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## Introduction

“We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.”

- Herman Melville

Herman Melville lived in 19<sup>th</sup> century and the word internet, and RSS would not have come into his mind even in his wildest dreams. Still, a lot of writers have come and gone after him – I haven’t found a better statement to present our context before you. Money has stirred an honest nest around us and although money can’t be said to be everything in our life, it’s a fact that none of us can’t live without dollars. We all crave for dollars and run after that using different means. It’s these “means” that we select to run our business that matters. Putting it in simple words, modern day business is **all about connecting people**. Needless to say, those who connect to people in a better way, often succeeds. Paradoxically, those who are armed with the latest technologies are capable of connecting to people more successfully. Before the advent of RSS and blogs, these technologies used to burn out a hole in your pocket. All those days are

gone. Now, if you have a website you only need some knowledge to make things happen for you. It's this vital knowledge that I am going to pass on you through this book.

Again playing with Herman's words, our lives are now indeed connected by a thousand invisible threads. The only difference is that, unlike the times of Herman, we connect these threads by the medium of internet. And as you know, internet has become too crowded a place that reaching people through the net has become a tough task. To make things further complicated, gone are the days when your customers would have fallen to your marketing ad-words and click your "buy now" button without any hesitation. This is where RSS and blogs come to picture.

## Chapter 1

### Let us roll the RSS ball

Well, are you a net savvy who may fit into one of the following categories?

- You are usually in hurry and looking for something specific without wanting to waste your valuable time.
- You think staring at computer screens hours together can be tiring for the eyes. So prefer scanning text instead of reading word for word.
- You frequently end up on some webpage (not through the homepage) and do not know how it fits into the rest of the website!
- You are a person expecting the information on the web to be up-to-date.
- You like to have privacy on the information you are interested in and control over the numerous unwanted information popping and earning your irritation.
- You welcome with great interest the latest methodologies, if that cannot only save your precious time but also prove to be a powerful, versatile method to keep you well updated faster than the conventional methods.

Are you an organization/marketer/publisher who has opted for Internet marketing strategies, having created your website and has been on the constant run to win

more visitors to your site? Glance through the following points of which at least some have caught your attention at one time or the other in your path of business:

- Presence of millions of web pages gives you the challenging job of hooking the visitors who may very easily move on to somebody else's website.
- Having spent thousands of dollars creating your website, you feel it does nothing to promote your organization. Should it not help you grow your business at least to some extent, when so much pain is involved?
- You are on a long hunt for a suitable method of conversational marketing on Internet, which can replace the so-far passive Internet marketing.
- Visitors do not trust web contents unless its credibility is clear.
- You wish to give a distinguishable look to your company with the help of a blend of audio and video elements in your website.

Whichever category you may fall into – the former or the latter – here comes an incredible solution, to your long-pondering questions! A drastic change from traditional solutions to a highly effective methodology – RSS is the buzzword, creating waves in today's Internet world. RSS, an acronym for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary, is a very cost effective method to bring your information to your clients and 'to-be-clients'. It is a viable alternative to produce effective solutions to your numerous business needs.

RSS opens a new gateway to ever-flooding effective business strategies, never existed before, and creates a new dimension in the way you reach out to the public. When you, as a marketer/ businessman/company, decide to promote your business through the marketing strategies of Internet, try to take the maximum advantage of this interactive medium. When your website does not engage visitors, then your web-based promotional efforts have been crippled. What are



the means to attract visitors to your website, when there exists a million dollar question – whose website to visit? Given innumerable choices, just think of the visitor's plight to decide which one and whether he wishes to really come back after his first visit.

RSS has a lot of advantages over the other existing methods, to turn it into the most sought-after, powerful, influential tool, which will take over the Internet world very soon, if understood fully and properly. It is basically a 'push-based' communication method, which can be published and subscribed to easily. It can be explained as a file containing the latest information and accessed by subscribers who are interested.

Consider a website as a real-world conversation. We need to adopt the same things just like while trying to sell our product to a sales prospect in person. RSS has wonderful features, which embody the techniques of conversational marketing in a very flexible way. Don't you go through the following while reaching out to the visitors? Glance through and see how RSS helps:

- First, you decide your goal and try to analyze what kind of audience your website can get.
- What do the visitors get on visiting your website? Interview customers for their feedback, do a research and make changes to your website accordingly. The last part can be done very easily done using RSS feeds (which we will see in detail in the later chapters).
- The look of your website is very important. RSS has made it very easy to understand, see and feel your message for the visitors by mixing video and audio channels to your contents. Also, keep in mind that not only is it enough to have a good website but an appropriate one to your business also, to catch your visitor's eye.
- Make your website work well in all the browsers. Your website is open to a variety of visitors who can prefer browsers of their choices. RSS is a

convenient way since it works on all platforms. Most of the browsers may not face hurdles accessing RSS.

- Your website is the gold mine of information on how the public respond to what you say. RSS provides an unbelievable platform to discuss the views of the public without wasting time. Instead, you can spend your time on crafting quality contents. RSS has got many special features such as dialog facilitators, RSS radars, and automatic responders to enhance the significance of conversational marketing.
- You can collect a lot of information such as the number of subscribers, their interests, their reading frequency, the topics they are more interested in etc using RSS feeds. These are definitely going to be vital for improving your standards of business.
- Your search engine ranking reflects how good your website is! RSS increases the search engine ranking remarkably and well, again helps develop your business.

**Not only these!** You can go on listing down the various advantages of RSS which we will explore one by one after knowing about RSS in detail.

And do not think it's a super-techie thing that you cannot use! Once you are familiar with the tool, you are open to the amazing world of RSS and one day, sure to find yourself hooked to it! Its going to be the beginning of an unbelievable era, exploring deeper and deeper the many faces of RSS and of course, the web world, through it! Though it can't be an all-out replacement for other technologies, it can be a standard to optimize your Internet experience.

So, what are you waiting for? Get going to know more about RSS in the following chapters and unleash the power of this incredible, powerful tool!

## Limitations of current E-mailing technology:

Before knowing about the latest trendsetter RSS, let us discuss in length about the current demerits faced by the organizations planning to offer e-mails or e-newsletters to their subscribers. The organizations are meeting a great challenge to catch the attention of their subscribers.

The users have second thoughts signing up, due to the junk mails flooding their mailboxes. Even if they do sign in, the question of whether these mails draw their attention pops up! With the technology world pacing through unimaginable changes each and every minute, one needs to know how precious time is. Users definitely may not want to even bother to open such mails, lest to read it.

With spam gaining momentum by the day, the question of mere survival of the organizations' mass deletion system hovers as a big challenge.

Now, people or precisely, organizations, resort to better, flexible methods of communications. Obviously, with the enormous growth in technology, especially in the internet, there is a need to switch over to more interesting ways of communicating to the subscribers. Especially companies with smaller advertising budget need to be innovative in their ways of communication through web.

This is where 'push-based' communications methods such as RSS come in.

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary. It can be simply explained as a file containing the latest headlines, which can be published and subscribed to easily. Major players such as Macromedia, Macromedia, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and IDC have begun going in for RSS, not for just effective communication, but also for augmenting visibility of their websites, thus increasing traffic to their sites. End of the day, these organizations update their customers without worrying about 'mass deletion'!

Before going in depth about Really Simple Syndication, knowing what RSS is will give us a vivid picture of this new technology.

## Features of RSS:

We can define RSS more technically as a lightweight, topical, metadata and syndication format. Let us look into each feature to get a vivid picture:

- **Lightweight:**

This is a very important feature looked upon by many users as one of the reasons to prefer RSS tool. RSS is very small, in the sense – it requires less space, usually less than a hundred kilobytes of space. RSS files are XML documents, which can be written using any text editor (Word, notepad, emacs, vi etc) very easily.

- **Topical:**

RSS highlights what you think is important on your page and that would be the contents seen by the other readers. For example, if you are a news organization, you may want to focus on the latest headlines, if you are a

businessman you may want to showcase about your products or if you are a publisher you may want to throw light on your latest book releases.

- **Metadata:**

Metadata is the information about your data. You can embed details about your data in your RSS file. For example, who wrote the article you are highlighting or how often your RSS file will be read to see if you have added any information.

- **Syndication:**

As we have already seen that it is to present a snapshot, in a specified formatted file, of what you consider most important about your site at the moment.

## How to go about it?

As a provider, the first step is to collect the latest news, announcements or any information you wish to give subscribers. Then you create 'RSS document', a summary of the collected information.

The next step is to register the document with an RSS publisher. Once it is registered, anyone using an RSS reader can get it from the publisher or directly from your site.

## Understanding RSS Document

An RSS document is made up of 'items', comprising a title, a link to the content and a description of that item. For instance, for a news article, the title will be like a headline, the link will take readers to the news article and the description will summarize the news they'll find on clicking the link to visit your site. The items

are grouped into a 'channel' or 'feed'. This is the name you assign to your ongoing series of RSS documents.

RSS documents are created in XML, or Extensible Markup Language, which is fast becoming the markup language for the Web. HTML tags instruct the browser how to display content (fonts, images or otherwise); XML tags define the nature of the information. Do not panic! Proficiency in XML is not a prerequisite to create RSS documents. The non-technical can seek the help of various tools of conversion available.

The XML file can be updated manually or by using modules to increase the speed of the process. The feed is prepared by transforming the RSS file into HTML. A scripting command named server-side include is used to place the content on the Web page as a template. Once the module has been developed, it's really just a matter of sitting back and letting the content stream in.

The files can be accessed from your own Web site or by registering your feed with content aggregators, or sites that list various feeds. Individual RSS readers can subscribe directly to your feeds through these options. Other Web sites can also do the same, bringing more hits to your content!

You, as a content manager, can subscribe to other sites' or aggregators' feeds as well. This will provide your site visitors with news and material that you may not have the time to develop.

Essentially, bloggers and news sites, such as The Wall Street Journal Online and The New York Times Digital, have been the early adopters of this technology, mutually benefiting in terms of updates and increased visibility. The feeds keep the blog visitors informed and updated without having them to visit it daily. We can very well put it that if not for the existence of the feeds, the response for

“blogs” would not be this increasing. And the hope of getting the like-minded people to post the site content is very high.

Nowadays, it has become inevitable for buyers of software products, as it helps them stay up-to-date on product news, development, support etc. Not just this, users save time too! The journalists are switching over to RSS for press releases and pitch letters.

The use of RSS is becoming very essential for companies, which have lots of information to share, small budget and internet-savvy audiences. It serves as a boon not only to the organizations wanting to widen their visibility, but also to users who always like to stay up-dated about the contents they eagerly wait to taste upon.

The number of RSS feeds offered by an organization often depends on the requirements of their subscribers, nature of the news from it, the ongoing research at the organization, the speed with which the contents are updated, the number of subscribers etc.

The RSS also helps the customers in managing the information flow not just from the organizations, but from a variety of data sources also.

Many of the RSS providers are in turn RSS subscribers also of several technology-oriented feeds to keep them in par with the latest information about other sites also. Though many people have the interest to update themselves they may not have the time to do it. Visiting each and every website, they enjoy seeing for any new addition to the contents, is a very time consuming process. The RSS aggregators help you to quickly view where a new content is appearing and whether it is of interest to you. For companies who do not update their news daily or for those who do not do it even once a week, but who are keen in informing their subscribers when they do it, this can be the best method which

costs nothing at all. RSS is really standards orientated and the payback is really high for the companies.

When the companies provide different RSS feeds, it also helps them find out the area of interest of their subscribers. For example, let us consider a company having different RSS feeds such as on press releases, blogs, new research announcements, company news, columns etc. Depending on the traffic on the RSS feed, the company can gauge the interest of the visitors. It may therefore try to focus more on providing to the thirst of the users.

It is also important to mention here that big companies, corporate are very much benefited by the use of RSS. There are occasions when even the employees within big companies may not know the latest news or the new ongoing research of the company due to lack of communication among the various departments. Here RSS lends a helping hand! Make use of RSS feeds; stay updated all the time. After all, we know how crucial it is to be informed about what is happening in your company!!

The content managers can go for effective redesign of their websites developing new content sharing tools to promote information and build awareness among the members.

In spite of many added points in favor of RSS, we can also totally not deny the fact that it can be a value-added addition to the current day communication methods, however, cannot replace e-mails completely.



## Chapter 2

### Why do the existing technologies suck?

We are aware of different current key elements of marketing over the net like Advertisements through Internet, E-mail marketing and publishing, search engine marketing and optimization, e-commerce, business blogging, branding and many others. But these can be considered as separate entities being driven by different corporate roles and having its own proprietary set of Internet tools.

Of course, there are some tools that are multi-purpose. But, there has never been a powerful tool like RSS that is trust-worthy, Spam-free flexible and most of all enhances the power of the different key elements of Internet marketing.

It is sure to produce incredible business and marketing results in the future.

## Loopholes of the existing marketing technology:

It is needless to say that SPAMS, enabled by the "democratic" nature of e-mail, has ended up driving the mere purpose of this once-upon-a-time best method to peril.

- The companies have to fight their way to acquire the recipient's email id, seek permission lest to be assured of their content being delivered. Many internet users prefer a big 'NO' in signing up to avoid wasting time deleting the unwanted mails from their inboxes. Why not nip the trouble in the bud itself?
- Talking about the companies, who have at last succeeded in their objective, they have still a long way to go for their content to reach the target mailboxes. They are faced with various Spam barricades from the recipient's Internet Service Provider.
- After getting through the ISP barricades the message needs to "combat" the various filters in place on the user-side, such as third-party spam filters, usually partnered with an e-mail client Spam filter. All this to make sure that nothing that even looks like Spam gets through.

Then, again the user quickly scans the messages, eliminating the most obvious Spam, and on top of that often also performs an in-depth scan to finally decide what messages he can delete, what to be moved to the dreaded "to read" folder (which never gets read) or what to be actually read.

Any proof whether the messages will be read after having got through so many barriers is truly uncertain.

- This obviously means more than 50% of lost sales and relationship opportunities. How much does that amount to in losses in a few years?

- Important messages and updates for your existing customers are getting lost as well. This in turn will affect your follow-up sales and after purchase relationship building activities.
- Some rules which are currently implemented by the US CAN-SPAM legislation are putting legitimate e-mail publishers at risk. Instead of putting check on the real spammers, they threaten legitimate senders.

Can you believe? Many people end up calling their subscribers to check on their receipt of their message. Is it not obvious that the very purpose of e-mails is smashed down here?

## The Search Engines:

The e-mail content delivery problem is joined with the ever-growing number of websites, all competing for the attention of the same visitors and the same search engines. Though Search engines are still the **No.1** traffic generator for most websites, getting high rankings for our website is getting more difficult with each passing day. Unless we are able to reach out to our prospects and customers, chances of us selling the products and building relationships with them is very meager.

Of course, we could use Pay-Per-Click advertising (sponsored keywords), but Pay-Per-Click prices are getting completely out of control. Many marketers can

no longer keep up with high prices and can no longer generate a positive response with their campaigns. The demand is just too high.

## Will E-mails last long?

- The companies mainly dependent on e-mails for their Internet content to reach the target audience. This serves as the sole medium existing between the senders and the receivers.
- On the other hand, consumers depend on e-mails again to receive the contents from the companies as per their requirements.
- We better put it that while the marketers and the publishers struggle to deliver their contents through e-mails, the internet users fight to control the content consumption through e-mails.

With such existing pressures whether e-mails can continue to serve as the channel for content delivery and content consumption is arguable.

The world is fast changing from a **push-based information delivery** where you send information via e-mails to **pull-based information delivery** where the subscriber accesses your information as and when he wants.

## Checking on SPAM:

To bring down the hazards caused by Spam, there are some solutions, which are in the development stages but, yet not put into operation:

- The Sender Id (intended to verify an e-mail sender's identity), being developed by Microsoft.

- Next comes the Bonded Sender Program in which the e-mail senders have to pay certain fee to get their e-mail messages delivered, just like traditional mail postage. Again, this may not be useful for small companies who have midget budgets! We are looking for some solution, which would benefit all the users of Internet alike.

Though we cannot deny that most of the marketers and publishers still depend on e-mails, we must surely admit that e-mail is no longer the content delivery vehicle it once was and we have to devise methods to compliment it with other new fruitful channels.

The multi-purpose tool RSS has many feathers on its cap and has every probability of emerging as the tool for this Internet era.

## **RSS as a marketing tool**

RSS is a technology that has the potential to overcome the Internet marketing challenges we are facing today. From the marketing point of view, not only is it simple to use publishing tool for marketers and publishers, but also has the versatility allowing contents to be delivered to the target users and other “content consumers”. These criteria enhance the marketers and publishers to achieve their business goals.

- Its ability to influence the entire key internet marketing elements, especially content delivery to end-users and improving search engine rankings is unprecedented.

- It is unique in the way it forces marketers to become more relevant and sensitive to the needs of their target audiences.

Its reach does not stop just with marginal penetration, but exploring many fields and the usage is growing with exhilarating speed. RSS is already used by the majority of the reputable media sites, by a satisfactory number of corporations and by almost “all” bloggers.

RSS is fast becoming the de-facto standard for pull-based information delivery because the user can anonymously subscribe to your feed, judge your content and stay subscribed as long as he wants to. He can unsubscribe at will, without any problems and delays.

And what’s more? It also eliminates a large part of the external noise and shortcomings of other delivery channels .In addition, RSS content can be delivered to other websites; such as search engines, specialized RSS directories, special content aggregation sites and other site types.

## Chapter 3

### A Peep into the RSS Terminology

RSS content is delivered through RSS feeds. These are simple files structured in a specific way. [A type of xml]

RSS stands for either Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary. RSS files (which are also called RSS feeds or channels) simply contain a list of items. Usually, each item contains a title, summary, and a link to a URL. RSS files look

a lot like HTML code. . It is up to the user to use this information in any way that he wants.

You should provide an RSS feed if you want to distribute your information to a vast and fast-growing community of users, who are more interested in knowing about your topic. In general, people who write articles or publish newsletters benefit the most. Most blog software allows you to offer RSS feed of the blog posts. You can also offer your press releases through an RSS feed.

In general, anything that you publish frequently can be offered as an RSS feed. For example in the share market, the prices of the shares are always fluctuating. People holding shares or those who are interested in that business would like to stay updated about the price of their shares. When RSS feeds are created for such fields it will be of very great use undoubtedly.

Soon, you will find online retailers and other catalog companies also offering RSS feeds of their product range.

There are 2 main components of a RSS feed.

- **Channel:** A channel is the total collection of items you wish to highlight in your site. There is exactly one channel per RSS file.
- **Item:** Item is a single thing you wish to highlight from your site. There is at least one, but no more than 15 items per channel. But it is better to limit to 6 items per channel.
- **RDF:** RDF is the mother specification of RSS.

Example – You may create a RSS feed about all articles on your web site. That is, articles covering different topics in one RSS feed.

Then the channel will contain information about the feed (“Read articles on various subjects”), the location (web site address or URL) and a short description of the content you have written about.

There will be multiple items in the RSS Feed. Each item will have information about one article (the title, author, category, short description and the URL where the article may be found).

The user may see the index in a suitable viewer called RSS aggregator or reader, display the contents on a web page, or use it in any other way he thinks fit.

An aggregator, as the name suggests, is a piece of software that collects content from many websites that publish new content regularly (CNN, New York Times, Wired, etc.) provide a list of headlines of the latest content. In addition to displaying these headlines on their own websites, it is very common for publishers to make them available for syndication, so that other websites or applications can also include their headlines. When a website has an RSS feed, it is said to be “syndicated”.

The RSS aggregators come in many different forms and flavors. The most popular are desktop applications and RSS aggregation Web services.

- In the case of desktop RSS aggregators, end-users have to download them to their computers and install them there.
- In RSS aggregation Web services, on the other hand, the users can create their own accounts and then use those websites to view RSS content directly from their Web browsers.

After installing an RSS aggregator or registering at a web-based RSS aggregator web Service, the user needs to proactively add the link to your RSS feed in to the Aggregator to view your content.



When any new content item is modified or updated in the RSS feed, the user is notified of that through his RSS aggregator. The content is also immediately available to him, without having to face any SPAM filters and other obstacles on the way.

RSS being essentially a pull-content delivery channel, that is, in order to receive content via RSS the end-users need to subscribe to the RSS feeds they desire. Content cannot be delivered to people who have not granted permission to be contacted by you. At the same time, the other side of the coin is also true! The user who had given permission once can revoke it instantly, taking away your capability of communicating to them.

This fact makes the marketers and publishers more alert and force them to send only relevant information to their subscribers. Therefore, the chance of the user stopping the subscription suddenly is very remote. He is assured of receiving only information that is of use and interest to him. This is why exactly RSS is very powerful.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Why RSS remains hot now?**

### **Unleashing the power of RSS in marketing and publishing:**

Unlike other Internet marketing and publishing tool, RSS can power multiple key Internet marketing and publishing elements and activities in different areas:

- Prompt delivery of your Internet content to end-users.
- Increasing the visibility of your website and thereby generating more traffic/visitors to your website.
- Powering your Internet public relations through RSS conversations.
- Enhancing your web presence.
- Serving as an advertisement platform for publishers and advertisers.

