

Being digital

Keeping up-to-date using RSS

1: Introduction

An RSS feed supplies updates from a website you have subscribed to. So, instead of following your bookmarks to find out if there's anything new, the information comes to you.

This makes keeping up-to-date with the latest news, articles or blogs much quicker and easier. You can even get audio and video files via RSS.

RSS feeds can be set up from many of the sites that are updated regularly, such as news or events sites. You can add new feeds or delete old ones at any time.

Learning outcome

By the end of this activity, you will know how to keep up-to-date with information using RSS.

2: Getting started

To receive updates from websites via RSS you'll need to use an RSS reader on your computer. These are usually free. There may be one built into your browser, or you can use a web-based reader, like Google Reader.

Another option is to download a reader, which will store your feeds on your computer so you can look at them offline.

Once you have a reader set up, you can subscribe to updates from web pages simply by clicking the RSS button.

Exercise

Have a look at, and compare, two or three RSS readers. Choose one that most appeals to you and sign up to it. There are some examples below, but you might want to search for others.

[Google reader](#)

[Netvibes](#)

[FeedDemon \(For Windows\)](#)

[NewsFire \(for MAC\)](#)

3: Trying it out

Case study

Michael has a keen interest in history and wants to make sure that he keeps up-to-date with news, comments and discussions on the subject.

He decides to use Google Reader and has a look at some of the general feeds suggested there, just to get a feel for how it works.

Then he checks some of the sites he already visits to see if they offer an RSS service.

History Today makes it particularly easy to subscribe. The RSS button is at the top of the page and there are clear instructions on how to get started.

He also looks at the **BBC History** website, and gets some useful information from their news feeds page.

He does a search for 'history newsfeed' and is thrilled to find **British History Online**, which he hadn't used before.

Exercise

RSS readers will suggest some 'pre-selected' content.

Think of a topic that interests you, and then go to the RSS reader that you chose in the previous activity. Look through some of the pre-selected content that has been suggested. If you find any feeds that are of interest, sign up to them.

4: Summary

RSS feeds are a great way of keeping in touch with your favourite websites.

An RSS reader will collect all your feeds in one place and regularly check for, and download, any updates. You can keep track of all your feeds and read any updates using your RSS reader.

Next steps

You will find some useful information on the following websites.

[BBC Webwise: What are RSS feeds?](#)

[Free RSS Reader-Aggregator](#)

References

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