

Making An RSS Feed

製作 RSS Feed

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RSS is a method of distributing links to content in your web site that you'd like others to use. In other words, it's a mechanism to "syndicate" your content.

RSS 是一種在您的網站中散播「網頁連結」的方法，您可能會希望使用者用此方法來檢視您的網頁內容。換句話說，RSS 是一個「同步發佈」網頁內容的機制。

To understand syndication, consider the "real world" situation where artist Scott Adams draws a daily [Dilbert](#) cartoon. The cartoon is made available to any newspaper that cares to run it, in exchange for a fee -- and 2,000 papers in 65 countries do so.

要瞭解所謂的「同步發佈」機制，以現實世界的例子來說，當漫畫家 **Scott Adams** 每天畫好呆伯特四格漫畫後，想要發佈此漫畫的報紙付費後即能取得當日漫畫的內容，而全世界 **65** 個國家有 **2000** 份報紙都如此做。

Unlike Scott Adams, syndication of web content via RSS is unlikely to make you rich. However, it can be an easy way to draw attention to your material, bringing you some traffic and perhaps a little net fame, depending on how good your information is.

使用 RSS 技術來「同步發佈」網頁內容並不能使您如同 Scott Adams 一樣富有，然而，它卻是吸引人們注意您網頁內容的一個好方法，它會令您的網路流量增加，同時也為您帶來一些網路名聲，致於您所受到注目的眼光大小，端視您所提供的資訊品質而定。

What Is RSS?

什麼是 RSS?

How does RSS syndication work? Say you publish a new web page about a particular topic. You want others interested in that topic to know about it. By listing the page as an "item" in your RSS file, you can have the page appear in front of those who read information using RSS readers or "news aggregators" (explained more in my sidebar article, [RSS: Your Gateway To](#)

[News & Blog Content](#)). RSS also allows people to easily add links to your content within their own web pages. Bloggers are a huge core audience that especially does this.

RSS 同步發佈是如何做到的呢？舉例來說，假如您針對某個特定主題發佈了一個新的網頁，而且您想要其它對此主題有興趣的人都能知道此一網頁的內容。藉著將此網頁列入您的 RSS 檔案之中，您就能將此網頁發佈給那些使用「RSS 閱讀程式(RSS readers)」或「新聞聚合程式(news aggregators)」來閱讀資訊的人。RSS 同時也讓人們能夠簡易地將您發佈的連結加到他們的網頁中，同時此被加入網頁的連結將呈現您所發佈的內容。部落格作家(bloggers)正是使用此項技術最重要也廣大的族群。

What does RSS stand for? There's a can of worms. RSS as introduced by Netscape in 1999 then later abandoned in 2001 stood for "Rich Site Summary." Another version of RSS pioneered by [UserLand Software](#) stands for "Really Simple Syndication." In yet another version, RSS stands for "RDF Site Summary."

到底 RSS 代表了什麼呢？真是一言難盡。RSS 是在 1999 年由 Netscape 公司發表的概念，然後在 2001 年被放棄發展，原意是「詳盡的網站摘要(Rich Site Summary)」。另一個版本的 RSS 則由 UserLand Software 公司創導，它代表「真正簡單的同步發佈(Really Simple Syndication)」的意思。在另一個版本裏，RSS 的意思是「RDF 格式的網站摘要(RDF Site Summary)」。

History buffs might be interested that there's been some rivalry over who invented RSS. This is why we have both different names and indeed different "flavors" or versions of RSS. Mark Pilgrim's written an excellent article, [What Is RSS](#), that charts the different versions with recommendations on which to use. I'll also revisit the version choice you'll need to make. But first, let's look more closely at some basics of what goes into any RSS file.

歷史學家可能有興趣探討到底是誰發明了 RSS。這也就是為什麼會有這麼多不同的名字以及不同品味或不同版本的 RSS 的原因。Mark Pilgrims 寫了一篇名為” What is RSS” 的文章，這篇文章描繪了各種版本的差異，同時也給了選擇上的建議。我也再度檢視這些您可能會用到的版本。但是，現在首先讓我們更仔細地檢視到底 RSS 檔案裏面有那些最基本的東西。

How Easy Is RSS?

