

RSS in the Classroom

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a web-based application that you can put on Internet-enabled computers to go to your favorite websites and check for updates. When the RSS program finds an update, it refreshes the display on the user's computer.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand this would be a continuously updated, interactive subscription to your favorite newspaper. Anytime you viewed the newspaper's webpage, it would have the most current news posted on that page without you having to get a new "paper" or refresh the information.

If your browser is RSS-enabled and finds a site that has an RSS feed, a button indicating that ability will appear in the toolbar. Click on it to connect your browser to that feed and gain access to the latest updates to the information carried by that website.

To explore this possibility, visit news.yahoo.com/rss. There you'll find a service from Yahoo! that allows you to aggregate stories on a wide range of topics. The latest updates will then show on your My Yahoo! page with the latest information on that topic each time you view your page.

In the classroom you can find many other RSS aggregators and use these to keep up to date on science, news, the arts, or any other topic. You might want to put a different RSS feed on each of several machines for students to monitor frequently and then give a news summary at the end of the day. Another use would be to point a student to one particular feed to help him or her achieve excellence in that topic.