Web 2.0 Ideas for Educators

A Guide to RSS and More

Version 2.0

By Quentin D'Souza

"Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing.

Such are the differences among human beings in their sources of pleasure, their susceptibilities of pain, and the operation on them of different physical and moral agencies, that unless there is a corresponding diversity in their modes of life, they neither obtain their fair share of happiness, nor grow up to the mental, moral, and aesthetic stature of which their nature is capable."

-John Stuart Mill, On Liberty (1859)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Quentin D'Souza is an Elementary Resource Teacher in the Academic Information and Communication Technology Department at the Toronto Catholic District School Board, which is responsible for over 80,000 students in Toronto, Canada. He helps teachers and administrators to improve the quality of education that they can deliver to their students through the use of technology.

Quentin has written numerous articles that have appeared in print and online. He has presented focused technology seminars, workshops, and multi-day events both locally and provincially. Quentin is an Advisory Board Member for Cause Initiatives for Youth and Community and part of the Development Committee for the Leading Learning Conference, a provincial information communication technology conference that draws educators from across the province of Ontario.

He has developed curriculum and resources for the Ontario Ministry of Education, ILC/TV Ontario, Harcourt Canada, The Learning Partnership and other organizations. Quentin has worked as an online mentor, developed/taught online and blended courses, and moderated online discussions. He is also the founder of http://www.TheCanadianTeacher.com, where he has developed and shared a broad range of materials and tools geared specifically to Canadian educators.

You can keep up with Quentin's activities and writing by visiting his blog at http://www.TeachingHacks.com.

Should You Read This?

- With all the information on the web how can we make sense of it all?
- Wouldn't it be nice to be able to filter out what we want from what we don't want?
- Do you visit the same web sites again and again looking for new content; wouldn't it be nice to automate this task?
- Would you like to share great resources that you find with other teachers or your students?
- Would you like to have access to new tools and resources without having to spend hours searching for them?
- Would you like to make connections with other teachers?

If you have asked yourself any one of these questions then the answer that you are looking for is RSS and Atom feeds. They are here to stay and feed offers a new face to the World Wide Web that we are already familiar with.

What is RSS and Atom feed?

RSS is an acronym that stands for Rich Site Summary, though it's often alternatively defined as Really Simple Syndication. The simplest definition of RSS is an eXtensible Markup Language(XML) format that uses the Resource Description Framework (RDF) for representing information about resources on the World Wide Web. Similarly, Atom is another format based on XML technology.

You might see buttons like these:

There are a few types of feeds commonly found on web sites RSS 1.0, RSS 2.0 and Atom. There is quite a bit of debate about which type of xml format is better, but for the purpose of simplicity I will often be referring to feeds as RSS.

RSS and Atom feeds are the structures that organize content which is being updated on a regular basis in order for others to retrieve it. This content could be articles, blog posts, photos, PDF documents, PowerPoint Presentations, audio files, video files, or other applications. If the content is the flesh of an orange then a feed would be its skin. The skin keeps the flesh in place so that it is easier to transport.
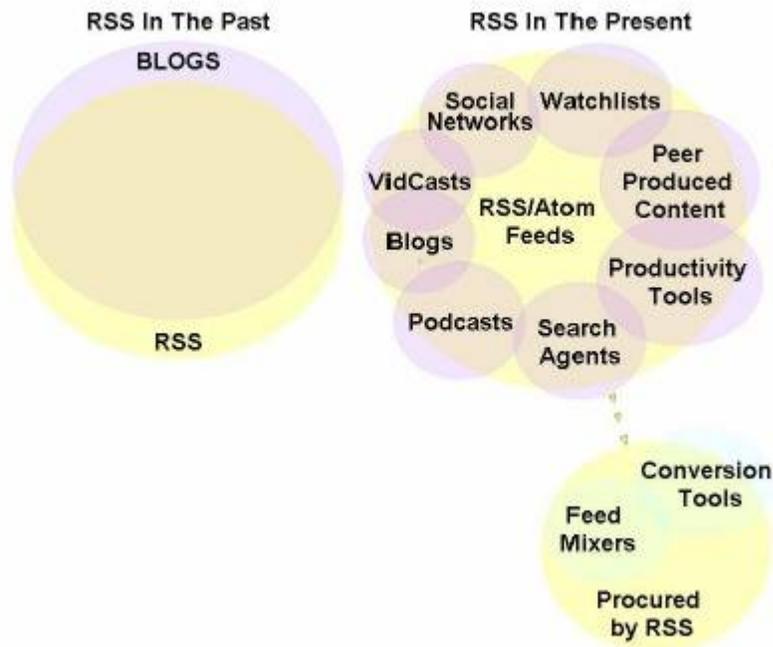
In 2003, RSS was more commonly associated with weblogs, known as blogs. Blogs and RSS feeds almost seemed to be an isolated cause and effect. Where there was a blog, you would find an RSS feed.

As this visualization shows, RSS feeds can more recently be seen being used for many different purposes. Bloggers created a different type of media, by adding audio and video files as the primary content to their posts. Listeners can subscribe to their favourite audio blog, also called a podcast, and download the audio files to be played on personal computers or mobile devices. This created a media which resembles a radio show, where the shows are almost always archived for future listening. While video blogs, also known as vlogs, created a type of archived video shows. All types of web applications are using feeds to share data within social networks, through enhancing accessibility to productivity tools, research tools, watch lists, and sharing peer created content. The numbers of applications that are using feeds are growing daily.

New tools have come into existence because of RSS feeds and the trend seems to be continuing to grow. These tools allow you to remix and reformat the content of a feed in a countless different ways.

Web 2.0 – I didn't Know There was a 1.0?

There has been shift from a World Wide Web that is "read only" to a Web that is being described as the "Read Write Web." Instead of content that was for the most part static, we are starting to see the ability to remix content in different ways, in order to suit our needs. The Web is evolving to become more like an area for social and idea networking. The web surfer negotiates the connections within a social or

idea network, exchanges bits of content, creates something new, and then the cycle begins again. XML content, but RSS and Atom feeds in particular, is increasingly becoming a standard for sharing data between these web applications.

