

How to use RSS Feeds and Social Bookmarking Tools to help you get organised

RSS feeds



RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is an easy way to keep up with the changing content of the web sites you are interested in.

When you subscribe to the RSS feed of a web site, you are alerted to new content on that web site. You can subscribe to as many feeds as you want, and you will simply need to check one site, your **feed reader** (also called 'news reader' or 'RSS reader') to get a summary of the latest content from all your preferred web sites.

You can use RSS feed to:

- receive 'Table of Contents' alerts as new journal issues are published.
- receive updated search results for a saved search that you have performed on a database.
- be alerted to new content on blogs and wikis in your subject area.
- subscribe to podcasts such as BBC radio programmes.

How does it work?

- 1) Register with a **feed reader**. Commonly used free web-based feed readers include **Bloglines** (www.bloglines.com/) and Google Reader (reader.google.com/)
- 2) Look for an orange  or  symbol or 'subscribe' button on the sites you are interested in. This tells you that the site has a feed that you can subscribe to.
- 3) Subscribe to the feed. Some sites will guide you through the subscription process, even allowing you to choose your feed reader from a list of options. If not, follow these steps:
 - Right click on the orange button and select 'Copy Shortcut' or 'Copy Link Location'.
 - Open your feed reader. It should have an option to 'subscribe to' or 'add' RSS feeds. Select the option, and right-click to 'Paste' the feed URL.
- 4) You will now receive new content via your feed reader as soon as it is added to the web sites you have subscribed to. Simply check your feed reader on a regular basis.

Finding out more

- Check the Common Craft short video entitled '**RSS in plain English**'. It is available on the **Common Craft** web site (www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english) and on **YouTube**.



Social bookmarking

Social bookmarking is an extension of the “bookmarking” or “favourites” feature of your Web browser, and has additional features.

- It allows you to organise and access your bookmarks on any computer.
- When bookmarking a site, you give it one or more **tags**. A tag is a keyword that describes the content of the website.
- You can share your bookmarks with people using the same bookmarking tool as you.
- You can view the sites other people have bookmarked on the same topic as yours, thus increasing your knowledge.
- You can subscribe to the RSS feed of a particular tag, thus receiving notification whenever somebody bookmarks something with this tag.

Which social bookmarking tools?

There are many free bookmarking tools. Two are:

-  **del.icio.us**, one of the most popular. It is available at <http://del.icio.us>
-  **diigo** has features which make it particularly useful in an academic setting, including a sticky note and highlights feature and the ability to create groups and lists. It is available at www.diigo.com.

How do I get started?

- Register with the social bookmarking tool you have chosen.
- Download the toolbar (or buttons) to add to your browser. This will allow you to post and view your bookmarks at the click of a button.
- If you are using a computer in a corporate environment and are unable to download, you can use **Diigo**. You will still be able to post bookmarks easily with **Diigolet**.

Finding out more

- Check the Common Craft short video entitled ‘**Social bookmarking in plain English**’. It is available on the **Common Craft** web site (www.commoncraft.com/bookmarking-plain-english) and on **YouTube**.

www.library.dmu.ac.uk

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