

Journal of Digital Imaging

How Do You Read Your News?

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Everyday I read up to 15 different blogs (weblogs for the purists). Although I read several blogs from the New York Times, most of the blogs I read are not actually news but topics of interest to me. Of course the primary blog for everyone at SIIM to read is the JDI Blog which can be found at blogs.springer.com/jdi.

I have several options for reading my favorite blogs: I have a laptop computer, an Amazon Kindle, and an iPhone. Many readers of JDI have these or similar devices. The thing is, in order to read blogs manually, readers need to manually navigate to each of their bookmarked pages. This is time consuming, especially if following multiple blogs. If you forget to check your blogs you miss things, and if the blog site is infrequently updated you see the same information over and over again. What is needed is to have the blogs automatically inform you when the site is updated. This can be accomplished through Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds. An RSS feed sends the title of the blog and sometimes the first few lines of the posting to a reader near you.

From an earlier TechBits column, I confessed to my reliance on Google. I use iGoogle page as my home page on my browser. Right now as I write this, I use my laptop and iGoogle as my primary method for receiving and organizing RSS feeds. My Google Reader window gets several feeds, but to keep them organized I send most of my feeds to separate windows then place the windows where I want to see them on my browser page. To illustrate this process with the JDI Blog, I navigate to blogs.springer.com/jdi. At the right side of my Firefox browser address bar, there is an RSS icon that I can click to subscribe to a feed (Fig. 1). This RSS icon is also available in a slightly different location at the top of the Internet Explorer browser and an RSS button is located at the right of the Safari browser address

bar—more on that one later. Figures 2 and 3 show how to subscribe to the JDI Blog using Google, either sending the feed to the Google page or to Google reader.

The Amazon Kindle is a great electronic reading device that can hold hundreds of books, newspapers, magazines, and blogs. All the material from Amazon can be sent wirelessly to the Kindle using Whispernet. Whispernet is free for a Kindle owner, although the cost of the network connectivity is built into the cost of the reading material. Speaking of cost, in order to read a blog on the Kindle, a user needs to subscribe through Amazon and most of the blogs are not free. The latest news from the New York Times costs \$1.99 per month and is delivered wirelessly. I actually read about the “Miracle on the Hudson” on my Kindle before I saw it on the internet or on the TV news. Not all blogs are available from Amazon, for example, the JDI Blog is not available for the Kindle.

My iPhone is always with me. I often have it with me when I don’t have my Kindle and am not near my laptop computer. The iPhone is an Apple product with a built-in Safari browser. There are a number of ways to read blogs on the iPhone with news reader apps such as MobileRSS—Google reader, Feeds—RSS Reader, and Pro RSS Reader; however, using the Safari browser is by far the easiest. I have found that the best way to organize my feeds is to subscribe to them using the Safari browser on my laptop, then synchronize my

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Fig 1. To subscribe to an RSS feed using Firefox, select the RSS symbol to the right of the address bar.

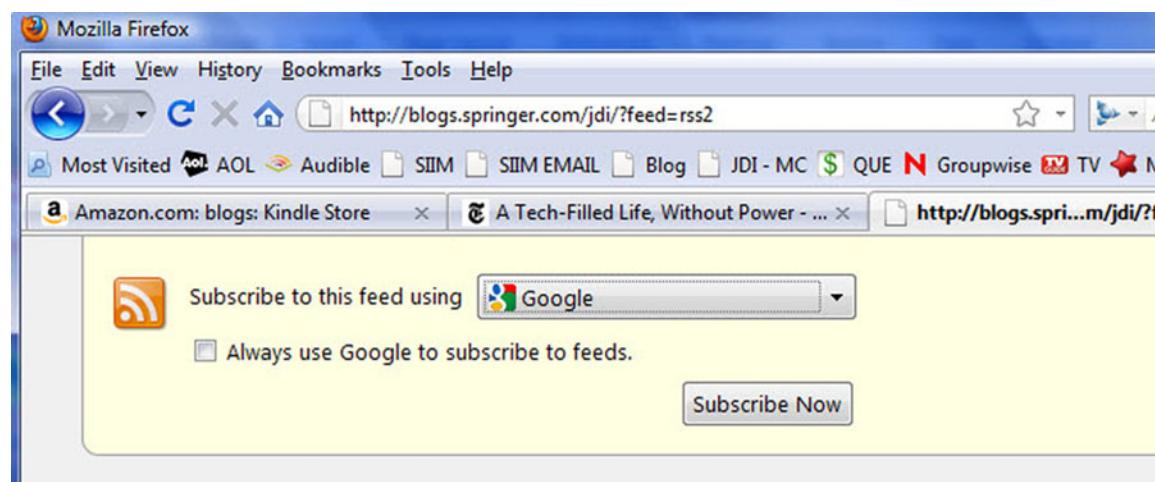


Fig 2. Select the method for RSS delivery, in this case, Google is selected.

The screenshot shows the Google homepage with a link to "Journal of Digital Imaging blog" (<http://blogs.springer.com/jdi/?feed=rss2>). Below the link, text says "Google offers two different ways to keep up-to-date with your favorite sites:" followed by two options: "Your Google homepage brings together Google functionality and content from across the web, on a single page." and "Google Reader makes it easy to keep up with the latest content from a large number of sites, all on a single reading list." Below these options are two large blue buttons: "Add to Google homepage" and "Add to Google Reader".

Add to Google homepage

Add to Google Reader

or

Sample

Sample

Fig 3. Select where Google should deliver the RSS feed. Google homepage sends each feed to its own window. Google reader sends all feeds to a single window.



Fig 4. Using the Safari Browser to subscribe to feeds. After selecting "RSS" on the right of the address bar, select "+" to add the feed to Safari Bookmarks.



Fig 5. iPhone Safari bookmarks after synchronizing with laptop computer. Blog folders are added to the Bookmarks Bar on the iPhone.

iPhone with my laptop including Safari bookmarks. Figure 4 shows the procedure for subscribing to a feed with Safari. First, find the website you wish to follow, then click on the “RSS” button on the right of the address bar—I chose RSS 2.0—then after the browser navigates to the feed page, click on the “+” icon to the left of the address bar. This will open a dialog box where the feed can be named and placed in a folder. Figure 5 shows my iPhone after synchronizing with my computer and the Safari bookmarks. I have organized my blogs into folders named professional blogs, craft blogs, gadget blogs, and news blogs.

After experimenting with my three ways to read blogs, I find that I prefer reading them on my laptop. I am unwilling to pay for free material so I can read it on my Kindle and my iPhone is too small to be a great reader. If I am stranded in traffic or in a waiting room, I will read blogs on my iPhone to pass the time. I will soon be an early adopter of the new Apple iPad device, and my prediction is that it will become my news reader of choice. I will report on my experiments with the iPad on the JDI blog.