If you look at the idea of publishing web pages, we would consider the read web as something that was more inclined for the geeks. Where there was some need to understand a server-side language, use FTP, maybe html, or a number of tools to create and publish web content. Now, in less than ten minutes you could set-up a weblog on Blogger.com and have your first idea posted. It would probably take you longer to come up with the ideas for the first post than to setup the weblog. I would call this a transformation from geek to sleek.
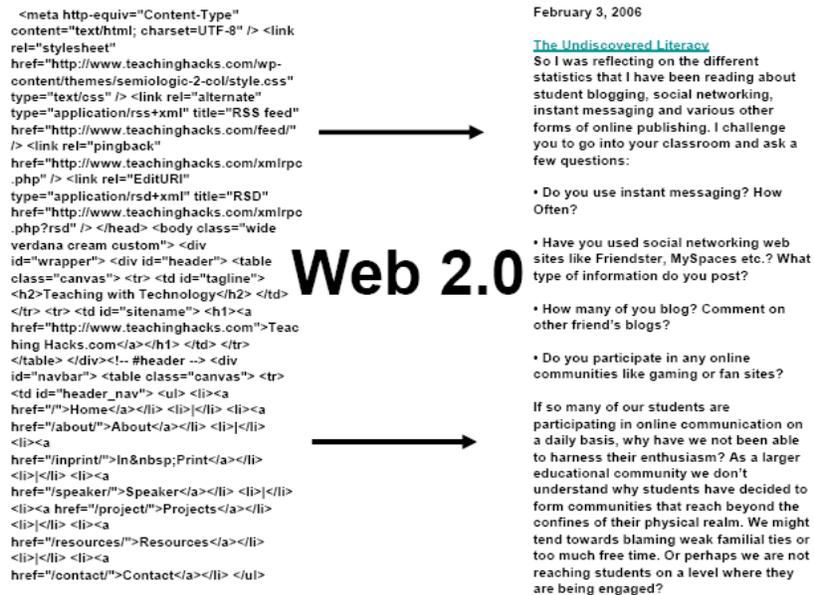
What is a Folksonomy and Tagging?

Like RSS, folksonomies and tagging are often part of the transformation to the "Read Write Web." The term folksonomy (derived from "folk" and "taxonomy") was coined by Thomas Vander Wal and refers to a form of organic categorization that comes from internet users as they encounter new information. Think about when you are looking at an image or a web site, you may think of a number of key descriptive words that help you to remember that resource. These keyword descriptions are referred to as tagging a resource.

Combine these tags with software that makes the categorization of these resources relatively simple and you have created a personal searchable database of information. By doing the little bit of work it takes to organize your own resources, you are spreading the workload in organizing information on the internet. When you look at all of these personal databases as a whole, patterns begin to emerge where similar resources have similar tags.

The categorization process on a macro level evolves in a democratic type of process, where certain tags gain prominence over other tags when used to describe types of

resources. General categories emerge and are followed by sub-categories, but these are all defined through a consensus model based on group interaction.

You can find folksonomies and tagging on many different types of web services that include, but are not limited to, social software components, blogs, bookmark storage, and photograph sharing.

Issues around Tagging

Tagging and folksonomies are not without its share of challenges. One of the common problems that are identified in tagging is the misspelling of tags within the tag cosmos. The result is leaving orphaned content that has little benefit to the group at large.

Another issue is deciding on what the content you are tagging is actual about. Everyone has different perceptions of what they are reading. In this case, services that create folksonomies that appeal to a particular group of people, would be more successful in tagging material similarly. An example would be K12 educators tagging resources using the same service ScuttlEdu (http://blogs.zanestate.edu/mybookmarks/).

Ideas:

1. Categorize lesson plans and learning objects at the province/state, school board, or school levels.
2. Categorize documents at a school or school district level in order to create a searchable structures that use descriptions based on those who use those documents.
3. Connect educators together who share similar interests through tags.
4. Unintended learning through the discovery of resources and information shared by others.
5. Create a unique shared tag where anyone can add to a specific set of resources by knowing the unique tag word, which could then be aggregated through RSS feeds.

What is Creative Commons?

Online publishing is a public representation of the physical school. It is important that any materials posted in the school or class web content are originals and not a copy from another website, book, magazine or any other medium. This includes text, images, buttons, or other media. Copyright law differs from country to country and need to be followed, but there are a few unwritten rules on the internet.

Copying ideas or information in your own words is not copyright infringement; as long as you use proper citation of sources. Often, you can attribute credit on a web page by simply linking to the original source. If you are copying an image from an online source you need to do your best to contact the creator of the image either by email or another means. Obtaining written permission to use the image is important and if you get no answer then you are getting a "no" answer from the creator.

There are sources of text, images and media that are free to use. Any materials that are in the "public domain" can be integrated into a web content without much worry of copyright infringement. Works go into the public domain for a number of reasons, a few examples are a certain amount of time has passed after an author has passed away, or the copyright holder has forfeited their rights and has given the work to the public.

There are also more flexible copyright licenses like the Creative Commons license, which appear on some websites. These licenses are easy to understand and clear about how you can use the content that appears on a website. Just click on the image to find out the type of rights associated with the work.

The Creative Commons (http://www.creativecommons.org/) is a non-profit organization devoted to expanding the range of creative work available for others legally to build upon and share. It enables copyright holders to grant some of their rights to the public while retaining others through a variety of licensing and contract schemes including dedication to the public domain or open content licensing terms. The intention is to avoid the problems current copyright laws create for the sharing of information.

A Creative Commons license is based on copyright. So they apply to all works that are protected by copyright law. The kinds of works that are protected by copyright law are, for example; books, web sites, blogs, photographs, films, videos, songs and other audio & visual recordings.

Creative Commons licenses give you the ability to dictate how others may exercise your copyright rights—such as the right of others to copy your work, make derivative works or adaptations of your work, to distribute your work and/or make money from your work. Creative Commons licenses attach to the work and authorize everyone who comes in contact with the work to use it consistent with the license.

- Creative Commons (http://wiki.creativecommons.org/FAQ)

Ideas:

6. Students can use Creative Commons licensed materials in presentations and other products. (http://search.creativecommons.org/)
7. Educators could license student generated materials through Creative Commons licenses.
8. Creative Commons encourages collaboration and sharing through the Share and Share a like component of some licenses.

