



# RSS for the Health Librarian: Professional, Practical, and Personal Uses and Functions

Amanda Tiller (Public Services Librarian, HSL), with special thanks to Courtney Lundrigan



# Outline

- What is RSS?
- How do you receive RSS feeds?
- What is an RSS aggregator?
  - What are the types of aggregators?
- Practical Exercise 1: Setting up web-based aggregator account (Google Reader)
  - Website example: CBC News (Health)
  - Database example: PubMed
  - Journal example: Lancet

# Outline (Cont'd)

- Practical Exercise 2: Subscribing to feeds in Internet Explorer browser-based aggregator
  - Website example: MUN Faculty of Medicine
  - Database example: CINAHL
  - Journal example: Blood
- RSS in the Library
- Promoting RSS in your Library



# Outline (Cont'd)

- Practical Exercise 3: What subscriptions would YOU like?! Spend some time subscribing to and organizing subscriptions of your choice!
- Question Period and Discussion
- References

# What is RSS?

- “Really Simple Syndication” / “Real Simple Syndication”
- “Rich Site Summary”
- “RDF Site Summary”
- Retrieves updated information from the web through FREE subscriptions.
- No need to check your favourite websites, journals, or databases again! With RSS, the information you want and need will automatically come to you!

# How do you receive RSS feeds?

- Feeds or updates are sent directly to your desktop, saved in your web browser, or sent to your own personal web-based RSS aggregator.
- Once a **newsreader or aggregator** is installed or used on your computer, it automatically checks web servers for you and downloads RSS newsfeed files on a regular basis (ex. Once a day or once an hour) from websites that have RSS files published to their servers.
- The aggregator “waits” for new content, downloads it for you when it becomes available, sends you an alert to the new content, and then waits for more information...all you do is sit and wait for the information you want to just roll in!

# What is an Aggregator?

- Also called “news readers,” “feed-readers,” or just “readers”
- Place where feeds from various locations on the web are sent and organized in one central place for the user to retrieve, organize, and read at his or her convenience.
- Aggregators “decode RSS and translate it into individual blog entries, news stories, or otherwise logical chunks of information”



# 3 Types of RSS Aggregators

- **Desktop Aggregators** which a user can download and install on his or her own computer.
- **Web-based Aggregators** which are located on your web-server. Just create an account, and you're good to go!
- **Browser-based or Embedded Aggregators** which are already embedded in your browser (ex. Internet Explorer) waiting to be used!



# Desktop Aggregators

- Examples:
  - FeedReader
  - Liferea
  - BlogBridge

# Desktop Aggregators

## Pros

- Safe and Private because they exist on your own computer
- If company that developed the aggregator goes out of business, your feeds will still be kept intact and will continue to operate

## Cons

- Not portable! You can only access desktop aggregators from the computer on which the aggregator was installed
- If your computer crashes, all your feeds and collected information may be permanently lost

# Web-Based Aggregators

- Examples:
  - Google Reader
  - Bloglines
  - My Yahoo
  - NewsGator
  - Netvives
  - Rojo.com
  - Findory.com

# Web-based Aggregators

## Pros

- No need to download the aggregator
  - Saves time and space
- Portable: can be accessed from any computer
- Ability to customize interface of most web-based aggregators, at least to a degree
- User-friendly: easy to create an account, and easy to subscribe/unsubscribe to feeds

## Cons

- Only available online!
  - Cannot access feeds if internet is down, if there is no wireless service, etc.



# Browser-Based Aggregators

- **Mac**
  - **Opera** and **Safari** both aggregate RSS feeds/ include Browser-Based aggregators
- **PC**
  - **Internet Explorer** includes a really user-friendly and straight-forward RSS Browser-Based aggregator
- \***Mozilla Firefox** includes an RSS reader called “Live Bookmarks”; however, this reader is not as user-friendly, I find, as the one offered by IE

# Browser-Based Aggregators

## Pros

- No need to download because reader is already embedded in your browser
- User-friendly in most cases

## Cons

- Feeds can only be accessed from the computer from which you subscribed to the feeds
- Preferred aggregators may not be the ones available on your preferred browser!
  - Ex. I like IE's RSS reader, but I'd prefer to use Mozilla Firefox. I also use a Mac, and IE for Mac isn't the same!

# Example: My RSS Feeds...

- I have chosen the **web-based** RSS Aggregator [Google Reader](#)
- I will show you my account because I can access it from this computer. I also subscribe to a desk-top aggregator, **BlogBridge**, but it can only be accessed from my computer. In that case, I will show you a screen shot.

