

What is RSS?

RSS or “Really Simple Syndication” is a means of having new content sent to you on a regular basis. It’s like newspaper being delivered to your door every morning. This way, you don’t need to keep visiting a site to see whether new content has been added.

Why Would I Want This for My Course?

RSS feeds exist for a variety of topics and publications. If your class, for instance, was following the stock market, you could include a feed to MarketPulse, which is listed on the MarketWatch web site published by Dow Jones. This feed would show links to up-to-the-minute market updates.

How Do RSS Feeds Work?

Most web sites today have RSS feeds that allow articles to be aggregated (collected) and read within an RSS reader.

Where Do I Find an RSS Reader?

Current browsers and some email programs (e.g. Microsoft Outlook 2007) now act as RSS readers.

Blackboard works as a RSS Reader. When RSS feed links are added to a Blackboard course by means of the process below, links to articles dynamically appear as site content is updated.

How Many RSS Feeds Are Available?

RSS feeds exist for a limitless number of topics. CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Association) and the BBC (British Broadcasting Association) are examples of news sites that provide RSS. There are also sites, such as **Feedster** (<http://www.feedster.com/>) and **Syndic8.com** (<http://www.syndic8.com/>) that are devoted to helping you find RSS feeds.

Getting Started: Bringing an RSS Feed Into Blackboard

1. Find an RSS Feed.

Quite often, a Google search of “*your topic and RSS*” will yield effective results. A web site that has an RSS feed will typically display icons such as:




2. **Generate the RSS Code.**

RSS feeds require a special reader in order to read them – much like how email can only be received and read through an email program. Blackboard can act like a RSS reader by adding some simple javascript.

Luckily, no programming is required! The following web site will generate the necessary code for you: <http://resources.online.nwtc.edu/rss/build.php>

- a. **Right-click** the RSS feed link.
- b. **Select** "*Copy Link Location*".
- c. **Paste** link into the URL text box. The only setting changes you should make are:
 - i. "*Use HTML in item display?*", select "Yes"
 - ii. "*Target links in the new window?*", replace "n" with "y".
- d. **Click on** "*Generate JavaScript*" button.
- e. **Select** all of the text, **right-click**, and **select** "copy".

3. **Cut and Paste the Generated RSS Code.**

- a. **Go** to a control panel and select a content area (e.g. Course Documents).
- b. **Click** on Add Item icon.
- c. **Name** the item.
- d. **Click** on HTML view on the text editor: 
- e. **Paste** code into large textbox, then **click** on Submit.

Other Resources

Using RSS Feeds in your Blackboard Course

http://preetamrai.com/webtopics/wiki_blog/03rss_in_bb.htm