Think About Student Privacy

Working online also means that you must be consciousness about what information is going out on the web in any format. Just because you're creating content for your

class doesn't mean that only members of your school community will be viewing what you have created.

That means that you have to be careful when you're posting student names, images of students, and student work on the World Wide Web. My own practice has been to only include student names as acronyms or screen names. They always enjoy coming up with something unique that they feel describe themselves. Any work if that comes from a student would use that particular acronym or screen name.

If you do decide to post images of students or their work, then you should get written permission form their parent(s)/guardians(s). The permission form should specifically state that it's okay to use a photo or student work on the World Wide Web. Some school boards have already established forms and formats for this process it's important to look up the forms and processes at your individual school board.

What Does a Feed Do?

As stated previously, feeds are most commonly used with web sites that are frequently updated, like blogs and news sites. By creating a 'feed', the author can easily syndicate his or her content in a format that others can access by subscribing to the feed. When the author changes the content on the site, it's automatically updated on the desktop or web page of every single person who subscribes to that feed.
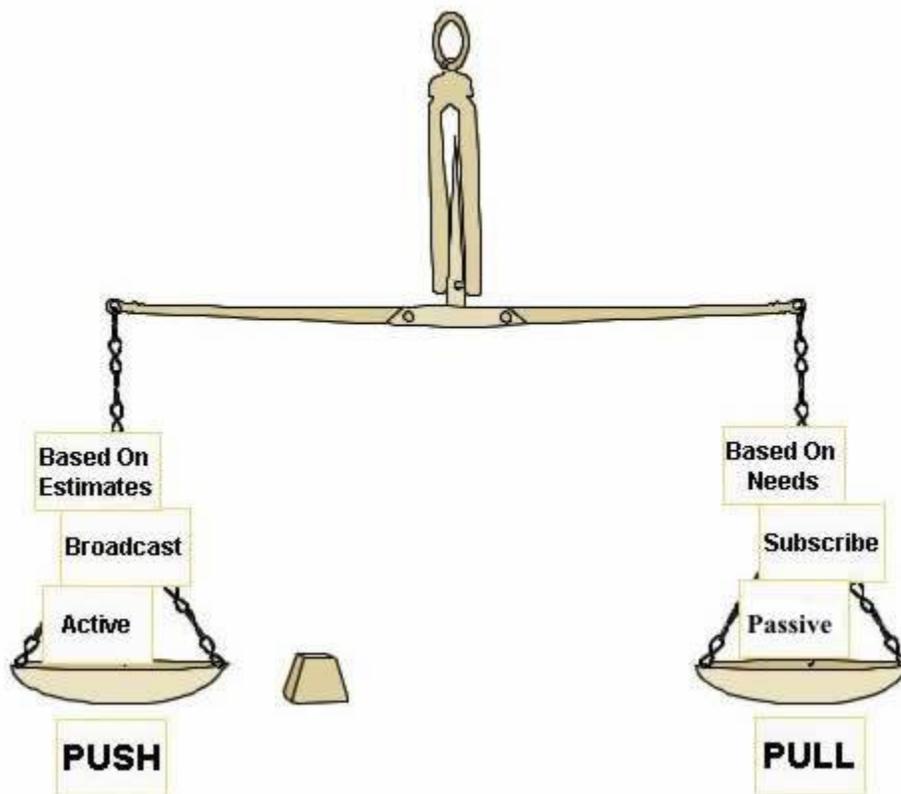
Feeds are most commonly referred to as pulling, rather than a pushing technology. Pushing technology is broadcasting a message and hoping that someone will come by your website or your television station to listen to it. RSS is pulling technology because visitors subscribe to your message and can retrieve it whenever they want.

A person on the internet has access to a large body of knowledge, but they can use pull technologies like RSS to engage in people, resources and information when the need arises. This in itself is a shift towards a "just in time" type of approach to concept understanding.

Imagine that you have a list of bookmarks in your favourite web browser that you visit regularly. Sometimes the content on these sites are updated, other times they are not. What if your bookmarks let you know when these sites have been updated? Then you wouldn't have to waste time with the ones that were not updated. That is what feed **aggregator** can do for you.

What does a Feed look like?

First, do not be afraid! Feeds are not something that is easily read by people, it is similar to when you view raw html, the language behind a typical web page. The feed begins with the format of the feed and then the channel tag.

In this example, the first tag defines the version and type of feed being used. The second tag signifies the start of the feed channel. The main content of the feed is entered between the channel tags.

1. <rss version="2.0">

2. <channel>

The title tag provides the web site, blog, or content source feed name, this is usually the same as the name of the website where the feed originates. The link tag provides a URL to the home page of the web site.

3. <title>Teaching Hacks </title>

4. <link>http://www. TeachingHacks.com </link>

The description tag is a phrase or a sentence that describes the web site, blog, or content source.

5. <description>Teaching with Technology</description>

The language tag defines the language of the web site, blog, or content feed source.

6. <language>en</language>

Te main content areas within a feed are found between the item tags. Each item or post within the channel is contained within item tags. Each feed may contain any number of items. The title tag within the item tags defines the subject of the posting or content item. The link tag between the item tags, provides the URL to the content source on the World Wide Web.

7. <item>

8. <title>Blogs of Fiction</title>

9. <link>http:// www.teachinghacks.com/archives/108</link>

The description tags offer a short summary of the post or the full posting/content item, depending on how the owner of the feed has set it up. In this example we have a short summary of the posting item since there is an obvious break in this posting.

10. <description> There are a few blogs that claim to be written by famous people who could not possibly be blogging because they are dead or they are fictional characters. A good example is the Darth Vader Blog where you can read the rebellion from Darth Vader …. </description>

At the end of each item you will find a closing item tag.

11. </item>

At the end of the feed are the closing tags opened at the beginning of the feed.

12. </channel> </rss>

This is a simplfied example of a feed. RSS 2.0 feeds often contain more items as well as many other tags referred to as enclosures, that further defines elements of the feed, such as audio, video, images, PDF documents, PowerPoint Presentations and other files. There are also tags that include more specific publishing information, as well as comments.

How Can You Use Feeds?