# Example 2: BlogBridge

- Just to show an example from a desk-top aggregator, I've added a screen capture from my BlogBridge account....



Guides	
Best Food Blogs	12
Best Wine Blogs	8
Entrepreneurshi...	11
Innovation	13
Java	9
Journalism	4

Feeds	
in: Entrepreneurship Reading List	
How to Start a Software Company...	15
Inside View from Ireland	9
Damien Mulley	10
ITNorthWest Voice	25
John Breslin blogs	10
Ken McGuire	20
Michele Neylon :: Pensieri	15
Piaras Kelly PR - Public Relations i...	10
Pinstripe	15
PodLeaders - Thought Leaders po...	10
Pure Play	25
Brian O'Neill	
David O'Neill (Dave's Rants)	
Paul Power (Peerside)	
Tom Raftery's I.T. views	

Articles in: Inside View from Ireland

All Articles [Menu Icon] [List Icon] [Grid Icon]

Today

**Sixty Minutes with X10 (Bernie Goldbach)** Apr 14, 2010 12:51 PM

Categories: Sightings



FIRST IMPRESSIONS FADE AWAY easily so I wanted to scratch out a few comments about the [SonyEricsson X10](#) after using the phone for a little more than an hour. I inserted my O2 SIM and followed the instructions on the screen, typing a few user names and passwords into the phone's Android operating system through a touchscreen. Within 10 minutes, the phone knew me, the fat-fingered far-sighted bloke. The X10 was displaying updates from Facebook and Twitter on its home screen (see left) and by tapping the rectangles associated with the updates, I could get more information or leave comments. I had fully functioning Picasa and Gmail services within 15 minutes of powering up the phone. I loaded Qik, shot a [few videos](#) and then spent the rest of the hour loading up free applications. I'm using AudioBoo, Google Goggles, TripIt, Evernote, Foursquare, Google Reader for mobile and Google Latitude. I spent more time tapping around the applications than using the home-grown SonyEricsson home screen applications but I'm very impressed with the video playback quality and the 8MP image quality. I accidentally bought two pop tracks from the O2 store before I realised the things were billed to my monthly contract. I've decades of high bitrate MP3s that I plan to load onto the phone, either by drag and drop or through the SonyEricsson Media management software. But that's for another hour. One passing comment from [Barry](#), the astute iPhone owner: "Nice phone." I'll have an educated opinion after a week's use.

[x\\_ref125mw technology](#)

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**My First X10 Qik (Bernie Goldbach)** Apr 14, 2010 3:13 AM

Categories: Sightings

YOU CAN TELL I'M a novice with the [SonyEricsson X10](#) because my finger features in the first Qik clip I made. I installed the Android application for Qik onto the phone then put the application onto the phone's home page because I like to have streaming video quickly available. When compared to the Symbian application, the Qik Android application appears to be non-streaming. It looks like the entire clip has to upload before it appears on the Qik timeline. A long Qik clip caught in an upload dead zone will congest all other Qik clips. Older clips have to upload before newer ones appear online. I can't control the data connection either--I'm stuck with my mobile operator. Nonetheless, it was a snappy operation. I'm playing around with a non-SIM operation during the next few days and also using the X10's eight megapixel camera to see if I can get details down in the dirt. More of [my X10 Qik clips](#). I am [Topgold on Qik](#).

[x\\_ref125mw technology](#)



# Most Common RSS Symbol!



# Setting up your account in *Google Reader* (Web-Based)

- \*If you already have a Google Docs account, you can use the same login information to access Google Reader!
- If you do not have a Google Docs account, go to <http://www.google.ca/>
- In the dropdown menu, select “Reader”
- Click “Create an Account”
- Enter your information
- Remember your user name and password!



# 2 Ways to Subscribe to Feeds in Google Reader

1. Subscribe from website, blog, Journal, database etc, by clicking on RSS symbol, sign into Google Reader when prompted, and add the feed...

2. Click: A rectangular button with a light gray gradient background. On the left is a blue square icon containing a white plus sign. To the right of the icon, the text "Add a subscription" is written in a dark gray, sans-serif font.

in Google Reader, and enter (or copy and paste) URL of the feed you want to add...

# Subscribing to Websites: ex. CBC News (Health)

Go to <http://www.cbc.ca/news/>

- Click “Health” tab
- Click “News RSS”
- Click link next to “Health”
- Sign into Google Reader
- Feed added!

# Subscribe by copying and pasting URL

- You can also subscribe by copying and pasting the URL of the site to which you want to subscribe, by copying and pasting the URL into Google Reader:
- Ex. Go to the Krafty Librarian Blog (<http://kraftylibrarian.com/>)
- Notice the RSS symbol which you can click to subscribe.
- You can also copy the URL, however, and paste it into Google Reader under “Add a Subscription.”