RSS 有多麼容易？

I've been exploring RSS because it was time that Search Engine Watch offered its own stories in this manner. I've read several tutorials about making a feed, and they generally suggest that it is easy. They often offer code that you can "cut-and-paste" and link over to specifications that I actually don't find that clear.

我曾經探索過 RSS，因為那個時候” Search Engine Watch 公司” 提供了它自己使用 RSS 的故事。我曾經閱讀了許多如何製作出一個 RSS feed 的教學文件，這些文件都說 RSS 很簡單，而且通常都檢附符合 RSS 規格，讓您方便” 剪下-貼上” 的程式碼以及相關連結，然而這些東西我都覺得有些不清不楚。

For example, the [RSS 2.0 specification](#) has an "cloud" element that's optional but which a lay person might still wonder if they should use it. Meanwhile, heaven help the person who stumbles into the [RSS 1.0 specification](#) and its complicated RDF syntax.

例如，RSS 2.0 規格書中有一個稱為” 雲(cloud)” 的元件，這個元件是可有可無的，但是一個外行人怎麼知道要不要使用它。同時，祈求上帝幫忙那個為了 RSS 1.0 規格書及其複雜 RDF 語法而顯得跌跌撞撞的我。

Sure, making an RSS file IS easy for many. If you understand HTML, you'll probably understand enough to do a cut-and-paste from someone else's RSS file to make your own file. Don't know HTML? Start a blog, because several blogging tools automatically generates RSS files.

當然，製作出一個 RSS 檔案對很多人來說是很簡單的。如果您瞭解 HTML 語法，您大概能夠瞭解如何將別人的 RSS 檔案拷貝一份過來再修改成自己想要的。如果您不懂 HTML 呢？先建立一個部落格吧！因為有許多部落格工具能自動地生成 RSS 檔案。

As for those non-technical people using WYSIWYG page building tools or personal home page building systems, have faith. Even you can build an RSS file from scratch, as long as you dispense with some of the extra features you probably don't need. We'll go through how to do this below. Later, I'll also mention some [tools](#) that will even do some or all of the work for you.

為了讓僅會使用所見即所得網頁建置工具的非科技人員能有信心，即使您能徒手建立 RSS 檔案，只要您想要省掉那些不想要的特色，我們將在以下介紹如何建立 RSS 檔案，稍後，我也會提到一些工具來協助部份或者全部您要執行的工作。

The RSS File

RSS 檔案

At the heart of an RSS file are "items." No matter what version of RSS you settle on, your file will have to include at least one item. Items are generally web pages that you'd like others to link to. For example, let's say you just created a web page reviewing a new cell phone that's being released. Information about that page would form an item.

RSS 檔案的核心是所謂的「項目(items)」，不管您選定那一個版本的 RSS，您的 RSS 檔案中至少要有一個項目，其內容一般而言是您所要連結到的眾多網頁。例如，若您剛剛建立了一個網頁來評論一個新發表的行動電話手機，則此網頁的內容將可以組成一個項目。

To enter your item into the RSS file, you'll need three bits of information:

要將您的項目輸入到 RSS 檔案中，您需要 3 個位元的資訊，如下：

- **Title** (標題)
- **Description** (概述)
- **Link** (連結)

The title and description of your item need not match exactly the HTML title tag of the web page that the item refers to, nor the meta description tag, assuming you use these (don't know what they are? See my [How To Use HTML Tags](#) article). You can write any title and description that you think will describe the page. However, using your page's title and meta description tag certainly makes it easy to copy and paste to build your RSS feed.

有關標題與概述的內容並不需要與項目所參考到的網頁 HTML 的 title 標籤完全相同，而且網頁 HTML 的 meta description 標籤也毋需相同(如果您不知道 title 標籤與 meta description 標籤是什麼，請參考拙作 [How To Use HTML Tags](#))，您可以任意地為您的網頁設定想要的 title 與 meta description。然而，使用相同的 title 與 meta description 做為 Title 與 Description 的內容，就可以簡單地使用「拷貝-複製」來建置 RSS feed 的內容了。

In the case of our example page, let's say this is the information we settle on to define it as an item:

以我們的範例網頁為例，我們以下列資訊做為 item 的內容：

Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos

I've been playing with the new Nokia 3650. Finally, someone has got the combination of a cell phone with digital camera capabilities right!