The information contained in the RSS feed is accessed by a piece of software called an **aggregator**. The aggregator holds a list of web sites and resources that offer RSS feeds. When it's opened the aggregator retrieves the information from each RSS feed page listed. The aggregator may be a desktop application, a browser or mail application extension, or web-based, some of them are commercial products and others are freeware. A few applications already have aggregators built into them – Apple's Safari browser, Opera Web Browser, Internet Explorer 7(beta) and there are rumours that the next version of Microsoft Outlook will support feeds as well.

The following is a list of free aggregators:

Web-Based Aggregators

Bloglines - http://www.bloglines.com/

NewsIsFree - http://www.newsisfree.com/

Newsgator - http://www.newsgator.com/

Desktop Aggregator

Fuzzy Duck - http://www.fuzzyd.co.uk/RSSreader/

FeedReader - http://www.feedreader.com/

CITA RSS Aggregator - http://www.seeita.com/RSSA/

Vienna (Mac OS) - http://www.opencommunity.co.uk/vienna2.html

Extensions and Toolbars

Wizz RSS (Firefox) - http://www.wizzcomputers.com/WizzRSS.php

My RSS Toolbar – (Internet Explorer) - http://www.myRSStoolbar.com/

Attensa (Outlook) - http://www.attensa.com/

Another excellent listing of the different types of aggregators is found on Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_news_aggregators).
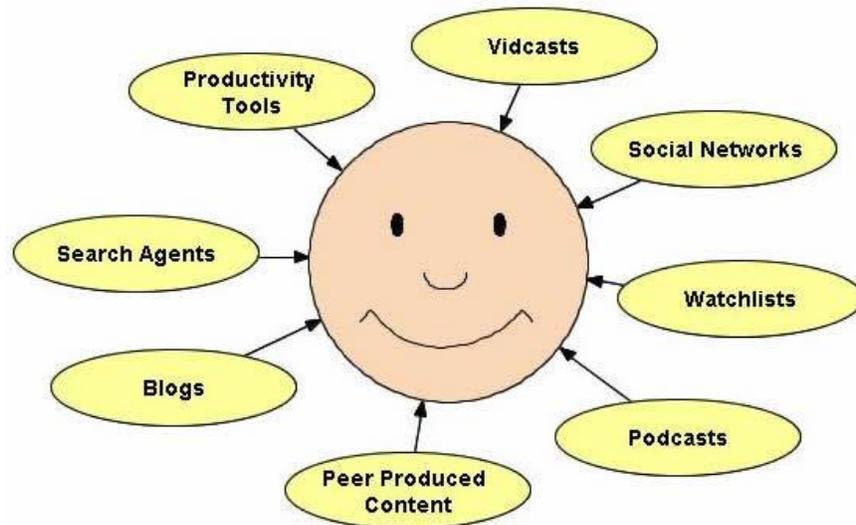
Many people use RSS feeds as a way to keep current on topics that are of interest to them. Rather than checking every web site they have found that relates to that topic, they subscribe to the RSS feeds for those web sites. When something new is posted to any of those sites, they will get the new information with the date of the posting, whether as a full article or as a title and summary with a link to follow for the complete article. The feed aggregator monitors the feed twenty-four hours a

day, three-hundred and sixty-five days a year. Subscribing to RSS feeds saves the time of checking every single site that you access to find out if they have posted anything new.

For the most part these feeds are ad free, but advertising services like Google Adsense are starting to take advantage of RSS feeds by offering embedded targeted ads in the feeds of the content providers. There is an interesting twist to this, because the ads are in XML and easily identified, so some aggregators will block these ads. (NewsFire - http://www.newsfireRSS.com/ for Macs and CITA RSS Aggregator - http://www.seeita.com/RSSA/ for Windows)

Feeds can also be manipulated in a variety of ways. One example is the use of server-side or client-side scripts so you can quickly format and republish information from other websites on to your own website. One such example is Feed2JS (http://www.feed2js.org) created by Alan Levine. You can enter a feed, format it they way you would like it to appear on your website, and then you are given a bit of JavaScript code which you place on your website. When the feed is updated the content on your website is automatically updated.

Online web applications like Phone Feeds http://www.phonefeeds.com/, My Yahoo! Mobile RSS http://mobile.yahoo.com/ and Lite Feeds http://www.litefeeds.com/ make it easy to reformat RSS feeds for use in mobile devices like a PDA, Blackberry or mobile phone. Get your feeds over any type of internet connection. There is even a service called Feed Beep http://feedbeep.com/ that will send SMS alerts to your phone or pager when feeds are updated.

Another feature of RSS is that it contains strictly content from web sites; it removes the eye candy that encompasses many web sites today. You will not see web site templates downloaded within an RSS feed, only the content that the web site is providing. A nice feature of some aggregator is the ability to create your own template and pull the web site content from your feeds into it. Now that is what I call web content customizability. You can see how this is literally changing the face of the World Wide Web.

Using an Online Aggregator - Bloglines

Setup your account at Bloglines - http://bloglines.com/register All you need is an email address and to create a password to get started.

Setting up a Feed in Bloglines

1. Find a feed that you are interested in and **copy the URL** of the RSS feed.
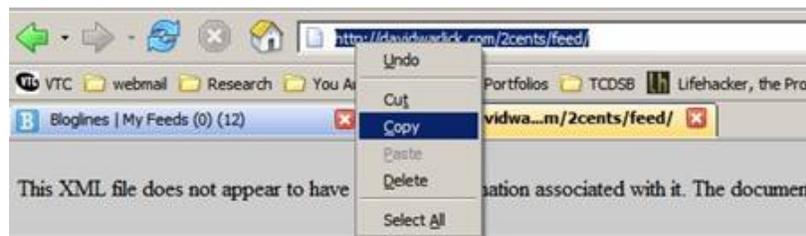
2. This is an example of the feed from David Warlick's Blog "2 Cents Worth." - http://davidwarlick.com/2cents/feed/

3. When you are logged into Bloglines you will notice a number of tabs – **My Feeds, My Blog, Clippings, Directory and Share**.

The Bloglines screen is divided into two parts - a navigation frame and a main frame. Bloglines should default to the My Feeds tab in the navigation frame when you first login.