To throw light on the power of RSS, it is essential to explore the topics one by one.

## **1. Prompt delivery of your Internet content to end-users**

The first step in marketing your product is to get your content delivered to end-users. Only then can you communicate to them, sell your products and build lasting relationships with them. As we have already seen, some Internet information delivery channels fail in their purpose as in the case of e-mails. This in turn throws most of our publishing efforts to gutters. We end up wasting money, efforts and most of all the precious time. Direct marketing, direct selling, relationship building, public relations through direct communication with media,

communicating with your business partners and employees, direct advertising of your products, customer announcements and updates all these are made impossible if your content cannot be delivered to the end-users. End users can be your customers, prospects, the media, business partners and employees.

RSS assures 100% delivery of the contents to the people who have willingly subscribed for your information.

Below are some general examples of the contents you can deliver to your various subscribers:

- Newspapers can use RSS feeds to deliver their latest news articles to the subscribers. This enables them to always stay informed about the flash news around the globe. The book publishers can use RSS feeds to announce their best sellers. This would help their users to keep track of releases they are most interested in.
- RSS feeds can help the affiliate managers to communicate with their affiliates.
- Banks can create RSS feeds to post their customers on their new schemes on savings or any change in the interest rates calculated etc.
- Software being the hottest on the current technology market, software companies can keep their subscribers informed on the latest downloads and relevant software packages available. They can also provide them with easy access to software updates, delivered to them exactly as they become available without the fuss of having to visit your website or deal with huge e-mail attachments. Thus avoiding Spam filters or other barricades straightaway.
- A few hundred content publishers are using RSS to deliver audio content, such as interviews even radio shows.
- Some websites allows people to post pictures, videos and text from their mobile phones via RSS feeds.
- Educational institutions use RSS to deliver educational content.

- As a supplement to their e-mail delivery some use RSS feeds to deliver their newsletters.
- RSS feeds can help you publish living digital catalogues of your products and provide your customers with your latest product releases. The products may be categorized so that it is easier to view and place order according to the product they are interested in.
- RSS auto responders with scheduled messages can be created to keep in constant marketing touch with your prospects and slowly get them to the point of purchase.
- You can provide limited-access content to your customers, employees, team members and even investors, without fearing other unwanted eyes. RSS feeds can be used for internal communications, team working and other needs.

As you can see, through RSS, practically any kind of content to practically any kind of target audiences can be delivered. The only thing to be kept in mind is the content has been broken down into several individual items or stories. The opportunities for integrating RSS in to your communicational strategies are endless. There are no limits to what, who and how you can communicate through RSS.

### **Improving the old and discovering the new:**

RSS can be used to improve your existing content delivery efforts and also provides you with an abundance of new publishing and marketing opportunities. This was not definitely available through other content delivery channels.

### **Update your content as often as you want:**

Here we point out the frequency with which the content can be updated. Can you ever think of hourly updates via other content delivery vehicles? RSS feeds can provide the subscribers not only with daily updates but also hourly updates. You need not hold on your important messages, news and other content for a month or even a week to include it in your e-zone. Make use of RSS to update your content as often as you want and your subscribers won't mind.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The technologies that crowns RSS**

#### **Pod casting and video casting:**

Until recently, the Internet was predominantly a textual channel without much interesting facts to desire for it more! Adding audio and video to the mix, delivering both via RSS, goes beyond the basic capabilities provided by the traditional Internet content delivery channels. Rich media personalizes the Internet experience and gives your company a distinguishable face. At the same time, it provides you with a media platform to make your message very easy to understand, see and feel.

Just imagine the following things:

- Delivering press releases in audio or video.
- Presenting video demonstrations of your products.
- Doing audio interviews to expand your reach and provide more content to your visitors.
- Delivering video and audio contents to demonstrate how your customers and readers can easily resolve various issues that you are helping them with.
- Instead of using impersonal e-mails seeking the help of audio and video to deliver important messages to your readers, customers, business partners or employees makes the contents more interesting for the users.

## Pod casting

By the term **Pod casting**, we mean delivery of audio contents by Internet. The word “pod casting” is an amalgam of the word broadcasting and the name of the popular MP3 player from Apple Computer called the “iPod”. It is not necessary that an iPod is required to pod cast. In fact, pod casts can be used with a variety of digital audio formats and play on almost any MP3 player or portable digital audio device - as well as any brand of desktop computer or laptop.

**Definition:** Pod casting is the process of capturing an audio event, song, speech, or mix of sounds and then posting that digital sound object to a Web site or “blog” in an RSS feed. Once the contents are posted, users can subscribe to a web page containing these RSS feeds and download them directly into an audio management program like Windows Media Player, Music Match etc. For this, they can use specialized newsreaders like iPodder or iPodderX.

After having synchronized their portable audio device with their personal computer, the user can listen to the audio contents whenever he wishes since the pod casts are automatically transferred to that device.

Pod casting may look similar to a Digital Video Recorder (DVR) but the aspect in which it differs is that the recorded content is delivered in it’s final format to a portable device that is independent of the recording.

After having created the audio contents using audio capture tools and audio editing tools, the file is transferred to the website by different methods like FTP/HTTP etc. Then the content is prepared in a specific structured format via XML tags to form the RSS feeds, which can be downloaded using RSS newsreaders such as iPodder or iPodderX.

You are here to make money out of these modern day tools and the fact is that people are already doing this. It’s better if you can glance through some of the pod cast directories like, <http://www.podcast.net> , <http://podcastdirectory.com> and <http://www.blogexplosion.com/podcast/index.php> . They will also provide you with a brief idea on the topics, which are normally dealt with through pod casting. As you can see there in the directory, the business section has got many pod casters there. This means that pod casting is evolving as a viable medium for the business people to connect to their prospective or existing clients and between themselves. Though you see only a few pod casts there, that doesn’t

mean that only this much pod casts are available there through the medium of internet. The fact is that, only some of them are listed in this particular directory. Even then, pod casting arena is not overcrowded and you can just laugh all the way to your bank, if you start immediately. Before going into full swing, I suggest you to glance through these directories or any other similar directories and play some of the files there. Study the files that are having maximum listeners there and then work out your strategy. Don't ever bombard your listeners with your business outputs alone. First step is to create an amiable atmosphere for your listener. It's only in the second step that, you can show them a welcome sign for your products. And that too should be done only as a gesture to help people out there. As far as your browser is concerned, opera is the best option available right now, for all RSS related activities. However IE7 beta has got many features although it's now available only for software developers.

## **How to Record Your Content**

All you need is a microphone and audio recording software to make your presence felt in the pod casting world. Microphones are available right from \$5 and you can buy one according to your requirements. A free audio editing software, audacity can be used for your editing needs.

## **Launching Your Audio Files – Hosting**



When you are ready to make your presence felt with your sound, you need to upload or export your pod cast so that others can download it. You can use a lot of services for hosting your pod cast. Our media is such a service, which is free.

### **There you are.....**

Your pod cast can be published with the help of a service like feed burner. Mind you, you are in the big league now, among those rare breed, who are ready to explore with the latest in technology. After all, you are only gaining for the simplest of the reason that you are doing every thing absolutely free, if not a very negligible investment. Remember, success is not something that knocks on your door to embrace you. On the other hand, it's you who has to crave for it.

“There are two types of people - those who come into a room and say, “Well, here I am!” and those who come in and say, “Ah, there you are.”

**- Frederick L. Collins**

**Video casting or VOD casting** (also called “vlogging”) - the “VOD” stands for “video-on-demand. It denotes delivery of video contents through Internet. The content is more likely to be played on a laptop than a PMA (personal media assistant) due to their newness and relative expense.

Obviously, these contents allow you to communicate via rich media messages. It not only makes the content more attractive and powerful, but also enables more personal “conversation” with your users.

The procedure for creating RSS feeds for Video casting is almost similar to that of Pod casting. But here for the creation of video contents you use video capture

tools then video editing tools and then file is transferred to web page using FTPs/HTTPs and RSS feeds are created just like in the case of pod casting. However, to-date we do not have any newsreader software specifically designed for VOD casting. We might as well as use the newsreaders such as iPodder /iPodderX or Play Pod etc.

Moreover, pod casting and video casting form the basis of new business models, giving you the opportunity to expand your product base to include these formats with higher perceived value. Since you can now demonstrate the usage of key products via online video, which can easily impress everything you need to convey to your customers, the customer education and support are improved as well.

With the help of RSS you can deliver critical software updates and patches to your existing clients as and when it is available. This relieves the work of customer having to visit your website every week to see if the update is available for downloading or not. This is called as **Appcasting**.

The latest news on your products, releases and updates can be grabbed by the users now in an easy-to consume way. Using RSS, you can provide your customers with simple tools so that they can create their own product feeds. When new products that precisely matches their interests become available they are immediately notified. A change in the product portfolio also reflects in the contents of the RSS feeds that your customers are subscribed to.

Consider for example, your customer is doing a search via the search engine for knowing about one of your product categories. Let us suppose, he receives a link to the RSS feed for those very same search results. He is immediately notified in case of the RSS feed whether the product matching his terms is released or available for order. Whereas using search engines though produces the result,

takes a longer time and of course, has a limitation that for his next requirement he has to perform the search from the scratch again.

Even complex searches can be achieved as well through RSS. If your customer is looking for a particular product in a specific price range, delivering the same search results is very much possible via RSS. When the required product matching his terms including the desired price is available, the customer is notified instantly. No wasting time searching again and again. The release reaches them directly.

Not just this! The same approach that many are using for e-mail alerts can be user for RSS also. The customers can be asked to fill up some forms which states clearly their criteria and then they can be given access to an RSS feed to stay updated about the products meeting their criteria. The advantage in RSS is no mails flooding the inbox and no leakage of personal information like e-mail id which some prefer not to disclose. RSS is anonymous and it is the customer's choice when to read it!

## **RSS for personalized/customized database listings:**

Similar to the product updates even personalized or customized database listings are possible using RSS. Any kind of complex information can be extracted depending on the requirements of your visitor.

For example,

- Job listings
- Dating
- Real estate etc

When they are given access to their own personalized RSS feed they can get the content delivered to them directly if it is what they are looking for. The content delivery prospects and business development models seen on the horizon geared by RSS are seemingly endless.

When already with Internet the globe has shrunken to a larger extent, the launching of RSS can contribute to the shrinkage even further!! Can you believe? The day is not far when you can keep track of your packages delivered by FedEx, UPS etc through RSS feeds. How about receiving an SMS on your mobile notifying that a new job matching your criteria is available or an alert reminding you about the last date to return your library material?

Sounds great, is it not? This is not all. There are ample business opportunities made possible with RSS. And each of them in a way improves lives of end-users making it a bed of roses!

## **Chapter 6**

### **Marrying the new without divorcing the old**

### **Honing your existing content delivery efforts**

RSS is not only about discovering the new, but also about improving the old. RSS technology can be used as a supplementary content delivery channel to the existing e-zine and other content delivery efforts. This will enhance the power of the old content channels thereby expanding business prospects. People who are hesitant to give out their e-mail addresses to Internet publishers and who refuse to sign-up due to endless junk mails will surely prefer an anonymous RSS feed.

- Allow your subscribers two options – either via e-mail or RSS
- Reply the subscribers through RSS option as well, instead of depending only on e-mail auto responders
- Use RSS feed to announce the availability of your product in addition to your e-mail options
- Provide RSS feeds to certain e-zine sections like news section to update your subscribers as and when news hits the desk.

## RSS in Direct Marketing

RSS can have an astounding performance in the field of direct marketing. It can outshine the e-mail marketing if understood properly by the marketers.

- **Scheduled and Auto responder messages**

You can develop the relationship with your customers through these scheduled and auto responder messages, which can be given through RSS feeds. When your visitor subscribes to your special RSS feed, he can receive a pre-determined set of messages for better communication with your subscribers. Use the messages to welcome him, to thank your new customer for purchasing the product, send him additional information about the ordered product. You can also provide him with the opportunity to buy an additional product at a lower price tag by giving him some special discounts after a couple of days and so on.

- **Tracking through RSS feeds**

Lot of information useful to your business can be fetched using RSS feeds. You can keep a track of the number of your subscribers, their reading habits, and their reading frequency to your click-through rates and activities after clicking-through from your feed. Spot the RSS feeds which perform better and get the feel about the taste of your subscribers, the topics they are more interested to know etc. Getting these feedbacks via RSS feeds helps you to drive more sales. The same thing applies for individual content items as well.

- **Targeting customized messages**

Apart from the collective feedback about subscribers' response on a particular RSS feed, spotting the interests of your individual subscribers can also be done since these feeds are dynamically generated on a per-user basis. To increase your sales success, target tailor-made marketing messages directly to them, depending on the individual needs and interests about your products.

- **Message personalization**

When you generate tailor-made messages for each individual user, you can also personalize these feeds. You can include personal data elements such as the subscriber's first name, his postal address etc. You can still go further for more advanced personalization with respect to your products like product recommendations and so on.

- **Collection of Data**

You can provide a simple or complex opt-in form to the visitors asking them to fill in the details like his name, interests, the current products he is using, his current position in the purchase cycle, whether he is going for purchase of new brands and so on. You can allow them to access your RSS feeds only when these details are given. Thus extraction of data is achieved easily. This can work with e-zine subscriptions, as well as forms you require your visitors to fill in to either register on your website or download your free report or whitepaper.

All these features are already available in many RSS publishing/marketing solutions, at very acceptable prices affordable even by the small budget companies.

## **2. Enhance the visibility of your website and generate more traffic:**

RSS can be a value-added revolution in the marketing field. For many marketers and Internet publishers RSS is one tool, which can improve their online visibility and generate more visitors.

### **Improve your Search Engine Rankings**

RSS has been documented to bring a great impact on the traditional search engine rankings. Even sites supposedly with low traffic are pushed to first-page sites positions for their key search engine keywords and phrases after switching over to RSS feeds. This is due to the fact that RSS feeds increases the number of inbound links to the site, the specific RSS feed format, and tight RSS feed focus and RSS-specific search engine strategies. These provide the search engines with strong and focused content streams from publisher's website. RSS publishers get more attention by search engines and directories since RSS contents are still scarce.

We can now see an example to make things clear and feel how much it is easier in RSS. We take the example of Yahoo! To get listed it used to take more than a

month but now can now do so in about just 24 hours using the following three simple steps:

**1. Start your own My Yahoo page.**

Just go to <http://my.yahoo.com> and sign in. If you don't have a yahoo Id, sign up.

**2. Add the 'Add to My Yahoo' button to your site.**

For this, go to <http://my.yahoo.com/s/button.html>. and get the HTML code for the button.

**3. Click on that button and confirm.**

That is all. You have just announced your feed to Yahoo!  
Other RSS search engine optimization strategies are also as simple as this one to implement.

## **Increase the number of visitors through RSS Search Engines, Directories and Content Aggregators**

You have numerous options available like RSS- specific search engines, directories and content aggregators to further publicize your RSS feeds and your RSS content, to generate additional exposure, which was never available before.

These will introduce your site to new audiences, making the content more accessible and at the same time improve your search engine rankings by providing you with relevant inbound links to your site.

## **Make your contents reach other Web Media**

Some publishers though may have the interest to provide their visitors with more high-quality content but cannot generate on their own can make use of RSS feeds in doing so.



RSS is the standard for Internet content syndication and it makes it easy to get your content published on other websites also. The very same feeds you are using to deliver your content to end-users can be taken by other sites to display your content, while providing links back to full-text versions of that content on your own site.

This ensures the following:

- You will be able to get new visitors especially those interested in the topic you are covering. Each of these visitors can be turned to a new subscriber or customer with the help of your effective marketing skills.
- More exposure to your site and thereby your products. Only when you are sure of the fact that there has been an increased number of visitors to your site can there be hopes of new buyers.
- When someone syndicates your content they are actually giving you an endorsement, increasing your credibility and your perceived brand-value.
- Depending on the number of visitors and the response, planning for the next move of your business is made easier.

### **3 Branded RSS Aggregators**

You are opened to so many advanced RSS marketing tactics which are for the most part still unknown to the majority of the marketers. One such tactic is marketing with branded RSS readers. For example, when NewsGator announced the launch of their Newsgator Media Platform to give media companies a branded RSS reader they can promote to their visitors and at the same time increase their brand exposure and achieve a more personal contact with readers.

There are both free as well as fee-based aggregators available in the market.

Larger players prefer to step in to this market, since using RSS readers not only provides not only a unique way to reach out to consumers but also connect them in a personal way. At the same time, your purpose of marketing is also served.

Let us consider that you are marketing through e-mails to your customers and prospects interacting everyday and using it as part of their lives and daily activities. You will definitely find a hard-to-believe difference when you use branded RSS aggregator. It can be a daily used tool, keeping your brand constantly in front of your customer, and also a one-touch interaction tool between the customer and your company.

## **Branded RSS Readers in Real-life**

There are notable branded RSS readers like **Quikonnex Desk view, Customer Reader**, which are made available to their RSS publishers to distribute to their own visitors. Each publisher can brand the reader by including their RSS feed in it from the start and changing the initial copy of what end-users see when they launch the reader.

The interesting features include branded interface skins, forced RSS feeds, personalized contact and other key information and a special notifications area to bring your content closer to the end-user.

We are sure to see more and more advanced marketing opportunities integrated directly in to the RSS reader.

## Developing your own RSS reader

It is good to have your own branded RSS aggregator to give the customers and visitors thereby increasing the potential. With many RSS reader developers available in the market it is not difficult or expensive. Even small companies with midget budgets can go for choosing their own RSS reader.

Keeping in mind the following features, one may design his own RSS reader.

- If the company offers RSS feed customization to cater to the subscribers' needs then the RSS feed customization module is essential.
- A visually branded software interface.
- Ad serving module, that has the capacity of serving targeted company ads to the users through the reader, based on their browsing/content consumption habits.
- Notification module, which keeps the user, informed when new content items appear to facilitate the communications between the company and the customers.
- Communications module, through which the user can send messages to the company, and even receive feedback. This can even include a customer support system.
- Web store module which allows the user to browse the company's product line through the actual RSS reader and even place orders.
- Pre-installed company RSS feeds, presumably spotlighted in the reading list. This can be personalized, if possible. You can design such that it would automatically provide a personalized feed for each identified RSS reader user and automatically provide him with content matching his needs through the company feeds. For example product support content updates.
- Direct access to product information such as product pricing, user manuals, FAQs, product forums etc.

- You can provide an option to the user to customize his aggregator with his own affiliate links for the company's products or it can be even his own and then re-distribute it to his own visitors.
- Integrated forum, to enable the user to communicate with your company customers/partners. This can open up a new door to discussions on vital topics to bring about positive points to the business prospects.
- Direct access to other information. Consider a publishing company providing a customized RSS reader to its users. It can give its users the opportunity to read its book excerpts directly from the RSS reader.

Thus RSS reader can act as a one-stop interaction point between the user and the company. It is needless to say that RSS readers help to achieve a concrete relationship and sales oriented interactivity between them.

## Enhance your web presence

The topics covered so far throws light on the different features marketers and publishers can utilize, via RSS tool, for publishing their own content. However, RSS can also be used to enhance your own website and enable you to provide more relevant content to your visitors.

You can display contents from RSS feeds of other publishers on your website. This will help you to provide more content source to your visitors. Whenever the users are in need of the specific content that you provide access to, they visit your website also and this results in more loyal visitors and build relationship with the customers. It can end up in valuable business opportunities too! End of the day you succeed in bringing more hits to your website enhancing the positive side of sales.

There are some websites which are in need of a tool to keep their visitors coming back but do not have the resources to produce their own content. This content “creation” strategy helps them to achieve that. By providing relevant selections of content from other websites, they can maintain a regular traffic.

### **RSS Radars**

RSS radars are about displaying syndicated content from other publishers on your website in a very refined, high-focused manner. The content sources from multiple websites are combined and filtered and created to form a single content source with only the most relevant content from a very specific topic.

A good RSS radar should be able to capture and display the most highly relevant content on a very specific topic. For example, a website covering the topic of RSS might provide focused RSS radars for the following topics:

- Branded RSS readers
- RSS metrics and statistics
- Creating RSS feeds
- Power of RSS in marketing
- And so on

Each RSS radar focuses on the sub-topic of RSS providing information relevant to that alone. Using RSS radars will not only be a valuable content source, but will also increase your search engine rankings for that particular phrase.

### **Advertising through RSS**

Though a small number of advertising networks are already offering RSS advertising to advertisers due to the fact that many are unaware of the potentials

of RSS, it is yet to gear up in this field. Since it is a new advertising channel, advertisers who go in early will achieve low prices and high success rates. They can achieve as good results as Google Adwords or Google AdSense can. But not many know this and so the RSS advertising prices are still very low. Currently RSS providers are Feester, Pheedo, and Kanoodle to name a few with many others slowly entering the market as well.

## RSS Conversations

We know that basically marketing involves 'conversations'. Is it possible using RSS? Will it be as good as talking to a person across the table or at least over a phone? The answer is going to be 'yes'. RSS can be used as an excellent tool to power marketing conversations. With the contents created by you traveling nook and corner of the world it is quicker than talking in person with someone staying at the other side of the globe!

