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Step By Step Guide To Creating Your Own **RSS** Feed

“Create your own **RSS Feed**
in less than 2 hours at **zero** cost and
start reaching thousands of new prospects!”

XML

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1. What Is RSS Feed?

RSS stands for **Really Simple Syndication**. Some people claim it is **Rich Site Syndication**.

This is a simple system by which you provide indexed information about some content that you have, in a structured manner. It is up to the user to use this information in any way that he wants. You can syndicate your articles, newsletters, press releases or any other information that is published frequently.

The user may see the index in a suitable viewer called RSS aggregator or reader, display the contents on a web page, or use it in any other way he thinks fit.

There are 2 main components of a RSS feed.

- The channel information (one per feed)
- The item information (many per feed)

Example – You may create a RSS feed about all articles on your web site.

Then the **channel** will contain information about the feed (“Read articles on various subjects”), the location (web site address or URL) and a short description.

There will be multiple **items** in the RSS Feed. Each item will have information about one article (the title, author, category, short description and the URL where the article may be found).

As you will see for yourself, RSS is really simple ☺

2. Who Should Provide An RSS Feed?

You should provide an RSS feed if you want to distribute your information to a vast and fast-growing community of users, who are **actively looking for information on your topic**.

In general, people who write articles or publish newsletters benefit the most. Most blog software (another hot topic but we will discuss the blogs in another report) allow you to offer RSS feed of the blog posts. You can also offer your **press releases** through an RSS feed.

In general, anything that you publish frequently can be offered as an RSS feed.

Soon you will find online retailers and other catalog companies also offering RSS feeds of their product range.

3. Why Should You Provide An RSS feed?

Because this is going to be the hottest way to provide regular information updates in 2005.

You might be aware that most emailed newsletters do not reach more than 30-40% of the subscribers because of spam filtering, blacklisted domains and several other reasons. The world is fast moving from a **push-based information delivery** (where you send information via emails) to a **pull-based information delivery** (where the subscriber accesses your information as and when he wants).

RSS is fast becoming the de-facto standard for pull-based information delivery because the user can anonymously subscribe to your feed, judge your content and stay subscribed as long as he wants to. He can unsubscribe at will, without any problems and delays.

There are no spam complaints. No lost deliveries.

The authors of the newsletters have to continually provide high quality information so that the users will stay subscribed and read the new articles or newsletter issues and this will improve the overall standard of information available. Junk dies a quick death.

This definitely does not mean that email is obsolete. It has its own advantages. Till the time, RSS becomes as popular and omni-present as email is now, you cannot ignore email-based newsletters. Also, you cannot get the exact number of the people who have subscribed to your RSS feed because RSS subscription is anonymous.

Embracing RSS technology right now can put you on the fast track and give you an edge over your competitors who are slow in adopting this hot new technology.

4. Step By Step Guide To Setting Up An RSS Feed

It is easy to set up a simple RSS Feed for your web site. Unless you have a large number of articles or newsletter issues, **you can be over with this in less than 2 hours**. And you need to spend only \$0. So pour some hot coffee for yourself, shut down the phone and get started.

We will set up the RSS feed for the site at www.articlestop10.com as a case study.

Let's collect some basic information about the RSS feed first. As you know, there are 2 main components for each feed, the channel and the items.

The channel contains the general information about your feed. For our case study, we settle on this –

Title -> ArticlesTop10.com – Read Informative Articles on Hot Topics

Description -> Large collection of highly informative articles on several hot topics from leading authors.

URL -> <http://www.ArticlesTop10.com>

Now let us look at the first item. It will refer to an article. Here are the required details –

Title -> Top 10 Search Engine Positioning Mistakes!

Description -> There are some basic mistakes that people make while designing their websites. Instead of wasting money on useless tools, avoid making these mistakes and improve your positioning on the search engines.

Location where this article will be found -> <http://www.articlestop10.com/top-10-search-engine-positioning-mistakes.php>

Author email address -> author@ebizindia.com

Author name -> Arun Agrawal

Published on -> Fri, 10 Dec 2004 11:00:00 PST

Now we are ready to enter this information into our RSS feed. We will call our feed articles.xml (you can also name it articles.rss). Just remember that whenever you want to use special characters, you have to use the code for that character. Like this—

- & should be &
- > should be >
- < should be <

Here is the content of the articles.xml file –

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rss version="0.91">
<channel>
  <title> ArticlesTop10.com – Read Informative Articles on Hot Topics</title>
  <link>http://www.articlestop10.com</link>
  <description> Large collection of highly informative articles on several hot topics
from leading authors.</description>
  <language>en-us</language>
  <lastBuildDate>Fri, 10 Dec 2004 12:38:45 PST</lastBuildDate>

  <item>
    <title>Top 10 Search Engine Positioning Mistakes!</title>
    <description>There are some basic mistakes that people make while designing
their websites. Instead of wasting money on useless tools and services, avoid
making these mistakes and improve your positioning on the search
engines.</description>
    <link>http://www.articlestop10.com/top-10-search-engine-positioning-
mistakes.php</link>
    <author>author@ebizindia.com (Arun Agrawal)</author>
    <pubDate>Fri, 10 Dec 2004 11:00:00 PST</pubDate>
  </item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

As you can see, there are no special tricks here. We have simply wrapped our information in some tags (like <title> and</title>).