The "**My Feeds**" tab is where you will view all the feeds that you are subscribing to.

> The average Bloglines subscriber has twenty feeds in their aggregator.

4. To add a new feed select the "**ADD**" link at the top of the "**My Feeds**" category. A new window will appear in the main frame where you will enter feed information.

Subscribe

Enter the URL of the blog you wish to subscribe to, and Bloglines will attempt to locate the appropriate feed. An easier way to subscribe to blogs and newsfeeds is to use the Easy Subscribe Button, which makes subscribing to a blog you're viewing just one click away.

Blog or Feed URL: [   ] Subscribe

5. Paste the URL for the feed in the text area beside the "**Blog or Feed Url**" and select the "**Subscribe**" button.

Available Feeds

2 Cents Worth
Tue, Oct 10 2006 5:28 PM (326 subscribers)
Occasional thoughts about education, teaching, learning, & the 21st century
http://davidwarlick.com/2cents/feed/
Preview This Feed

Options

Folder	TopLevel ▼
Updated Items	● Display As New ○ Ignore
Display Preferences	● Default ○ Complete Entries ○ Summaries if Available ○ Titles
Monitored By Bloglines Notifier	☑ 𝐁
Displayed in Mobile	☑ 📱
Access	● Public ○ Private Private subscriptions don't show up in blogrolls and you will not be listed as a public subscriber. However, the feed and all its posts will remain available to the public via Bloglines and Ask.com Blog & Feed Search. Exceptions are Bloglines email subscriptions and feeds that require http authentication. In both cases, the feed and its posts will not be included in search results.
Notes	

Subscribe

6. A confirmation screen will appear that gives you a little information about the feed that you have chosen. You can personalize the feed through the options section, when you are happy with any customizations, select the "**Subscribe**" button.

Viewing Your Feed in Bloglines

1. When you want to view the feed, just click on the "2 Cents Worth" link and the content of the feed will appear.

Once you view the postings in the "My Feeds" section, it will automatically disappear.

2. If a particular item interests you and you would like to hold on to you can select the link "Clip/Blog This" to add the posting to you "Clippings" tab or blog about the item, email the item to yourself, or select the "Keep New" checkbox to keep the item in your "My Feeds" folder.

Where do you find Feeds?

RSS is most commonly found in blogs or news web sites, but it is becoming more common to see on any web site that is updated frequently. Feeds help make web content a powerful communication tool.

You might see buttons like these: These buttons help you to quickly subscribe to the feed based on the aggregator of your choice.

You will also find many directories that exist to help you find RSS feeds on topics that interest you. Here are a few of the larger directories.

Top Left http://www.bloglines.com/ , Top Right http://www.technorati.com/ ,
Bottom Left http://www.pubsub.com/ , and Bottom Right http://www.syndic8.com/

Ideas to Get You Started

Social Bookmarking and RSS

What is Social Bookmarking?

There have been many different attempts to classify web sites through the use of more traditional classification systems such as Gail Shea Grainger's Dewey Browse (http://www.deweybrowse.org/). Dewey Browse uses the Dewey Decimal System to classify web sites for grades K-12 students. The problem is that web sites come in and out of existence. Other commercial ventures offer a more up to date list of web sites for students and teachers at a monthly price. A few examples are StudentLink (http://www.studentlink.org/) and NetTrekker (http://school.nettrekker.com/frontdoor/).

All these services, free or commercial, use a top down approach for organizing web sites into predefined categories. Where individuals might make suggestions through a submission form on categories or web sites, but have very little effect the organizational structure of the web site.

Social bookmarking sites turn the hierarchical model upside down. In the past an individual might have saved their favourites or bookmarks on their local computer. Their bookmarks might have been organized under a few general headings. The social bookmarking web site allows individuals to store their bookmarks on the Internet and makes them accessible anywhere.

Shared online bookmarks have been around since April of 1996 with itList.com, and a number of other services link Backflip.com. Contemporary versions of social bookmarking sites use an organizational strategy known as tagging. Each social bookmarking site is a little different but all include the ability to include a description of the web site. These descriptions include keywords often referred to as tags, which help to classify the web site for the individual, similar to how you might use a heading in your bookmarks on your local computer.

When many people use a social bookmarking site their tags seem to be repeated by others who use the same keywords to describe their bookmarks. This allows the users of the social bookmarking site to find out other web sites that have been tagged in the same way. Or a user can search through another person's bookmarks, as long as they remain public. Some social bookmarking sites offer the ability to make your bookmarks private and opt out of the social components of their sites.

Ideas:

9. create a set of resources that can be accessed on any computer connected to the internet
10. conduct research and share that research with your peers
11. track author and book updates

12. groups of students doing a classroom project sharing their bookmarks, a teacher subscribed to their rss feed to see the direction of their research. (FURL - teacher can review and comment on resources that are bookmarked)
13. resource teacher does a PD event with a group of teachers creates a shared del.icio.us account where teachers can post research and information bookmarks that they gather throughout the year. All members continuously benefit from this shared resource.
14. rate and review bookmarks to help with students decide on usefulness of resources
15. setup a group tag in order to share educational resources (IE. NECC 2006 Conference http://del.icio.us/tag/necc2006)
16. unintended learning through the discovery of resources and information shared by others through their bookmarks
17. share links to current news items that relate to classroom discussions
18. examine the popularity of a web site that a student had listed and examine those who have tagged that resource in order to find new resources. (and perhaps unintended learning opportunities)
19. Share one del.icio.us account between a number of different subject specific educators or a school in order to share resources with each other. (see Willowdale Elementary School http://del.icio.us/willowdale and District6 http://del.icio.us/district6)
20. Share one del.icio.us account between a large number of educators across a school district that teach in diverse settings in order to create a broad and deep set of resources. (see Traverse City Area Public Schools http://del.icio.us/tcapsstaff for district wide social bookmarking)

How It Works?

Create an account at del.icio.us(http://del.icio.us/) or Furl(http://www.furl.net/) to store, sort and share the web sites that you feel have worthwhile information for your students (and colleagues). Share your del.icio.us and Furl bookmarks with your class using their RSS feeds.