# Search for Feeds in Google Reader

- Google Reader also gives you the option to search for feeds you may not be aware of.
- Under “Add a Subscription,” do a keyword search for something you are interested in...



# Subscribing to Feeds in [Health] Databases: PubMed

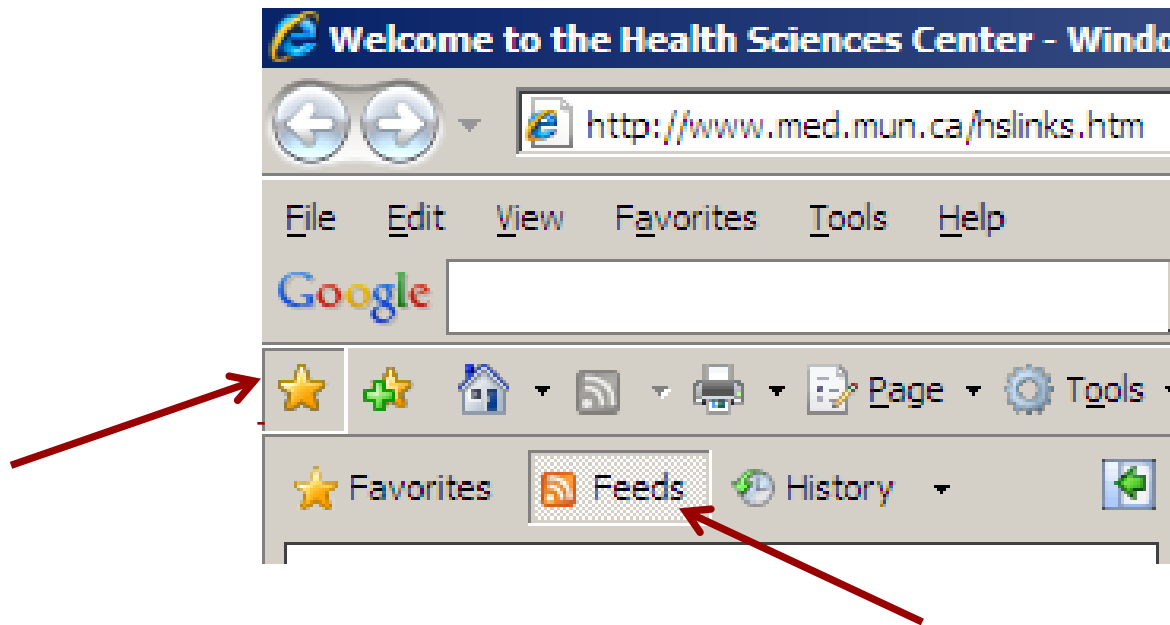
- Use RSS in databases to retrieve feeds on your searches: as new results become available for a search, they will be fed to you.
- Go to PubMed
- What information would you like to be fed to you through RSS?
- Do a search...
- Subscribe to the feed!
- Tip! Always look for one of the RSS symbols! From there, follow the steps.

# Subscribing to RSS feeds in specific Journals: ex. *Lancet*

- To subscribe to Journal updates, go to the webpage for that journal: ex.  
<http://www.thelancet.com/home>
- Under “Journals,” select the Lancet Journal to which you’d like to subscribe...
- See the “RSS Feeds” link under “Tools”
- Follow the instructions as usual, select either “Google” or “Subscribe,” and you will see the option to add to **Google Reader**

# Subscribing to RSS Feeds in IE Browser-Based Aggregator

- Open Internet Explorer
- RSS reader under “favorites” star:



# Subscribing From a Webpage

- Look for the RSS symbol
- What colour is it?
  - If it is orange, there is a feed on the page you can subscribe to...if the symbol is grey, there is no feed.
- Ex. CBC News (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/>)





# Cont'd...


- When you click the RSS symbol, you should see this box which includes the following options:

## CBC | Top Stories News

**You are viewing a feed that contains frequently updated content.** When you subscribe to a feed, it is added to the Common from the feed is automatically downloaded to your computer and can be viewed in Internet Explorer and other programs. [Learn](#)

 [Add this feed to iGoogle](#)

