

RSS Feeds and Aggregators

RSS Feeds and Aggregators oh my!

This session will demonstrate how to set up RSS feeds via Google Reader and NetVibes. You can share your collections of feeds with your students too! We will also examine the new ANGEL RSS widget that you can use in your courses. There will be time in the workshop for you to register and start setting up your feeds if you wish.



A hands on workshop

Level: beginner

Agenda

1. What is an RSS?
2. What are some benefits of using an aggregator? How to incorporate using an aggregator with your students.
3. Google Reader 101
 - a. Getting started, set up a couple feeds
 - b. Organizing your feeds
 - c. Sharing your feeds
4. Microsoft Outlook
 - a. Setting up a feed
 - b. Viewing your feed
5. NetVibes 101
 - a. Getting started, set up a couple feeds
 - b. Organizing your feeds
 - c. Sharing your feeds
6. ANGEL RSS widget

What is an RSS?

RSS in plain English (The Common Craft Show) www.youtube.com/watch?v=0klgLsSxGsU

“Real Simple Syndication”

Basically, RSS allows you to subscribe to your favorite blogs, news, podcasts or other content. An aggregator is the vehicle that allows you to collect, manage and organize those subscriptions.

RSS strips out all the graphics, design elements, and bells-and-whistles of a site and gives you just the text or main content. The power of RSS is two-fold: it circumvents your need to check a site for new content and it allows you to consume more content more quickly and efficiently.

Note: An RSS is different from a ‘bookmark’ or ‘favorite.’

Table of pros and cons:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RSS feeds are timely because subscribers get updates and breaking news as soon as they are available.• RSS feeds are cost effective because distribution and delivery costs are very low.• RSS works well with e-mail. An e-mail client is not required to view RSS feeds but they can also be received, viewed, and managed in your e-mail client.• RSS helps you manage and organize content. Messages and articles can easily be archived, sorted, and categorized automatically.• 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.• RSS feeds help you save time by scoping the content that you receive to your specific interests and ensuring that the information is always up to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RSS feeds provide no history, which means that although you always get the newest information, you can easily miss an article of interest to you if you don't check the feeds for a few days (when you're on vacation, for example).• RSS feeds are a bandwidth waster because they automatically download RSS files (usually hourly) to check for updates and changes.• RSS feeds are {somewhat} complicated to set up. As people hear about RSS and understand its value, they also become disappointed by the fact that it is not as easy as surfing the Web.• RSS content doesn't lend itself to search. Many search engines include RSS feeds but they struggle to identify which information is new and, hence, greatly limit the value of search operations on this type of content.• RSS feeds usually only show an abridged version of the content, which can be cryptic and may require you to open your Web browser to see the full article.
This table is from: http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/manageinfo/rss.msp#EJD	

How to incorporate using an aggregator with your students




Ideas

1. Monitoring RSS Feeds can allow students and instructors to **gather the latest news and information** about key subtopics. You can use the RSS nugget in WorldClass right in your course.
2. If your students are blogging, you can subscribe to their blogs (keep in mind you can arrange for your students to create blog journals that are only shared between you and the student-they don't have to be open to the public). If you are using a personal aggregator tool like Google Reader or NetVibes (or even Microsoft Outlook) you can set this up quite easily.
3. RSS provides efficient way for students to keep in touch with faculty, stay informed about coursework and other academic activities, and follow developments in their fields of study, which for many will be an important skill in their professional lives. The exchange of information that RSS facilitates can also take place from students to faculty or among the students in various courses within a department.
4. Instructors can use RSS to help them efficiently use the Internet to exchange disciplinary information and increase awareness of important developments. Many instructors may also use online repositories of learning objects to locate educational resources to include in their courses. Initiatives including MERLOT and OpenCourseWare offer RSS feeds that notify subscribers when new content has been added in particular academic areas.

RSS Feeds and Aggregators

NOTE

Not every Web site offers an RSS feed.

On Web sites that offer this feature, you might see the ,  or, .

In some Web browsers, when you click these buttons, it will ask you if you want to subscribe and it will allow you to select where you want it to subscribe to.

It can vary from site to site and browser to browser, what exactly you might see when you set up your feed.