Let us see how this can be achieved in the following simple steps:

- Create a new content item on your website usually a blog
- Distribute the contents via RSS to end-users as well as other websites
- Now the contents reach multiple points, which in turn act as starting points of content delivery to many more eyeballs (the ultimate goal is achieved – getting numerous hits to your site!)
- The dialogue (the contents) takes a life of its own and further spreads through multiple online media, completely losing all structure.

Whenever a new website displays content items of your company it serves as the starting point for a dialog. On one side, people keep posting their comments on

the actual website which weaves around the started dialogue and pour in different views of the users from different parts of the world. Simultaneously, on the other side, the dialog is further spread through other RSS end-users who are subscribed to the RSS feeds published by new dialog starting points which again spread your content or content on it on their own websites.

We also have something called the ‘automatic dialog facilitation’, which is also another feature of RSS directories and aggregators. When your RSS content is automatically syndicated by RSS directories and content aggregators, it spreads your idea still further making it available to even more users.

When our aim is to achieve multiple conversations and receive feedback for your idea spread via RSS, making use of “dialog facilitation” does it best. Though just by getting your content syndicated to as many websites as possible, more traffic is achieved the incredible power of RSS is felt only through dialog facilitation.

**Dialog Facilitators** are always alert of any news, opinions and other content about the dialogue, which have started spreading through your RSS feeds. Once the conversations have started it watches the Internet-space and keep track of the content and also respond to all conversations, trying to facilitate them further. They respond either in the form of blog comments or blog postings in their own blogs. The response can also be in the form of writing articles and other content (such as audio interviews). Then it is also distributed throughout the Internet.

Not only do they play an active role in spreading the conversations, but also in initiating conversations reflecting the existing pulse in the market. They input contents or articles depending on the trend available, thus trying to upgrade conversations and prolong them.

They can also carry on conversations with other bloggers and invite more and more visitors to enter into the conversation.

## The power of the emerging tool - RSS

RSS is a very powerful tool yet to be understood fully by the marketers and publishers. It is a many-in-one marketing & publishing tool giving the best results when fully integrated in your Internet marketing strategy. It can be very successful providing wonderful business solutions in various fields for each individual marketing function.

Let us summarize the different aspects of RSS in the marketing and publishing industry:

- ❖ RSS acts as a content delivery channel for communicating with the users assuring 100% content delivery and provides with promising business development opportunities.
- ❖ RSS acts as a promotional/visibility tool improving your site's visibility, generating more traffic, and enhancing the search engine ranking. It also helps getting your content published on other sites. This again means new visitors to your site, which in turn gives your site new subscribers and end of the day new customers too!
- ❖ RSS provides Conversations, which is content delivery and content syndication put together. RSS conversations further spread your contents throughout the Internet serving as a strong PR platform.
- ❖ After having successfully gained prospective subscribers who are interested in your product you can create your own **branded RSS aggregator** and provide them with the same. This will ensure more reach ability to your product, develop a constant relationship with your customers and enforce a brand experience. When using a branded RSS aggregator you have some additional benefits also. One is that it serves as a sales platform for your own products. On the other hand, it can also



- serve as an advertising platform for other products and thus generate advertising income.
- ❖ Your aim, being an advertiser or a publisher, is to satisfy the needs of your visitors. The visitors' come back only if they find accessibility to topics of their interest. This is the bait for more business! Use RSS to **syndicate content from other websites** also to continue attracting more visitors.
  - ❖ You can even make use of **RSS radars** focusing on several sub-topics for the main content you cover. But ensure that you stick to the relevant details of the areas you are trying to throw light on. Again **additional visibility** especially through improved search engine rankings and generation of new subscribers for your RSS feeds are the results.
  - ❖ These all create **advertising venue**, which means additional source of income.
  - ❖ **RSS advertising** is slowly emerging and gripping many sectors that dream to increase their sales and expand the exposure of their brands still further in the marketing world.
  - ❖ **Premium feeds** can be sold which again opens a door to income.

## Grab the power of RSS – free or at rock-bottom prices

- ❖ Here is some great piece of news to top all the things we have learnt so far about RSS. The money you shell out for getting such a powerful, problem-free, versatile tool is very less. It plays safe on your purse!!
- ❖ What more? If you are a small publishing/marketing company with midget budgets and relatively basic marketing needs you can get it even absolutely free of cost!
- ❖ Moreover, it works on all platforms!

Sounds incredible!!! Is it not? But true to every word. So, why wait? Get going to grab the latest trendsetter and unleash its power as one of the best Internet marketing tools today.

## Chapter 7

### **BLOGGING: Who knows, it can be your goldmine.**

One of the fields where the advantages of RSS feeds are extracted to the maximum extent is 'blogging'. Let us understand what a blog is before we proceed further exploring the topic.

A blog, also known as web log, is basically a 'diary-like-format' website containing entries in reverse chronological order with the most recent entry on the top, enabled by easy-to-use tools and open for everyone to read. The entries can consist of any content, which you would like to present to the viewers. By bloggers we mean the users who take part in blogging. In blogs you can see many links to other sites, the individual ideas and thoughts of bloggers on anything and everything he feels like telling others through net (sharing his views, to be more precise!) and other bloggers' comments/suggestions on the available topic of discussion etc. The authors may have different goals, uses or writing styles but have one thing in common – the format. It is a 'diary Web logs simply provides a framework to express the bloggers' views.

People may be motivated by different reasons under different environments. The motivation behind posting on a topic may include:

- Starting a conversation, looking for a feedback
- Clarifying ideas or concepts, articulating ideas to understand them

- Capturing and organizing ideas to oneself or for others
- Contributing to an idea development by commenting or by connecting different ideas

With blogging gaining popularity day by day, the expansion of RSS is remarkable reaching new heights and depths in various fields. Since some blogging soft wares generate RSS feeds automatically, some people who maintain blogs publish RSS feeds without even knowing they are doing so. Blogging need not necessarily mean a personal affair it can also fuel business opportunities looked upon by various marketers and publishers. Also many big companies are using blogging to keep their employees, colleagues in various departments and customers posted on the latest topic of discussion.

Blogging, though the name was coined by Jorn Barger during December 1997, dates back to the time of invention of Internet. The Internet was started as a tool for scientists, researchers, academic professionals, students and the government. But, it took a real pace when it was explored for commercial purposes. The early days of World Wide Web consisted of lots of personal sites and free information, which made people take a tilt towards posting whatever they wanted at any time.

Still, people are interested and they have more things to say than before! Users are enthralled by the fact that they can create a website whose main purpose was to give ongoing updates on anything – current affairs, social issues, technical advances and so on. To top it all, they can give their opinions too! These comments/opinions often written in a witty manner with a well-researched outlook as well, hook people to read blogs. The fact that you need not get a job as a reporter or a writer to publish your views to the reading world is what keeps blogging on wheels since the day it was invented. Blogging is the true democratization of publishing. Bloggers find it fun to write anything, anytime for anyone, anywhere in the world.

The best part of the web log is that, you need not be a geek to be the master of your web log. The most vital point to remember while having a web log is that, it should be updated regularly. If you are not doing that, your readers will loose interest and will certainly go in search of better pastures to graze. After all there is no meaning in hanging on somewhere, where there is nothing to read. If you are in search of dollar, first formulate a frequency for your blog, which you are quite comfortable with. A perfect blog is one which is daily updated with relevant features. To blog daily, you need to manage your time, very carefully, unless you have plenty of time with you. And who can argue the fact that the owner of a quality blog also has some excellent time management techniques.

“Enthusiasm is like having two right hands.”  
Elbert Hubbard

## **Six most unique ways to get connected with readers for dollars**

“Enthusiasm is like having two right hands.”

**- Elbert Hubbard**

## Businessman, without a story?

If you are in business, I am sure that, you will have a story to tell. If you think otherwise, then take some time to ponder inside your mind to have introspection. Most successful business blogs do this trick. When you tell your own story in an intriguing fashion, your readers are bound to follow your words. It's no wonder, if you have failures in your business. Why can't you blog on failures? Every one explains about success only. And they say that failures are the stepping stones to success. This can be the best way to show, that there is something unique to read there. If you are able to give them something unique for the reader, and then believe me, you have entered the blogosphere, to win their hearts. This is very important because, blogs themselves have multiplied like anything and the uniqueness in your blog can pamper your reader to have a close look.

<http://www.ecademy.com> is a place where you can see how; connections are created between business personals for the betterment of every participating member. It's a win –win situation and no one is a loser there.

## You are in business without knowledge?

If you tell me that you are not having any knowledge to share, I can't say anything but, you are awfully wrong. May be, if you were living in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century there would have been some sense in your argument. Now a days, you need not mug up any thing to your brain and discourse it as and when required to unloose your knowledge bag. And even if you are doing that, then also the possibility that you are one among the top list of the knowledge providers is very bleak. What matters now is only how up to date you are and how convincingly

you share your thoughts. Surprisingly the word obsolete has even become obsolete to the extent that, today's top knowledge content can find a place only in your waste bin. So, what is the way out? Browse, browse and again browse, relevant content related to your business or what ever topics which can matter to your reader.

This doesn't mean that knowledge can't come from experience. Some specific knowledge you have acquired while in business can turn out to be so vital for your client. Think that you are an avid software geek and you have found out a virus in your computer and was able to delete it after several attempts. Now, if a software specialist like you took that much time to get rid of the virus, think how difficult it could have been for a layman. You very well remember this virus episode and just live back your normal life. (Yes, I mean it; a computer virus can make your life abnormal!). But in doing so, you are losing a golden opportunity to connect with many readers. Mind you, there is no better way to "connect with people" than by helping them, when they are in a difficult situation. And you can be in their heart within no time, your only expenditure being your time.

## **Is art running in your blood?**

In every possibility, you might have incurred some talents within you. If you were able to pin down your art at some point of your life, well, you are there ready to entice your readers with your creativity. It can be poetry, stories, paintings, music or whatever of that sort. It is also possible that you are still unaware of it. In that case, it's high time to fire up your lost art. Now, even if you have found out that, you are men or women without art, so be it. You need to worry only for a few seconds; until you reach step 6.

## **Are you hiding yourself from others?**

I just had a google search for the word “secret”. Mind you, I was a little bit astonished. There were 167,000,000 hits! That means, if the demand and supply are properly balanced, secret is one of the most sought after word in the net. So, what is the secret of secret being a hot key word? The answer is there in our blood. We have an urge within us to go and seek the unrevealed. That is one of the reasons why porn sites are still the hottest property in the net. Hmm...Don't worry I don't want you to be a porn star to be there among the glittering ones among the blogs. Am I gazing the unwanted pastures? My apologies, if I have. So what is the business with the word “secret” and you? There can be something in your life that is of interest to others. If you can divulge some of them, you can make your readers on the edge, hooked up there waiting for your next blog.

## **Are you not interested in politics and current affairs?**

This is one of the easiest things to do. If you have an opinion about politics or politicians, then you can be ready with a blog on politics. Mind you, bloggers had a say in the last election and “war on Iraq” was a hot topic. In fact, many of the blogs have a journalistic touch in it. No wonder, blogs are often called as sixth estate.

## **The sixth way – Another recipe to success**

You can just blog on blogs! Many are doing it incredibly well. Even blogs are overcrowded and if you are the one of those persons, who has that special talent to convert a negative aspect into a positive one, there you are. You can browse through many blogs and write about your opinion about them. Just showing some links to other blogs may bring some traffic to your site. You may not be able to hook up with your clients.

<http://www.bloggingaboutblogs.blogspot.com/> is an example of such a site.

## The ethics you need to know before landing on the blog world

### a)Stick to the topic:

As far as blogging is concerned, you are invited to write about anything you wish to. But it is necessary that the contents of items in the blog should all relate to a general theme. The majority of your readers are keen about the contents that relate to a specific defined theme or loosely defined area of interest. For example, people may be interested in knowing what a healthy breakfast should consist of rather than what you take for your breakfast! So first decide the theme, define it and then stick to it. Once you are satisfied, you have started a hot topic, leave the rest to the other bloggers who are left with but the opportunity to weave interesting threads of contents, which are sure to gain momentum with more number of encouraging bloggers! You can also keep posting your comments every now and then adding color and vigor.

### Post on current, hot topics:

While choosing the topic, go for the hot ones which would be of much interest to many. Discussing about affairs which were on the news some months ago may turn down your readers. If you want to keep your blogs alive and expect good response, select a hot topic. Most of the bloggers may not prefer



discussing 'history' of events considering it a waste of time. This in turn will be questioning the value of your columns.

## **b) Be informative:**

Creating a good impression is very difficult. If you are attempting one such step, wanting to voice an opinion or endorsing a product, be sure to check your facts. The views, which you are going to put forth, are accessible by millions of people! If you are offering an opinion, be sure to qualify your post, making it clear that the content is intended as an editorial.

## **c)Clarity and simplicity:**

The contents you provide in the blog have to be clear and simple. Remember, the web is global and expressions, idioms and acronyms don't always translate. When you make the entries easy to understand, it can go a long way.

## **d)Adhere to a schedule:**

Create a schedule and stick to it. Blogging requires time and effort. With new blogs and RSS feeds popping up everyday, only hard work and good presentation can develop an audience to your words. You would not want to lose them due to lack of communication. So do not create unrealistic expectations and be unable to deliver what you had wanted to. An occasional

lapse or holiday can be understood but readers returning to find stale, out-dated content are going to find another blog with similar content.

### **e) Not only quality, but also quantity matters:**

One of your aims of blogging is to attract the attention of search engines. For this, you will have to develop content and substance. Just a simple sentence or a headline is going to neither generate the interest of readers nor will it help with search engine ranking. It's better to archive old blog posts to develop a large portal of similarly-themed content. People who are interested in those themes would generally want to come back again for their future references, checking any information, which is of use to them.

### **f) Frequency:**

Update your blog content frequently! Search engines will tend to spider the pages at regular intervals.

### **g) Catchy keywords:**

You must be aware of the fact that only when the title is catchy/attractive, people tend to open the posts lest to read it! Each item should have a title that will catch many eyeballs but still be relevant to the post. When the ultimate goal of your blog is to increase your visibility, highlight the content by

including related keywords in the title of the blog. Ensure that the title is no longer than 10-12 words.

## **h) Spell-checking and proof reading:**

Before you make the contents available for others, check it thoroughly for any mistake. It takes hardly a few moments but will save you from having to make embarrassing explanations. Always keep in mind that whatever you publish on the Internet can be found and is on the move reaching numerous persons throughout the globe. When you provide quality information, it can serve as archive for future use. So think carefully and execute the checking procedures before posting your article.

## **i) RSS**

As we have already seen, the significance of RSS in reaching millions, the blog's content should be included in an RSS feed to increase readership and distribution. RSS enhances the blog's reach.

The average web log is a lightweight content management system. The contents, which we can include in a blog, need not only be text entries but also can be of sound or picture files. The system supports adding and editing items and simplifies publishing to the Web, by processing content through a set of pre-defined templates holding all the formatting information for a particular visual presentation. While simple web log systems provide only a chronological ordering of posts, advanced web log systems also provide clustering entries into categories or labeling them with meta-data entries such as keywords and topics.

Once the blog content is included in an RSS feed, the news aggregators or RSS readers check subscribed web log feed for updates and display their

contents. In this way, the readers can keep up with many web logs and an increasing number of other websites without navigating the actual WebPages. This convenient way of monitoring many sources has led to use RSS feeds by many web log authors. It is not exaggeration to say that readers prefer going for blogs with RSS feeds.

If understood properly web logs can be used professionally as knowledge repositories, learning journals or networking instruments. There are many blogs available in the market to quench the thirsts of professionals in various fields. For example, med logs (web logs about health and medicine <http://www.medlogs.com>) blawgs (law related web logs <http://www.blawgs.com>) and edublogs (educational web logs <http://www.ebn.weblogger.com>).

## **j) Choose hot titles**

The readers often come to your blog just being attracted by the headlines. More over, search engine also spider the titles. Having a relevant and catchy title is a must if you want to turn the attention of the time-short readers.

## **Why people go for blogs?**

There can be many reasons why people opt for blogging. To list some:

- Some do it out of curiosity or having been encouraged by others.
- Some find it interesting to organize their ideas and references. They also may have a tilt to learning new things.
- Many are driven by their interests in communication and the urge to share their views and publish their thoughts.
- Some find it very useful to hone their techno-related skills, increase their ability to pose questions, to distinguish between public and private etc.
- The readers find social effects of blogging, a positive point to resort to! Amplified networking and relation building, making friends with similar interests and tastes. They feel exuberant having found an easy method to pour out their views.
- Web logging fits very well for IT related job professionals or anyone whose job involves studying or using technology generally. Blogs are useful to learn new ideas from people in the same line. Paves a new dimension for learning, collaboration and knowledge sharing
- People whose jobs involve trend watching, collecting and aggregating information, making notes and writing are also the ones giving an overwhelming response to blogging.
- Blogging is also encouraged by people with suitable environment that provide “right” conditions for it – time, freedom to communicate, Internet connection etc.

## Positive Reflections of blogging:

‘Blogging’ has become the latest buzzword of Internet. Each and every day users are driven by curiosity and interests to take a dip in the ‘blogging’ sea. The day is not far when majority of users would be turning into “bloggers”. The web logger activities can be covered in two topics: developing ideas and developing relations with others. Let us look into it to have a real feel of the effect ‘blogs’ produce:

## Developing ideas:

Web logging tools are not only easy for web publishing but also flexible and could be used in a variety of ways. They prove to serve as instrument for organizing and filtering information, articulating, developing and sharing ideas like in the field of research etc.

- **Finding ideas/information:**

Reading web logs of others with similar ideas helps you to filter ideas or discover new web links to other valuable and interesting resources. Thus avid web log authors act as “human-information routers” to like-minded readers.

- **Articulating, capturing and organizing ideas:**

Web logs provide a platform to capture new ideas from the outside world and to articulate one’s own ideas for future use. They provide opportunities for categorization, retrieval of data via topic-based archives as well as chronological ones.

- **Initiating and following conversations:**

Web logs are used for developing ideas not only in a personal level, but also through dialogues with others. Each web log posts can serve as a trigger for conversation with regular blog readers or random web-surfers. We also have ***distributed blog conversations***. Some authors, instead of commenting directly, prefer to post their comments in their own blogs providing a link to the original post. This results in discussions scattered across many web logs, also known as ‘blogologues’ or ‘blogosphere stories’.

## Developing relations with others:

Other than paving ways to expand your own ideas, organize contents, discover new leads etc, blogging helps you to develop concrete relationships with others. Blogs support community forming, developing relationships across communities and conversational learning. Below we see some of the bloggers' activities on building relationships with others:

## Representing oneself and tracing a path:

Many blogs serve as online identities for their authors. Professional blogs are often compared with or used as “living” business cards. There are even chances of getting job offers through blogs! Moreover, it is always good to know about a person's ideas before you start sharing your knowledge with him. Blogs provide visible traces of a blogger's expertise thus serve as a starting point for knowledge-sharing connections with others.

## Spotting experts and cross-disciplinary connections:

Listing of the web logs regularly visited by their author is possible in blogging. Such displays are called 'blogrolls'. When another reader finds out the web logs visited by the author and is interested in the topic, these links can serve as sources to the reader to further explore, while the link is a sign of value and personal recommendation by the author himself. This enables other users to spot relevant contacts faster instead of wasting solid time searching. Compared to closed professional associations, publications and conferences the open nature of the blogs supports establishing cross-disciplinary connections that fuel development of innovative ideas.

## Bonding, building and maintaining connections with others:

Regular reading of particular web logs sows the seed of relationship with the web log authors who grow as days pass branching into solid knowledge sharing and demanding experts' advices. It also helps to maintain the existing relationships since regular reading of blogs keeps you aware of the person's thinking and progress, allowing them to 'stay on the radar'. They also reduce the burden of finding out someone's contact information as most of the authors provide the details of various means to contact them in the blog itself.

Blogs are envisioned as prototype technology for enabling grass-root knowledge management, triggering pilots and experimentation in companies.



Their public nature provides researchers unique opportunities for observing usually invisible trails of developing ideas and relations with others.

## **Blogging for 'dollars' using RSS:**

Having got a complete picture about 'blogging', let us now move on to an interesting topic – how to make money through blogging using RSS? We have already explained how you can use RSS and blogs to get more traffic to your site and to make a relationship with your readers. RSS, the multi-dimensional tool, has the potential to help companies develop strong relationships with consumers and creating brand loyalty with customers. There are a number of reasons online businesses should consider using RSS.

Blogging for dollars might sound like the latest game show, but it's the latest craze to hit the Internet. Bloggers began blogging for a number of reasons, but as the blog movement has increased in popularity, they have found ways to monetize their blogs and are seeing their commitment pay off. When you can earn while having fun, why not go for it?

The most popular ways for bloggers to earn some added cash for their pet projects are:

### **a)Affiliate Programs (Product Endorsements)**

Affiliate programs work when an affiliate web site receives income for generating sales, leads or traffic to a merchant website. Generally, bloggers will mention or endorse specific products and if site visitors purchase the product, bloggers will receive a portion of the sale.