Of course, you will have to put **your** information in the corresponding places. Make sure you use the special characters like ‘&’ in the right way, as explained above.

Before we input information about more items (articles or newsletters), let us test if we have done everything right.

Manual check

At first, I suggest you to go through the file once manually to verify that you have closed all the tags you opened and in proper order. Thus if you start a tag <title>, you should put your actual title after this and then close the tag by putting </title>.

Automated check

Now upload your file to any location on your web site. I uploaded mine to www.articlestop10.com/rss/articles.xml.

After this, you should open any web browser and visit www.feedvalidator.org. It shows a text entry box where you should enter the URL for the xml file on your site. For me, it is www.articlestop10.com/rss/articles.xml.

FEED Validator

FOR ATOM AND RSS

Now supports Atom 0.3! ([more](#))

[Home](#) · [About](#) · [News](#) · [Docs](#) · [Terms](#)

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Now click on **validate**.

After a few seconds, you will get a message saying
“Congratulations! This is a valid RSS Feed.”

If you get some error message here, you should check up your file again and try to correct the error as explained by feedvalidator. The most common errors are – not closing all the tags or closing some in improper order. Remember you close the most recent tag first, then the previous one and so on.

Once you have successfully validated, your first RSS feed is all set. Great beginning, eh?

I got my basic feed set up. What next?

Now you should open your xml file (or rss file if you decided to name it that way) and create more items. You have more than one article or newsletter. Isn't it?

Just add more item sections to the text file. You should add the item sections in reverse chronological order. This means that the most recent article or newsletter should be placed before the one, which was released just previous to it.

Here is an extract from my articles.xml file showing 3 articles for your reference.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rss version="0.91">
<channel>
  <title> ArticlesTop10.com – Read Informative Articles on Hot Topics</title>
  <link>http://www.articlestop10.com</link>
  <description> Large collection of highly informative articles on several hot topics
from leading authors.</description>
```

```
<language>en-us</language>
<lastBuildDate>Sun, 12 Dec 2004 12:38:45 PST</lastBuildDate>

<item>
  <title>Improve Your Link Popularity with Endorsements! </title>
  <description>There are some simple steps that you call follow to improve your
link popularity and encash the benefits.</description>
  <link>http://www.articlestop10.com/improve-link-popularity-with-
endorsements.php</link>
  <author>author@ebizindia.com (Arun Agrawal)</author>
  <pubDate>Sat, 11 Dec 2004 11:00:00 PST</pubDate>
</item>

<item>
  <title>How To Improve Clickthrough On Google Adwords! </title>
  <description>Some tips that will help you to improve your Click-Through-Rate
(CTR) and decrease your Cost-Per-Click (CPC)</description>
  <link>http://www.articlestop10.com/google-adwords-improve-
clickthrough.php</link>
  <author> author@ebizindia.com (Arun Agrawal)</author>
  <pubDate>Fri, 10 Dec 2004 11:19:28 PST</pubDate>
</item>

<item>
  <title>Top 10 Search Engine Positioning Mistakes! </title>
  <description>There are some basic mistakes that people make while designing
their websites. Instead of wasting money on useless tools and services, avoid
making these mistakes and improve your positioning on the search engines.
</description>
  <link>http://www.articlestop10.com/top-10-search-engine-positioning-
mistakes.php</link>
  <author>author@ebizindia.com (Arun Agrawal)</author>
  <pubDate>Fri, 10 Dec 2004 11:00:00 PST</pubDate>
</item>

</channel>
</rss>
```

As you can see in the above example, we are duplicating the part between <item> and </item> and replacing the title, description and link with those of the new articles.

You can put information for your other articles in the same way, by putting as many item sections as required.

Don't forget to upload this updated file and test it with **feedvalidator**.

5. Setting Auto-discover On Your Site

When a visitor wants to add your RSS feed to his feed reader, he has to specify the exact URL of the RSS feed. However, you can add a meta-tag to your home page that will help the viewer's feed reader to auto-discover the feed URL and make it easier for him to add your feed. This will result in greater exposure to your feed.

I have the hunch that soon, there will be some Google like search engine that will go around the web looking for web sites that offer RSS feeds and prepare a special index for such feeds. When that happens, you will have headway over others.

It is easy to add this meta-tag to your web site. Here is the step-by-step guide –

1. Open the home page of your web site in your favorite editor. Switch to the source code view (some editors call it the HTML view).
2. Look at the HEAD section at the beginning of the HTML source code. I have reproduced the HEAD section for www.articlestop10.com here –

