RSS and current awareness: how two projects (ticTOCs and Gold Dust) are hoping to improve the academic information landscape

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Roddy MacLeod
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, UK
r.a.macleod@hw.ac.uk
Outline

• RSS and its potential for current awareness purposes in the academic sector
• ticTOCs project
• Gold Dust project
RSS is a family of Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content such as blog entries, news headlines, and podcasts. An RSS document (which is called a "feed" or "web feed" or "channel") contains either a summary of content from an associated web site or the full text. RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with web sites in an automated manner that can be piped into special programs or filtered displays. RSS content can be read using software called an "RSS reader", "feed reader" or an "aggregator".
RSS – more information

• RSS Specifications
  – http://www.rss-specifications.com/

• RSS Compendium
  – http://allrss.com/
Growth of RSS
Selection of feed categories of interest to academics

- Journal Tables of Contents (TOCs), e.g.
  - http://www.nature.com/nature/current_issue/rss/
- Calls for papers, e.g.
  - http://www.elsevierscitech.com/rss/compsci_cfp.xml
- Funding opportunity news, e.g.
- New patents, e.g.
- New theses & dissertations, e.g.
  - http://rss.proquest.com/rss/diss/Dissertations_Engineering_Chemical.xml
- Professional society news, e.g.
  - http://royalsociety.org/rss/newsFeed.xml
- Forthcoming conference & events, e.g.
  - http://eventseer.net/feeds/main/
- New Teaching & Learning resources, e.g.

**Journal Tables of Contents Service**
More feed categories

• New book announcements, e.g. http://www.wildy.com/browse-by-subject
• New items in Repositories, e.g. http://arxiv.org/rss/cs
Example from Eventseer.com

- **3rd international conference on digital information management (ICDIM 2008)**
- Final Call for Workshop Proposals

ICDIM 2008 (IEEE Sponsored) will host a number of workshops addressing different areas related to digital information management that complement the main ICDIM 2008 conference.

We invite workshop organizers to send proposals as instructed below.

Workshops are intended to serve as an intensive collaborative forum for exchanging late breaking ideas and theories in an evolutionary stage. We encourage prospective workshop organizers to submit proposals for highly-interactive workshops focusing on either in-depth analysis or broad-ranging approaches to areas related to digital information management.
Response from downstream - commercial
Response from downstream – LIS community

- **TOCRoSS** - to place journal tables of content (TOC) data into a library catalogue without human intervention

- **FeedNavigator** Health articles and RSS feeds - downloads medical feeds published by web sites and aggregates their content into a single feed, latest news first.

- University of Saskatchewan Library - Electronic Journals with RSS Feeds
Guides to RSS

RSS - A Tutorial

Introduction to RSS Feeds

This is a short, basic tutorial on creating a free account with a Web-based RSS feed reader, and setting up a sample RSS feed. Links to more information on RSS, the concepts behind it, and how to subscribe to feeds are included at the end.

Note: You may use the control bar at the bottom of this presentation screen to fast-forward or rewind the tutorial.

UCD Library

RSS Tutorial

(click the icon to start)
Guides to RSS

RSS Basics and Beyond
Tips and Tricks for Getting the Most out of Syndicated Content

Ken Varnum
Web Systems Manager
University of Michigan Libraries
varnum@umich.edu

13 June 2007
Guides to RSS

What Is RSS And How Do I Use It?

Does the library have any RSS feeds?
Yes; use the links below in your RSS reader:

- feed for Science News from the Library

What is RSS? What does it stand for? Why should I care?
At this point, it really doesn't matter what RSS stands for. It can mean "Real Simple Syndication" or "Rich Site Summary" or "RDF Site Summary". What matters is that using RSS allows you to view information from many sources in one place, thus saving you time.

What are RSS feeds? How do I use them?
RSS is a means of converting the content on a webpage into "feeds." RSS readers (also called aggregators) are used to collect, organize, and view RSS feeds. Many readers are available, for all platforms and with differing levels of features and customization. A list of available RSS readers is available from the RSS Compendium.

For many people, Bloglines is a great choice. Not only is it easy to use, but it is free and works with any web browser. Since it is a web-based product, you can access your feeds from any computer connected to the Internet. Detailed help on using Bloglines can be found from this tutorial and from the Bloglines Help Page.