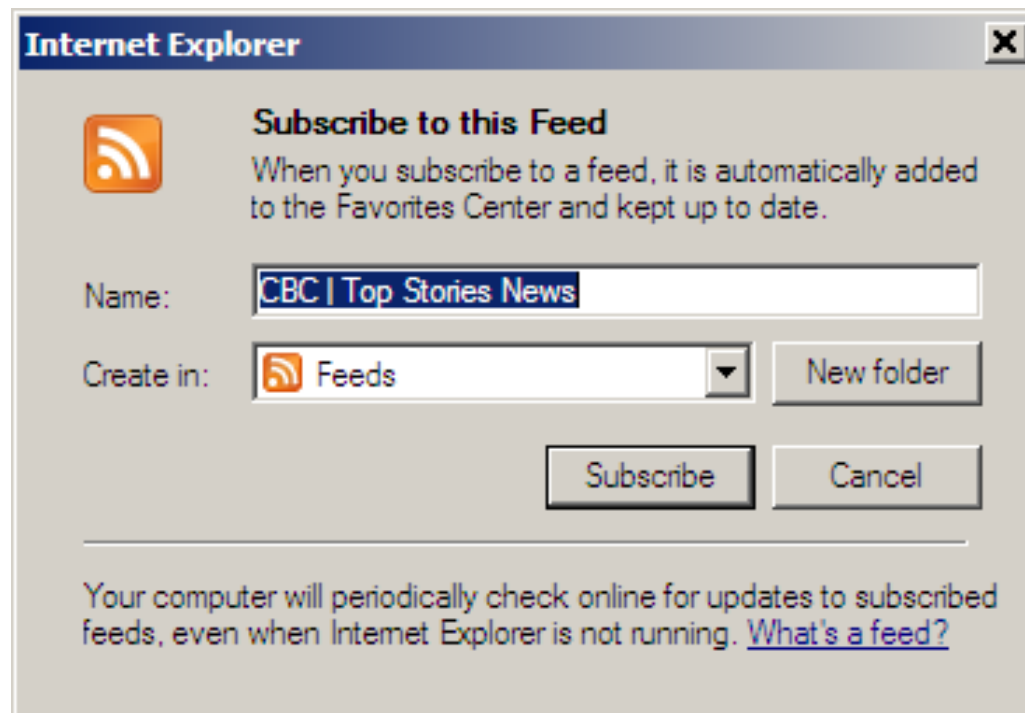
 [Subscribe to this feed in Google Reader](#)

 [Subscribe to this feed](#)



# Cont'd...

- Click “Subscribe to this feed,” and you should see this:



# Cont'd...

- Click “Subscribe”...



# Cont'd...

- There it is! In your RSS feeds!
- You can also manage your feeds by naming folders to contain “like” feeds, for example...



# Subscribing to websites: ex. MUN Faculty of Medicine

- You can also add a feed from within a webpage if you happen to see an RSS symbol. Clicking this symbol will usually lead you to the same subscription options.
- Practice: Try to add a feed to your IE browser RSS aggregator:
  - Ex: MUN Faculty of Medicine:  
<http://www.med.mun.ca/medicine/home.aspx>

# Subscribing to [Health] Databases: ex. CINAHL

- Like in PubMed, Use RSS here to retrieve feeds on new results for your searches
- Go to CINAHL and perform a search for a research topic, something you are interested in, or something a patron of yours has recently enquired about
- Do you see an RSS symbol?
- Go ahead and try to subscribe! Try subscribing to the feed in both Google Reader and your IE reader if you wish!

# Subscribing to Journals: *ex. Blood*

- As in the case of “The Lancet,” find the webpage for “Blood”
- <http://bloodjournal.hematologylibrary.org/>
- What stands out?

# A Place for RSS in the Library

- RSS can be used in any library as a means of getting updated information on library resources, services, and events to the user community
- RSS can be used to update users of academic or health libraries, for example, on new books or other acquisitions in their field of study. In this case, a library can create subject-specific lists of new acquisitions and users can subscribe to receive a feed each time something new gets added to the list that meets their needs.



# Cont'd...

- Librarians and library workers can use RSS to keep on top of personal study interests, library trends and innovative services offered by other similar libraries
- Some libraries have set up RSS feeds for catalogue searches so that subscribers will be notified if any new titles become available for their search.
- RSS can be used to notify users of upcoming classes and workshops offered by the library, as well as any changes in schedule.

# Cont'd...

- For teaching purposes, Librarians can set up RSS feeds on class websites, so that busy students can receive updates on when new content becomes available to avoid checking every day.
- Librarians with personal blogs dealing with issues that could benefit their clientele, could make the content of this blog accessible through RSS
- Some libraries also have feeds linked to users' personal library accounts. These feeds notify patrons when books are due, when holds are ready for pick-up etc.

