

RSS – How it Works

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In a previous article, we described the basics of RSS. In this one, we'll try to explain, without getting too technical, how RSS works.

Most users visit a lot of websites with continually changing contents, such as news sites, product support pages, community pages, blogs, and so on. For years, it was a frustratingly time-consuming task for users to check each site they were interested in, for content changes and updates. So, over time, programs called RSS aggregators were created to automatically find and retrieve content feeds from pre-selected websites on behalf of the user and organize the results, usually by the user's criteria.

RSS makes it possible to receive information feeds on virtually any topic, using organized lists of news headlines and periodic updates from other web sources.

The RSS aggregator is like a web browser that displays RSS content. HTML presents information directly to users, while RSS lets computers communicate with one another automatically. Most importantly, RSS aggregators keep track of changes on the feeding websites. The titles or descriptions are links themselves and can be used to load the web page the user wants.

RSS starts with an original website the content of which is made available by the webmaster. The site creates an RSS document and registers its content with an RSS publisher that will allow websites to syndicate, i.e.: distribute the documents. The website also produces an RSS feed, also known as RSS channel, which is available on the particular web server together with all other resources or documents. The website will register the feed as an RSS document, with a directory which lists appropriate RSS publishers.

An RSS feed is composed of website content, usually chronologically listed from newest to oldest. Each item consists of a simple title describing the item, usually along with a more complete description and a link to a web page with the actual content being described. In some instances, the short updated description or title is all the information that a user wants to read (for example, final scores in sports, blogs posts, stock updates, or breaking news). Therefore, often it is not necessary to have a web page associated with the content items listed; sometimes all the information required are just the titles or the very short summaries themselves.

RSS content is located in a single file on a web page in a way that is similar of typical web pages. However, the information is written in XML code to be used by (and be compatible with) an RSS aggregator, and not by a web user like a regular HTML page.

The structure of RS Syndication consists of two main parts: the source end and the client end.

Once the URL of an RSS feed is known, a user can submit that address to an RSS aggregator program and have the aggregator monitor the RSS feed for changes and updates. Many RSS aggregators already come preconfigured with a ready list of RSS feed URLs for popular news or information websites. Users can simply choose the feeds they are interested in.

Many RSS aggregators can be used by all Internet users. Some can be accessed through the Internet, some are already incorporated into email applications, while others run as standalone programs on computers.

For more information, or an absolutely [free web site analysis and SEO consultation](#), we encourage you to contact us. Our [SEO Consultants](#) will be pleased to discuss with you how to achieve long-lasting high search engine rankings, enrich your website, and enhance its level of interest to users by providing valuable RSS feeds.

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