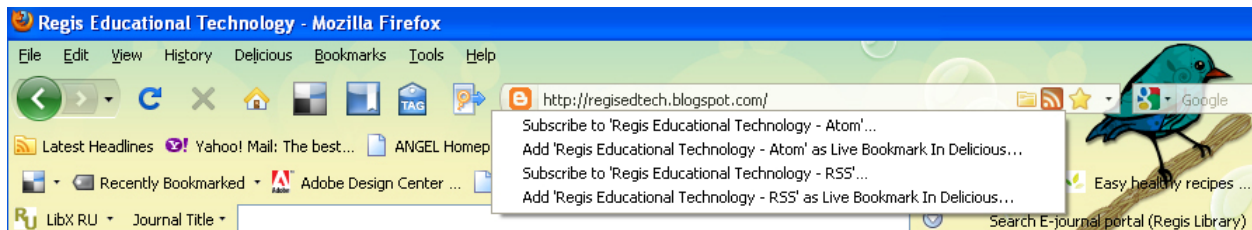
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Google Reader

1. www.google.com/reader

If you have not already registered a Google account go ahead and do so. This doesn't necessarily mean you have to use a gmail account. You may register with Google using your Regis email address. Once you register with Google, the door will open to use just about all the Google tools that are available, like Google Docs or Google Calendar.

2. I like Google reader because of the layout and how easy and convenient it is to use. *I can access it anywhere I can get online.* Go to a website you want to subscribe to that offers RSS, **Click on the orange RSS symbol**, (Depending on which browser you use it may appear in the URL or below it) Choose **“subscribe to “X”-RSS”**



3. Next, I choose **Add to Google Reader.**

Google Add to Google

eLearning Technology
Blog on eLearning, courseware, custom content, learning management, authoring, e-learning, blended learning and other aspects of eLearning Technologies.
<http://feeds.feedburner.com/eLearningTechnology>

Google offers two different ways to keep up-to-date with your favorite sites:

Your Google homepage brings together Google functionality and content from across the web, on a single page.

Google Reader makes it easy to keep up with the latest content from a large number of sites, all on a single reading list.

