Library Outreach and the Course Management System: Using RSS Feeds to Advertise New Library Holding

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The College of New Jersey
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Problem Statement

- **Topic:** Engaging users by providing them with effortless access to relevant new library holdings
- **Question:** Does current technology provide a way for us, a medium sized college library, to accomplish this?
- **Rationale:** To draw awareness to the library's evolving print collection while reinforcing the library's active role in scholarship
- **Significance:** By working together, librarians, students, and the IT department have been able to provide a useful service despite limited resources and have created a model for others to follow
Managing Constantly Updating Information: RSS
Content-Specific RSS feeds from NY Times

How to sign up for NYTimes.com RSS feeds

Click on the below content area(s) you're interested in subscribing to, and follow the instructions to add to your news reader or your personal My Yahoo! page.

How to access RSS feeds

There are a number of ways to access RSS feeds. You can install a news reader that displays RSS feeds from the Web sites you select, enabling you to view hundreds of headlines at once. After installing the news reader, you can add each feed manually from the Web site by clicking on the "Subscribe" or the "XML" orange button next to the feed.

An alternative to downloading a dedicated news reader is to use a Web-based news reader. For example, My Yahoo! users can now add RSS feeds directly to their personal page.

NYTimes.com RSS feeds by category

If your news reader supports OPML, NYTimes.com RSS feeds are available that group content by various news categories:

Terms for NYTimes.com RSS feeds

We encourage the use of NYTimes.com RSS feeds for personal use in a news reader or as part of a non-commercial Web site or blog. We require proper format and attribution whenever New York Times content is posted on your Web site, and we reserve the right to require that you cease distributing NYTimes.com content. Please read the Terms and Conditions for complete instructions.

Other ways to display New York Times headlines
What is RSS?

• The acronym varies by RSS version:
  • RDF Site Summary (0.9, 1.0)
  • Rich Site Summary (0.9x)
  • Really Simple Syndication (2.0)
• "There is no consensus on what RSS stands for, so it is not an acronym, it is a name" - Dave Winer of Userland
• “Result Set Syndication” - Walter Lewis (not a “real” definition, but it is a good way to think of it, especially for this project)
Adding a URL for a Feed to Aggregator (Thunderbird)
"New Literature" Feed from TCNJ Library in Thunderbird

News & Blogs:
- Trash
- ALA Press...ses (131)
- Library Ass...osals
- Library Li...e Day (67)
- NYT > Circuits (211)
- OCLC Catal...ates (14)
- OCLC News (14)
- OCLC System Alerts
- Target Weekly Ad (0)
- TCNJ Lib...aks (464)
- TVS.org home (1238)

Subject: Dialogic Imagination: four essays
From: corrado@tcnj.edu
Date: 12/23/2005 1:40 PM
Website: http://libcat.tcnj.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&Search_Arc=ISBN+0292715277+%28SL=none&Search_Code=CN&CTN=10

TCNJ LIBRARY CATALOG

Database Name: The College of New Jersey Library
Search Request: Keyword - Boolean = ISBN '0292715277'
Search Results: Displaying 1 through 2 of 2 titles

Sort by: 

Post Limit: 464 465
RSS Feeds Integrated into a My Yahoo!

TCNJ Library - New Computer Science Books

- User's guide to cryptography and standards / 2 weeks ago
- Programming pearls / 2 weeks ago
- Telegeoinformatics; location-based computing and services / 3 weeks ago
  Telegeoinformatics; location-based computing and services / edited by Hassan A. Karimi and Amin Hammad. Location: General Collection. Call Number: QA76.59.T46 2004

Reuters: Top Stories

- Diplomacy must win to avoid Iran confrontation: US / 2 hours ago
- Iraq parliament opens / one hour ago
- Saadat says not involved in killing Israeli minister

AP: Top Stories

- Iraq's New Parliament Is Sworn In / one hour ago
- Bush Reaffirms Pre-Emptive Use of Force / 19 minutes ago
- U.S. Willing to Talk With Iran About Iraq / 13 minutes ago
- Firm Failed to Protect U.S. Troops' Water / 3 hours ago
- Inflation Slows Sharply in February / one hour ago

Lead Photo

Iraq's New Parliament Is Sworn In
Iraqi children play soccer on a deserted street, in front of a Shiite Mosque, in Baghdad, Iraq.
The HOT college.

Knowledge is Power
The College of New Jersey has developed an Energy Conservation Awareness Initiative to help mitigate the unprecedented escalation in energy prices that has occurred globally in recent months.