## **b)Product Promotion**

Businesses use blogs to detail how specific features or product add-ons can increase functionality and save time. Content-rich product promotion will help with search engine placement.

## **c)Banner Ads:**

Websites, which have decent traffic, can make money by selling banner space. Though this is less popular than the earlier days, it still exists and can add to some revenue.

## **d)Advertisements in blog contents:**

Some giant service providers allow webmasters to dynamically serve content-relevant advertisements in blogs. Consider Google AdSense, for example. If the visitor clicks one of the AdSense ads served to the blog, the website owner is credited for referral. Webmasters need only to create a google generated java script into the blog or blog template. Google's spider parses the Ad Serving blog and serves ads that relate to the blog's content. Google uses a combination of keyword matching and context analysis to determine what ads should be served.

## Chapter 8

### Let us sail the RSS Boat

#### How to go about with RSS?

As we have learned, RSS is a method of distributing links to content in your web site that you'd like others to use. In other words, it's a mechanism to "syndicate" your content.

To throw more light on the word 'syndication', let us consider our Television channels. You have all related programs broadcasted in a single channel. If you want to get your daily dose of Science, you tune into discovery channel. Here the Discovery channel syndicates all science related programs for the viewers.

In similar lines, one can provide content that change often through RSS. RSS feeds are considered as the best marketing tool that the Internet can ever provide. They can also bring in a fair amount of traffic to your site if the content is really worth it.

#### **Footprints of RSS:**

In the earlier days of syndication, people formulated various formats that worked only with the service provider who developed that format. This led to a chaotic environment where each service provider had his own format and the true meaning of 'syndication' was lost in the war between these formats. One fine day, Dan Libby of Netscape wanted to put an end to this chaos and formulated RDF Site Summary, the mother of RSS.

#### **RDF:**

RDF Stands for 'Resource Description Framework' and was primarily used to represent information about resources in World Wide Web. It gave the power to specify metadata (a description about the data) about a web page or anything that could be identified on the web which includes the description of a surfer's preferences, information about a shopping cart item etc...

### **RSS Versions:**

#### **RSS 0.9:**

The RDF Site Summary got christened as RSS version 0.9 and became the defacto standard for RSS.

#### **RSS 0.91:**

July 1999 saw the next version of RSS, which was tentatively named, as RSS 0.91 by Netscape, in which RSS was expanded as 'Rich Site Summary'. After some time Netscape dropped its support for RSS. An irony since RSS was widely used then. Meanwhile RSS-DEV, a working group set up by RSS users started to take up the development of RSS.

#### **RSS 1.0:**

The RSS\_DEV group Standardized RSS based on RDF and let out their own version of the standardized format, RSS 1.0 on December 2000. This version was designed with modularity in mind and used a metadata vocabulary, which was borrowed from Dublin Core. At the same time User Land Software released RSS 0.92, a minor modification of RSS 0.91.

Winer of User Land software published RSS 2.0 in 2002 and gave yet another meaning to the three-letter abbreviation. Now RSS stood for "Really Simple

Syndication". It was backward compatible with RSS 0.92 and allowed to add extension elements in separate namespaces.

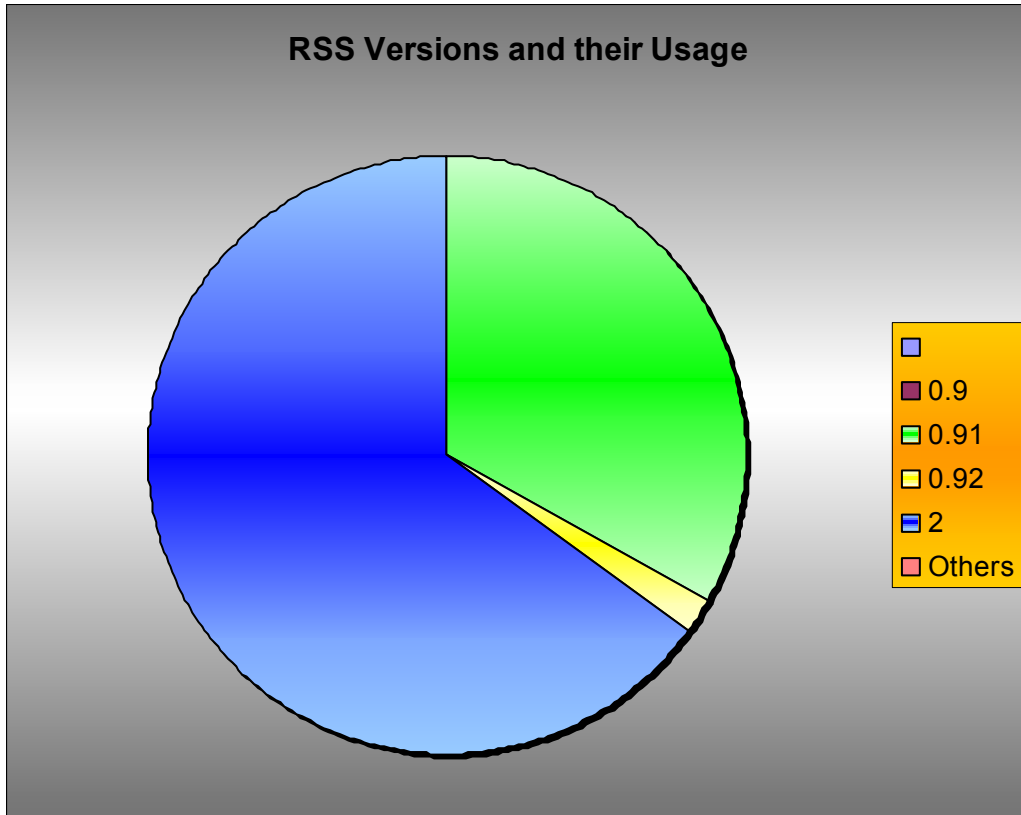
In February 2004 the W3C published a significant revision of the RDF specifications, which among other improvements included better support for literal XML content.

### **Atom:**

In reaction to perceived deficiencies in both RSS branches (and because RSS 2.0 is frozen with the intention that future work be done under a different name), a third group started a new syndication specification, Atom, in June 2003, and their work was later adopted by Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).

The relative benefits of Atom and the two RSS branches are currently a subject of heated debate within the web syndication community. Supporters claim that Atom improves on both RSS branches by relying more heavily on standard XML features, by supporting auto discovery, and by specifying a payload container that can handle many different kinds of content unambiguously. This, they say will standardize the RSS specification which was missing in the pre-existing versions of RSS. But the critics feel that Atom also does the same mistake as its predecessors by introducing yet another branch of syndication specifications, thus confusing the marketplace further.

## Which Version of RSS is more Popular?



Going by the numbers from syndic8 we can infer that RSS version 2.0 is the popular of all RSS versions. It is also backward compatible with RSS 0.92.

## Basic Elements of RSS:

RSS conforms to the XML standard and thus is made up of tags that are similar to XML. We shall see some tags that form the backbone of RSS.

### <rss> Tag :

This ubiquitous <rss> tag is called as the RSS root tag since this tag is the one, which indicates that the document that we are creating is a RSS feed.

## Commonly Used Attributes:

**Version:** this attribute specifies the version of RSS that is being used in the RSS file.

### <channel> Tag :

The channel tag is the one, which specifies the core subject of the RSS feed. One can consider this tag as the grouping tag which groups different items under one single title.

Once we define a channel it becomes mandatory to give it a Title, description and location. These details could be provided using the following tags.

- <title>
- <description>
- <link>

The name of the RSS feed is specified within the title tag.

A short description about the RSS feed is provided within the description tag.

The main page of the website providing the RSS is given in the link tag.

The Channel element also has other optional attributes or tags such as

<category> : This tag is used to specify the category of the RSS feed that we are providing. These categories include business, entertainment, news, technology etc...

`<language>` : This tag specifies the language in which the web pages linked by the feed are written. By specifying the language in this tag we can facilitate the RSS feed reader to categorize the feed based on the language.

`<lastBuildDate>` : As the name suggests, this tag specifies the last updated date for that RSS feed.

`<managingEditor>` : One can specify the RSS feed editor's email ID within this tag.

`<ttl>` : TTL is known as Time To Live in programming parlance. Here it denotes the time for which the contents remains fresh. After that time interval, the content of the feed becomes stale and thus the reader has to update the content. There are other such optional tags available for channel element. But then, we don't want to bore you by jotting them down here, since they will be only used in rare occasions.

**Note:** XML is case sensitive, meaning 'XML' is not equal to 'xml'. Please be careful when you code tags like `<lastBuildDate>` and `<managingEditor>`. If you get your capitalization wrong then your RSS may not work.

### **<item> Tag :**

Simply put, Items are the web pages that you want to publish using the RSS feed. A RSS channel element contains one or more item elements. There exists a striking similarity between *item* and *channel* elements when it comes to the list of mandatory fields. The item tag also requires,

A title tag which gives a heading for that item,

A description tag which describes the item and



A link tag which specifies the actual URL of the item. (webpage)

There are other optional tags available for use with the item tag. Some of them are listed below.

<PubDate>	: Used to specify the last published date of the RSS item.
<author>	: Specifies the name of the author for that item.
<comments>	: Used to enclose comments.
<enclosure>	: This is one of the important tags that is used to embed an external file, say a song or a movie within the item. This tag forms the backbone of Pod casting.

Now that we have seen the description about the commonly used tags in RSS, we shall now start creating our own RSS Feed.

## Creating your own RSS feed:

Welcome aboard!!!

We are going to embark the RSS journey by creating our own RSS feed.

## So what do I need to know to create a RSS feed?

Hmm... Let me think...

### You need to know

1. Theory of relativity
2. AstroPhysics

3. Java Virtual Machine architecture
4. C#
5. JAXP, SOAP, UDDI, ABCD, EFGH etc...

Ok...Ok... I was just KIDDING... actually you need not know anything to create a RSS feed, well if you just want it to do the basic things.

So to start off, you need to have a Web Page that has content that is worth reading. If the content is boring, then even RSS can't help you much in your marketing endeavor.

Now that the content is ready, we want the whole world to know about our dream product and the innovations that we had incorporated into it. Before we do that lets first list out the contents that we are going to publish.

## **Step 1: Decide the content that you want to publish**

Let us assume that we have decided to publish our 'ACME super duper Glue' product page, which is reachable at the following URL.

<http://dreamproducts.com/glue.html>

Now I shall write a small description for our product, which is going to be the slogan of our product or the catchy line that is going to tempt the user to read on further.

So...here we go...

**'Sticks everything together except broken hearts'**

## Step 2: Creating the XML document

The next step is to create the RSS feed ... time to kick some dirt...shall we?

- i. Open up a Text Editor (No MSWord please...) and switch on the character set to ASCII. If you are not sure about the character set stuff then just open up Notepad.
- ii. All XML documents start with a `<xml/>` tag. Since RSS is also a subset of xml we start our RSS feed with the `<xml/>` tag

```
<? xml version="1.0"?>
```

If you do not understand what XML is ... please do not worry, there is always Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V to help you out. And if you don't know what Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V are then... amen.

- iii. Our next step is to say to the world that we are not any ordinary xml page but a XML powered RSS page. We can do that by using the `<rss>` tag

Now the file should look something like this.

```
<? xml version="1.0"?>  
<rss version="2.0">  
  
</rss>
```

The version attribute indicates that our RSS feed conforms to RSS 2.0 standards.

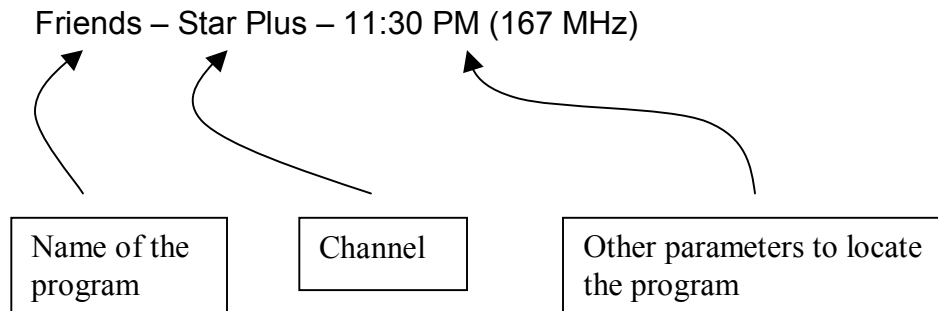
- iv. Next we have to start a channel for our RSS feed. The concept of channels is no different from that of the Television channel. You see cartoons in Cartoon Network and Adrenalin pumping Action in AXN. In the same lines all contents conforming to a specific subject is grouped together as a channel in RSS. Assuming that we have only one channel in our RSS offering, we include a single `<channel>` tag.

Each channel has a title, description and a link associated with it.

Adding these elements with our channel tag we get a file that looks something like this:

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rss version="2.0">
  <channel>
    <title>ACME DreamProducts Corporation </title>
    <description>
      Out of this world products, available only at ACME
    </description>
    <link>http://dreamproducts.com</link>
  </channel>
</rss>
```

- v. We have now reached the most exciting part of it. This is where we define the programmes for our channel. In RSS parlance these programmes are called as items. The item that we are going to publish is our ACME super duper glue product page. Let us consider a TV catalog; a program is described in the catalog as follows.



Similarly, Our Item too has a set of attributes, which describe about it.

The <title> tag specifies the name of the item.

The <description> tag contains a small description about the content. (In our case, it going to be our product slogan)

The <link> tag provides the actual URL of our content.

Now that we know what tags are used to describe an item, we shall now create an item for our ACME Glue product.

```
<item>
  <title>ACME Super Duper Glue</title>
  <description>
    Sticks everything together except broken hearts
  </description>
  <link>
    http://dreamproducts.com/acmeglue.html
  </link>
</item>
```

- vi. If you have any other revolutionary product then you can create another item and place it after our previous item.
- vii. And here it is... our RSS feed file:

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rss version="2.0">

  <channel>

    <title>ACME DreamProducts Corporation </title>
    <description>
      Out of this world products, available only at ACME
    </description>
    <link>http://dreamproducts.com</link>

    <item>
      <title>ACME Super Duper Glue</title>
      <description>
        Sticks everything together except broken hearts
      </description>
      <link>
        http://dreamproducts.com/acmeglue.html
      </link>
    </item>

    <item>
      <title>ACME Do-It-Yourself Space Shuttle Kit</title>
      <description>
        ACME in association with NASA proudly presents...
      </description>
      <link>
        http://dreamproducts.com/acmespaceshuttle.html
      </link>
    </item>

  </channel>

</rss>
```

We shall save the file with extensions as .xml or .rss. Both will work fine. Let us save the file as acme.rss

No, give yourself a pat on the back... you have successfully created a RSS feed!!!

### Step 3: Publishing your RSS Feed

Now that your file is validated, you want the world to know about it! To make this happen, visit the RSS directories and search engines. They generally offer submission pages, where you can inform them of your feed.

One such site is <http://www.2rss.com>.

The screenshot shows the 2RSS.com website interface. At the top, the browser address bar displays <http://www.2rss.com/index.php>. Below the address bar, there is a list of RSS feeds with descriptions and links. A blue oval highlights the address bar. Below the list, there is a section titled "We recommend:" with three links, each with an RSS icon. Below that is an "RSS search" section with a text input field for "Keyword(s)", a "Search" button, and radio buttons for "only 2RSS.com" (selected), "Internet [powered by Google]", and "Only Podcasts". Below the search section is a "Suggest (only) RSS feed" section, which is circled in blue. It contains fields for "URL:" (with "http://" entered), "Category:" (with a dropdown menu showing "Select a category"), "Description:" (with an empty text box), a "Podcast" checkbox, and an "Add" button. Below the "Suggest" section, there is a link: "Got a blog? Submit your blog to the [Blog Flux Directory](#)". At the bottom left, there is a link: "» [RSS Daily News: our online RSS reader](#)".

You also want to make sure that people who come to your web site see that you provide a feed. It's very common to post a link to the feed somewhere on the home page of a web site. If you have a dedicated news page, you may want to put it there, as well.

You can link to your feed with an ordinary HTML link. However, many sites use a small orange XML icon to link to the feed. Some sites also use blue RSS icon.

And finally...

If you think the whole stuff is intimidating then you can skip this whole RSS feed creation stuff and point your browser to

<http://www.webdevtips.com/webdevtips/codegen/rss.shtml>

Here the RSS Feed will be automatically generated.... All you have to do is to specify the URL of your content page.

### **RSS Creating Software:**

If you want to utilize the full feature set of RSS that these online RSS generators don't provide and at the same time you don't want to hand code each and every line of your XML file you can try RSS creation soft wares. Now you don't need to compromise on the features that your RSS can provide.

FeedForAll is one such software that could be downloaded at

<http://www.feedforall.com/software.htm>

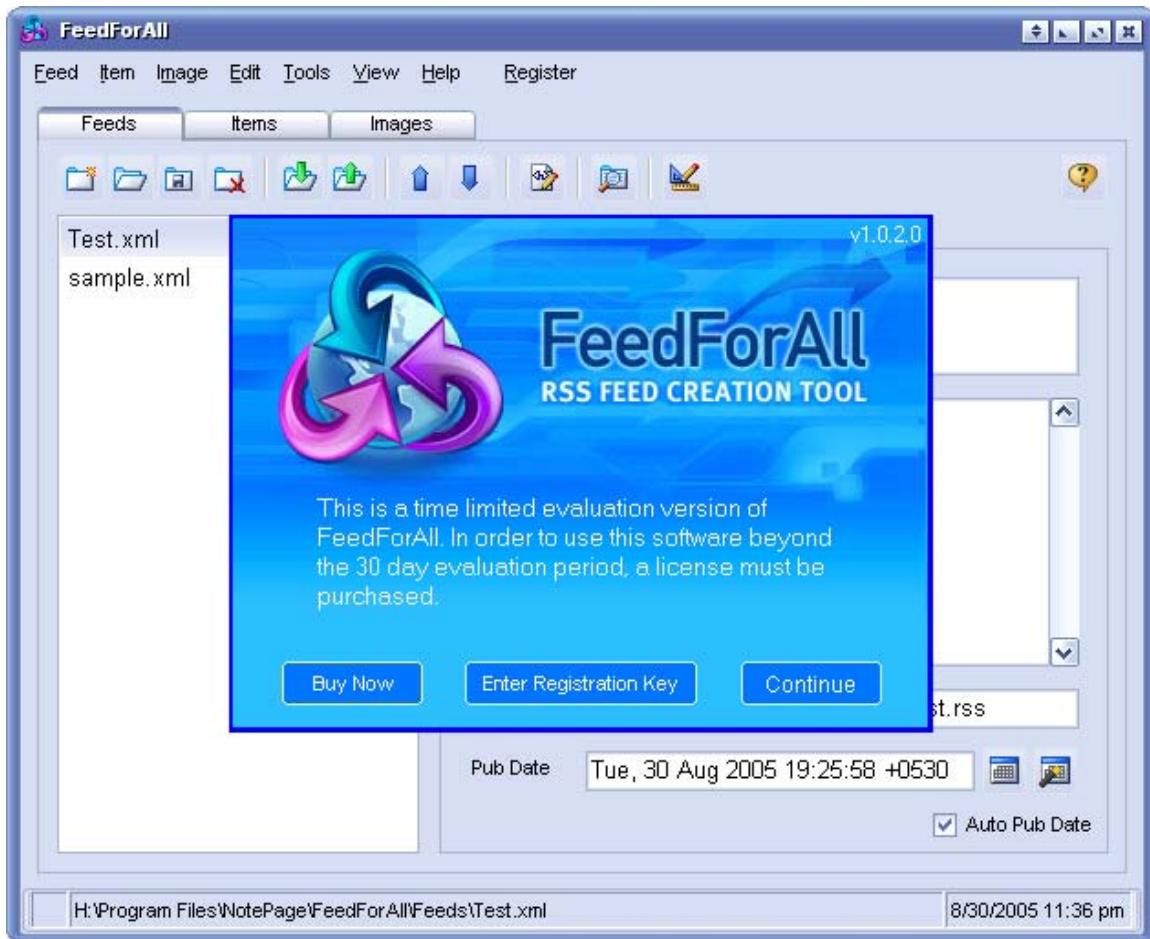


FeedForAll is available for both windows and Mac platforms as of now...  
Download the appropriate version from the website.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.feedforall.com/software.htm>. The page has a purple header with "Welcome!" and a main heading "RSS & Podcasting Software". On the left is a navigation menu with items: Software, Order, Download, Support, Reseller, Press, About us, and Solutions. The main content area features two software options:

- FeedForAll** - robust RSS feed creation software. Easily create, edit and publish RSS feeds and podcasts with desktop software. It includes buttons for "MORE INFO", "ORDER NOW", and "DOWNLOAD". Below the text is a stack of Windows desktop screenshots and the text "windows 98, NT, 2000, ME, XP or 2003".
- FeedForAll Mac** - easily make, edit and publish RSS feeds, podcasts and iTunes on a Mac. Built-in wizard simplifies the feed creation process. It includes buttons for "MORE INFO", "ORDER NOW", and "DOWNLOAD". Below the text is a stack of Mac OS X desktop screenshots and the text "Mac OS X 10.3.9 or better".