# Cont'd...

- Provide RSS feeds for other library website content: ex. study guides, research help guides, database searching tutorials, ever-changing citation guides etc...
- Academic libraries can provide links to feeds for University-wide news that may be of interest to their patrons or other relevant web content

# The Librarian as Middle-Man: Promoting RSS

- Although RSS is widely-used, there are still many people who have never taken advantage of this technology, and this is where librarians can come in:
  - Teach classes on RSS geared specifically towards demonstrating how RSS can be useful for their participants' specific needs
  - Notify patrons of all the useful feeds that are out there, including feeds from popular research databases and feeds for specific journals. Patrons may not know how these feeds work or even that they exist!



# Cont'd...

- Create handouts, flyers, or bookmarks promoting RSS classes, or give a brief description of RSS and a brief “For more information, please ask at Information Desk.”
- Discuss RSS as a part of liaison activities and duties:
  - Ex. During liaison meetings:
    - Offer to teach seminars on RSS to faculty
  - Send emails to liaison departments which include research tips and lists of applicable RSS feeds

# Cont'd...

- Promote RSS to patrons at the information desk following or during reference interviews
- Announce new RSS feeds that may be of interest to library patrons, in library newsletters, on library websites, and through signage posted in study areas and reading rooms.
- Provides lists of journals offering RSS in subject guides, on library website, or through liaison interactions

# Practice!

- Take some time to subscribe to some feeds that interest you personally or professionally!
- Take a look at some of the websites, blogs, journals, or databases that you check out on a regular basis, and see if RSS is available; add these to your growing list of RSS feeds!
- Also, practice organizing your feeds once they are there, and have a look at what you've collected.
- I will circulate the room to offer any assistance!

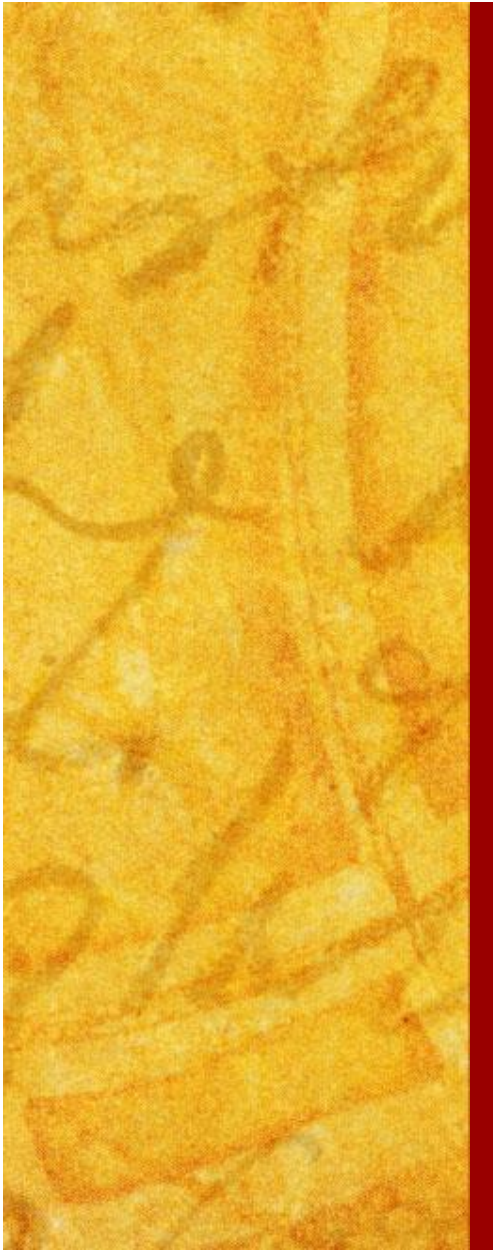
# Suggestions...

- Health Canada website
- Public Health Agency of Canada website
- Canadian Health Network
- Health Association websites (ex. Alzheimer Society of Canada)
- Eastern Health
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Health News from *USA Today*
- Health news from Canadian magazines
- PsychInfo
- MD Consult
- STAT!Ref
- Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Journals (ex. Blood)
- MUN faculty of medicine website
- Canadian Institute for Health Information
- Health Caffe (Health Discussion Blog)
- The Health Care Blog



# Summary

- What is RSS?
- What does it stand for?
- What does it do?
- How do you get feeds?
- How is information organized/condensed in RSS?
- What are your aggregator options, and what are some of the pros and cons of each option?
- Set up individual accounts and subscribed to some useful feeds of personal and professional interest
- Feed options :ex. journals, databases, blogs, websites
- How to use RSS in the library
- How to promote RSS to users



**Amanda Tiller**

[atiller@mun.ca](mailto:atiller@mun.ca) OR 777-6238

# Question and Discussion Period!



# References

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Thank You!