RSS Feeds: A New Generation Information Tool for Special Libraries
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Abstract
Special libraries have emerged as efficient information catering organizations with exclusive tools to meet the never saturating demands of the information seeker. The Internet is a tool to provide quality services at a lower cost and quality services at a lower cost. The RSS (Really Simple Syndication) or Rich Site Summary is a way to deliver the information in a structured way. It is a convenient way to deliver news, articles, and other content to users in a structured manner. It is a way to promote quality services at a lower cost and quality services at a lower cost. The RSS can be used to promote libraries and libraries can promote the RSS feed. The RSS feed can be used to promote libraries and libraries can promote the RSS feed.

Introduction:
Libraries catering to the information needs of a specialized community of users and providing specialized and pin-pointed, on-time value information are designated as special libraries. A special library can be found in a university, museum, publishing house, government agency, hospital, or corporation. As defined by the Special Libraries Association, “it is a place where information is evaluated, analyzed, organized, packaged, and presented in a manner that maximizes its usefulness.” Special libraries have emerged as efficient information catering organizations with exclusive tools to meet the never saturating demands of the information seekers. For the effective dissemination of information to the patrons in the least time and cost special libraries provide current awareness service (CAS) as to fulfill the nascent and current information demands of the users. CAS can be understood as “A service or publication designed to alert scholars, researchers, readers, customers, or employees to recently published literature in their field(s) of specialization, usually available in special libraries serving companies, organizations, and institutions in which access to current information is essential. Such services can be tailored to fit the interest profile of a specific individual or group.”

Inspite of the responsibilities sought upon special libraries due to time, budgetary and staff constraints it is an easy task to provide quality services let alone value added services. With the advent of Web 2.0, RSS or Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary has evolved as a solution for the aforementioned constraints while providing Current Awareness Services.

RSS:
RSS is an acronym for Really Simple Syndication and Rich Site Summary. RSS is an XML-based format for content distribution. Webmasters create an RSS file containing headlines and descriptions of specific information. While the majority of RSS feeds currently contain news headlines or breaking information the long term users of RSS are broad.

Special Libraries can use RSS:
- To Create an RSS feed tie to a library card account for hold notifications and/or overdue materials.
- To Create an RSS feed for new programs and events posted on the library website.
- To Create an RSS feed for the library’s electronic newsletter.
- To Create an RSS feed for press releases and other media advisories.
- To Create an RSS feed for library closings, including emergency closings.
- To Create an RSS feed for library job openings.
- To Subscribe to a few RSS feeds, such as local news websites, and share the content on the library’s website. This could be included on a page containing other local resources and local links.
- To Subscribe to RSS feeds of interest to library users and share the content on the customer’s personalized library webpage. Users can choose to access selected RSS feeds, their library account information, subscription databases, and email with a librarian all in one spot.
- To Subscribe to a few professional RSS feeds and share with library’s staff on the library’s intranet.

Implementing RSS in Special Libraries:
As stated above RSS in special libraries have numerous applications while providing current information. A step by step method for implementing RSS through a freely available one month trial based software viz. Feedroll RSS Feed creator is illustrated below:

Step 1: Downloading the Feedroll RSS feeds creator software from the internet:

Step 2: Installation of the software:

Step 3: Creating feeds e.g., News feeds:

Step 4: Publishing RSS Feed:

The above demonstration shows the creation and publishing of RSS Feeds, displaying News Feeds from various Newspapers. These feeds will get updated automatically on regular basis. In the similar manner special libraries can implement RSS feeds for their respective information demands.

Conclusion: Utilizing RSS Feeds to provide library services within a special library environment is an effective tool to provide target users group, relevant, authoritative, current and on-time information.

Kindly provide your valuable feedback for the effectiveness of this tool in special libraries if implemented.
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