Add to Google homepage or **Add to Google Reader**

Sample

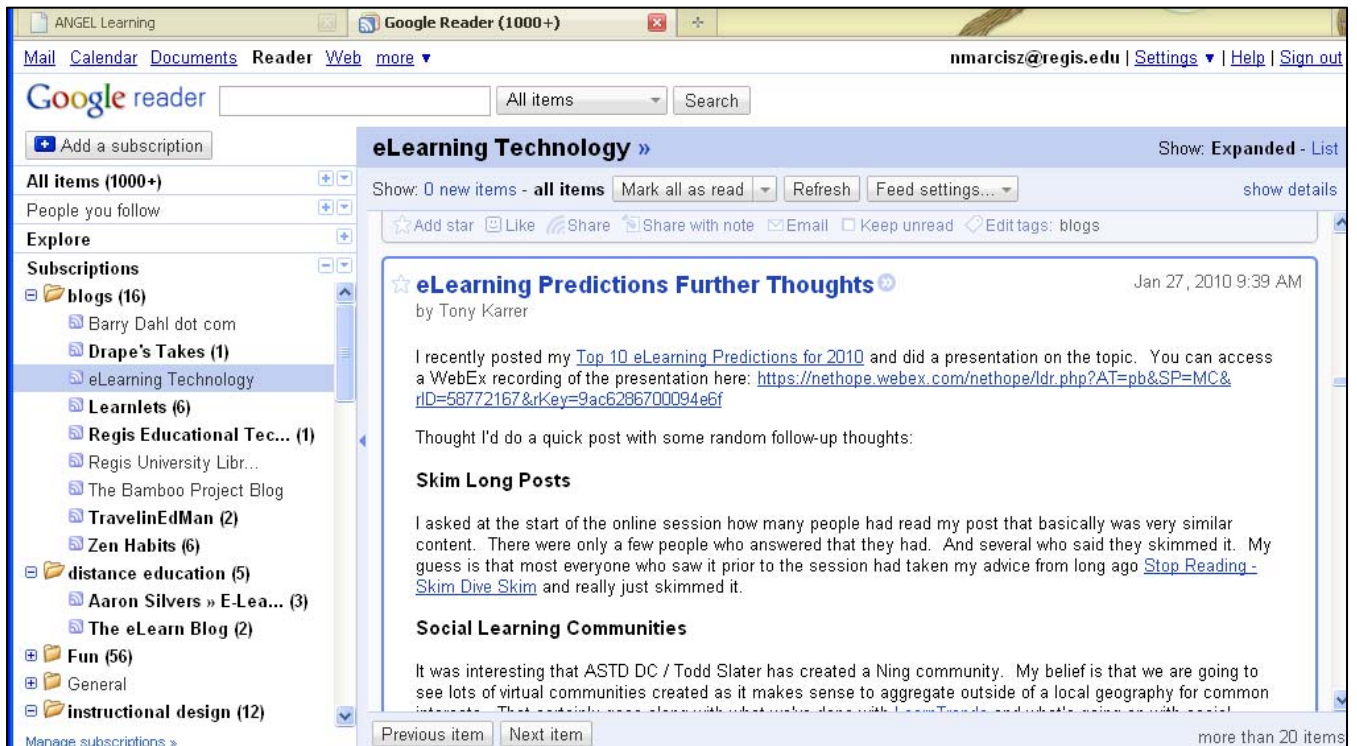
Sample

RSS Feeds and Aggregators

This is what my Google Reader looks like. I have a variety of blogs that I follow. (Mostly instructional design related or education, but some fun or health topics too)

The subscriptions appear on the left side, and when I choose a particular one, the content will appear on the right.

If a subscription has a new post that I did not read yet, it will have a bold number next to it.

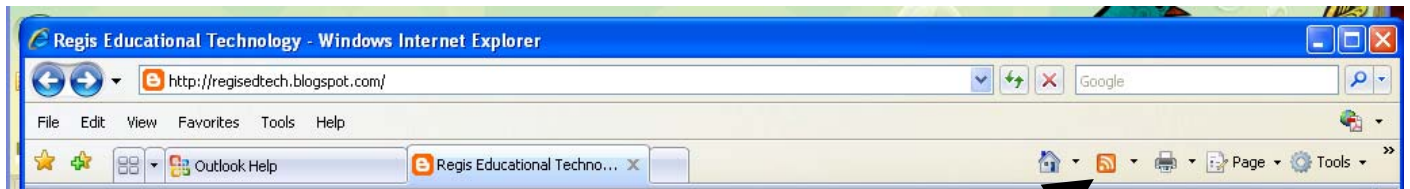


RSS Feeds and Aggregators

Microsoft Outlook

1. Setting up your feeds to go to your Microsoft Outlook is easy. Go to a site, use the Ed Tech Blog as your first try: <http://regisedtech.blogspot.com/>
2. **Click on the orange RSS symbol** in towards the top of your browser (It depends on which browser you use Firefox or IE), then choose “**subscribe to ‘Regis Educational Technology’ –RSS**” This will give you the actual link you need to copy and paste into your Outlook reader. (If you are using your Outlook as your main reader, I think it may allow you to set the RSS straight from this dropdown menu)
3. Go back to Microsoft Outlook, Go to the **Tools** menu, click **Account Settings**.
4. On the **RSS Feeds** tab, click **New**.
5. In the **New RSS Feed** dialog box, type or press CTRL+V to paste the URL of the RSS Feed. For example, <http://regisedtech.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default?alt=rss>.
6. Click **Add**.
7. Click **OK**.