After downloading and installing the software, Run FeedForAll. You will be welcomed with a splash screen. FeedForAll is a software that is available as a time based trial software. You can launch the trial application by clicking on 'continue' the software will work only for 30 days after which one have to purchase it and enter the registration key to continue using that software.

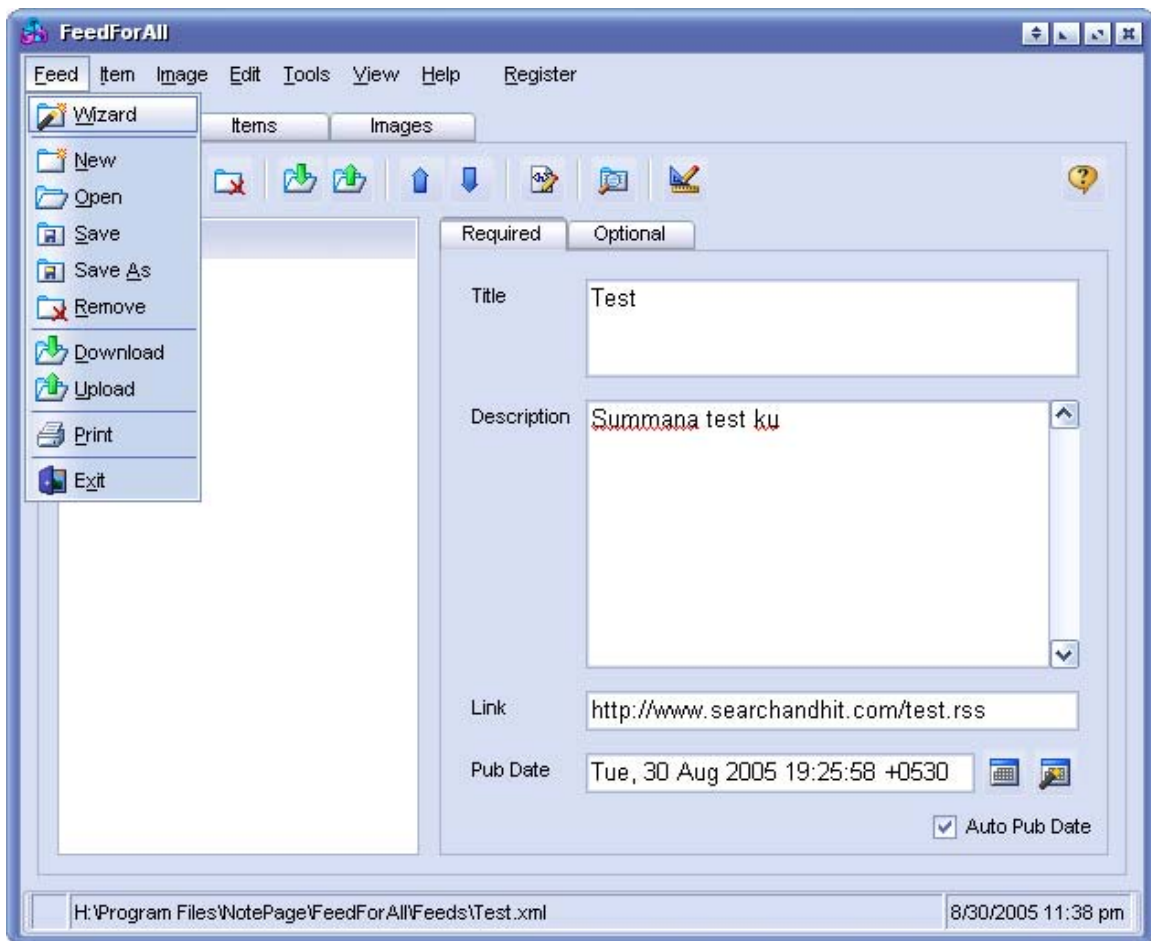


After loading the application one can create RSS in two ways

- Use the wizard that will walk you through the RSS creation process.
- Manually navigate to the Channel or items and enter the text for title, description and link fields.

We shall first use the FeedForAll wizard to create our RSS feed. This wizard could be launched by clicking

[Feed->Wizard](#)



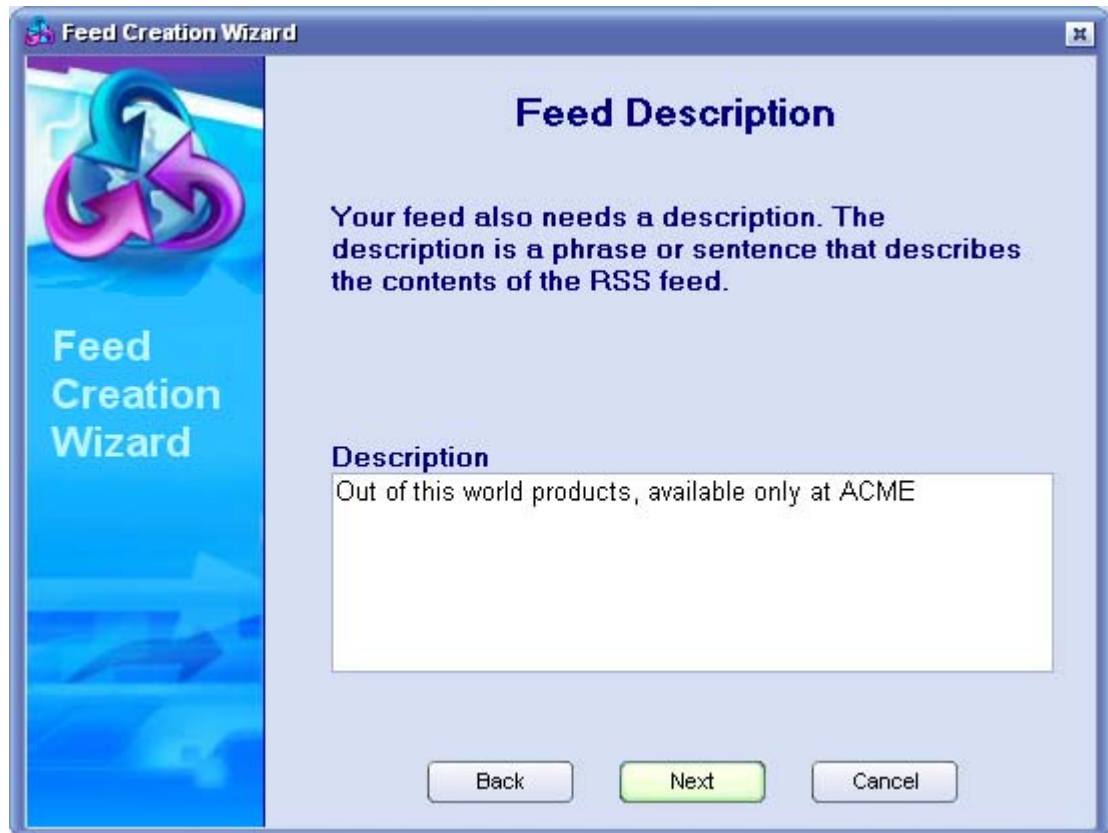
An introductory screen about the wizard is splashed once the wizard button is clicked. Just click on OK and go ahead.



Next comes the Title screen. Here you have to enter the title (name) of the feed. These fields are mandatory for a feed. If you are sharp enough, you can find that this field corresponds to the 'title' attribute of the channel element in our RSS file that we created before.



Next comes the Description screen where one can enter the description of the channel.



Then comes the screen where you can enter the name of our website. This field corresponds to the link attribute of the channel element of RSS.

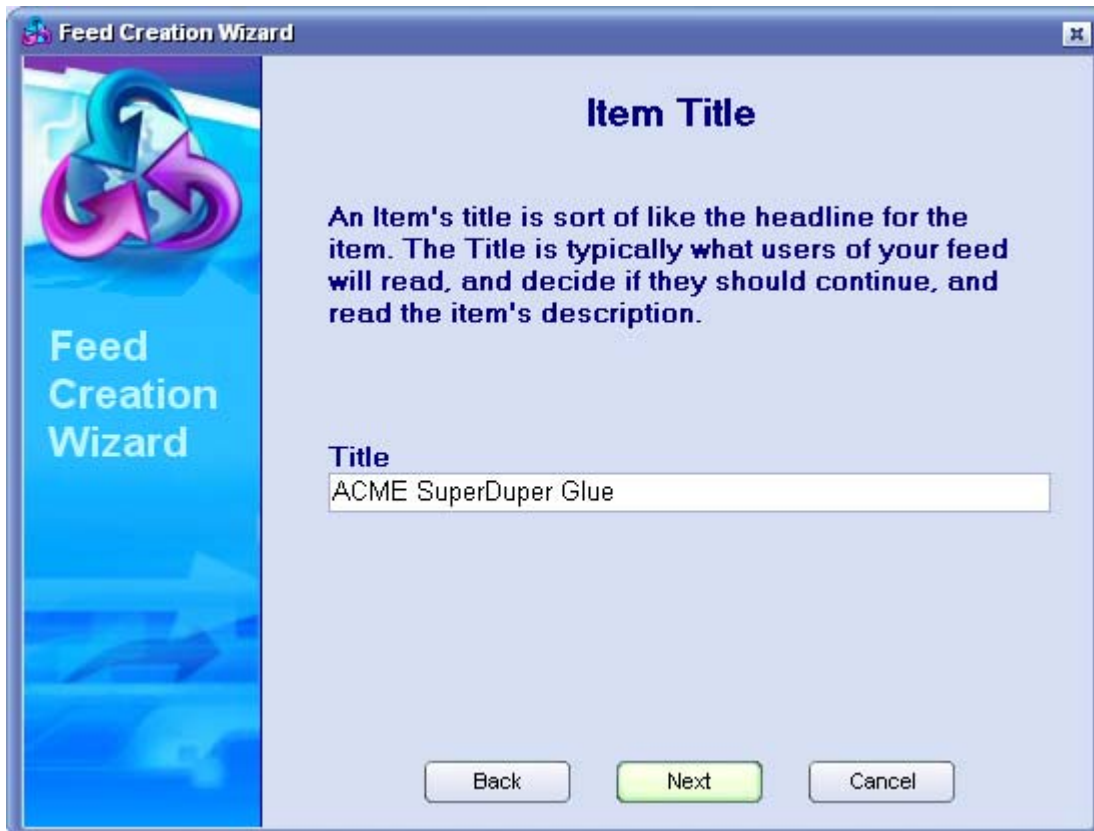


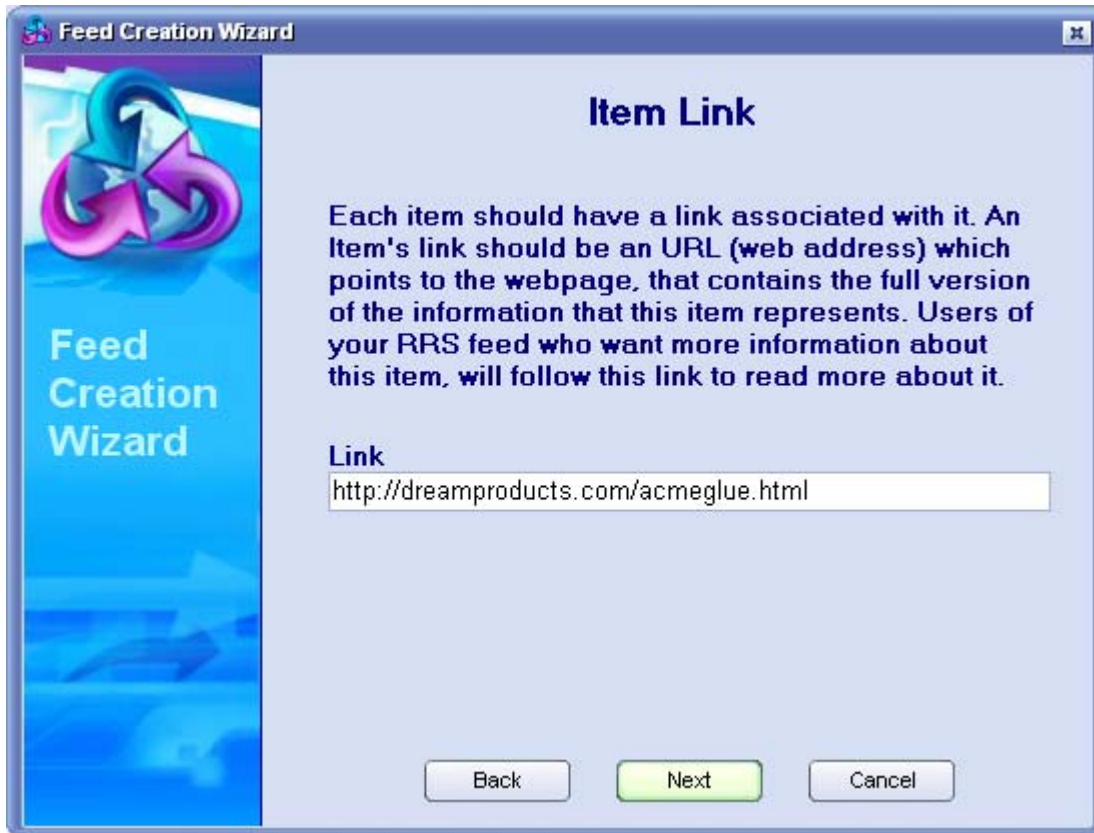
Every RSS feed should have at least one Item. Thus you will be presented an Item entry screen after you finish configuring the Channel element. Entering an Item is quite similar to that of the channel (or Feeds, going by the screenshots that are presented here).

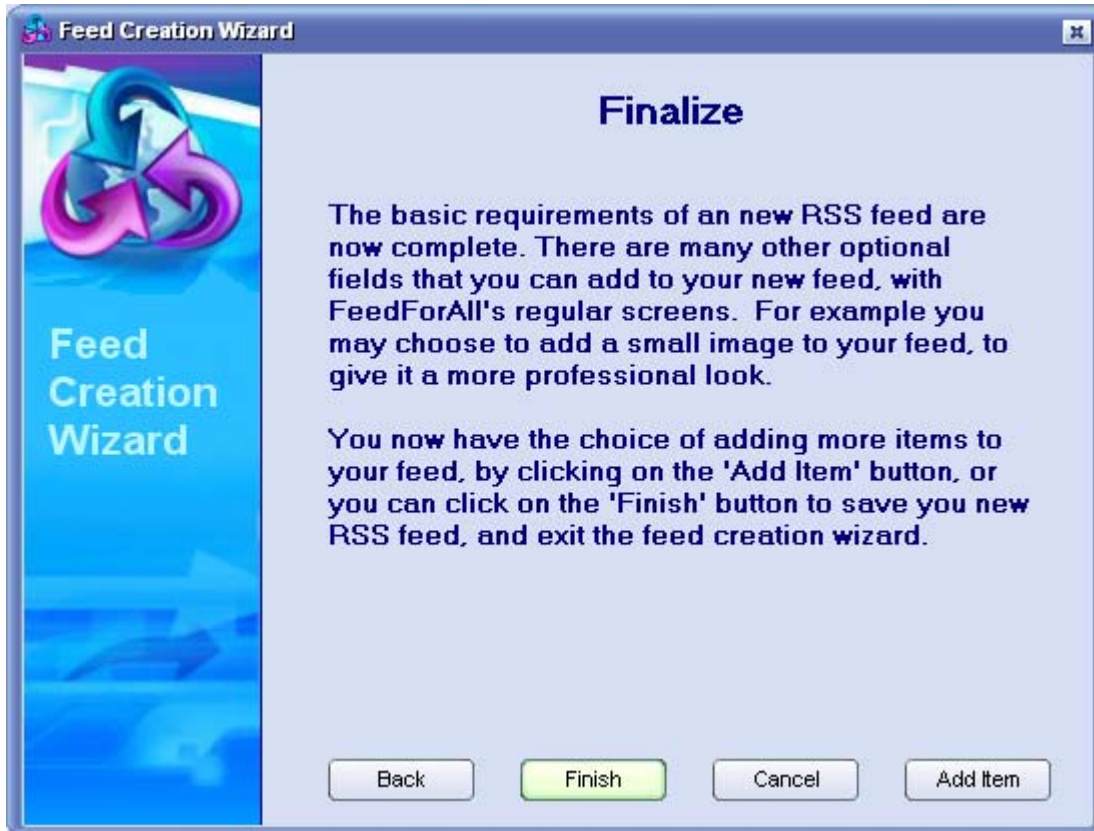
If you still feel lost, you can always come back to the screenshots given below which will give you some insight on configuring an Item.







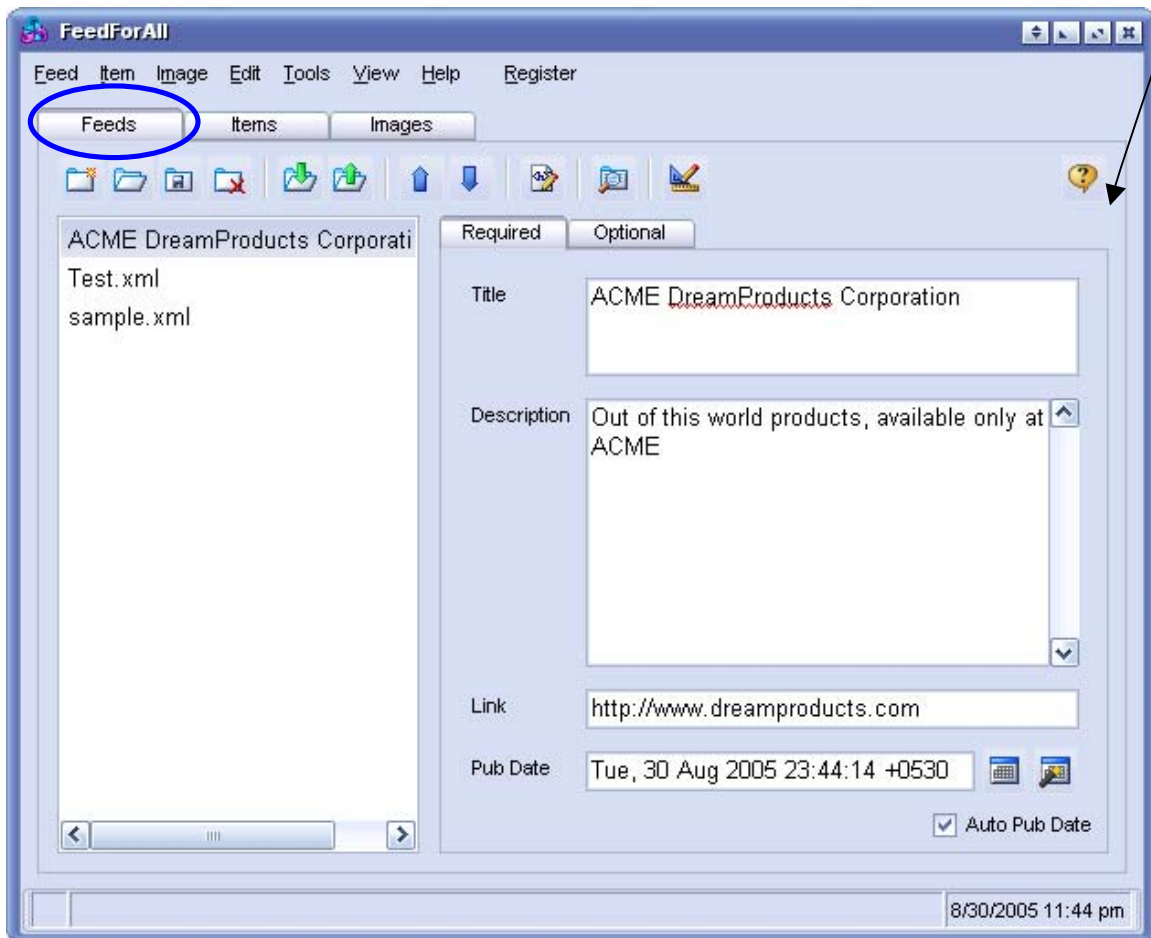


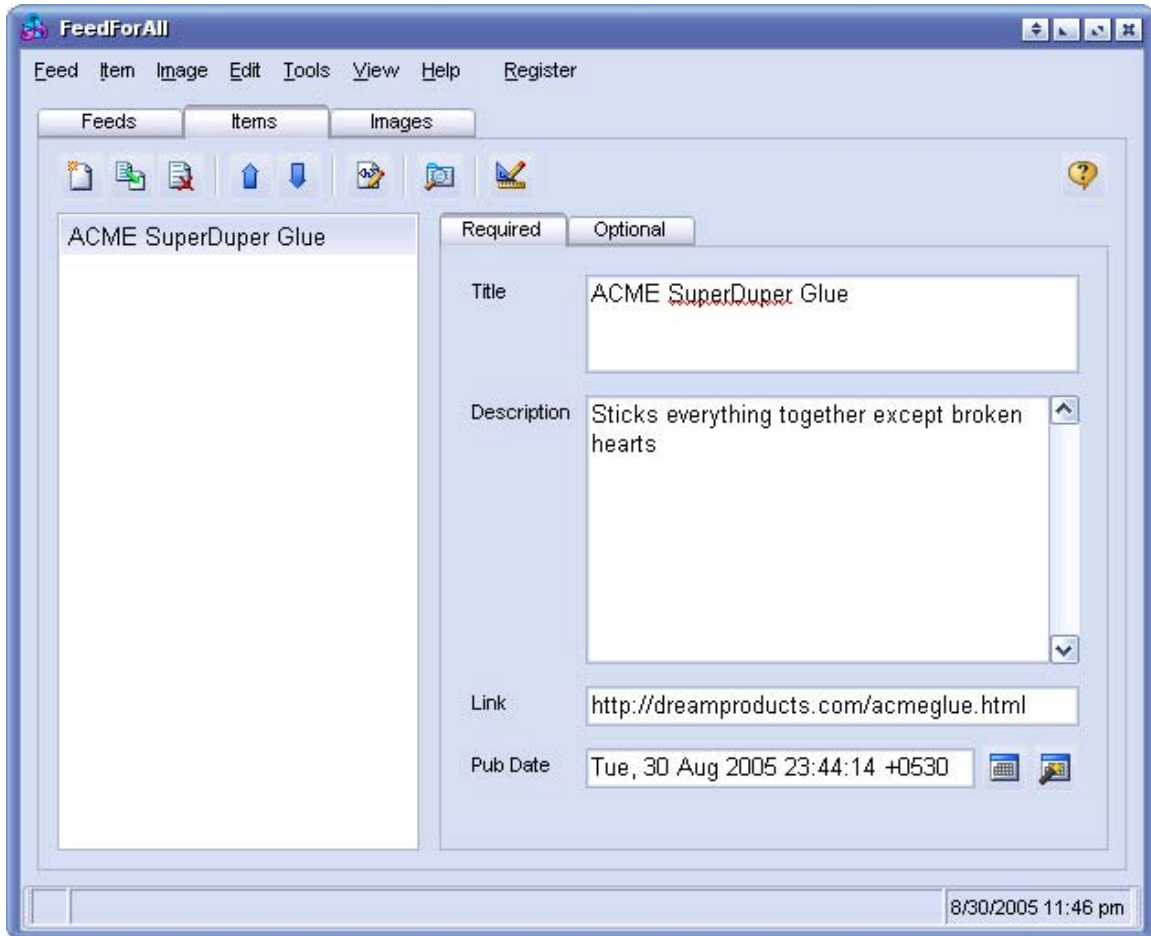


Once you finish entering an item you can either click 'Finish' or you can continue to add more items by clicking on 'Add Item'