<http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/nokia3650.html>

Now we have to surround that information with XML tags. These are similar to HTML tags, with the exception that unlike with HTML, there's no set definition of XML tags. Anyone can make up a particular XML tag. Whether it is useful depends on the program that reads the

resulting XML file. In the case of RSS feeds, they have their own unique set of XML tags that are defined. Use these correctly, and then anything that reads RSS will understand your information.

現在我們要替這些資訊加上 XML 標籤，這些動作就和加上 HTML 標籤類似，僅有一點點兒不同，那就是 XML 標籤中並沒有關於集合(set)的定義。任何人都可以編造一個特定的 XML 標籤，此特定的 XML 標籤是否有用，端視讀取此 XML 檔案的程式而定。在此例的眾多 RSS feeds 中，它們擁有自定的 XML 標籤，如果正確地使用這些標籤，則任何讀取 RSS 的程式就能瞭解您所要傳達的資訊。

Did that make your head spin? If so, don't reread -- just carry on to see how simple it is. First, open a text editor like Notepad. We're going to build our RSS file using it.

開始覺得頭暈腦脹了嗎？如果真是如此的話，您不需要再將前文閱讀一遍，您只有留意去瞭解 RSS 有多簡單就行了。首先，開啟一個文字編輯程式，如 Windows 裏面的 Notepad。我們將要使用 Notepad 來建立自己的 RSS 檔案。

For your title, you need to start it with the <title> tag, then follow this with the text of the title, then end with the </title> tag. It looks like this:

在您的 title 中，您需要用<title>標籤開頭，然後把 title 的內容放在<title>的後面，最後以</title>標籤結尾，它看起來如下：

<title>Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos</title>

For your description, you do the same, starting out with the opening <description> tag, then following with the actual description, then "closing" with the </description> tag. Now you have this:

在您的 description 中，同樣的動作再做一次，這次換成以<description>標籤開頭，然後輸入 description 的內容，最後以</description>結尾，現在檔案內容應該像下面這個樣子了：

<title>Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos</title>

<description>I've been playing with the new Nokia 3650. Finally, someone has got the combination of a cell phone with digital camera capabilities right!</description>

Next, we add the link information, beginning with `<link>`, following with the actual hyperlink, then closing with `</link>`. That gives us this:

接著，我們把 link 資訊加進來，以`<link>`標籤開頭，接著輸入超連結的網址，最後以`</link>`標籤結尾。結果看起來如下：

```
<title>Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos</title>  
<description>I've been playing with the new Nokia 3650. Finally, someone has got  
the combination of a cell phone with digital camera capabilities  
right!</description>  
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/nokia3650.html</link>
```

Now there's one more thing we need to do. We actually have to define all this information as forming a particular "item," which we do using a special item tag.

現在只剩下一件事是我們必須要做的。我們已經定義好一個特定 item 所有的資訊了，針對此 item，我們要加上 item 標籤。

You place the opening item tag, `<item>` at the top or start of all the information we've listed. You then place the closing item tag, `</item>`, at the bottom or "end" of the item information. The finished product looks like this:

您必須將`<item>`標籤放在剛才列出的資訊之前，然後在所列出資訊的最後面加上`</item>`標籤。最後的成果看起來如下：

```
<item>  
<title>Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos</title>  
<description>I've been playing with the new Nokia 3650. Finally, someone has got  
the combination of a cell phone with digital camera capabilities  
right!</description>  
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/nokia3650.html</link>  
</item>
```

Congratulations! You've now made your first item. There's a bit more to do to finish our RSS file. First, what if we have other items we want to syndicate? Then we simply add more item

elements, just as we did above. You can have up to 15 items. New items tend to be inserted at the top, with old items removed from the bottom, to make room for new stuff.

