going to change. Nevertheless, Web pages like these sometimes offer RSS feeds, indicating that appropriate guidelines for how the technology should be used are still still evolving. In addition to several versions of RSS, a completing protocol from Atom offers an alternative technology for the same purpose. Underlying the various protocols are fundamental disagreements among developers about how the tools should work.

**RSS feeds and Library:**

RSS can be applied to some of the following Library & information services.

- Current Awareness Service
- Selective Dissemination of Information
- Bibliographic Service
- Bulletin Board Services

From the Libraries Web site, you can keep up-to-date of new items available in our collection by subscribing to RSS feeds of our Recent Acquisitions. The What's new announcement are also available as an RSS feed. In addition, a growing number of databases allow you to save search alerts as RSS feeds.

**RSS Feeds in Academic Libraries: Some Possibilities:**

Biometrical databases have implemented RSS services which can be used as an effective means of disseminating research information within and outside the academic environment. The research process today is no longer likely to begin with a face to face consultation with a librarian, a visit to the library's special collections service points, or a search of the

online library catalog. Rather, faculty most often turn to network level services, including both general purpose search engines and services targeted specifically to academia.

**RSS feeds impact on the Library Services:**

RSS provides an efficient way for students to keep in touch with faculty, stay about course work and other academic activities, and follow developments in their fields of study, which for many will be an important skill in their professional lives. The exchange of information that RSS facilities can also take place from students to faculty or among the students in various courses within a department. Faculty use RSS to help them efficiently use the Internet to exchange disciplinary information and increase awareness of important developments. Many faculties also use online repositories of learning objects to locate educational resources to include in their courses, and initiatives including MERLOT and Open Course Ware offer RSS feeds that notify subscribers when new content has been added in particular academic areas.

RSS feeds allow you to receive updates whenever new content is added to a library database on a particular topic, or whenever a new issue of a journal is added to a library database.

RSS works by sending automatic updates to an RSS feed reader rather than an email address; this allows you to stay on top of research in your field without constant searching and without cluttering up your inbox.

**Use of RSS feed in Academic Library:**

Academic libraries can use RSS feeds in a variety of ways as listed below :

1. Original content is changed and the RSS feed is updated, users of that feed automatically receive the updated content. Without RSS you need visit every web site individually to check if there is anything

new. But with RSS update are automatically delivered to you.

2. Create an RSS feed for new additions to the online catalog.
3. Create an RSS feed tied to a library card account for hold notifications and / or overdue materials.
4. Create an RSS feed for new programs and events.
5. For New books and Journals – Faculty and students subscribing to the feed can keep current with new book and journals arrivals in the library.
6. For new electronic resources Provide a Information about new electronic databases added to its collection by RSS feeds to the students and staffs.
7. For events organized in the library to faculty and students – Academic library blogs and their feeds can play an important role in promoting various library related events to faculty and students. RSS feeds can enhance any academic library’s outreach mission to make their users aware of new resources, events and other important announcements.
8. Introduce a new research and learning opportunities in academic department blogs.
9. User awareness by RSS feeds – Course and departmental blogs with RSS feeds which link to the Academic library’s blog will not only enhance the library and the Academic Departments collaboration with each other but also provides an additional opportunity for students to learn about libraries.

#### **New implications for teaching and learning in RSS feeds:**

RSS provides an efficient way for students to keep in touch with faculty, stay informed about coursework and other academic activities, and follow developments in their fields of study, which for many will be an important skill in

their professional lives. The exchange of information that RSS facilities can also take place from students to faculty or among the students in various courses within a department. Faculty use RSS to help them efficiently use the Internet to exchange disciplinary information and increase awareness of important developments. Many faculty also use online repositories of learning objects to locate educational resources to include in their courses, and initiatives including MERLOT and open courseware offer RSS feeds that notify subscribers when new content has been added in particular academic areas.

#### **Conclusion:**

RSS is a free and easy way to promote a site and its content without the need to advertise or create complicated content sharing partnerships. Using this standard, webmasters provide headlines and fresh content in a succinct manner. Meanwhile, consumers use RSS readers and news aggregators to collect and monitor their favorite feeds in one centralized program or location. Digital Library Software like D-Space has got provision for auto generation of RSS feeds for some communication and collections. RSS aggregator applications, installed in a library’s system and coupled with the social network of the Library, will enable users to have a single, customized, personal library page that syndicated all the library content of interest to them and their research, eliminating irrelevant information. And users will, of course, control that page and that content. They allow people to see your content without having to go to the website. Now that may sound like a bad idea, but in today’s fast-paced world, anything that saves us time and frustration is valued. How many websites have you intended to go back to and then forgotten about them? Even those we bookmark don’t get visited. Feeds can also be used of RSS for syndication of links. You can

add text, audio, images, logos and video to a feed. The feed contains an index – a list of items and each one is identified by a link to the content on your site. Most RSS feeds include a title for the link and a description of the content, use an eye-catching title and interesting description of the full content.

This way you encourage your readers to click through and read the full article. You can also choose to syndicate the full article. Information professionals can also link the blog in their library's home pages. They can announce the availability of their blog and RSS feeds to their faculty and students.

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