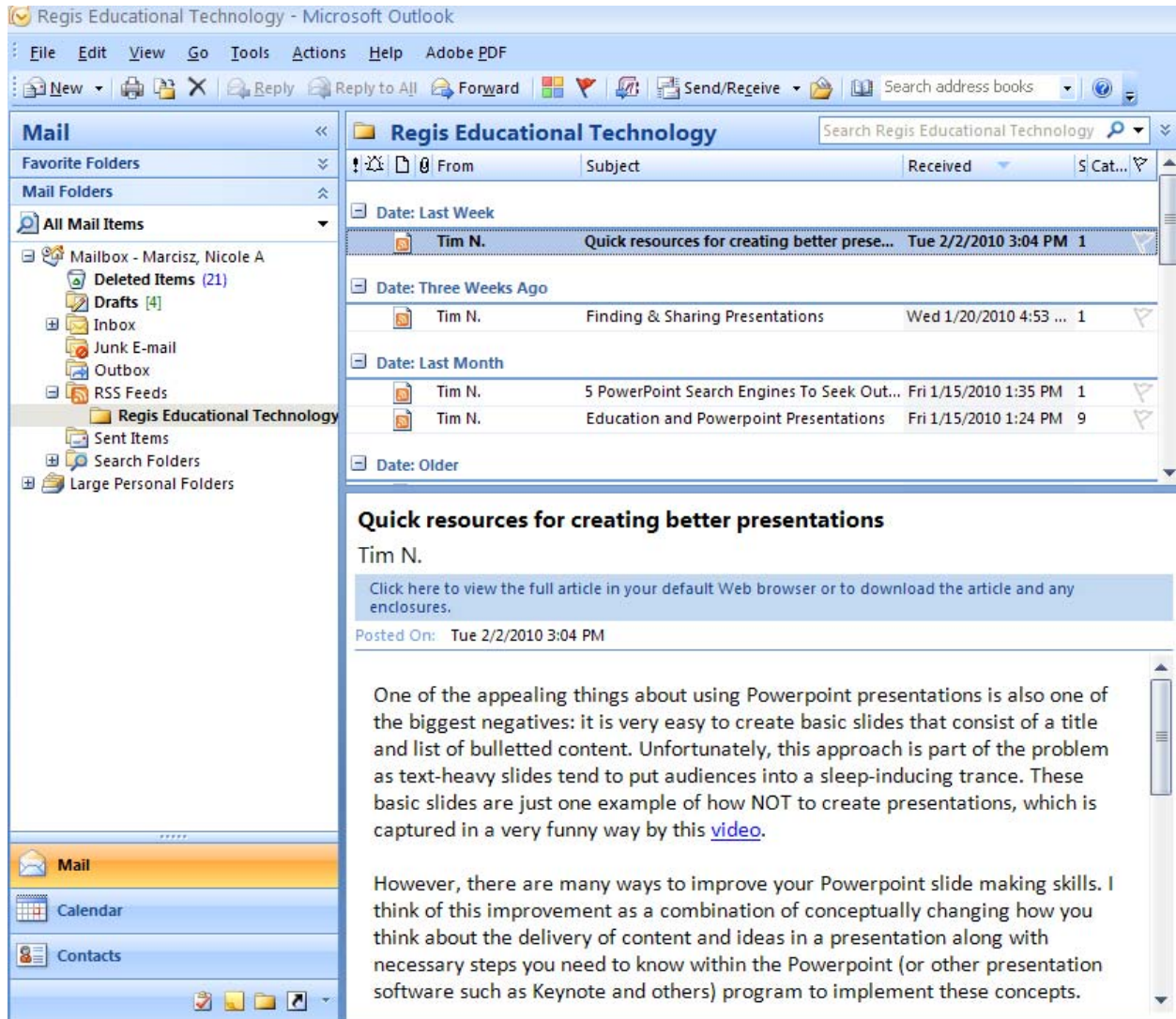
This screen shot is from Firefox



In IE, the little orange RSS symbol appears in a different place

RSS Feeds and Aggregators

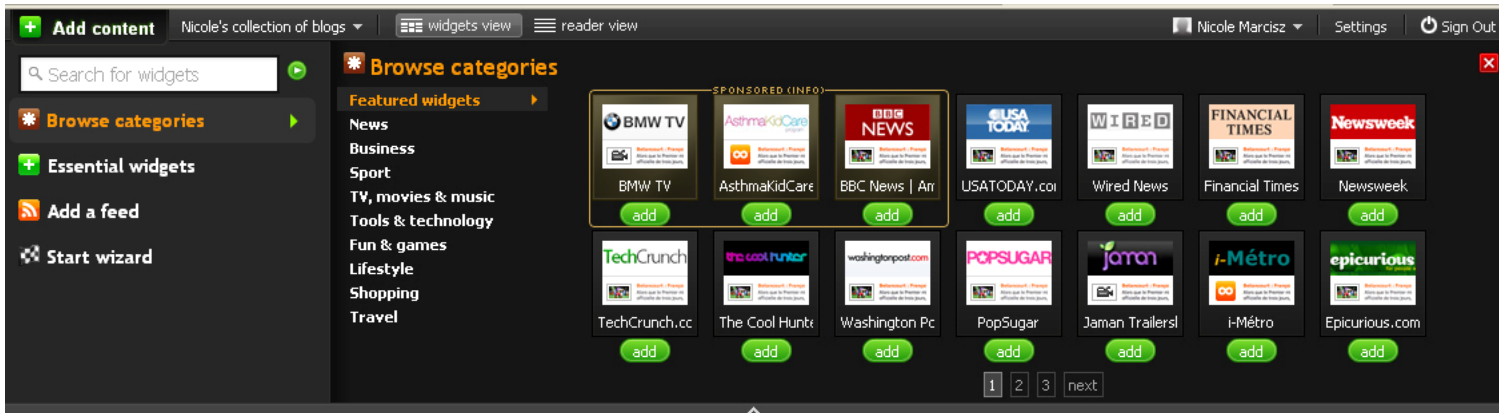
This is what it looks like in Microsoft Outlook after I set up the Ed Tech Blog feed.