恭喜了！您已經製作了您的第一個 item。要完成我們的 RSS 檔案，還有一點點兒要忙。首先，如果我們還有其它 item 想要發佈時，該怎麼辦呢？很簡單，只要再加入更多的 item 項目就行了，就像我們剛才做的步驟一樣。您可以擁有最多 15 個 item。新的 item 習慣上加在前面，而舊的 item 則從尾巴刪除，這樣就有空間可以加入更新的 item 了。

With our example, let's see how things look if we add two more items:

以我們的範例為例，我們可以看到加入兩個 item 之後結果如下所示：

```
<item>
<title>Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos</title>
<description>I've been playing with the new Nokia 3650. Finally, someone has got
the combination of a cell phone with digital camera capabilities
right!</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/nokia3650.html</link>
</item>
```

```
<item>
<title>Sanyo Tablet PC Amazes!</title>
<description>I was dubious about the new Tablet PCs, but then I saw the latest
from Sanyo. Wow, cool looks and it works!</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/sanyotablet.html</link>
</item>
```

```
<item>
<title>Canon MegaTiny Digital Camera Too Small</title>
<description>OK, there is a limit to just how small is too small. Canon's MetaTiny,
no larger than a quarter, simply is too little to use properly</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/metatiny.html</link>
</item>
```

Having defined items we want to distribute, we now have to define our site as a "channel." You'll use the same tags as with the items: title, description and link. However, this time the

information will be about your entire site, rather than a particular page. That means our channel information would look like this:

在定義了我們想要發佈的 item 之後，我們現在必須將我們的網站定義為一個「頻道(channel)」，您將使用和 item 一樣的標籤，如：title、description、link。然而，這一次標籤所設定的是關於我們整個網站的訊息，而非是指定某個特定的網頁。這代表了我們的頻道資訊(channel information)看起來像下面這個樣子：

```
<title>All Gadgets Reviewed</title>
<description>If it's a gadget, we review it. Learn what gadgets are hot and what's not!</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com</link>
```

Now, how does something reading our RSS file know that the information above is for our "channel" when it looks just like item information? Simple. As long as we don't surround this information with an opening and closing <item> tags, it won't be seen as item information but rather as channel information. That gives us this:

現在，讀取我們 RSS 檔案內容的程式如何知道上述的資訊代表是頻道(channel)的資訊而非 item 的資訊呢？很簡單，只要我們不要將上述的資訊加上<item>與</item>標籤，那麼就不會被識為 item 資訊，而會被視為頻道資訊了。所有的設定如下：

```
<title>All Gadgets Reviewed</title>
<description>If it's a gadget, we review it. Learn what gadgets are hot and what's not!</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com</link>
```

```
<item>
<title>Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos</title>
<description>I've been playing with the new Nokia 3650. Finally, someone has got the combination of a cell phone with digital camera capabilities right!</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/nokia3650.html</link>
</item>
```

```
<item>
<title>Sanyo Tablet PC Amazes!</title>
```



```

<description>I was dubious about the new Tablet PCs, but then I saw the latest
from Sanyo. Wow, cool looks and it works!</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/sanyotablet.html</link>
</item>

```

```

<item>
<title>Canon MegaTiny Digital Camera Too Small</title>
<description>OK, there is a limit to just how small is too small. Canon's MetaTiny,
no larger than a quarter, simply is too little to use properly</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/metatiny.html</link>
</item>

```

There are a few last things we need to do. First, we need to add a tag at the very top of the file saying that this is written according to the XML 1.0 specifications. Right under this, we also have to say what RSS version we are using.

我們還有最後一點點兒事情要做。首先，我們要在檔案的最前頭加入一個標籤來說明我們是依據 XML 1.0 規格書來定義 RSS 檔案。在這個標籤底下，我們還必須說明所使用的 RSS 版本。

So far, everything we've done is compatible with UserLand's popular RSS 0.91 version. However, it also matches UserLand's latest [RSS 2.0 version](#), as well, so we'll define the file as meeting that specification. This will allow us to add other neat features in the future, if we want.