If you already have a Google Mail account, you might want to use Google Reader. Curious about the differences?

- Google Reader vs. Bloglines (from Usabilityworks.org)
Guides to RSS

Virtual reference service
Answers to clinical questions out of library hours
Available now via Resources - Library section

Wednesday, 23rd April, 2008

Library

What is RSS?

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication, or Rich Site Summary, or RDF Site Summary. It’s an easy way for you to keep up with news and information that’s important to you, and helps you avoid the conventional methods of browsing or searching for information on websites. Now the content you want can be delivered directly to you without cluttering your inbox with e-mail messages. This content is called a “feed.”

RSS is written in the Internet coding language known as XML (eXtensible Markup Language), which is why you see RSS buttons commonly labeled with this icon: . RSS links are also available when you see the RSS icon:

What is an RSS reader?

An RSS reader is a small software program that collects and displays RSS feeds. It allows you to scan headlines from a number of news sources in a central location.

Where can I get an RSS reader?

Journal Tables of Contents Service

Gold Dust Project

JISC
RSS feeds at the University of St Andrews

What is RSS?

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a format for delivering regularly changing web content. RSS is used on the University of St Andrews website to share the latest news and events that are frequently updated on the site.

Why use RSS?

RSS allows you to easily stay informed by retrieving the latest content from the sites you are interested in without needing to visit each site individually. Now you can have all the latest news delivered directly to your computer in a way that is as quick and easy to use as downloading your e-mail.

How you can use RSS

You will need special software called a Feed Reader or News Aggregator which can check RSS-enabled webpages, such as this one, and display any updated articles that it finds. A variety of RSS Readers are available for different platforms and online.

What is RSS?
Response from downstream – LIS community

• Google search:
  – Library + “what is rss” = 253,000 hits!!
• What a lot of duplicated effort!!!
When we first use it, we are keen to find interesting new blogs and sources to add to our subscriptions. Then, after a while, the amount of attention required by our subscribed feeds begins to exceed the amount of time we have to read them. So we stop looking for new feeds. We end up in a 'comfort zone', and new, potentially interesting voices don't get a chance to be heard.
Problems with RSS

- Sometimes still a bit technical
- Too many possibly relevant RSS feeds, and not always easy to find them
- These produce a torrent of items within which only a very small number may be of interest to academics
- It can take much time to manage the process
Save the time of the user

- Better RSS finding tools
- Better RSS filtering tools
- Better RSS personalisation tools
- Services aimed at niche areas of interest to academics
- Save their precious time
- ticTOCs Journal Tables of Contents Service
  http://www.tictocs.ac.uk
- Gold Dust http://www.hull.ac.uk/golddust/
ticTOCs

• Project to develop a freely available current awareness service which will make it easy for academics and researchers to find, display, store, combine and reuse scholarly journal tables of contents (TOCs) RSS feeds from multiple publishers in a personalisable website, and also facilitate the export of TOC RSS feeds to feedreaders of choice.

• http://www.tictocs.ac.uk
ticTOCs partners

Universities, etc

For profit publishers, etc

Not-for-profit

Journal Tables of Contents Service

Gold Dust Project
Personalisable Web environment

Directory of Publishers’ TOC RSS Feeds
Select Store Aggregate Export

Display

Export TOCS To other readers
Export items in TOCS to bibliographic management services
Re-use metadata
Links to Full text

Content
TOCs by RSS

• March 2005 - 13 Publishers with 1,139 titles

• October 2006 - 38 Publishers with more than 7,000 titles

• April 2008 – many more publishers, 000s more titles!
TOCs by RSS

American Chemical Society
American Institute of Physics
American Physical Society
Annual Reviews
ANSI Journals
BioMed Central
Blackwell Synergy
BMJ Journals
CALIBER - University of California Press
Cambridge Journals Online
Cell Press
International Union of Crystallography
EDP Sciences
Emerald
Haworth Press
HighWire Press
Hindawi Publishing Corporation
IEEE Xplore
Inerscience
Ingenta Connect
Institute of Physics
Karger Publishers
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins
Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.
MIT Press
Nature Publishing Group
New England Journal of Medicine
New Scientist
New Statesman
Oxford University Press
Peeters Publishers
PLoS - Public Library of Science journals
Project MUSE
Royal Society of Chemistry
SAGE Publications
Science
ScienceDirect
SIAM
Springer
Taylor & Francis informaworld
Thieme –
Wiley InterScience
Zetoc

