

KEEP YOURSELF UPDATED WITH RSS

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Ever wonder how you can keep yourself updated with the recent medical knowledge despite your busy schedule? Don't have time to browse medical journal website for new information? To help you overcome those problems, let's learn a new technology called RSS.

What is RSS?

RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication. It is frequently updated content published by a website. Any information that can be distributed in this format is called a "feed." RSS feeds are used to stay current on topics of interest by monitoring selected web sites for new information and then feeding that information to a web page for you to access at your convenience.

Why should I use RSS?

RSS is a timesaver especially for a busy doctor. For example, lets say that you visit a number of sites (such as American Family Physician sites, Medscape headlines, BMJ news sites, or other related sites) several times. Rather than spending 4 - 5 minutes scanning each site looking for new information, you can subscribe to RSS feeds for those sites and the new articles will be delivered to you as they become available.

How do I know if a website offers feeds?

You will see this icon  to indicate an RSS feed is available. Some web sites use this icon  to display RSS feed capability. In addition your browser will tell you that the website offers feeds (see later in step by step instruction).

Does RSS only available in medical sites?

No, RSS available in any websites such as news, blog, stock exchange, email, etc.

Why use RSS feeds?

- Stay current with your favourite sites and journals stored on one page!
- RSS helps you manage and organize content. Organize your feeds by subject, research interest, news, fun and more!
- No more email overload!
- No more filing through bookmark lists.
- RSS works well with e-mail and web browser
- RSS maintains privacy and anonymity. You fully control the subscription to and removal from RSS feeds. You don't have to provide your e-mail address or any other personal information when selecting the feeds you want to syndicate.

Does RSS subscription cost money?

No, it's usually free.

What do I need to do to read an RSS feed?

Get a feed reader. There are two types:

Web-based: With this type of reader, you can check your feeds from any computer, which is very convenient but it comes at a cost: limited functionality and speed eg Google Reader and Bloglines.

Application-based: FeedReader, Microsoft Outlook etc.

This month I will show you how to subscribe RSS feed using Internet Explorer 7 and Firefox 3 browser.

Internet Explorer 7

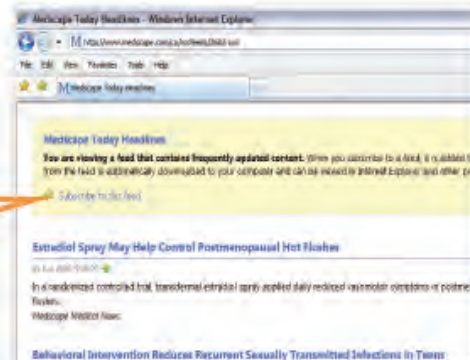


Step 1:

Let say you want to subscribe to the Medscape latest news. So log into the Medscape website and if the website has RSS feeder, you will notice that the Feeds button  on the menu bar of Internet Explorer will change color and a sound will play. Scroll down until you see the **XML** sign

Step 2:

Clicking on the **XML** sign will lead you into this webpage. It is the list the latest headline in *Medscape Today*. Click on "Subscribe to this feed".

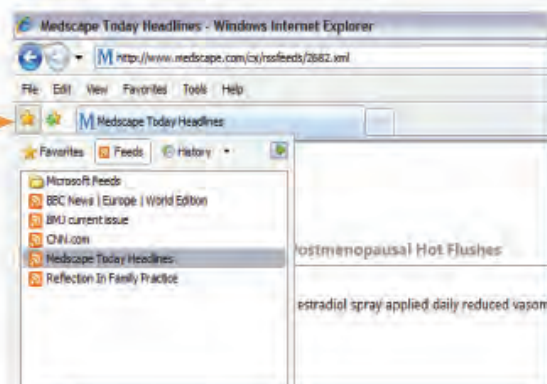


Step 3:

A dialog box will appear to confirm your subscription. By default Internet Explorer will put your subscribed feed under the Feeds Category in the Favorites Centre. Click "Subscribe".

Step 4:

To view your feeds, click the star button in the **Favorites Center**, and then click **Feeds**. The feed shows the latest headlines available in Medscape website. Should you find any news that interest you just click on that news header and your browser will take you to the Medscape website for you to read further.



Firefox 3



Step 1:

Let say you want to subscribe to the STAR online news. So log into the *thestar.com.my* website.

Scroll down until you see the  sign

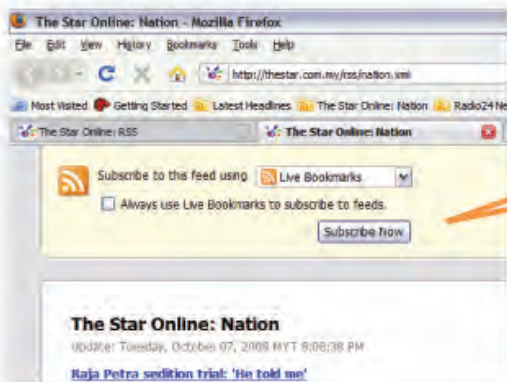
Step 2:

Clicking on the  sign will lead you into this webpage. You will notice the RSS sign  appeared on the far right of the address bar. Make your choice by clicking on the  sign.



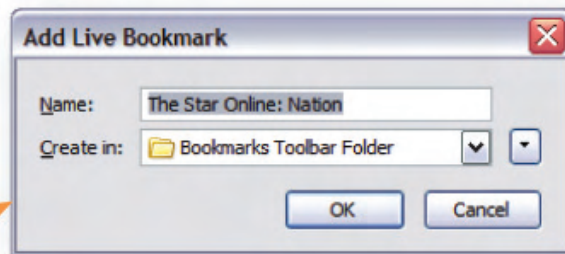
Step 3:

Click on **Subscribe Now** button



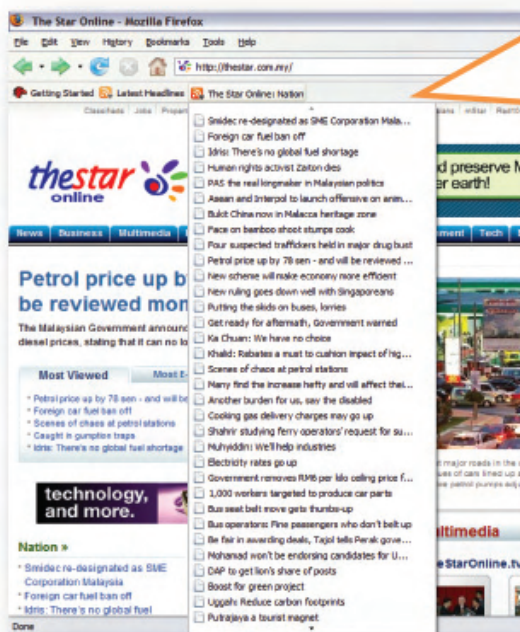
Step 4:

A dialog box will appear to confirm your subscription. By default Firefox will put your subscribed feed in the Bookmarks Toolbar Folder. Click "OK".



Step 5:

The newly subscribed feed will appear on the Bookmarks Toolbar. To view your feeds, click the  button and the updated news feed will appear as a drop down list. Should you find any news that interest you just click on that news header and your browser will take you to the related website for you to read further.



References:

1. <http://www.whatisrss.com/>
2. Internet Explorer Help File

One step further:

Some website offer RSS feed to be send direct to your web-based application. For example if you have a yahoo account you can select "My Yahoo" from the drop down list.