到現在為止，我們所做的一切事情都和 UserLand 受歡迎的 RSS 0.91 版本相容。然而，它也符合 UserLand 的最新版 RSS 2.0 版本，於是，我們定義此檔案符合 RSS 2.0 規格。如此一來，我們可以在未來依需求在此檔案中加入新的特色。

Finally, after the RSS tag, we need to add an opening "channel" tag. That gives us this at the top of the file:

最後，在 RSS 標籤之後，我們必須加上 "channel" 標籤，這些標籤要放在檔案最前頭：

```

<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rss version="2.0">
<channel>

```

At the bottom of the file, after all the items we want to syndicate, we have to insert a closing channel and RSS tag, in that order. Those look like this:

在檔案的最後頭，我們要依序加上</channel>與</rss>標籤，如下：

```
</channel>
```

```
</rss>
```

This means our complete file looks like this:

整個完整的檔案看起來如下：

```
<?xml version="1.0" ?>
```

```
<rss version="2.0">
```

```
<channel>
```

```
<title>All Gadgets Reviewed</title>
```

```
<description>If it's a gadget, we review it. Learn what gadgets are hot and what's not!</description>
```

```
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com</link>
```

```
<item>
```

```
<title>Nokia 3650 Combines Phone And Photos</title>
```

```
<description>I've been playing with the new Nokia 3650. Finally, someone has got the combination of a cell phone with digital camera capabilities right!</description>
```

```
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/nokia3650.html</link>
```

```
</item>
```

```
<item>
```

```
<title>Sanyo Tablet PC Amazes!</title>
```

```
<description>I was dubious about the new Tablet PCs, but then I saw the latest from Sanyo. Wow, cool looks and it works!</description>
```

```
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/sanyotablet.html</link>
```

```
</item>
```

```
<item>
```

```
<title>Canon MegaTiny Digital Camera Too Small</title>
```

```
<description>OK, there is a limit to just how small is too small. Canon's MetaTiny,
```

```
no larger than a quarter, simply is too little to use properly</description>
<link>http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/metatiny.html</link>
</item>

</channel>

</rss>
```

Mind Blowing Options

Everything shown above is the bare basics you need to create a file and start syndicating content from your web site. However, there are additional things you could do.

For example, rather than your entire web site being a "channel," you could actually have different content from within the web site be defined into separate channels. That's something I'm not going to explore in this article, but some of the [resources below](#) will guide you through this, when you feel more comfortable.

As hinted at, RSS 2.0 allows you to insert all types of additional information into your feed. It can make your head spin to look at these and decide what to use. The easy answer is, don't bother with anything you don't know. Not every aggregator supports all the options offered. As long as you provide the minimum information suggested above, you should be fine.

Did I Choose The Right RSS Version?

Earlier, I'd mentioned there are different versions of RSS. Even though we entered the bare minimum of information, it turned out that we were able to have a file that was easily considered to be RSS 2.0, the latest version promoted by UserLand and which is widely used.

Indeed, the Syndic8 site [reports](#) that the most popular format of RSS by far is RSS 0.91 -- and though we've used RSS 2.0, our file as shown is entirely compatible with RSS 0.91. In short, we're in safe company.

What about that RSS 1.0 version that I said was complicated. Well, it is complicated. However, some people might want to make use of some of the special capabilities that it offers. If you are interested in it, then check out the [official specification](#).

Saving The File

Now that we're done adding to the file, we need to save it. But what name shall we give it? I've looked and not seen any guidance on this. I imagine that's because as long as the file is valid (more below), it probably doesn't matter what it's called.

To make my own decision for Search Engine Watch, I decided to imitate what I saw out at UserLand, which promotes the RSS 2.0 standard that we used. UserLand's example feeds all ended .xml, so let's do the same. As for the first part, that really can be whatever you like. For our example, let's say we just call it feed.xml.

Now that our file is saved, we can place it anywhere we want on our web server. Let's say we put it in the root or home directory. Then the address to our RSS file would be:

<http://allgadgetsreviewed.com/feed.xml>

Validating The File

Now our RSS file is done, but did we do it right? To find out, we need to validate it. Use the aptly named [Feed Validator](#) service. Simply enter the address to your RSS file, and you'll be told if everything is OK -- or if there's something wrong you need to fix.

