

A short list of RSS Readers available

Built into the browser:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 7.0 (recommended)
- Mozilla Firefox 2.0

Internet sites:

- www.google.com/reader (recommended)
- www.bloglines.com
- My.yahoo.com

Free download to your Windows PC:

- www.feedreader.com (recommended)

Most of the other downloadable RSS Readers require .NET, which we do not yet support. But if you feel up to it, you could try these on a .NET-enabled PC:


- www.rssreader.com
- www.rssbandit.org
- www.sharpreader.net

Setting up and using RSS with Google Reader

Start Google Reader

1. Go to www.google.com, and click on Sign In in the upper right corner.
2. If you have a Google account, please sign in. If not, click on "Create an account now" on the bottom right. Enter in the required information, and click on "I accept. Create my account." on the bottom of the screen.
3. In the browser's address bar, type www.google.com/reader. You're ready to start!

View and copy the RSS Feed you are interested in

1. In a new browser tab or new browser window, look for the RSS symbol () and click on it. You will see either a page of code, or a "Subscribe to this feed" page, depending on your browser.
2. Highlight the URL (or web address) and copy it by using control-C or right-click and copy.

Paste the feed URL into Google Reader

1. Back in Google Reader, click on Add Subscription. Paste the feed URL into the textbox, and click on Add.
2. The items in the feed now appear in Google Reader. Click on "Mark all as read". Whenever a feed has been updated, it will be shown in **bold** with the number of unread items in parenthesis.

Other things you can do in Google Reader:

- Mark special items of interest with a Star
- Share items through a webpage and RSS feed
- Sort feeds into folders
- Mark feed items with special tags
- On a laptop, you can go "Offline" and still view feeds with no internet connection

Comparison: E-mail vs. RSS

E-mail	RSS
Searchable	Searchable (with FeedReader)
Organize with folders and flags	Organize with folders, stars, and tags
Loaded with Spam	No Spam – you only get what you subscribe to
Full of distractions – people requesting things of you	Focused – receive only the information you requested
Interacting with people	Managing information

Bill Status by e-mail using RSS to e-mail

Now that we have RSS feeds, there is a way for people to get bill status by e-mail by subscribing to an RSS to e-mail service. These will take an RSS feed, put the updated contents in an e-mail, and send it to the user's e-mail address. Depending on the service, the RSS feed is checked anywhere from once a day to every hour. Here is a short list of service sites, in no particular order:

- <http://www.feedblitz.com/>
- <http://www.r-mail.org/>
- <http://www.feedmailer.net/>
- <http://www.rssfwd.com/>

Feedblitz has a free service (site checked once a day), but of course you can pay for premium service (you decide how often, up to once an hour). I am not sure how the other sites work, but they are all based on converting an RSS feed to e-mail.