Gold Dust Project

Journal Tables of Contents Service
Exploitation of current content

• Publisher revenues $5 billion p/a STM journals.
• 20,000 – 25,000 Peer Reviewed journals.
• 200,000 researchers UK, 5.5 million globally.
• Latest articles are ‘cream on this cake’
• Efficient exploitation of latest issues is vital for publishers, researchers and authors.
ticTOCs contains 6,680 TOCs

Welcome to ticTOCs

The ticTOCs Project is piloting a free service where academics and researchers can keep up-to-date with journal Tables of Contents (TOCs). This is the beta version. Further features and enhancements will appear in the near future.

Please start by searching for TOCs, or by browsing TOCs by publisher. Then, if you click on a journal title, the latest Table of Contents will be displayed.

You can use ticTOCs to select journal TOCs and save them on your MyTOCs folder (with a "tick"). From there you can read future TOCs at your convenience, or export them as an OPML file into your favourite feed reader.

At the moment, ticTOCs has 6,680 journal Tables of Contents, with 171,287 articles, collected from 37 publishers. More journals will be added in the future.

ticTOCs Prototype 1.0 Beta version was released on Wednesday March 12th 2008.
Are you a geek?

- You definitely won’t have to be an RSS geek to use ticTOCs.
- If you are one, however, there’s stuff for you too
Metadata inconsistencies

- <title>Nature</title>
- <title>BMJ Current Issue</title>
- <title>Journal of Geophysics and Engineering latest papers</title>
- <title>SpringerLink – Journal</title>
- <title>Blackwell Synergy International Journal of Cosmetic Science: Table of Contents</title>
- <title>NATURE-LONDON-</title> [Zetoc feed]
Metadata inconsistencies

• [multiple authors - IOP]
  – <dc:creator>Luciano Telesca</dc:creator>
  – <dc:creator>Antonio Lanorte</dc:creator>
  – <dc:creator>Rosa Lasaponara</dc:creator>

• [multiple authors - Biomed Central]
  – <dc:creator>Alexandra Devine, Michelle Kermode, and Helen Herman</dc:creator>

• [multiple authors – Elsevier]
  – <description>Dostal, M. , Roberts, J.B. , Holmes, R.</description>
Best practice recommendations

• CrossRef and ticTOCs will produce best practice recommendations covering what information to include in journal TOC RSS feeds, and the best way to structure that information.
ticTOCS Blog

• See News from ticTOCs blog http://tictocsnews.wordpress.com/
Gold Dust

• Develop innovatory solutions to the problem of information overload. It will deliver highly relevant, personalised current awareness content of a variety of kinds to academics, without the need for any input by those academics, in a flexible way from within selected JISC and non-JISC presentation services.
Gold Dust Partners (12)

Lead institution
Gold Dust
Project Associates (6)
Gold Dust

Fig 1. Principles of Gold Dust. Aggregation of new content, effortless discovery of relevant materials - delivery via service of user’s choice.
Gold Dust

• http://www.macs.hw.ac.uk/~mthljr/golddust
Gold Dust

Real-time News Feeds via RSS

Personal Interest Profile (PIP)

Digest

Users

Flexible Delivery and Presentation

Journal Tables of Contents Service

Gold Dust Project
Gold Dust

Journal Tables of Contents Service

Gold Dust Project

Hull University Portal
ICE
Intute SET
Feed Forward
Aerade
CIG
ticTOCS and Gold Dust - benefits

• ticTOCs
  – Make it easy for researchers to find and exploit journal Tables of Contents, without having to understand the technicalities of RSS, or spend lots of time managing the process
ticTOCS and Gold Dust - benefits

• Gold Dust
  – Develop **practical solutions** to identify **highly relevant** (personalised) items of interest from amongst a mass of potentially relevant **current awareness** information which is being generated via **RSS** by numerous content providers, and then test its **delivery**, as required, to **academics**, without requiring their direct input in the whole process.
More information

- **Free Pint**, No 234
- **Multimedia Information & Technology**, Vol 34 no 1, Feb 2008.
- **News from ticTOCs blog**
• Thank you
• Questions?

• Roddy MacLeod
• r.a.macleod@hw.ac.uk