

Blogging and Site Syndication

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What is a Blog?

The term blog is short for Weblog, a form of web based diary. Individual articles on a blog are called “blog posts”, “posts”, or “entries”. These posts are usually presented in reverse chronological order, and are database driven.

Because of the database repository of entries, readers can easily filter and sort the content for various presentation, such as by date, category, author, or one of many other attributes.

Unlike regular sites, it's easy to have multiple contributors to a blog site. Blog platforms allow the administrator to invite and add other authors, whose permissions and access are easily managed.

One of the biggest advantages of blogs is that they automatically generate RSS feeds.

What is RSS or Site Syndication?

RSS is a family of XML file formats for Web syndication used by (among other things) news websites and weblogs. The abbreviation is typically used to refer to Really Simple Syndication.

The technology of RSS allows Internet users to subscribe to websites that have provided RSS feeds; these are typically blogs.

Feeds provide web content or summaries of web content together with links to the full versions of the content. In addition to providing syndication, RSS allows a website's frequent readers to track updates on the site using an aggregator.

Aggregators (or feed readers) can check RSS-enabled webpages and display any updated articles that it finds.

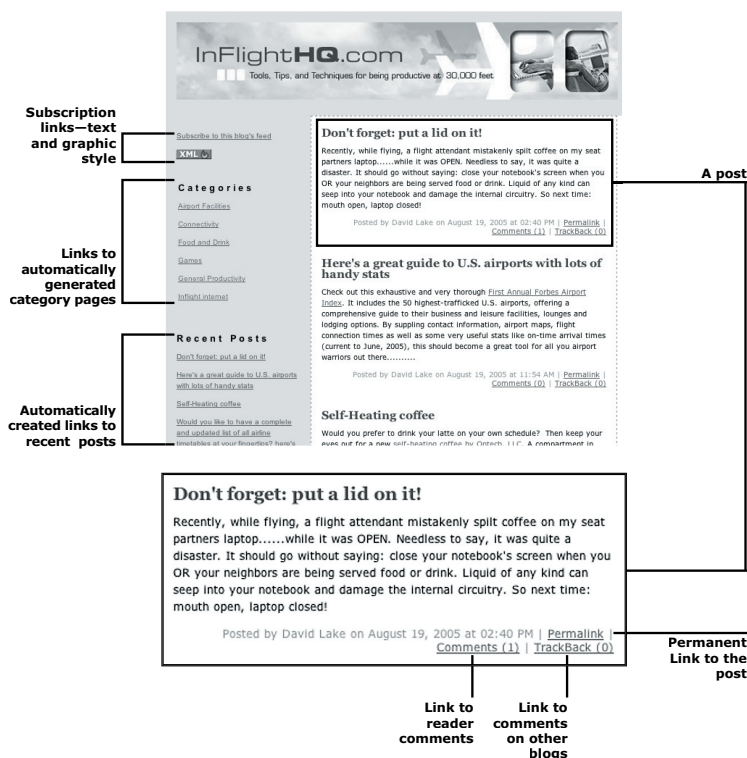
On blogs, RSS feeds are typically linked with an orange rectangle with the letters XML or RSS.

How do I Get RSS Feeds?

Mac software such as NetNewsWire, and more often Safari can be used to subscribe to feeds. Certain web-based services such as Bloglines can also be used to gather and display subscriptions.

How do I Start Blogging?

It's extremely easy. One can sign up for a free account at Blogger.com and begin entering posts immediately. Inexpensive accounts at Typepad.com or Blogharbor.com provide (for a small monthly fee) enhanced functionality.



Why are Blogs Better Than Traditional Web Sites?

Unlike traditional sites, blogs do not consist of static HTML pages. They are composed of a few templates (usually Main Page, Archive Page, and Individual Article/Item Page), into which content is fed from a database. Bloggers put data into the database, and the blog software builds pages as needed automatically.

This means new pages are easily created, since new data is entered into a simple form (usually with Title, Category, and the body of the article), and then submitted. The templates take care of adding the article to the home page, creating the new full article page (Permalink), and adding the article to a date and/or category-based archive.