

About RSS

RSS is an acronym for Really Simple Syndication. Used to publish blogs, podcasts, and news feeds, it brings Internet content to a browser automatically without entering a URL each time. Web pages, blogs, and podcasts offering RSS are frequently identified by a rectangle (usually orange or blue) with the initials RSS or XML, or simply a *Subscribe* link.

To utilize RSS requires the use of an *aggregator* or *reader* that is used to *subscribe* to the RSS feed. When the aggregator is launched, it checks all subscribed feeds for new content, retrieves it, and makes it available to the user. When the aggregator is next launched, it retrieves content added since the previous time.

Some web browsers are also aggregators. Apple's Safari was one of the first. Stand-alone aggregator applications are available on both platforms as well. Web-based feed readers are also available and provide the advantage of being available to you from any computer with any browser.

Using Safari

When browsing with *Safari* on the Macintosh, if you notice a blue RSS icon at the far right of the Address Bar, then the site offers RSS. If you click the icon, a page appears containing titles and descriptions, each with a "Read more..." link. (The URL now begins with *feed://* instead of the familiar *http://*.) If you create a bookmark of the feed, when you select this bookmark in the future, you will see an updated RSS listing!

Safari can read multiple RSS feeds. After setting Safari preferences to update RSS in the Bookmark Menu or Bookmark Bar, simply create a folder in one of those locations to store your RSS bookmarks. When you browse a site with an RSS feed, click the icon, and drag the feed URL into your RSS folder. (Be sure it is stored in one of the places indicated in the *Update articles in* choice in preferences.)

Safari can also provide an RSS "Search." When viewing feeds you wish to search, enter a search term in the *Search Articles* field.

Using a Web-Based RSS Reader

There are a number of web-based readers available that can be found with a simple search. Most are free to use after a simple registration process, offer customizable interfaces, manipulation of categories and feeds, and a list of potential feeds.