How about a quick preview of how your new feed actually looks? Then pay a visit to [Wytheville Community College News Center](#). Again, enter your feed URL, and you'll see the clickable headlines and story descriptions nicely assembled inside a box.

The service will also generate a JavaScript code that you can post on your site. Anyone copying the JavaScript can automatically have your feed syndicated into their pages -- pretty neat!

Get Syndicated!

Now that your file is validated, you want the world to know about it! To make this happen, visit the RSS directories and search engines listed in the [RSS: Your Gateway To News & Blog Content](#) article. They generally offer submission pages, where you can inform them of your feed.

You also want to make sure people who come to your web site see that you provide a feed. It's very common to post a link to the feed somewhere on the home page of a web site. If you have a dedicated news page, you may want to put it there, as well.

You can link to your feed with an ordinary HTML link. However, many sites use a small orange XML icon to link to the feed. I've also seen some sites use blue RSS icon. I could find no

standard about using these. So, to be safe, I did all three with Search Engine Watch. Look on the [home page](#), and you'll see how it's done (and help yourself to the icons, if you need them).

Finally, it's good to "ping" one of the major services that track when web logs and RSS content changes. By doing this, you ensure that other sites that monitor these know to check back at your site for more content.

[Weblogs.com](#) is one of these major sites. Enter your site's name and the URL of your feed into the manual [Ping-Site Form](#), and it will know you've updated your feed. The [Specs](#) page explains how to set up automatic notification.

[blo.gs](#) is another major change monitoring site. It is supposed to receive any changes that come from Weblogs.com, so you shouldn't need to notify it separately. However, if you want to be on the safe side, it's easily done. Use the [ping form](#), which also explains how to set up automatic pinging, as well.

Easier Options

Still not happy about the idea of making the feed by hand? Not to worry -- there are some alternatives you might try.

A top choice is the wonderful [RSS Headline Creator](#). At the creator, you choose the number of headlines you'd like to include in your file, up to the 15 maximum allowed. Then a form with boxes that you fill out will be made. Enter the right information, then push the "Make The Code" button. Your RSS file's code will be generated, for you to copy and paste into a text editor and save.

Still too much work, you say? OK, then visit myRSS's [Create a Channel](#) area. Enter the URL of any web page that lists articles or content on your web site. For instance, if you have a news page that's always being updated with the latest articles, enter that URL.

When you do this, myRSS will spider the page and do what's called "scraping," which means it will guess at what are the headlines and essentially remove all the details it thinks it needs to make an RSS file. A new page will load, and you can select a freshly-minted RSS file in one of various versions offered -- all for free!

What's the drawback? Any time someone receives your feed and tries to click through your stories, they'll have to wait for a few seconds to see a little "brought to you by myRSS" notice

before your page loads. In addition, your feed probably won't be perfect. Things you don't consider to be stories might get included, as well.

To remove the redirects, you'll need to "sponsor" for channel for \$10 per year. Want hand-crafted rather than automated assembly of your channel? That will be another \$40 per year.

Finally, another solution you might experiment with is [Syndicate Your Page](#). This site asks you to place special coding within the HTML of your regular web page that lists stories you want to syndicate. If you've done this, then by entering the URL of that page, you'll have an RSS file automatically made.

Tutorials & Resources

[How To Get Your Web Site Content Syndicated](#) is a Dec. 2002 tutorial by Kalena Jordan and Dan Thies from which I drew inspiration to get my own feed going.

[Syndic8's How To Section](#) lists a variety of tutorials that discuss how to build RSS files.

[Content Syndication with RSS](#) is a book by Ben Hammersley that was just released in March 2003. I haven't read it, but everything I've heard is that it should be excellent.

[RSS Resources Directory](#) from UserLand categorizes helpful information related to RSS, in different categories.

Postscript: [Search Types: Blogs & Feeds](#) and [SEO: Feeds](#) are sections of the [Search Topics area](#) available to Search Engine Watch [members](#) with lots of information on the topic of feeds since this article was originally written.