These web services use keywords called tags that are freely chosen by its users to organize the links, often referring to as folksonomies, rather than a predetermined set of categories. You will use tagging to sort shared photographs, bookmarks, and in other social software.

An RSS feed can be found on the bottom of almost every page within del.icio.us. You can use your inbox to subscribe to other people's feeds or by tag. The inbox merges all of these feeds together into a central feed. This central feed will keep track of all the bookmarks people are adding to the community that I have flagged.

You can also search through your bookmarks by keywords or by tags, and you can access your bookmarks from any internet connection or through a public feed based on your username.

Another similar service, CiteULike is a free service to help academics to share, store, and organise the academic papers they are reading. Because your citations are stored on the server, you can access it from any computer. You can share your library with others, and find out who is reading the same papers as you. http://www.citeulike.org/ A great tool for writing and research.

Examples of Elementary Teachers Using Social Bookmarking Sites (Ages 4-13):

http://del.icio.us/cbonner - Collin Bonner (Special Education K-12) via http://elgg.net/collinb/

http://del.icio.us/derrallg - Derrall Garrison via http://educalgarden.blogs.com

http://del.icio.us/cfisher - Clarence Fisher - via http://www.remoteaccess.typepad.com/

http://del.icio.us/JSGeometry - Jeanne Simpson via http://mathmusings.blogspot.com/

http://del.icio.us/noon - Doug Noon via http://borderland.northernattitude.org/

http://del.icio.us/bitbybit - Bob Sprankle via http://www.bobsprankle.com/

http://del.icio.us/reiffert - Robert Eiffert via http://www.beiffert.net/wordpress/

http://del.icio.us/mahlness - Mark Ahlness via http://www.earthdaybags.org/mahlness.htm

http://del.icio.us/Landrum - Landrum Middle School via http://lms.springbranchisd.com/

http://del.icio.us/wegner - Graham Wegner via http://gwegner.edublogs.org/

http://del.icio.us/acl0026 - Alicia via http://www.indefinitearticles.blogspot.com/

http://del.icio.us/AlUpton - Al Upton via http://alupton.wordpress.com/

http://del.icio.us/mikeheth - Mike Hetherington - http://mhetherington.net/blogs/

Examples of Secondary Teachers Using Social Bookmarking Sites (Ages 14-18):
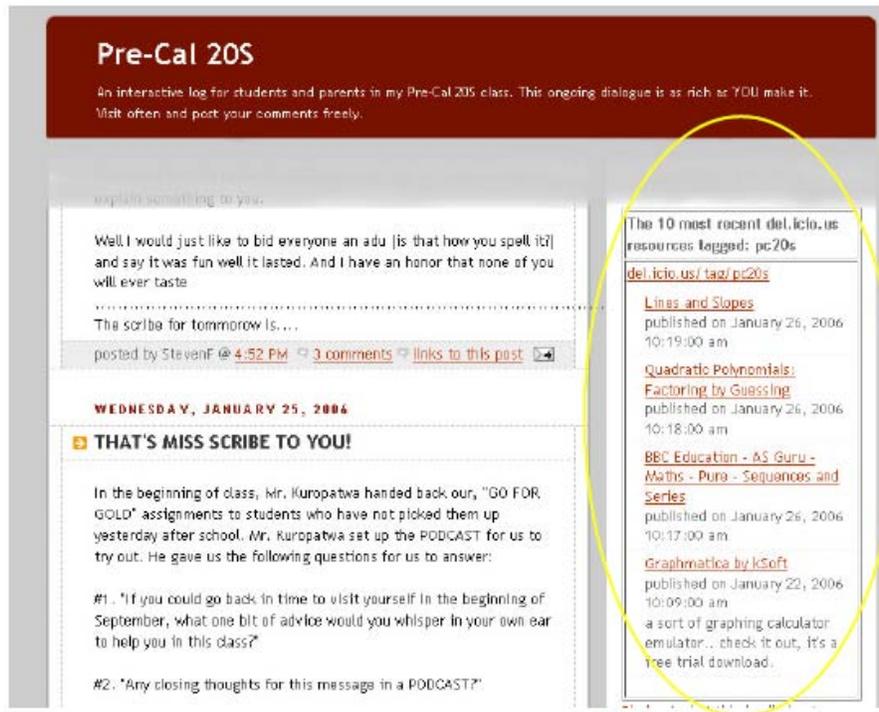
Darren Kuropatwa is using a Del.icio.us feed for Pre-Calculus and Calculus Classes. http://pc20s.blogspot.com/, http://pc30s.blogspot.com/ and http://apcalc.blogspot.com/

Darren Kuropatwa - http://www.furl.net/members/dkuropatwa

http://del.icio.us/rubyfire Jo McLeay via http://theopenclassroom.blogspot.com/

http://del.icio.us/brightideasguru - Vicki Davis via http://coolcatteacher.blogspot.com/

http://del.icio.us/ericmacknight - Eric MacKnight via http://www.ericmacknight.com/

http://del.icio.us/PaulAllison - Paul Allison via http://www.nycwp.org/paulallison/

http://del.icio.us/OutsideTheCave - Stephen Lazar via http://outsidethecave.blogspot.com/

http://furl.net/members/budtheteacher - Bud Hunt via http://www.budtheteacher.com/

http://del.icio.us/wenturner -Wendy Turner (Secondary English Teacher) via http://www.staff.fcps.net/wturner/

http://del.icio.us/cx1uk - Neil Winton via http://nwinton.wordpress.com/

http://del.icio.us/bcaldwell7 - Brandi Caldwell via
http://mtnbrookseniors.blogspot.com/

Examples of Administrators Using Social Bookmarking Sites:

http://del.icio.us/timlauer -Tim Lauer via http://tim.lauer.name/

http://del.icio.us/joevans John Evans via
http://nlcommunities.com/communities/joevans/

http://del.icio.us/chrislehmann Chris Lehmann via
http://www.practicaltheory.org/serendipity/

Automatically Adding Links to Any Web Site

By using a service like Feed2js (http://www.feed2js.org) you can create a set of links
or references and embed them in an online course, school or personal website. You
are creating a personalized learning object for the class, which evolves over the
term, by formatting your del.icio.us feed into JavaScript, and then placing the code
on your website.