RSS Feeds and Aggregators

NetVibes

1. <http://www.netvibes.com>
Register at NetVibes if you would like to begin using this as your RSS aggregator/reader. NetVibes is nice because you can use it as a personal reader and you can also set up a public page to share (with your colleagues or students for example). The layout of NetVibes allows you to organize all your feeds and have fun!
2. You can add feeds to NetVibes by clicking on ADD CONTENT. Here you can browse hundreds of common news and entertainment feeds. For any other feed such as a nursing blog, just copy and paste the RSS feed link from the site (by clicking on the orange RSS symbol on the site), then choose ADD a Feed back on the NetVibes page and paste in the RSS feed link you copied.



3. Check out this Ed Tech blog post on the topic of using NetVibes. Tim Noteboom created a little video demonstration. <http://regisedtech.blogspot.com/2008/09/how-to-adding-rss-feed-to-netvibes.html>

Blogs that Nicole recommends:

People/Educational Technology/eLearning/Higher Education/Instructional Design

1. <http://barrydahl.com/>
"Innovations in Ed Tech"
Barry Dahl serves as the Vice President of Technology and Lake Superior Connect e-Campus at Lake Superior College (LSC) in Duluth, MN.
2. <http://tiny.cc/7uvbU>
The Rapid e-learning blog
The Rapid E-Learning Blog shares practical tips and tricks to help you become a rapid elearning pro.
3. <http://engagedlearning.net/>
Engaged Learning
Social Media in orgs for performance improvement & learning
4. <http://theedublogger.com/>
The Edublogger by Sue Waters
Tips, tricks, ideas and help with using Web 2.0 Technologies
5. <http://blog.acm.org/elearn/>
eLearn Magazine
Education and Technology in Perspective

Other interesting blogs....

<http://lifehacker.com>

Welcome to **Lifehacker**, an award-winning daily blog that features tips, shortcuts, and downloads that help you get things done smarter and more efficiently.

<http://zenhabits.net/>

Simple productivity

Zen Habits is about finding simplicity in the daily chaos of our lives. It's about clearing the clutter so we can focus on what's important, create something amazing, find happiness. It also happens to be one of the Top 100 blogs in the world.