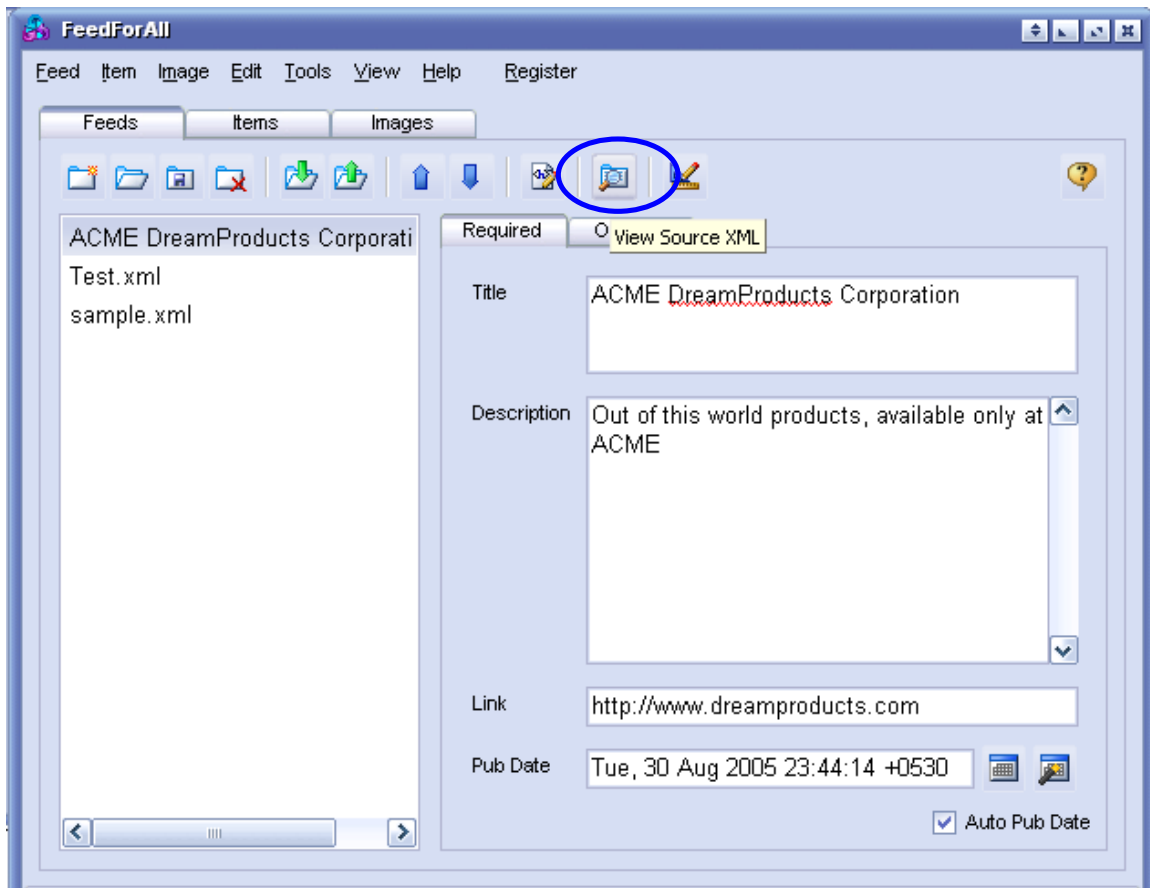
I chose to stop with one item and thus clicked finish .You will then be taken to the main screen which has all these details filled in appropriate columns.

Clicking on the feed, item tabs will populate their details such as title, description etc here





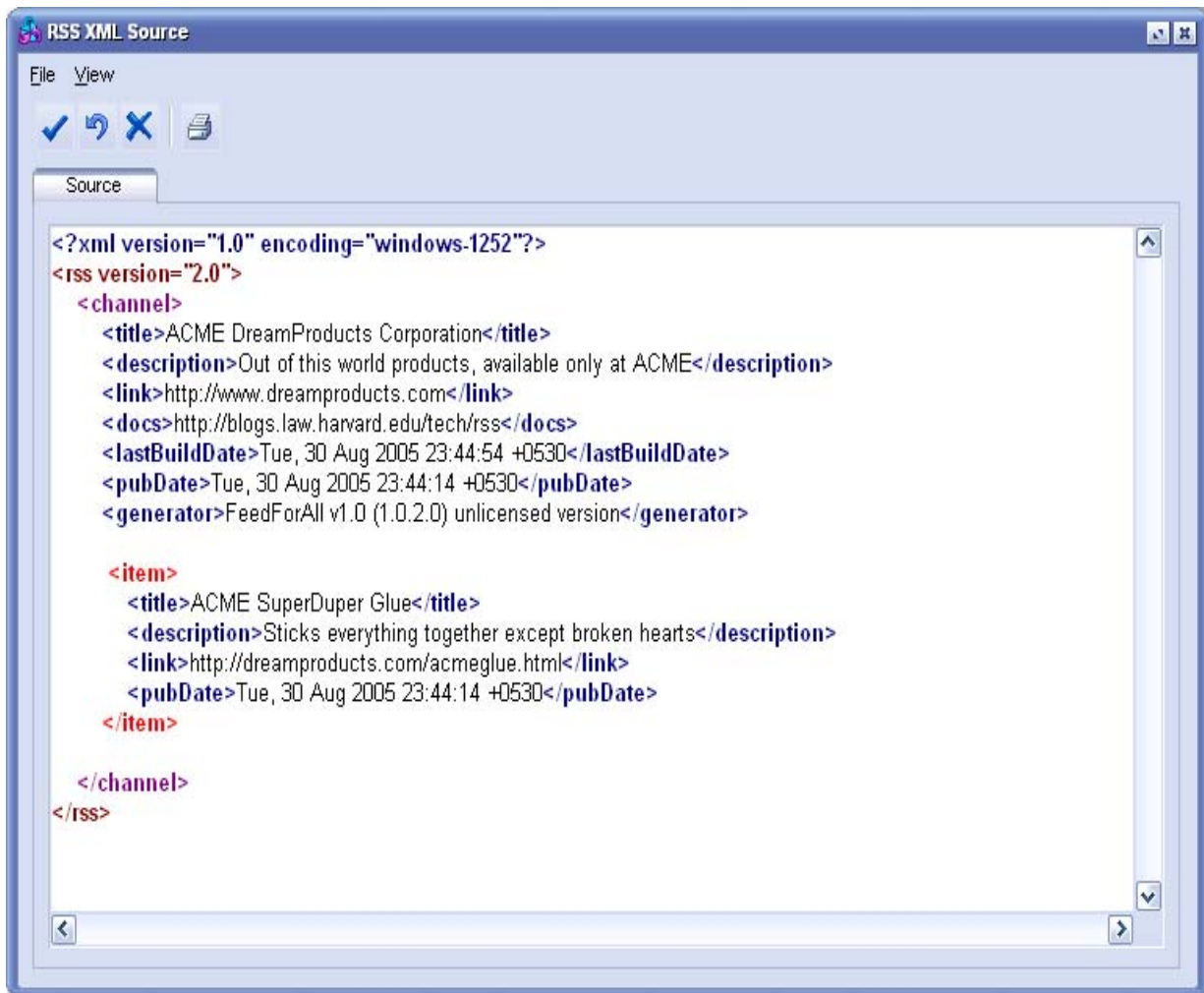
And for those people who are curious about the 'pub date' field in the screenshot, it just specifies the date on which the Feed or the Item is published.



And before we wrap off, I have got a surprise for you. Wouldn't it be nice if we can use the software to do all the hard work but can also see what it is up to if we really want to?

Yes, we can see what the software has created for us by clicking the 'view source XML' menu item which is highlighted in the previous screenshot.

Here it is... the final output of the software...



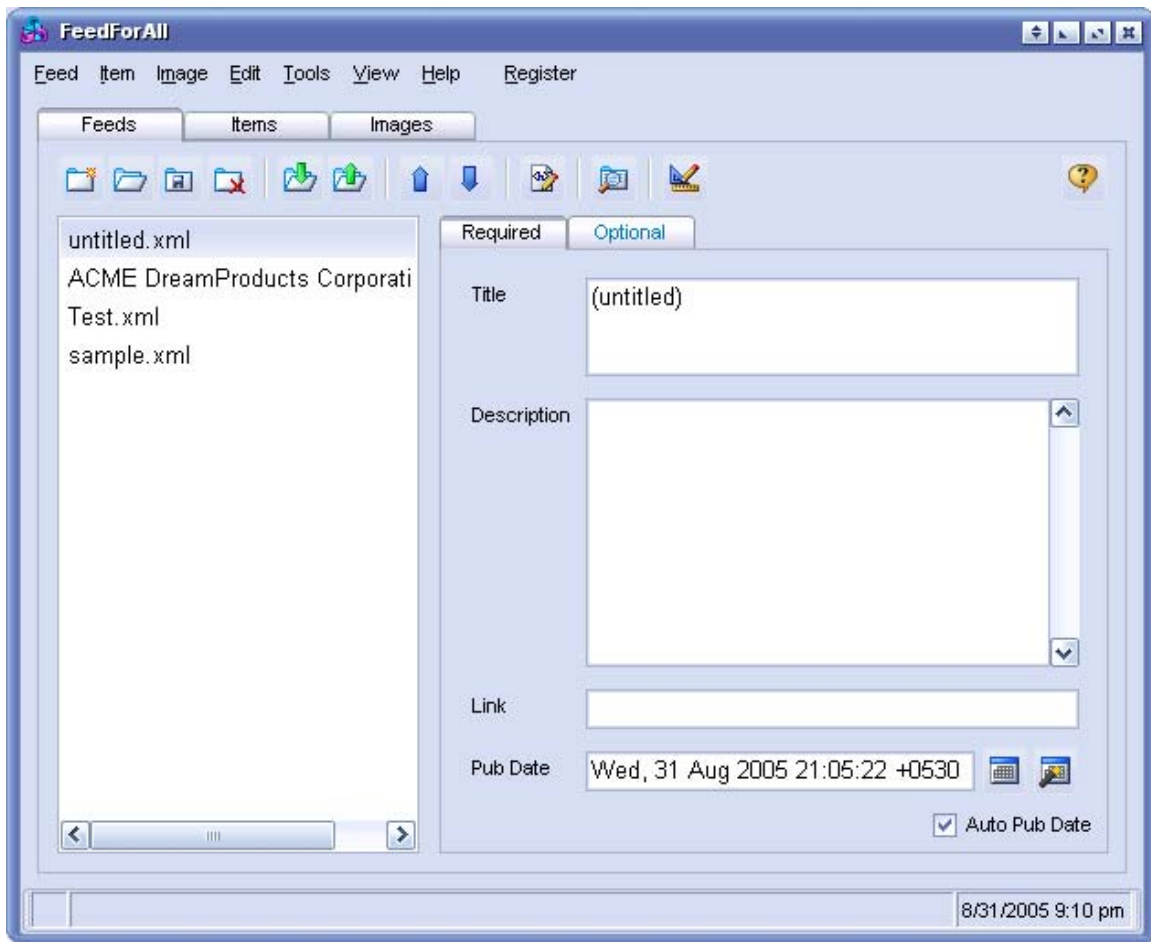
The screenshot shows a window titled "RSS XML Source" with a menu bar containing "File" and "View". Below the menu bar are four icons: a checkmark, a circular arrow, a red X, and a printer icon. The main area of the window is labeled "Source" and contains the following XML code:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="windows-1252"?>
<rss version="2.0">
  <channel>
    <title>ACME DreamProducts Corporation</title>
    <description>Out of this world products, available only at ACME</description>
    <link>http://www.dreamproducts.com</link>
    <docs>http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss</docs>
    <lastBuildDate>Tue, 30 Aug 2005 23:44:54 +0530</lastBuildDate>
    <pubDate>Tue, 30 Aug 2005 23:44:14 +0530</pubDate>
    <generator>FeedForAll v1.0 (1.0.2.0) unlicensed version</generator>

    <item>
      <title>ACME SuperDuper Glue</title>
      <description>Sticks everything together except broken hearts</description>
      <link>http://dreamproducts.com/acmeglue.html</link>
      <pubDate>Tue, 30 Aug 2005 23:44:14 +0530</pubDate>
    </item>