Blogging and RSS

What is a Blog?

The word blog is shortened from the word "weblog." It is often inaccurately described
as an online diary that is subscribable, organized in categories, and displayed in
reverse chronological order.

A blog is similar to an empty book, it is how we use the book that turns it into
something. This book can be anything we want it to be from a sketchbook, a diary, a
dictionary or writing portfolio it depends on the content that we put into this book.

- Blogs offer the ability to archive content that is posted by date.
- The commenting feature of blogs allow for immediate feedback on a posting.
- The content that can be posted to a blog can be text, images, files, audio and
  video.
- Publishing postings to an intranet or the internet can by done quickly and
  easily.

Ideas:

21. use blogs for real-world writing experiences
22. pull class blogs together into one area for easy tracking
23. prolong discussions outside the classroom or for q and a with guest speakers
24. quickly give feedback to students, and students to each other (no stacks of
    paper)
25. track student writing development Blogging with Students
26. students using peer networks to develop their own knowledge
27. update new information such as homework and assignments

Estimates suggest more than 50 million people are blogging worldwide and the number is growing. Blogs are so incredibly simple to create and edit, that they are ideal for the classroom teacher.

Start a classroom blog to use for posting important information and sharing web resources. Students can easily keep track of the content posted to the blog through the RSS feed. By creating individual feeds for courses teachers can choose a few key resources, while students get the benefit of a subject specific feed.

A few examples:

- Ms. Howard's Class Writing Blog http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/takpilotblog/ - Yukon

- Mr. Tubb's Sixth Grade Homework and Student Blogs http://jtubbs.21publish.com/ - Wyoming Middle School

Have your students use blogs instead of paper journals for writing assignments. Services like http://www.Blogger.com, http://learnerblogs.org/ and http://epnweb.org/blogmeister/ are free blogging services that your students can join. Some are open to the public, others are password protected.

Both tools make RSS syndication easy. Students syndicate, you subscribe – and their journals are delivered to your desktop every time they update their blogs.

You can also use remixing tools to pull all the content of the separate blogs into a central location that has it's own feed. Tools like Suprglu (http://www.suprglu.com/)make this easy by adding the RSS feeds from the blogs that you want to combine and them gives you a template to choose.

Blogmeister (http://epnweb.org/blogmeister)combines blogging with the ability to approve posts before they are published. By using an approval system, you can work with students to polish their work before they post it for public comment.

Examples of Classroom Blogs:

- Mr. Monson's Classroom Weblog - http://monsonclassroom.blogspot.com/

- Clarence Fisher's and his student Blogs - http://mr-fisher.edublogs.org/

- Darren Kuropatwa's AP Calculus AP class blog on Blogger - Winnipeg - http://apcalc06.blogspot.com/

- Room 208 and 209 Poetry Blog - http://bobsprankle.com/writingblog/ - Mr. S and Mr. I Student Poetry

- Ms. Howard's Class http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/takpilotblog/ - Yukon, Takhini Elementary

Comments in Blogs

Ideas:

28. encouraging students to help each other with their writing
29. use it for literature circle types of activities
30. get responses on a question without getting the same answer twenty times

Use the RSS syndication feature to monitor the comments in the blogs when using the comment feature to encourage collaboration among students and staff. An RSS feed for the comments are available on some, but not all blogs.

If students have there own blogs, the commenting feature makes it easy for students to comment on each other's work and share thoughts and ideas with each other. Encourage students to comment on each others' work offering critique, suggestions for direction and encouragement. Students who are shy in class often "come out of their shells" online. It's also excellent practice for real world collaborations. 21 Publish - http://www.21publish.com/ If you are starting out with a class blog you might try having students respond to your posts and track the feeds, rather than each student doing their own blog.

Some blogs offer a multiple author feature which allows students to work together on a single project. All the postings are aggregated in a central area, but each student can contribute to this main space or comment on another students work. If you are starting out with a class blog you might try having students respond to your posts teacher's and track the feeds, rather than each student doing their own blog.

You can use comments to help guide the conversations that are occurring in your classroom blogs, as well encourage students to reflect a bit deeper about the posts that they are reading. Educators play an important role in modeling the types of comments that they would like to see students include on the classroom blogs. Moving past the role of teacher but one of reader and guide.

Types of expressive comments might include:

- personal interpretations and reinterpretations
- expressing concern regarding a confusion of meaning
- personal connections to events, people, places or mood
- comparisons to other work by the same blogger
- comparison to other posts elsewhere
- predictions developed from the post

Wikis and RSS

What is a Wiki?

A wiki is a type of free on-line writing space that allows users to add, modify and update its pages. If something is missing or incorrect in a wiki and permissions allow you to edit the wiki, you can easily add your thoughts or make changes to the wiki. It is essentially a fully editable web site.

- Ward Cunningham used the word "wiki" to describe the collaborative tool he developed. Wikis were named for the "Wiki-Wiki" or a Hawaiian adjective for "quick."
- Anyone can post material without knowing HTML or a programming language.
- The most famous wiki is the on-line encyclopedia Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WikiPedia
- Wikis are often referred to as "collaborative web sites." People who contribute to a wiki understand that their words may be deleted or changed by others.
- The last draft of a wiki is given the highest importance. Each time the text has been changed a new version is saved. The writing process and changes to the text can be observed through these older versions.
- Wikis offer the ability to discuss changes before they are actually made, and track who edited what and when.
- The process is the product. Meaning is developed and guided out of the social interactions at the point where text is created.

One of the most obvious benefits of using a wiki is the ability to offer a quick way to collaborate textually, while creating a content rich web site. Where the knowledge of the group is greater than an individual and the end product is the result of the group's interactions.

Ideas:

31. Use for student projects where group members need to contribute at different times and from geographically diverse locations.
32. Use for collaborating on ideas and organizing documents and resources from individuals and groups of students.
33. Use as a presentation tool where those who attend a workshop can contribute to future versions of the workshop.
34. As a group research project for a specific idea.
35. Manage school and classroom documents.
36. Use as a collaborative handout for students.
37. Writing: student created books and journaling. (i.e. Wikibooks http://en.wikibooks.org/)
38. Create and maintain a classroom FAQ
39. As a classroom discussion and debate area.
40. A place to aggregate web resources.
41. Choose a topic on Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki , break the topic into facts, students verify the facts using their information literacy skills, and make changes accordingly (Citing sources).

