

## *How to Survive.....*

# Using RSS for study and research

### Checking web content

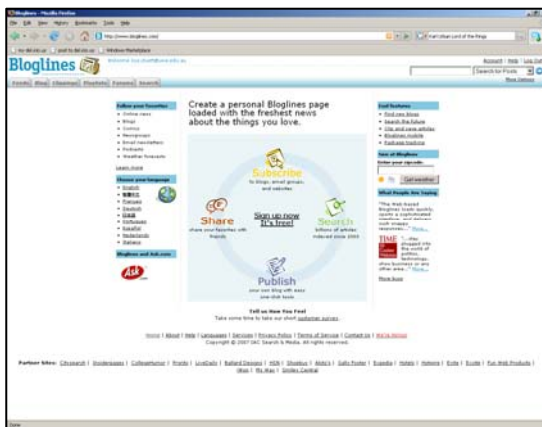
Say you're an Honours student in Agriculture. You know that there are journals you should be reading, websites you should be checking regularly and job ads to be keeping an eye on. But time for browsing the internet is limited plus there are so many other sites you want to have a look at.

The answer for streamlining your web browsing may be here – and it's called RSS!

### *What is it?*

RSS stands for 'really simple syndication'. It is a way of distributing and collecting newly created web content which has 2 main parts:

- People who create web content can 'push' it to readers via a process called 'syndication'
- Web users can subscribe to web feeds and 'pull' new content into a single web page that might look something like this:




### Aggregation (gathering web content)

'Pulling' content (using an aggregator) means that you don't have to browse the web for information from your favourite sites – the updates are sent to you! You can 'aggregate' updated content from news, sports, blogs, journals and a HUGE range of other sites.

This is very useful for students and researchers who need to keep up to date with lots of different sources of information

### Steps to setting up your aggregator

- Choose one of the many services such as *iGoogle*, *Bloglines*, *Feedreader*, *MyYahoo* etc (their websites are overleaf).
- Then go to the websites you like (or want to be kept up to date about) and look for the  symbol
- Click on the symbol and you'll see a URL that won't make too much sense to you
- Copy this URL into your aggregator (you will probably have to click 'add' and then paste it in)
- New content from 'your' websites will be now automatically be sent to your aggregator website (so you only have to check one website!)

### *The symbol*

This is the image to look for on a website. It tells you that the site is set up so that you can 'pull' new content to your page (aggregator) as it is created



## Finding content for your RSS aggregator

UWA pages that generate (syndicate) material at the moment include the UWA Events calendar and the node.live site. You can, of course, aggregate other materials that would be useful including:

- Latest editions of relevant journals (search for your most useful journals online and then look for the RSS symbol)
- News services (try ABC, BBC, CNN, The Australian Newspaper etc)
- Government alerts (keep up to date with the latest news from government departments by subscribing to their web feed)
- Job ads (try SEEK.com etc)
- Personal stuff (weather, sports, entertainment etc etc etc!!)

The point is that you can mix (aggregate) all your uni, work or personal content onto the one page (which looks a bit like a customised online newspaper that only contains information relevant to you!!)

## Managing RSS content and time to study

- **Schedule a time** – check your page first thing in the morning or last thing at night – just try not to check it every 10 minutes!
- **Don't browse as well** – the idea of an aggregator is that the content comes to you. While you can add more feeds, it is pretty inefficient to check your page and THEN go browsing the internet for more content (unless you're looking for something in particular)
- **Delete feeds you don't read** – there may be feeds that come into your page that you skip over regularly or that aren't quite what you wanted. Don't be afraid to delete them as they clutter up your aggregator and make the page less relevant to you
- **Use the features** – most aggregators have features that will help you manage the information that comes into your page. Check out 'tick to keep new' and the clipping feature for example as these will help you keep track of what you've read, what you want to follow-up and anything you might like to share with other people

## Links to popular aggregators

iGoogle (Australian version) –

<http://www.google.com.au/ig>

Bloglines - <http://www.bloglines.com/>

Feedreader - <http://www.feedreader.com/>

MyYahoo – [www.my.yahoo.com](http://www.my.yahoo.com)

Pageflakes - <http://www.pageflakes.com/>

## Other useful resources:

- Other Survival Guides – *"Time and Task Management"*, *"Effective Reading"*
- [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) – Look up "RSS" or go straight to: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS>
- Educause "7 things you should know about" series – check out the issue on RSS at: <http://connect.educause.edu/library/abstract/7ThingsYouShouldKnow/39401> (only 2 pages!)

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