  </channel>
</rss>
```

And for the people who prefer to enter these details manually, you can exit the wizard and start typing in the details in appropriate columns as shown below.





## Another Example:

We have provided a 'behind the scenes' captures in the following pages. This is a live site and let us explore the whole story.

Feel free and explore them.

Here is the web page which has the article that is to be published.



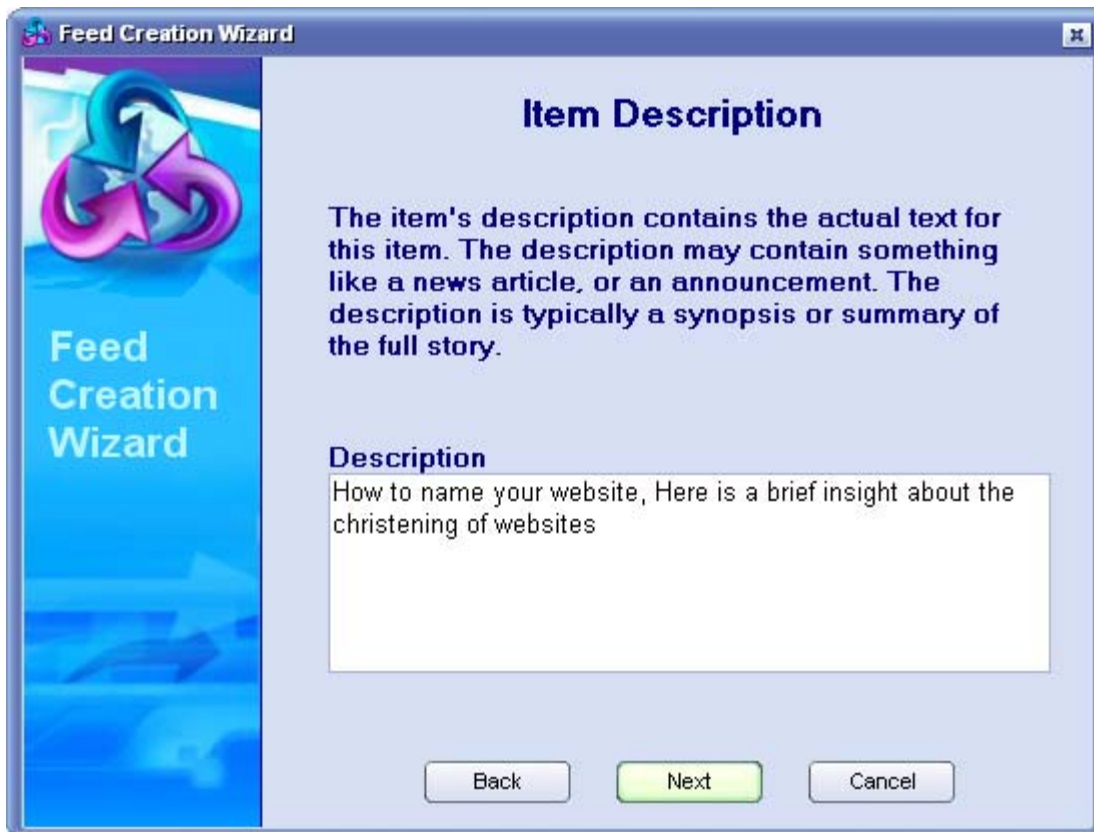
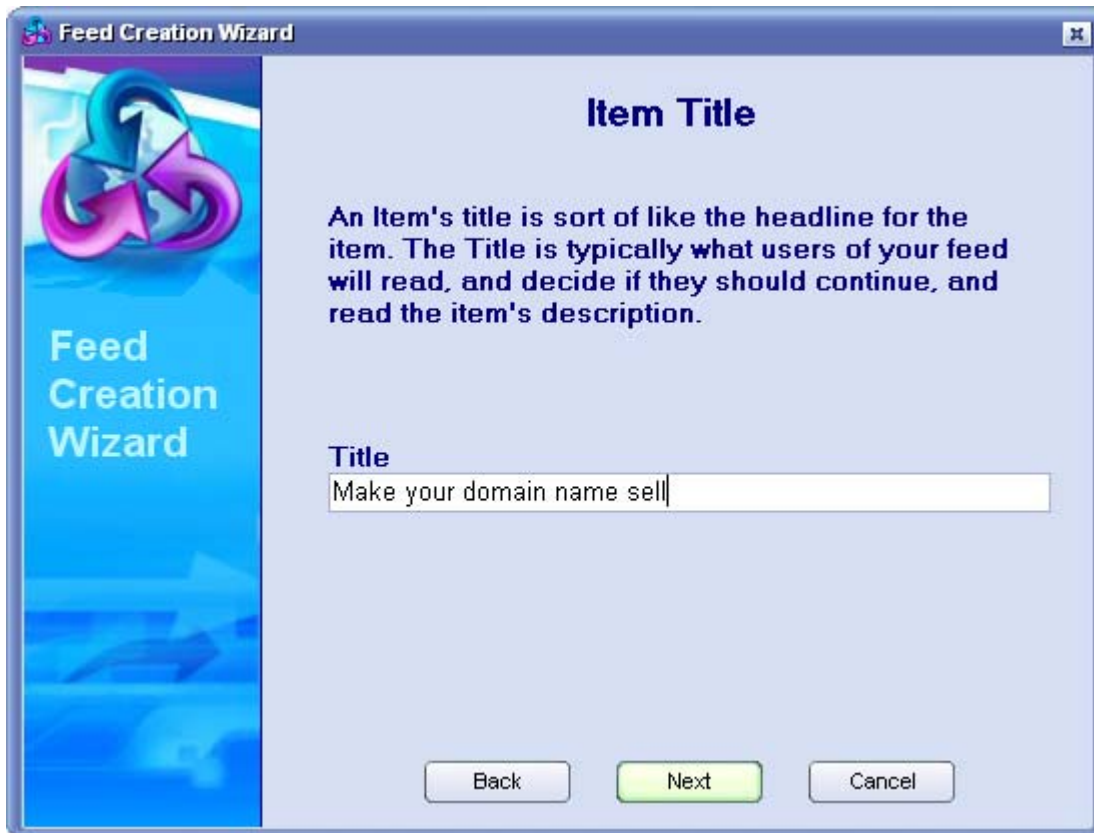
The screenshot shows the ACEi Intellect website. The header features the logo and a navigation menu with links: PROFILE, PORTFOLIO, SERVICES, QUOTE, CONTACT US, and HOME. The main content area includes a banner with a group of business professionals and the text "Integrating Intelligent Solutions". Below the banner is an article titled "Make your domain name sell" with the following text:

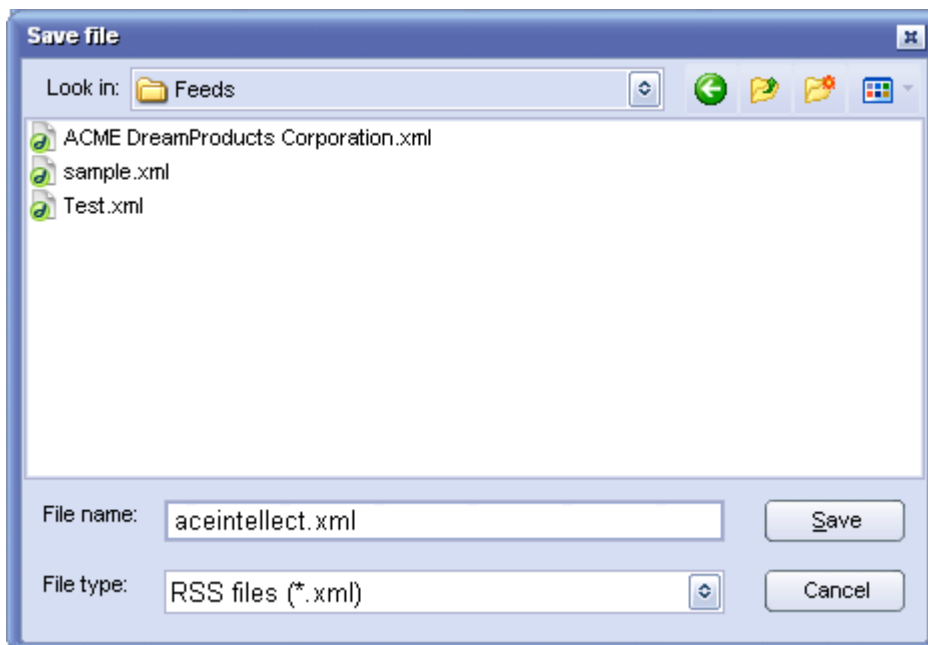
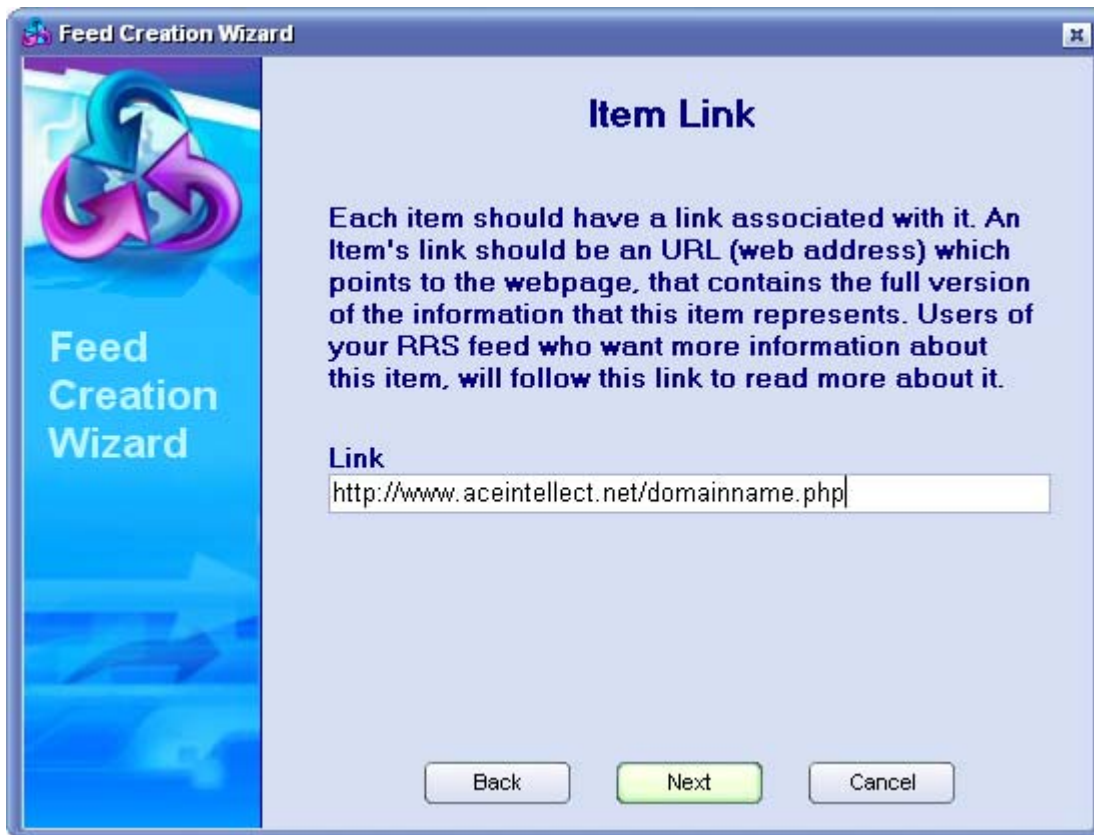
The name for your website can be a real challenge now. If you were trying for a domain name in the 90's it would have been a job done even before you start. The extend of the web in every household had made the web pages to proliferate beyond comparison. This has made a new domain name seeker's job more tedious like never before. However there is nothing to panic about.

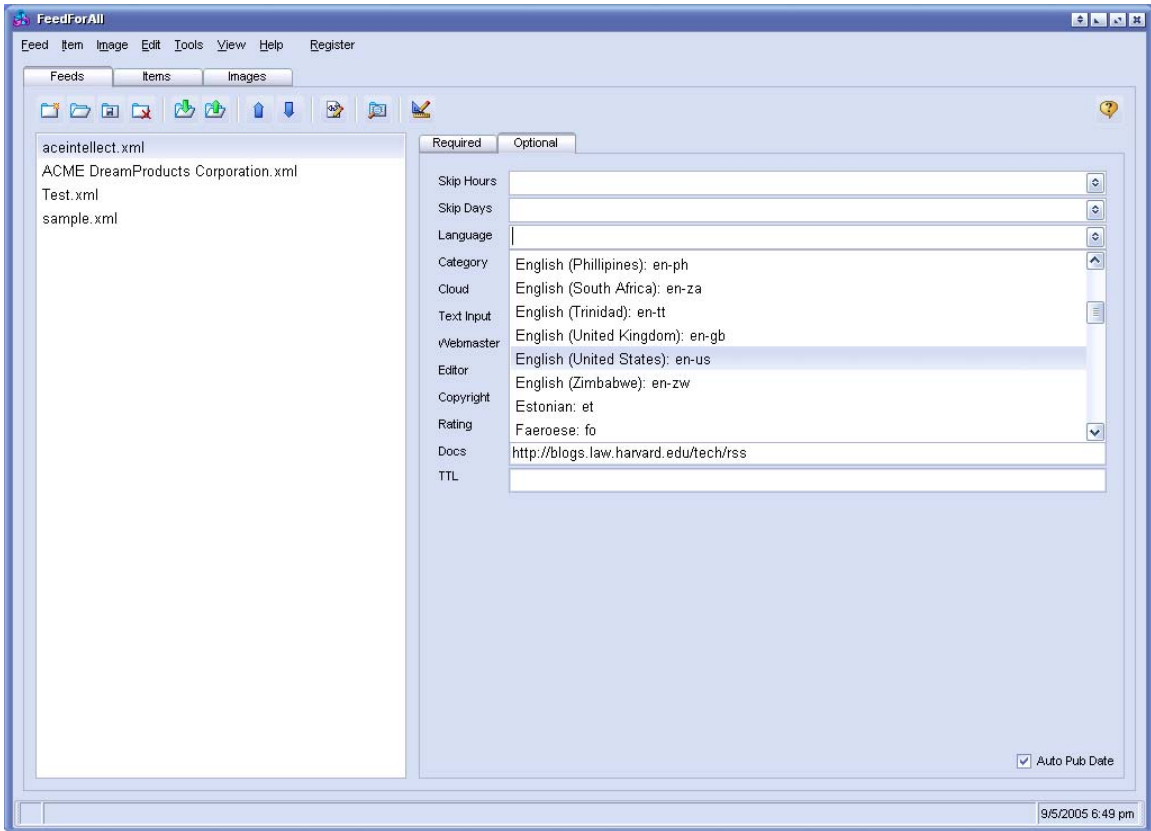
I would give you a simple formula to make things easy as far as your domain name is concerned... Imagine that you have got a new baby girl and is in the task of naming her. What would be your top priority? Obviously you would like the name to be a highly attractive one. Hmm...It's the same for your domain name. It should be able to catch the attention of the reader and make him or her to remember it again as and when needed. I hear you moan "Bookmark will do that job". But a beautiful name can prompt your reader to bookmark your page. I happen to browse through a site, <http://www.overheardinnewyork.com> and even before glancing through the content, I bookmarked the site. Also, I have never regretted my decision as the content was worth my time.

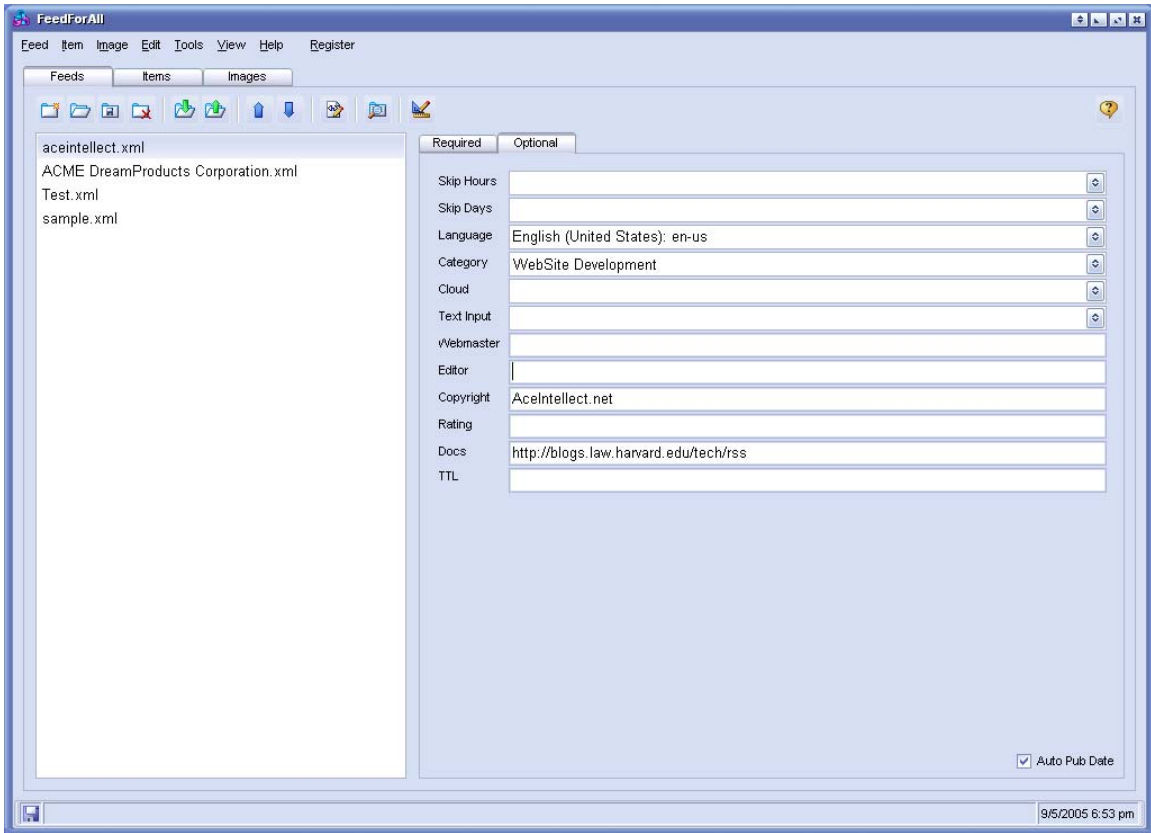


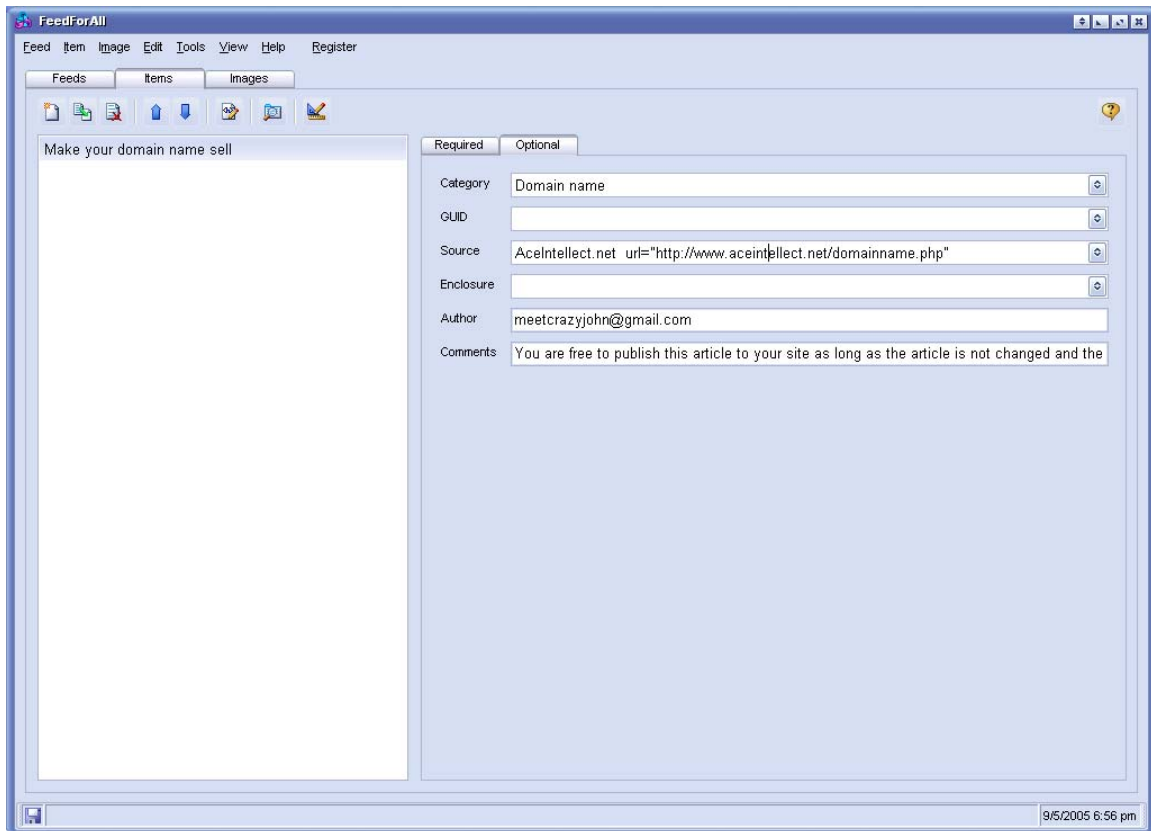













Once the feed was generated, The resulting XML file was validated using the online validator from <http://www.feedvalidator.org> . The result is shown below

# FEED Validator

FOR ATOM AND RSS

**Congratulations!**

 This is a valid RSS feed.

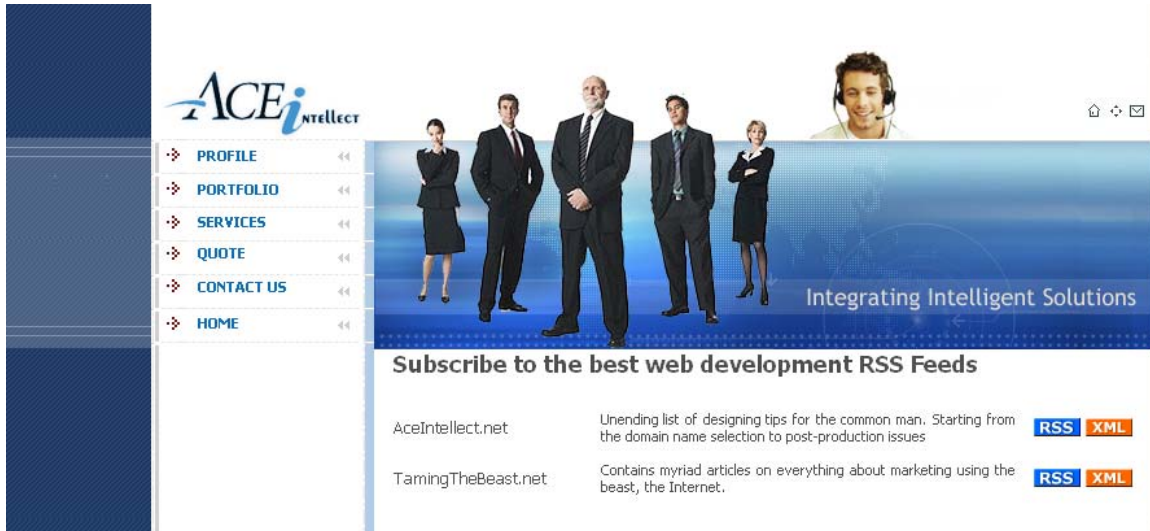
If you would like to create a banner that links to this page (i.e. this validation result), do the following:

1. Download [the "valid RSS" banner](#).
2. Upload the image to your own server. (This step is important. Please do not link directly to the image on this server.)
3. Add this HTML to your page (change the image src attribute if necessary):

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The links to the RSS Feed that we created was listed as a separate webpage as displayed below.



That's it guys, the RSS feed is published and ready to go.

**Note:** You can also embed audio (pod casting) and video (video casting) in your feeds using the `<enclosure>` tag.

**RSS Aggregator:** If the term 'RSS Aggregator' sounds scary, you will be relieved to hear that they are nothing but software that are used to read RSS feeds. They are also known as News Aggregators.

In order to read the RSS feeds the users will need such RSS aggregators. Just google for RSS Aggregators and you will find a whole list of aggregators that you can use.

## How Do I Read RSS Feeds?

If you want to read the RSS feeds, you need a News Aggregator or RSS Aggregator. If you are one of the lucky persons, who use Opera to browse, then you can rest easy, since Opera has a RSS reader built in. If you need more functionality or your browser doesn't have any aggregators built in, you can always download the RSS reader software from the Internet.

One such RSS reader is Feed Reader, which could be downloaded at <http://www.feedreader.com>

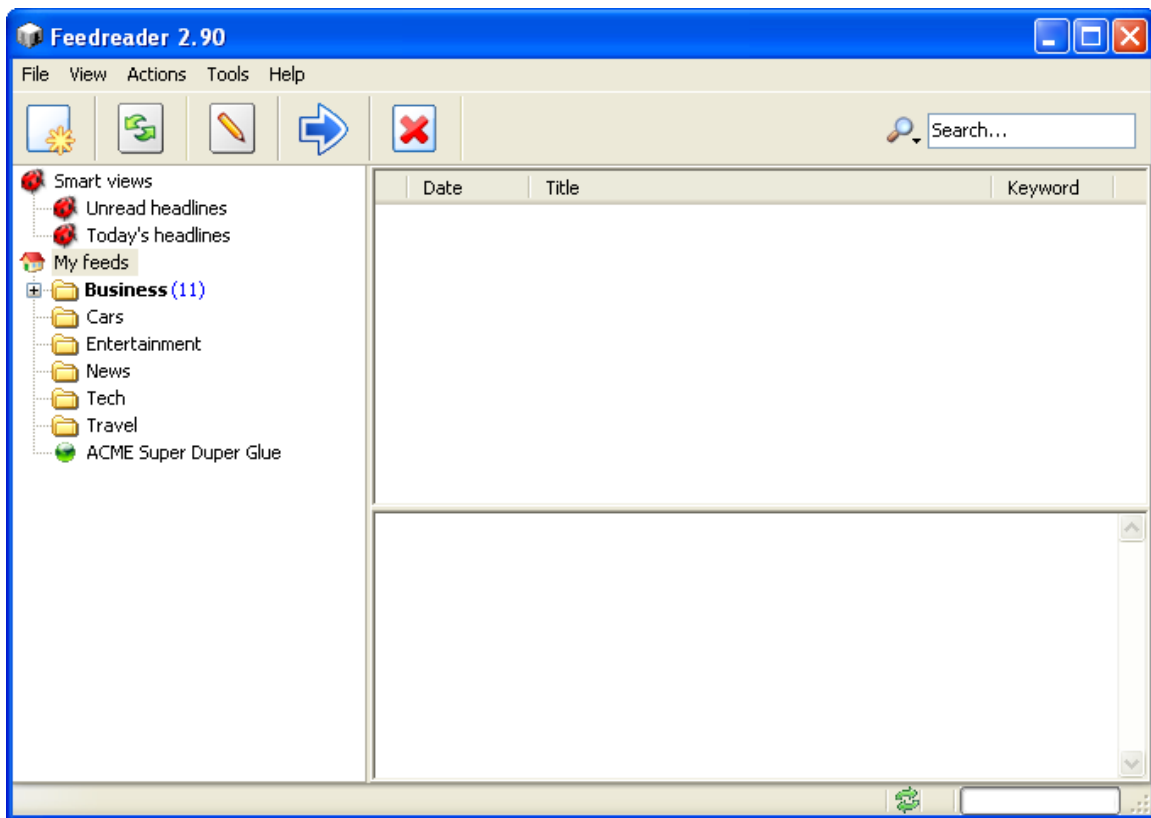
For Mac users **NetNewsWireLite** is available at <http://ranchero.com/netnewswire>  
Linux users can get **Lifera** at <http://liferea.sourceforge.net>

In order to read a RSS feed you must first subscribe to it. You can subscribe to RSS feeds by clicking on the orange XML icon or the blue RSS icon, which will be displayed in the websites.

We have provided a step-by-step, do-it-yourself demo using Feed Reader below:

### **Step 1: Launch Feed Reader :**

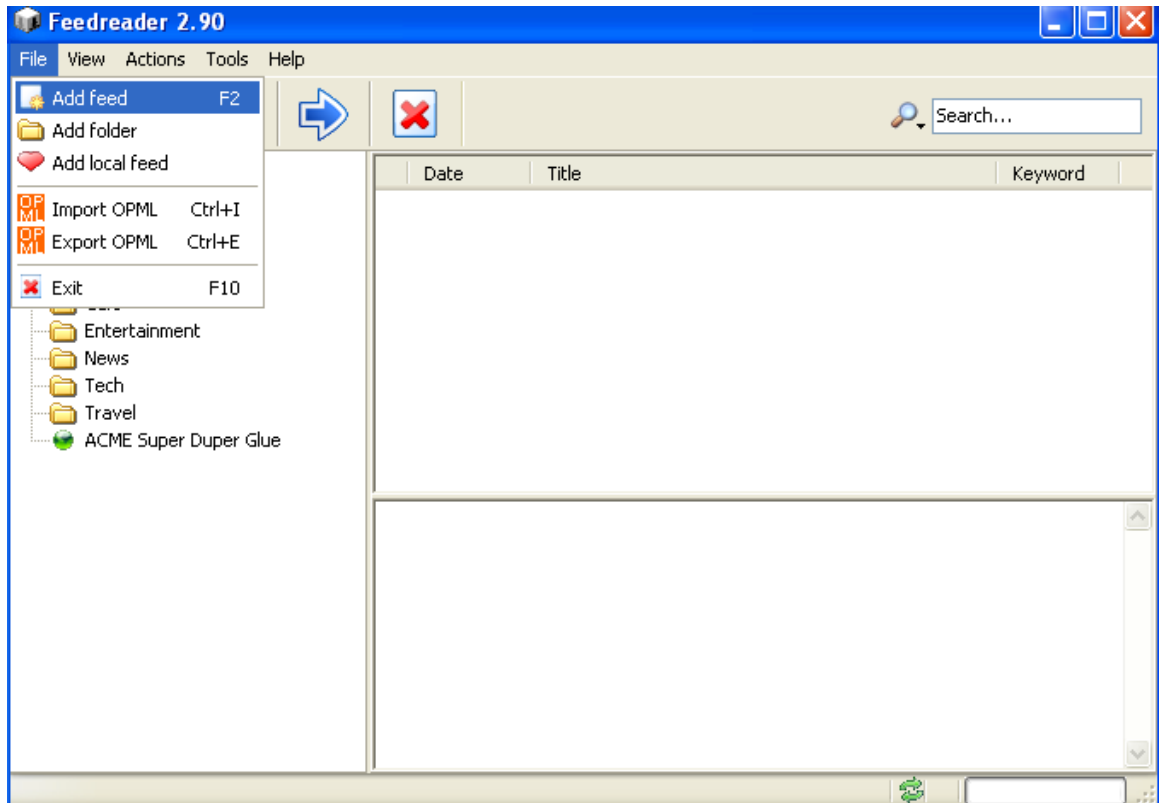
Once you launch Feed Reader, you'll be welcomed with a screen that looks as follows:



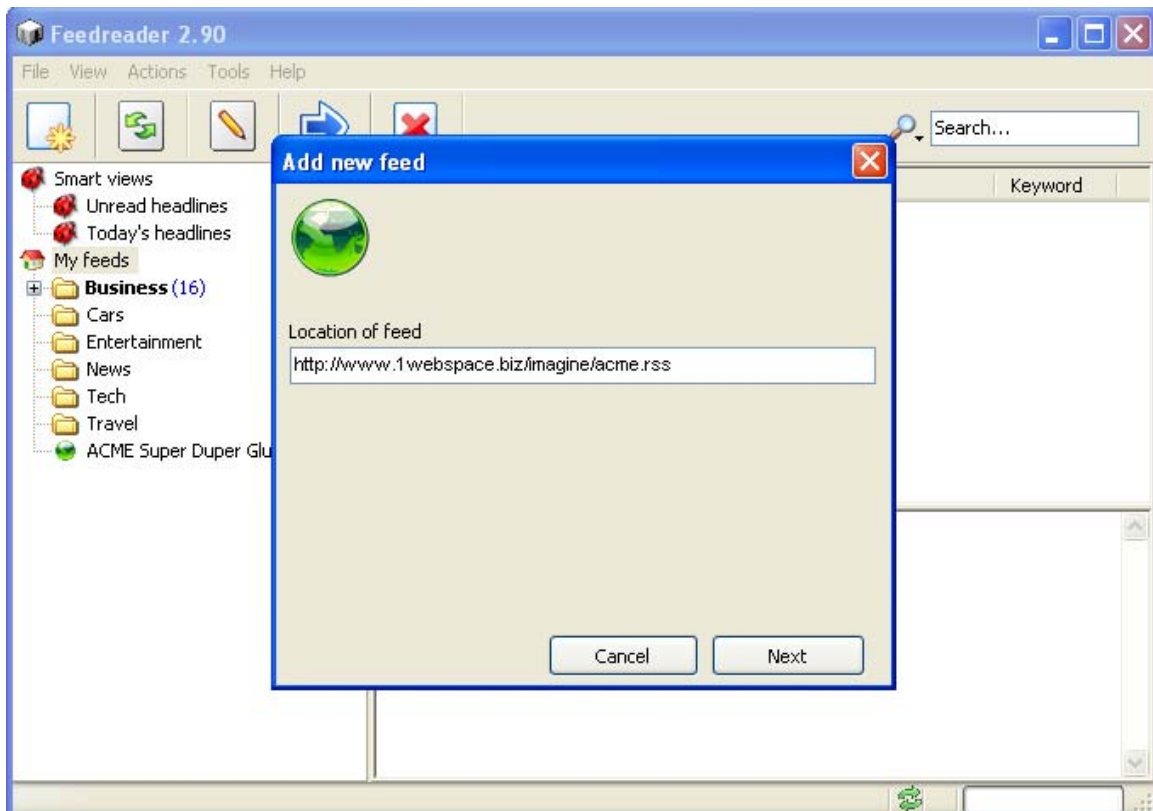
## **Step 2: Subscribe to an RSS Feed :**

You can subscribe to an RSS Feed by directly entering the URL of the feed.  
This can be done by clicking.

[File->Add Feed](#)



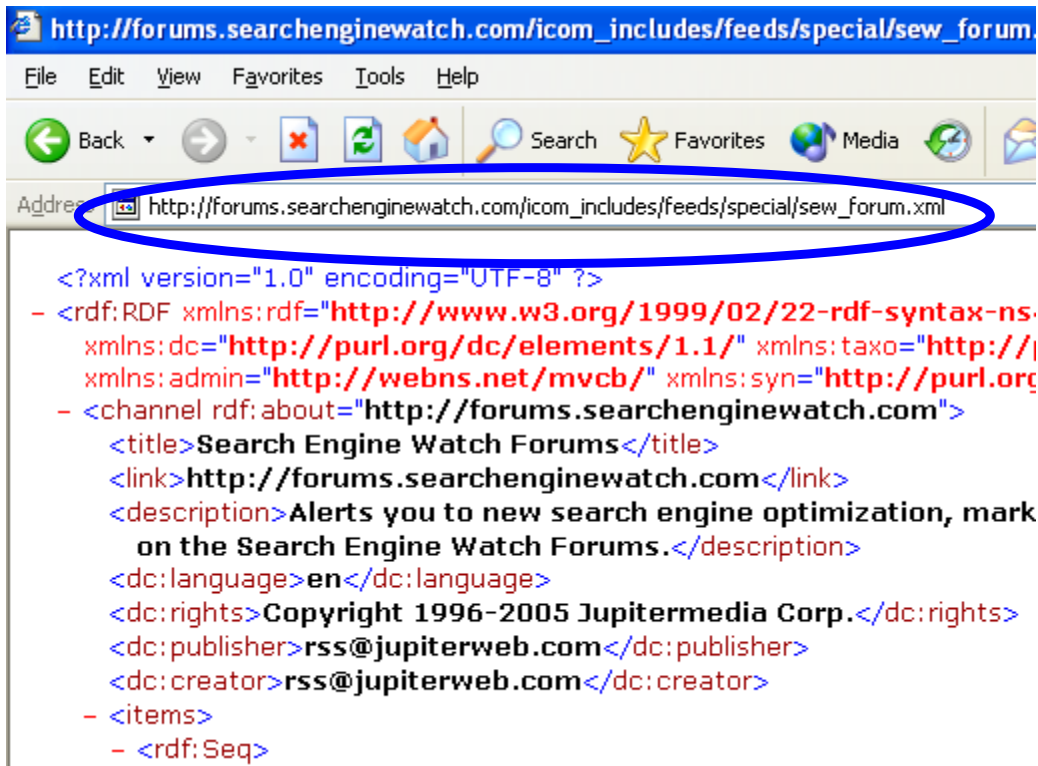
You get a dialog box asking for the URL of the RSS feed.



If you are not sure about the URL then just click on the icons like

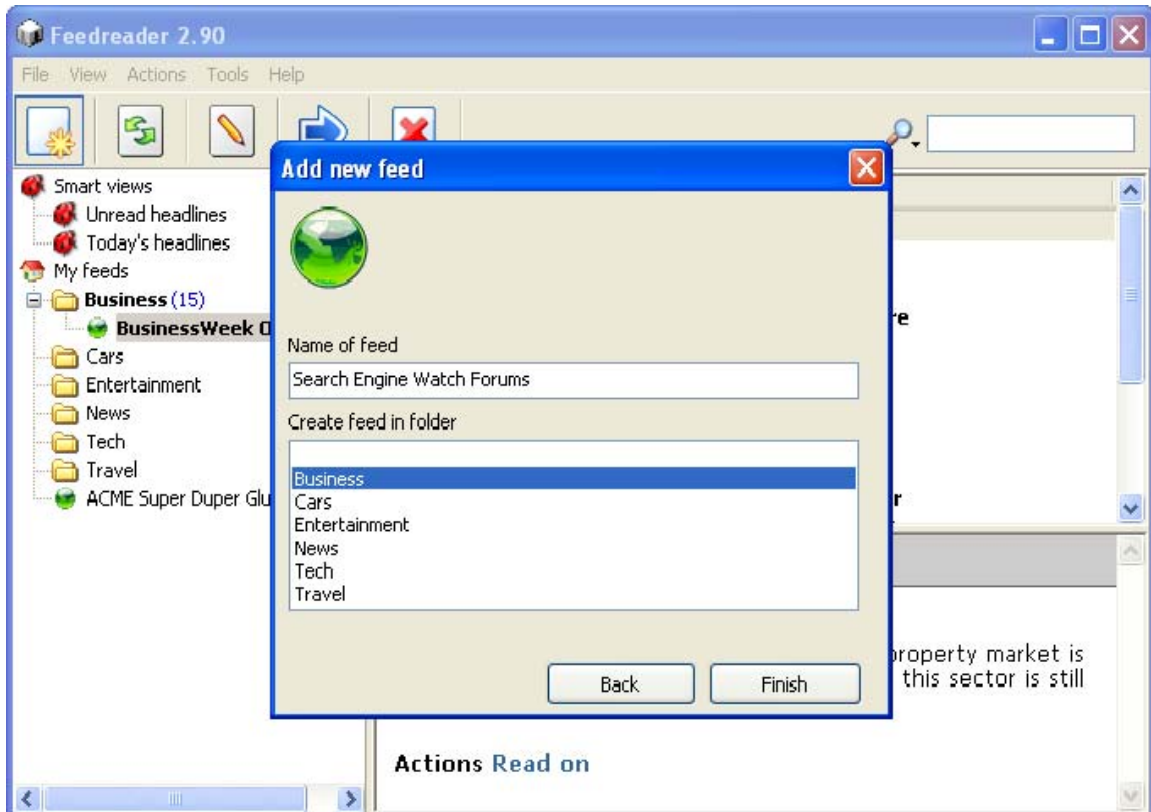


Once you click them in IE you see something like this...Do not worry if you cannot understand the content that is displayed. All you need is the URL of this page.



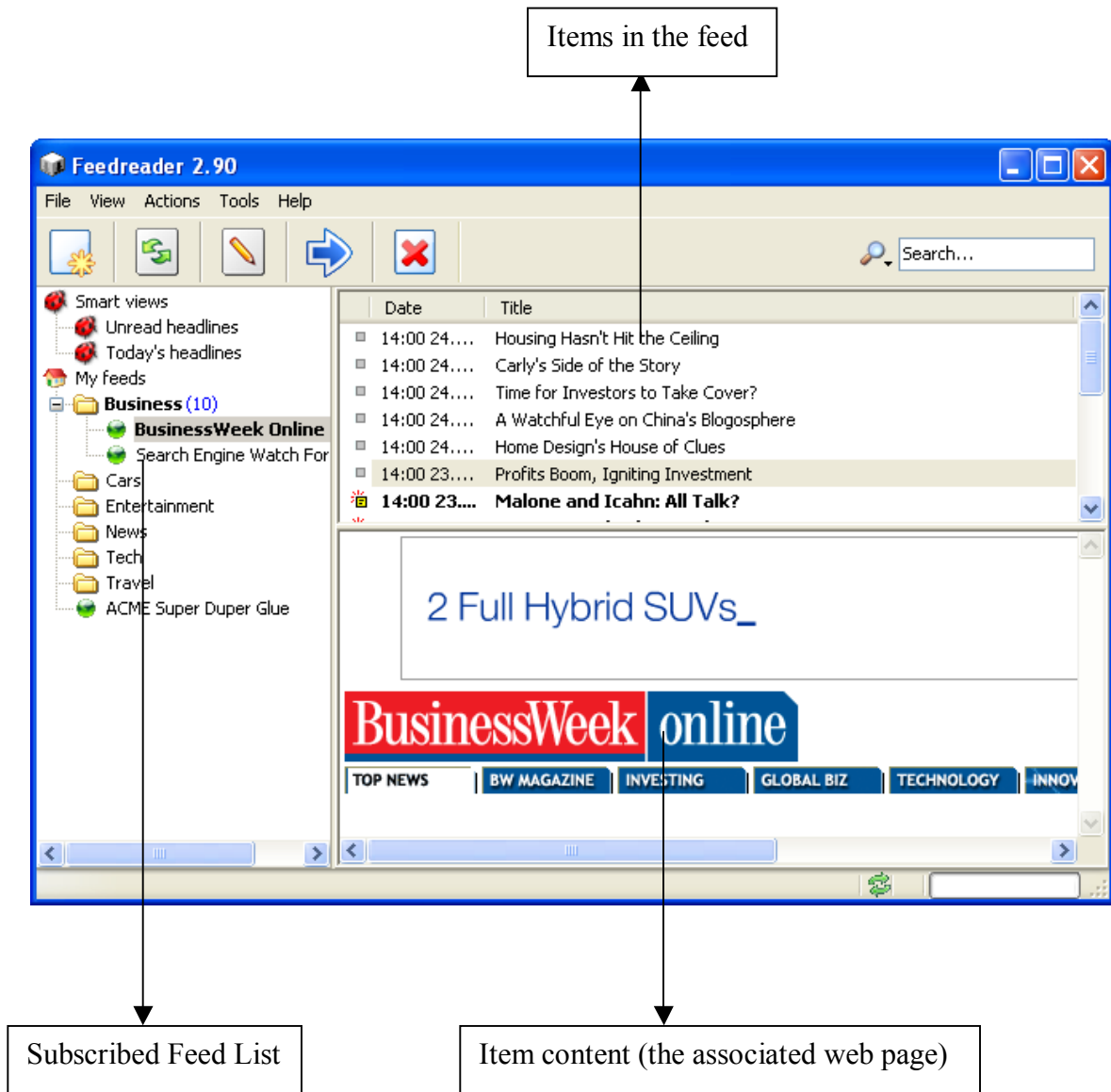