Adding RSS Feeds to Your Course

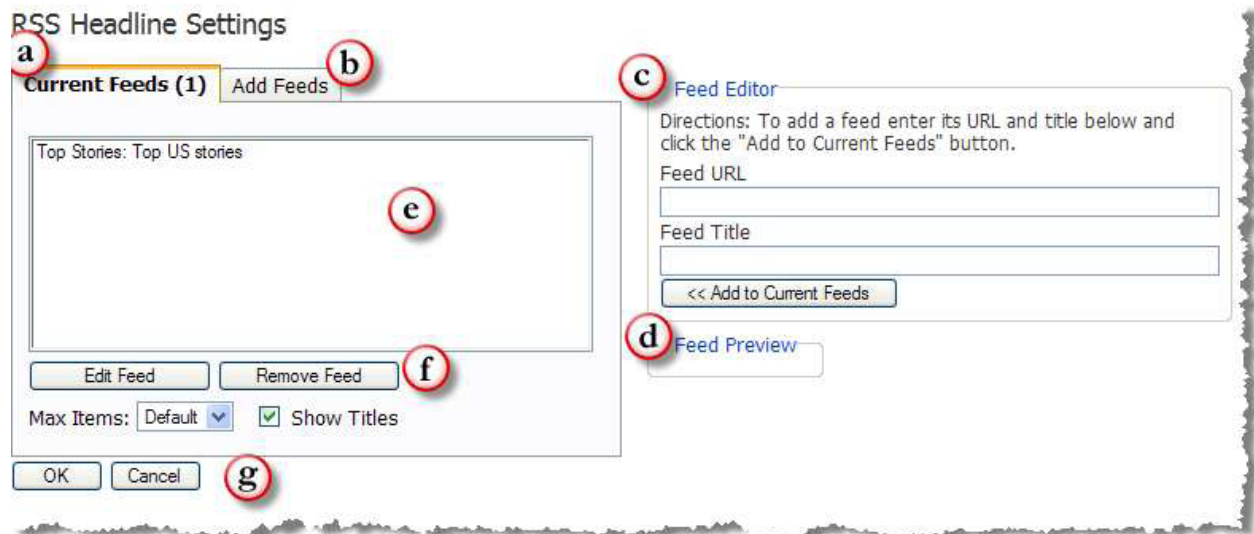
(Copyright © 2009 ANGEL Learning.)

RSS feeds allow you to stream news or data from other websites into your course environment automatically. Two RSS feed components are available:

- **Course RSS Feed.** This feed (available only to course editors) allows the instructor to establish an RSS feed on the course Home page. Only course editors may edit this component.
- **Personal RSS Feed.** This feed is available on both the personal Home page and course Home page. This component is editable by all users and thus is not under the control of the instructor. Students may edit this feed to add other content of interest.

To customize your course with RSS feeds:

1. Add the desired RSS feed component to your page.
2. Hover the mouse pointer over the title of the component and click the component's **Edit** button. The RSS Headline Settings page appears.



- a. **Current Feeds.** This tab lists and allows you to edit current feeds. The number in parentheses after **Current Feeds** indicates how many feeds you currently have set up.
- b. **Add Feeds.** This tab allows you to search by keyword for feeds to add to your component.
- c. **Feed Editor.** Allows you to enter URLs for RSS feeds directly. After specifying the URL and a title for the new RSS feed, click the **Add to Current Feeds** button to add the new feed to the list.
- d. **Feed Preview.** When a feed is selected for addition to the feed list or for editing, a sample of the feed appears in the preview area.
- e. **Feed list.** Shows all current feeds.

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- f. **Edit Feed/Remove Feed.** Edits/removes the feed selected in the feed list.
- g. **OK/Cancel.** Saves/cancels changes you have made.

Adding a Feed via Search

You can use the built-in search engine to find an RSS feed by keyword.

The screenshot shows the 'RSS Headline Settings' dialog box. It has two tabs: 'Current Feeds (1)' and 'Add Feeds'. The 'Add Feeds' tab is active. The 'Keywords' field contains 'education'. The 'Search' button is highlighted. Below the search results, 'Education News - The New York Times' is selected. The 'Feed Editor' section shows the URL 'http://www.nytimes.com/services/xml/rss/nyt/Education.xml' and the title 'Education News - The New York Times'. The 'Add to Current Feeds' button is highlighted. The 'Feed Preview' section shows a preview of the selected feed, including the title 'Education News - The New York Times' and several article snippets.

1. Add Feeds tab
2. Search button
3. Selected feed
4. Feed Preview
5. Add to Current Feeds button
6. OK button

To add an RSS feed via search:

1. Click the **Add Feeds** tab.
2. Enter a search term and click **Search**. A list of matching feeds will appear.
3. Select a feed by clicking on it.
4. Check the preview for the selected feed to make sure that it's the one you want.
5. Click the **Add to Current Feeds** button to add the feed to the list.
6. Click **OK**.

RSS Feeds and Aggregators

If you already know the URL of the feed you want, you can add it in the Feed Editor section.

RSS Headline Settings

Current Feeds (1) Add Feeds

Top Stories: Top US stories

Edit Feed Remove Feed

Max Items: Default Show Titles

OK Cancel

Feed Editor

Directions: To add a feed enter its URL and title below and click the "Add to Current Feeds" button.