```
<html>
<head>
<Title>FREE Articles for Successful Internet Marketing and Business
Promotion</Title>
<meta name="description" content="Read our vast collection of articles by Top
Internet Marketers here. Regularly updated. RSS Feed available.">
<meta name="keywords" content="Internet Marketing, Free Articles">
<link href="style.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css">
<link rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml" title="RSS feed"
href="http://www.articlestop10.com/rss/articles.xml" />
</head>
```

3. Put the above meta-tag in your head section, making sure that you have replaced my RSS feed address with that of your feed.
4. Save the file and upload to your site.

Verifying Auto-discovery

If you want to verify that auto-discovery is working for your site, you can use a feed reader that supports auto-discovery (checkout FeedDemon from the resources section) or access the site using Firefox browser (download location in the resources section).

These show a special icon in the bottom right of the window when you open a site that supports auto-discovery.

6. Announce Your RSS Feed To Your Site Visitors

Ok. So you have got your RSS feed in place. Now you have to let the site visitors know that you also offer RSS feeds. For this, you should place a small image with a link to your RSS feed, on your web site.

You must do it on your home page at least. For better results, you can also place this image and link, on other pages, specially the articles pages and the pages where you solicit subscription to your newsletters.

Here is the step-by-step process –

1. Visit www.articlestop10.com
2. Look for a small orange graphic saying “XML” under my signature. Right click on this and save the picture on your hard disk. Now upload this picture to the images folder of your website. Of course, you can keep it in any folder but remember to note the location where you upload it. You can keep the name as xml.gif.
3. Open your home page in your favorite editor and insert this image at a prominent place on the home page.
4. Link this to the URL for your RSS feed (for me it is <http://www.articlestop10.com/rss/articles.xml>)
5. You can put a suitable Alt-text for xml.gif. I have put “RSS feed for the articles”.
6. Wow! You are done.
7. Upload the home page and verify that everything displays correctly. If you click on the orange XML icon, you will find that your XML file opens in the explorer window. Don’t worry; you cannot see the feed in the normal browser window. You need a RSS reader software to interpret this feed.

Invite Them to Add Your Feed to Their My Yahoo! Account

Yahoo claims on their web site that if anyone adds your RSS feed to his My Yahoo! Account, Yahoo will immediately spider your feed and also add it to their RSS feeds directory. This is a super proposition for you and your chance to get in their directory at no cost. Take them on this offer while it lasts!

You can put up a button on your site that makes this a snap. After you have put this up, you should add your feed to your **own** My Yahoo! account.

Here is the step-by-step guide to doing this --

1. See the “Add to My Yahoo” button under my signature on www.articlestop10.com? You should place a similar button on your site too. This can be put near the XML button you placed in the last section.
2. Right click on the button on my site. Save the picture on your hard disk. You can accept the default name of **add2myyahoo2.gif**.
3. Upload this picture to the same directory on your website where you uploaded xml.gif.
4. Now open your home page in an editor and add this picture near the XML picture. The picture should link to a URL like this –

<http://add.my.yahoo.com/rss?url=http://www.articlestop10.com/rss/articles.xml>

(Replace the part after **http://** with that of your RSS feed)

Add Your Feed to Your My Yahoo! Account

Why wait for others? Why don't you add your RSS feed to your own My Yahoo! Account to get the process started right away.

Step by step guide to adding your feed to your own My Yahoo! Account --

1. Start any web browser and open your site.
2. Click on the “Add to My Yahoo!” button.
3. You will see a screen like this –



Add to My Yahoo!

Articlestop10.com - Read Informative Articles on Hot Topics

Large collection of highly informative articles on several hot topics from leading authors.

To add this source to My Yahoo! you need to sign in.

Sign In

NOTE: If you don't have a My Yahoo! page, you can get one for free. Click the "Sign In" button above.

Learn more about:

[My Yahoo!](#), [RSS on My Yahoo!](#), [Syndicating your content](#)

4. Click on **Sign in** and enter your username and password.
5. You will get something like this –



Add to My Yahoo!

Add this source to the RSS Headlines (BETA) module on your page.

Add It

No thanks

Learn more about:

[My Yahoo!](#), [RSS on My Yahoo!](#), [Syndicating your content](#)

[Articlestop10.com - Read Informative Articles on Hot Topics](#)

- [Build Your Business with Strong Brands - not a Mountain of Cash](#) - 2 days
- [How To Improve Clickthrough On Google Adwords!](#) - 1 week
- [Top 10 Search Engine Positioning Mistakes!](#) - 3 days
- [Improve Your Link Popularity with Endorsements!](#) - 1 week