Just copy paste the URL i.e. text in the address bar of your browser in the Add feed window of the Feed Reader (shown in the previous screenshot) then click 'Next'.

Feed Reader prompts you to enter the category under which the feed is to be placed.



After selecting the category, click 'Finish'. Now you can see the title of the feed that you had registered in the feed list.

All the items in the feed are displayed in the right pane. If you want to read any item just double click on the title that is displayed in the right pane. The feed content will be opened in the bottom right pane as shown in the screenshot.



Whew! That was quite a mouthful, wasn't it? Anyways, you are now equipped with the powerful marketing weapon which will make marketing a breeze.



## Conclusion

The RSS technology has come here to stay and in all possibility may make the present content management and publishing systems a thing of past. You are now armed with all the vital weapons required to grab your part of the RSS pie. Now it's time to pass on the RSS ball to your court.

**Good luck!!!**

## Recommended Reading

**"Learn how to make a life-changing income of \$100,000 to \$250,000 with your Internet business... even if you're a computer dummy!"**

**Review: "The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet" by Corey Rudl**

I've just finished reading the brand-new version of Corey Rudl's top-selling Internet marketing system, *"The Insider Secrets To Marketing Your Business*

*On The Internet,"* and frankly, I'm overwhelmed by the huge amount of critical wealth-building information he's managed to pack into these **two hefty binders and 3 CDs!**

But I guess I shouldn't be surprised; after all, when the box containing these materials showed up at my door, it weighed in at **over 10 pounds!**

That's 10 pounds of the most comprehensive **marketing strategies, test results, case studies, tools, and ideas** for generating a life-changing income online (from \$1,000s to over \$1 million) you're ever likely to read!

I'm talking about information like...

- Step-by-step advice for starting your own Internet business **in as little as 48 hours!**
- How to build a top-selling web site... for less than \$100!
- Where to find hot products to sell (in 20 minutes or LESS)!
- 100s of FREE and cheap online tools, resources, and software
- How to get 1,000s of qualified NEW visitors to your web site... for FREE!
- How to **get #1 rankings in the search engines** and get tons of FREE traffic from the "Big Guys" like Google!
- Secrets to writing sales copy that can **increase sales by up to 400% (or MORE)!** And much more!

If you're unsure who Corey is, you should know that he's been a recognized expert in online marketing for a decade now. Not only has he generated **\$40,000,000 in online sales**, his sites also attract **450,000 visitor a week!**

What's *really* great about Corey is that he can show ANYONE how to have a **wildly profitable Internet business** (that takes just a few hours each day to run)...

*... even if you're an absolute computer dummy!*

And if you *already* have an Internet business, he can help YOU, too. The advanced sections of his system show you how you can **increase your sales by 400%... 700%... even as much as 1,000%!**



**I give Corey's system the highest rating possible!** Its 1,300+ pages of step-by-step lessons contain the exact SAME tested and proven fast-growth strategies he has personally used to generate over \$40 million in online sales -- *starting on a shoestring budget!*

And it's the SAME SYSTEM that literally **1,000s of his students have used** to drive "truckloads" of cash out of the Internet.

I strongly urge you to check out Corey's wealth-building system as soon as possible! [Click here](#) for a FREE preview.

**To Get Additional Internet Marketing Tips & Tools To Help Build And Grow Your Internet Marketing Business [Click Here](#) Today And Look For The "Free Bonus" Link!**

# **To Get Additional Internet Marketing Tips & Tools To Help Build And Grow Your Internet Marketing Business See The Additional Sources Below...**

## **Additional Resources:**

**Finally revealed after hundreds of years of research**

...

### **15-Minute-a-Day "Praxis" Gives Total Mastery of Time, Energy, and Money**

Find out how a simple **15 minute a day "praxis" allows anyone to get whatever they want.** Attain total mastery of Time, Energy, and Money.

Learn It in a [FREE 18 Day Step-by-Step Interactive Multimedia Experience](#) Based on Cutting Edge Speed-Learning Psychology

Each Fun Daily Lesson Takes Just a Couple Minutes ...

[Instant FREE Access for Everyone](#)

**New To Internet Marketing and need some tips?**

[Click Here](#) for the best Internet Marketing Course Available

## **Domain Names**

<http://DomainAbbey.com> Domain Names for your new website are a bargain here

## **Web Hosting**

[Host4Profit](#) - Offers your 1st account for only \$25 and then all additional accounts are only \$5 with no limit!

## **Merchant Account**

[Authorize](#) - This is a real pro merchant account and a super cost- We search high and low before we personally signed up with this merchant provider

[PayPal](#) - Another Merchant account with a Free signup if you are just getting started and doing lower dollar sales volume

## **Autoresponders**

[Automatic-Responder.com](#) - Offers the most reliable autoresponders on the planet! If email deliverability is important to you signup today!