1 Feed URL
://news.google.com/news?pz=1&ned=us&hl=en&q=education&output=rss

3 Feed Title

4 << Add to Current Feeds

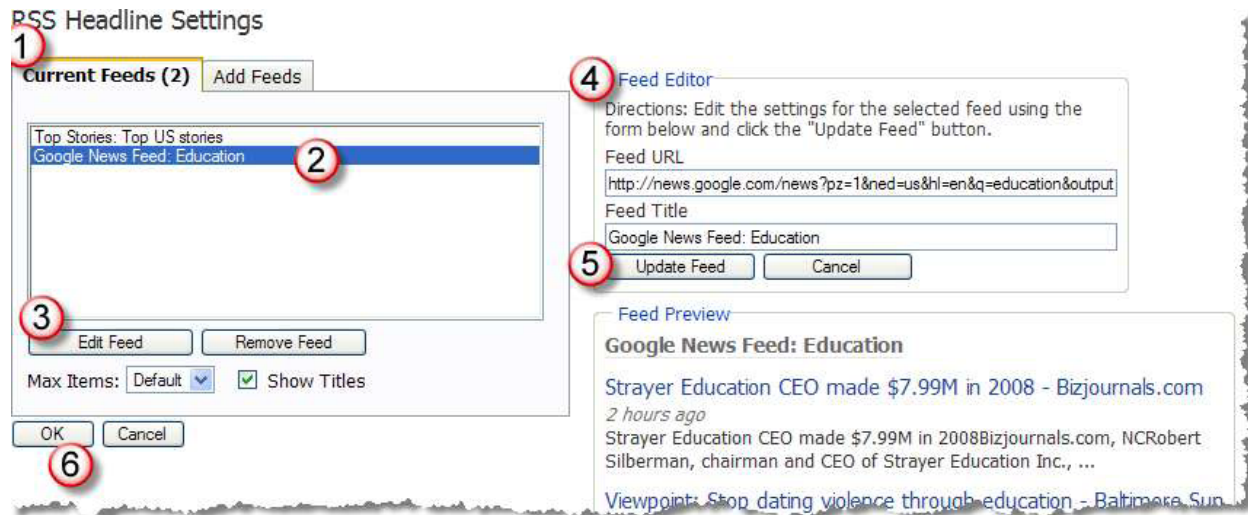
Feed Preview

Viewpoint: Stop dating violence through education - Baltimore Sun
10 hours ago
Viewpoint: Stop dating violence through educationBaltimore Sun, United StatesWhen Kristin attended high school here in ...

Education's Ground Zero - New York Times
Mar 21, 2009
Education's Ground ZeroNew York Times, United StatesBy NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF AP/Susan Walsh Michelle Rhee testifying before ...

1. Paste the URL of the feed into the **Feed URL** box.
2. Check the preview for the selected feed to make sure that it's the one you want.
3. Give the Feed a title in the **Feed Title** box.
4. Click the **Add to Current Feeds** button to add the feed to the list.
5. Click **OK**.

Editing an Existing Feed



You can change the URL or title of a feed on the Current Feeds page.

1. Click the **Current Feeds** tab.
2. Select the feed you want to edit by clicking its name.
3. Click the **Edit Feed** button. The feed appears in the **Feed Preview** area.
4. Edit **Feed URL** or **Feed Title** in the **Feed Editor** section.
5. Click the **Update Feed** button.
6. Click **OK**.

Deleting an RSS Feed

To delete an RSS feed:

1. Click the **Current Feeds** tab.
2. Click the feed you want to remove.
3. Click the **Remove Feed** button. The feed is removed from the list of current feeds.
4. Click **OK**.

RSS Feeds and Aggregators

Resources

http://rhchp.regis.edu/facultyresourcesite/content_pages/rss.html

7 things you should know about RSS (Educause) <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7024.pdf>

Will Richardson's quick start guide for educators <http://weblogg-ed.com/wp-content/uploads/2006/05/RSSFAQ4.pdf>

Google Reader: sharing your feeds

<http://www.google.com/support/reader/bin/answer.py?answer=83000&cbid=1rdv112kpljbr&src=cb&lev=index>

Another aggregator to consider: www.bloglines.com

You could also use Microsoft Outlook as well.