

## Session Profile

<b>Topic:</b>	Real Simple Syndication (RSS)
<b>Duration:</b>	2 ½ hours
<b>Tools required:</b>	Laptop, Internet Access
<b>Abstract:</b>	An introduction to RSS, history, best practices in utilization and implementation, how to use

## Why are we here?

Today you will be learning about **Real Simple Syndication (RSS)**, a publishing method that enables us to easily share and distribute frequently updated content that can be utilized or remixed in a variety of ways by our target audience. Upon completion of this session you will:

1. Have a knowledge of how RSS was developed
2. Be able to recognize and describe methods for deploying RSS
3. Utilize a set of best practices for utilizing RSS feeds in your day-to-day work
4. Understand how to subscribe to an RSS feed
5. Have a blog of your own that features an RSS feed

## Before we get started

Duration: 5 minutes

Before we get too far into our topic for today, let's take a moment to complete a short survey.

1. **Which company do you think was responsible for developing RSS?** (choose one)
  - a. Yahoo
  - b. Microsoft
  - c. Netscape
  - d. Sun
  - e. Apple
  
2. **How many blog based RSS feeds are there?** (choose one)
  - a. Less than 250,000
  - b. 270,000
  - c. 6,200,000
  - d. 70,000,000
  - e. 8,500,000,000
  
3. **How do you stay up to date on information distributed online?** (circle all that apply)
  - a. Visit favorite Web pages
  - b. Read e-mail materials from colleagues, friends, and family
  - c. Mailing lists
  - d. Forums and bulletin boards
  - e. News/information portals
  
4. **Of the options listed below, which group do you consider yourself a part of?** (choose one)
  - a. **Innovator:** I want all of the latest and greatest tools, gadgets, and gizmos
  - b. **Early adopter:** I don't grab all of the new stuff, but I do like using new things
  - c. **Early majority:** I start using stuff once I see lots of others using it
  - d. **Late majority:** After stuff has been around for a while, is proven, and lots of others are using it, I like to adopt the tool
  - e. **Laggard:** gad-zooks, there are a lot of things out there, what I have works great, and I like to take on new things when it is absolutely necessary
  
5. **What else would you like to get out of this session?** (please write in your reply)

## Survey review

Duration: 15 minutes

*(This part is scripted for the presenter and not distributed to the session participants; a printed handout will be distributed at the end of the session for reference, and a pdf made available online – but we don't want people reading too far ahead into the session)*

*Dev note: tie the overall main points presented here to a PowerPoint, Web page display, or other strong visual – in order to assist participants with making a strong connection to the main ideas presented*

## History of RSS

RSS was first developed by the good folks at Netscape back in 1999. Some of the technology was based on conceptual ideas for restructuring data and information that were advanced by folks at Apple in 1995. The technology was deployed as part of Netscape's personalized web portal tools but was later abandoned. Later on others picked up the technology and developed it into what we use today. A much more detailed description and history may be found online at Wikipedia.

More information: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS\\_\(file\\_format\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_(file_format))

## Feeds available

According to Dave Sifry, a writer for Technorati, in Oct. 2006 there were 57 million blogs. Every day 100,000 or more blogs were being created. So, as of today, there are probably about 70 million or more blogs available.

More information: <http://technorati.com/weblog/2006/11/161.html>

The great thing is that blogs allow anyone to write on a specific topic, area of expertise, publish research, project notes, or general areas of interest. There are over 70 million sources out there where you can find someone interesting in exactly the same thing you are. I'll give you a few examples:

## Examples

### John Nack

<http://blogs.adobe.com/jnack/>

I like to read John Nack, who works at Adobe. John is interested in Photography, application development, multimedia, and programming. He writes about his role in developing great products like Photoshop, Lightroom and Flash. John used to work for Macromedia, and came to Adobe because of his interest in integrating aspects of Flash into other applications like Photoshop. Adobe Lightroom is probably one of the first major software releases to merge workflow and output options that include flash technology.

### Ray Kurzweil

<http://www.kurzweilai.net/>

Ray was responsible for huge advancements in synthesized speech for visually disabled individuals. He is also advancing the field of artificial intelligence, real-time linguistics translation, and many other innovative things. On his blog, Ray writes about things he sees online, interactions in person, and more – that relate to his personal interests.

**John Maeda**

<http://weblogs.media.mit.edu/SIMPLICITY/>

John Maeda is a professor at MIT. He has done a lot of innovative work related to programming, multimedia, simplicity and innovation. The simplicity blog is where John writes about observations of the Web and world at large related to his own personal development process, issues related to simplicity and more.

**How to stay up-to-date**

*(Lead a discussion about how people stay up to date with information)*

- Emphasize the overwhelming amount of information available
- Talk about tools that can be used to make using the information easier (bookmarks, portals, user groups)
- Lead-in to how RSS and reader tools can help, talk briefly about tagging and meta-data

**Technology adoption cycle**

Talk about the adoption cycle. Identify the participants mostly as innovators/early adopters/late majority to help them tie a personal vision of themselves in a positive way to their participation in today's session.

**Other knowledge desired by the group**

Take note of any other items the group/participants wish to get out of today's session. Make an effort to include coverage for these areas.

## Finding RSS Feeds

Duration: 30 minutes

*This portion is not a handout, supplemental materials would be distributed at the end of the section/session*

- Online directories
- Blogs
- Online newspapers
- Trade publications
- Journals
- Individual researchers
- Faculty at other institutions

## Using RSS feeds everyday

Duration: 30 minutes

*This portion is not a handout, supplemental materials would be distributed at the end of the section/session*

- **Research**
  - Trade publications
  - News
- **Professional development**
- **Collaboration**
- **Recreation/fun**

## Creating your own RSS feed

Duration: 40 minutes

*This portion is not a handout, supplemental materials would be distributed at the end of the section/session*

- **Sharing feeds via Google Reader**
- **Creating your own feed using a blog**

## End of session review

*Duration: 20 minutes*

So, we have covered a lot today! Give yourself a big pat on the back. 😊

Let's do a group review of the survey questions we started out with, along with a few others:

1. **Which company was responsible for developing RSS?**
2. **How many blog based RSS feeds are there?**
  - a. Why is this significant?
  - b. What topics do you want to subscribe to?
3. **What are some of the most time effective ways for staying up-to-date on information online?**
4. **How can you tell if there is an RSS feed available on a Web site?**
5. **What tools would you use to read an RSS feed?**
6. **How would you publish your own RSS feed?**
  - a. What topics would you write about?
  - b. How would you use tagging and meta-data to organize your information?
7. **Are you an innovator, early adopter, early majority, late majority or laggard?**
  - a. Did anything we cover today affect which group you would like to be a part of?
  - b. How would you go about sharing RSS methods and benefits with your peers?
8. **Did we cover the other topics you wanted to know about in today's session?**