- TCNJ is Nation’s Top Division III Athletic Program for Fall Semester
- Sesquicentennial Events and Designs Garner Top Spots from CASE
- Federal Grant to Support TCNJ Community Service Initiatives
RSS Feeds of New Library Holdings

- Revisiting the Problem Statement:
  - Topic: Engaging users by providing them with effortless access to relevant new library holdings
  - Question: Does current technology provide a way for us, a medium sized college library, to accomplish this?
  - Rationale: To draw awareness to the library's evolving print collection while reinforcing the library's active role in scholarship
  - Significance: By working together, librarians, students, and the IT department have been able to provide a useful service despite limited resources and have created a model for others to follow

- RSS feed is made available in Course Management System
  - TCNJ's SOCS (Simple Online Courseware System)
RSS Feeds in SOCS:

- Feed displays prominently within CMS
- Lists relevant recent monographic acquisitions
- Provides seamless, automatic syndication
- Is tailored to specific course
- Anticipates user need
Getting Started/Feasibility

- Will it be used?
  - “New Books List” has proven to be popular
  - Informal discussions with key stakeholders
    - Librarians
    - Classroom faculty
    - IT (SOCS designer, web master)
- Has another Voyager library done this (or similar)?
- Do we have the in-house expertise to do this?
- Effort vs. reward (If you build it, will they come?)
Consider the following flow chart outlining the general model for our implementation:
Stage 1 – Overview

Main Goals
- Determine which acquisitions are “new”
- Report items in a flat file for further processing
- Maintain up-to-date information

Design Considerations
- Subjects for feeds
  - LoC call number vs. LoC Subject Heading vs ???
- Fields to display
  - Acquisition Date, ISBN, Title (245a), Title Statement (245), Location(s), LoC call number
Stage 1 – Implementation

SQL*Plus Pseudo Code:

```sql
select distinct
    item_create_date || '|' ||
    isbn || '|' ||
    brief_title || '|' ||
...
from
    bib_record,
    location,
...
where
    suppress_in_opac not in ('Y') and
    call_number between 'QA' and 'QB' and
    call_number not between 'QA 71' and 'QA 91' and
...
order by
    location,
...
Stage 2 – Overview

Main Goals
- Process the flat file of new acquisitions
- Format each field accordingly
- Generate XML files

Design Considerations
- The Perl programming language
  - Rich text processing, robust pattern matching, familiarity
  - “Makes the easy jobs easy and the hard jobs possible”
    --Programming Perl. Wall, Christiansen, Orwant
- RSS Version
  - Version 0.90 vs. Version 0.91/1.0 vs. Version 2.0
Stage 2 – Implementation

Consider the following flow chart outlining the basic approach:

- Flat-file of Library Records from SQL*Plus
- Perl Script
- Config File
- XML File (RSS 2.0)

Inside “Stage 2”
Stage 2 – Technical Details

Plain Text “lst” flat file:

Fri, 12 AUG 2005 14:13:37 EDT | 0873534980 (pbk.) | . . .
Thu, 28 JUL 2005 16:24:55 EDT | 0766832279 (pbk.) | . . .
Thu, 28 JUL 2005 14:34:05 EDT | 0325005060 (pbk.) | . . .
Stage 2 – Technical Details

Plain Text Configuration File:

```plaintext
channel-title="New Mathematics Books"
channel-description="Mathematics"
channel-itemfile="math.lst"

channel-title="New Test Books"
channel-description="Test"
channel-itemfile="test.lst"
```
Stage 2 – Technical Details

Perl Script Pseudo Code:
Read config file for channel meta-data
For each channel
    Parse associated flat file
        Split by the pipe delimiter
        Create internal data structure
        Format each category accordingly
    Create RSS channel
    For each element of internal structure
        Insert element into RSS channel
    End For
End For
Write RSS file to disk
Stage 2 – Results

RSS 2.0 File:

```xml
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="US-ASCII"?>
<rss version="2.0">
    <channel>
        <title>New Mathematics Books</title>
        ...
        <item>
            <title>SAS System for regression</title>
            <link>http://...</link>
            <description>
                SAS System for regression /  
                Rudolf J. Freund, Ramon C. Littell.  
                Location: General Collection.  
                Call Number: QA276.4 .F74 2000
            </description>
            <author>...</author>
            <pubDate>Sat, 13 AUG 2005 13:57:37 EDT</pubDate>
        </item>
        ...
    </channel>
</rss>
```
Stage 2 – Code Module Credits

- CPAN, repository for free public Perl code
- XML::RSS module authored by
  - Original code: Jonathan Eisenzopf
    <eisen@pobox.com>
  - Further changes: Rael Dornfest
    <rael@oreilly.com>
Main Goals
- Accept RSS 2.0 files
- Display new acquisitions to the community
- Allow for display alternatives (aggregators/news readers)

Design Considerations
- Course Management Software
  - SOCS, in-house CMS software
- Subject Guides
  - Web pages within the library's site
Stage 3 – SOCS Screens

### Syndication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCNJ Library - New Literature Books</td>
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<td>FRI, 24 FEB 2006 11:59:05 EDT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegeoinformatics : location-based computing and services /</td>
<td>SUN, 19 FEB 2006 15:49:11 EDT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ant : the definitive guide /</td>
<td>SUN, 19 FEB 2006 09:02:31 EDT</td>
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Stage 3 – Subject Guide Screens

TCNJ Library

TCNJ Home : Library : Subject & Class Guides : Philosophy

Text Size: A  A  A

Philosophy

Contents

- Background Information
- Articles & More
- Books, Videos & More
- Careers & Graduate Programs
- People & Organizations
- Other Guides to Philosophy Resources
- Writing Resources / Style Manuals

Background Information

Dictionary of Philosophical Terms and Names
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
Index to Philosophy Dictionaries and Encyclopedia
- Blackwell Companion to Philosophy REF B21.B56
- World Philosophy: Essay Reviews of 225 Major Works REF B29.W68
- Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy REF B41.B53
- Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy REF B41.C35
- Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy REF B51.R68
- Biographical Dictionary of Twentieth Century Philosophers REF B104.B52
- Encyclopedia of Empiricism REF B816.E53
- Dictionary of Existentialism REF B819.D455
- Ayn Rand Lexicon REF B945.R233

New Books at TCNJ

Moral animals : ideals and constraints in moral theory /

Veritas : the correspondence theory and its critics /

Fundamentals of logic /

Cultivating kindness in school : activities that promote integrity, respect, and compassion in elementary and middle school students /
Cultivating kindness in school : activities that promote integrity, respect, and compassion in elementary and middle school students / Ric Stueckler. Location: General Collection. Call Number: B11333.K5 S7 2004

Logical forms : an introduction to philosophical logic /

Oxford handbook of metaphysics /

Triumph of practice over theory in ethics /
Triumph of practice over theory in ethics / James P. Starba. Location: General Collection. Call Number: B711 .S69 2005

Love of self and love of God in thirteenth-century ethics /
By implementing RSS feeds, the benefits include…

1. Maintains library’s relevancy to campus community in digital environment
2. Spotlights and encourages local skills and talents as part of the collaborative nature of the project
3. Provides library outreach for scholarship and teaching
4. Improves library visibility while encouraging learning through use of advertised holdings
5. Provides users with easily-accessible method for accessing new and relevant library holdings information on topics they need, when they need them
In the increasingly digital campus environment:

- Promotes library relevancy in campus’s online information environment
- Markets library and OPAC holdings to targeted users in campus CMS
- Informs users who do not browse the library regularly
- Provides information to users without requiring them to find quality feeds or set them up
  - Answers a call in the library lit. (Byrne, 2005)
- Supports distance-education initiatives, providing a “link” to the brick and mortar campus
2. Making the Most of Library Human Resources

Implementing the project in a library:
• Is feasible with basic on-campus/in-house expertise
  • Does not require high-budget software
  • Does not require outsourced programming
• Provides librarians an opportunity to collaborate within and outside of the library walls
  • Involves collaboration among diverse kinds of librarians (systems, public services, technical services)
• Can recruit talented student IT workers
3. Providing Outreach for Scholarship and Teaching

As an aid to teaching and learning in higher education:

• Highlights the dynamic nature of the collection and the academic support provided by the library
• Illustrates the continued relevancy of the brick and mortar library
  • “Intellectual hub” of the campus community
• Provides library faculty an opportunity to mentor/work meaningfully with students
• Demonstrates library’s willingness to collaborate with other departments on campus (IT) and vice versa
• Provides library follow-through on commitment to support online education initiatives
4. Increasing On-Campus Visibility for the Library

RSS feed project, as a boon to library operations:

- Functions as a virtual “New Book” area
- Streamlines information in RSS display to include only acquisitions relevant to the subject matter of the course
- Targets a specific group of scholars/students at appropriate time
- Provides an effortless method for students and faculty to know when new books are available at the library
  - Addresses call to embed library collections and services in users’ workflows (Dempsey, 2005)

--We project that the visibility of new holdings in CMS will generate interest and increase new book circulation in library
5. Providing Users with Information They Want...

Effortless Access to Information on Relevant New Monographic Holdings

• Inspires student curiosity in subject matter by displaying titles representative of latest trends in the field
  • Assurance that title IS there and available
• Provides seamless access to OPAC for further browsing (via hyperlink to bib. record)
  • Encourages users to access OPAC directly from CMS
• Encourages general use of the OPAC as a research tool
In response to Education’s call for library visibility in CMS (i.e. Cohen, 2002)
Offers alternative to Google for information searching in online environment
Showcases library holdings at “point of need”
Generates general student and faculty interest in library holdings
  • Volume of new books!
  • Newness of acquisitions!
  • Catchiness of titles!
Discussions

- Collaboration for fun and profit
- Still a work in progress
- Other uses of the “New Library Acquisitions” RSS feeds
  - In aggregators, such as Thunderbird
  - In Subject & Class guides
  - In the Library website
  - In other TCNJ websites
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http://www.tcnj.edu/~corrado/scholarly/njla2006/

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