

What is an RSS feed?

Internet users often find themselves with one major problem: staying up to date with the many websites they're interested in.

RSS feeds were invented to solve this 'staying up to date' problem.

RSS feeds aren't meant to be read by humans, they're meant to be read by computers. All they contain is brief information about the website's content and links to each item.

Most people use a program or website to keep track of their chosen RSS feeds.

Having found an RSS feed, you 'subscribe' to it. By subscribing, you tell your chosen software to check the feed regularly.

This saves you the trouble of visiting the site to check for changes.

Typically the program allows you to sort, annotate, and save the items in the feed, and of course, to keep track of which ones you've read and which ones are new.

Some browsers will automatically detect the feed and show a link to it, using an orange icon, at the right of the URL bar.

You can read RSS feeds with desktop software, i.e. software you download and install on your computer, for instance:

[FeedDemon](#) and [Awasu](#) for Windows

[Newsfire](#) and [NetNewsWire](#) for Mac

The Firefox browser also allows you to subscribe to a feed as a 'Live Bookmark'.

You can also read RSS feeds through your browser by signing up to online services:

[Bloglines](#)

[My Yahoo!](#)

[Google Reader](#)