- [Marketing in a tough economy - DO'S & DONT'S](#) - 1 week

Here's what the source will look like on your My Yahoo! page

6. Click on Add It.
7. Congratulations! You are done adding your RSS feed to your My Yahoo! account.
8. **Yahoo has been known to spider your site and add all these pages to its index within 48 hours. It also adds your RSS feed to its RSS feeds directory.**

7. Announcing your RSS feed to the world

Just letting your site visitors know about your feed is not enough. You have to go out and let the world know for greater exposure and higher traffic.

And how do you do it? You should submit your feed to several RSS directories out there.

The resources section contains the list of some popular RSS directories. Visit each of these and follow their instructions to add your feed to their index.

8. Updating Your Feed When You Add More Content

When you publish more articles or another issue of your newsletter, you need to update your RSS feed as well. Don't worry; it is very easy to do so.

Here is the step-by-step guide –

1. Open your RSS Feed file in any text editor.
2. Scroll down to the first item element. Select the first item, i.e., all the text between `<item>` and `</item>` and copy to your clipboard. To do this, you can use the CTRL-C key combination or select the Copy option on the Edit menu.
3. Now take your cursor to the space just before the `<item>` of the item you selected and click once. This will deselect the text.
4. Paste your copied text (use CTRL-V or select the Paste option on the Edit menu).
5. You will see that there are 2 copies of the first item.
6. In the first copy of the first item, replace the title, description, URL and pubDate with those of the new article. You should keep the tags intact; only change the data.
7. Save the file and upload it to the same location where you keep your RSS feed.
8. Your update is complete.
9. Validate your feed at www.feedvalidator.org every time you upload a new feed.

9. Other RSS Resources

Here are some other resources to help you explore more of the RSS world.

RSS Readers

- [FeedDemon](#) is an excellent feed reader. You need to pay after the initial trial period.
- [RSS Reader](#) is available for Windows 98/NT/ME/2000/XP/2003.
- [FeedReader](#) is FREE and available for Windows 95 and later versions.
- [NewsGator](#) is a free RSS Reader plug-in for Microsoft Outlook.

Learn more about RSS

- [RSS Made Easy](#) by Adrian Ling
- [RSS Exposed](#) by Paul Short
- [RSS Stampede](#) by Joe Vitale and Laura Childs

Business Success with RSS

- [41 Tips to Profit From Your RSS Feeds](#) by Dr. Mani. This ebook explains how you can profit from RSS feeds in very lucid manner.

Syndicate Your RSS Feeds

- [Syndic8](#)
- [My Yahoo!](#)

Creating RSS Feeds

You have already seen how you can quickly and easily create your RSS Feeds manually. However if you prefer to use a software or an online tool to create and maintain your feeds, here is a list of some good resources.

- [RSS Turbo](#)
- [Feedburner](#) helps you to track the hits to your feed

Using other RSS Feeds on your site for search engine success

- [RSS Equalizer](#) pulls others' RSS feeds into your website and helps you to get better search engine rankings through dynamic and fresh content.
- [Excellent article](#) on using RSS feed for search engine ranking success.

Blogging Resources

- [WordPress](#) – FREE and widely acclaimed. I use it for my blogs too.
- [Movable Type](#) – Commercial, very popular.
- [Blogger](#) allows you to create your own Blog in minutes (FREE)
- [Blog Profit Ideas Exposed](#) by Dr. Mani. This ebook explains how you can profit from Blogs.
- [How 2 Blog](#) by Stephen Pierce. He covers RSS and blogs in great detail and offers several tips to make money from your blogs.

RSS enabled Browsers

- [Firefox](#)

Other Useful Resources

- [Site Build It](#) helps you to develop a rewarding web business without bothering about any technical stuff. They have already adopted RSS for their own site and plan to offer in-built RSS compatibility on all client sites very soon. Highly recommended!
- [Top 10 Ranking on Google, Yahoo & MSN – 100% guaranteed](#) My own site ☺

Disclaimer: Please remember that I have recommended all these resources in good faith. I know most of the owners to be reputed Internet marketers and reliable service providers. However, I have not personally used some of these products and services and you should check the suitability of individual offer for yourself before investing.

I will appreciate learning about your experience (even if it is bad) with these products and services. Write to me at feedback@RSSStop10.com.

About Arun Agrawal, the author

I am a Post Graduate Engineer operating as a consultant and software developer in Calcutta, India.

I started to dabble with Internet marketing in 1998 and love direct response web sites in contrast to brochureware websites. In 2003, I started a search engine ranking service from www.SEOtop10.com and met with considerable success. My clientele mainly includes small and medium level businesspeople, who feel hesitant to explore the real success that can come with proper utilization of the Internet technology.

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To your business success.