A wiki, allows multiple authors to contribute and edit a shared document. Changes to the document are tracked, making it easy to revert to earlier version of the same document. The most commonly known and widely used wiki is Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/)

A wiki gives the classroom teacher the ability to offer the class a collaborative document to work on, negotiate meaning and construct knowledge. Instead of reading the textbook students could use research around a topic to help write a textbook. They might also add to the growing list of wikibooks available for schools, here are a few.

Wiki Books - http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Main_Page

The Free High School Science Texts: Biology
The Free High School Science Texts: Physics
Science for secondary school students
Regents Earth Science (High School)
Geometry for elementary school
Free High School Science Texts: Computer Literacy

Or for teachers…

Classroom Behaviour Management
Instructional Technology
Blended Learning in K-12

How does one monitor the changes to a wiki? Well first Wikis don't necessarily have to be open to the world; it could start off as something that is password protected, where users login to use the wiki. - i.e. http://pbwiki.com one of the neat features of Wikis is the ability to go back and revert to earlier versions of the same work. And of course you can track all the changes made to the wiki if your wiki supports RSS feeds.

Sharing RSS Feeds

Ideas:

42. share a subject specific feeds list for students or peers
43. students sharing feed lists with each other

Another idea is to share a list of feeds around specific topics or on a subject area that includes search queries, blogs, research and other feeds. Use an OPML (Outline Processor Mark-up Language) file to import complete RSS feed lists to a news aggregator. OPML is an XML mark-up language that was created for outlines.

Using an OPML file you can link to a list of RSS feeds, and import them into another news aggregator to share with students or peers. One great way to use OPML is to create a linked list of all of your students' subscription lists on a particular topic and publish it in one central space so that all students can benefit from the feeds others have found.

Photo Sharing and RSS

What is Photo Sharing?

Photo sharing tools work as a combination of things. They serve as online storage spaces for photos, with the ability to tag and organize each photo, as well as publishing your images to whomever you want. Other users who review images in these photo sharing web sites have the opportunity to leave comments for the photographer on any image that has been made available. Some photo sharing web

sites offer the ability to edit your photos online, make notes, post your photos to a blog and a variety of other features.

Perhaps the best known photo sharing web site is Flickr (http://www.flickr.com/). Flicker uses an advertising supported model so that users can publish their images for free. Other services like Shutterfly (http://www.shutterfly.com/) depend on users to purchase photos online. While paid services like SmugMug http://www.smugmug.com/ use subscription fees rather than advertisements and photo purchases to support their web site. Some software, like Picasa (http://picasa.google.com/), uses a peer-2-peer network to share photos directly from your own computer.

How It Works

Each photo sharing service is different, but they all offer upload forms with the ability to browse to images on your own computer, in order to select the images that you would like to share. They all post images to a web site on the internet; except for Picasa which shares images over the internet and uses your own computer to host them.

Ideas:

44. share, comment, and add notes to photos or images to be used in the classroom
45. embed your photos into your school or class web space
46. inspire writing and creativity
47. create a storybook using shared images
48. create a presentation using the photos and slideshow in Flickr (Example: Networked Learning http://www.flickr.com/photos/leighblackall/sets/1402220/)
49. use tools in Flickr Toys (http://bighugelabs.com/flickr/) to create motivational posters, magazine covers, cd covers, and more, using shared photos
50. find photos that students can use that are creative commons licensed (see http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/)
51. use tags to find photos of areas and events around the world for use in the classroom.
52. use photos to enhance students classroom work or for media literacy projects
53. promote and document school events in order to share photos with the school community
54. create digital portfolios where students and instructors can comment on the photos that are included.
55. create a photoblog using the shared photos.

Share Photos of class and school events using Flickr. This service allows you to embed photos in a blog, web site and share them via RSS. It's a great way to give parents a peek into their children's school day.

Lewis Elementary Flickr Feed http://www.flickr.com/photos/lewiselementary/

Centre d'Apprentissage du Haut-Madawaska Flickr Feed http://www.flickr.com/photos/48336161@N00/

St. Leo the Great Flickr Feed http://www.flickr.com/photos/stleothegreat/

You can also grab feeds from interesting local photographers and bring them into the classroom for discussion, or for writing inspiration. My current favourite feed is photographer Sam Javanrouh. - http://wvs.topleftpixel.com/

More Ideas

Sharing Learning Object's

Ideas:

56. grab subject specific resources and make them available to students
57. grab peer produced and commercially available content on the subjects that you are interested in

According to Stephen Downes, one of the leading education bloggers in Canada, RSS aggregation "provides greater exposure of (education and training resources) to the wider community. Aggregation also promotes the reuse of resources and encourages the development of interoperable resources."

Downes adds that by creating repositories of 'learning objects' and making them accessible by RSS feed, educators can capitalize on each others' work in true collaborative fashion rather than reinventing the wheel.

At eLearningOntario for instance, educators and the Ministry of Education are actively working together to build a learning object repository. Learning object repositories represent one of the benefits of using Internet resources for education – reusability. The unit that you put together for your class and posted as part of the class blog can serve as a resource for another teacher on the other side of the country or world.

K-12 Learning Objects Shared Through RSS

I am also anticipating adding the Ontario LOR (http://www.eduontario.ca/) to this list, as I have heard rumours that it will include an RSS feed as well as aggregate feeds from different school boards.

UK Centre for Materials Education - http://www.materials.ac.uk/index.asp New and updated resources feed.

Edna Online - http://www.edna.edu.au You need to browse the learning objects or do a search in order to find the RSS feed.

Merlot - http://www.merlot.org/ Provides 30 feeds.

OSAPAC - http://www.osapac.org/ Learning materials and resources

Class and School Information

Ideas:

58. create a school website that can be easily updated and visitors can be made aware of those updates
59. create a classroom newsletter by using a multi-user blog for the different topics. I.E. classroom trips, sports, upcoming trips … (http://www.simplyheadlines.com/ creates a daily newspaper of all your students/teachers rss feeds)
60. quickly offer computer based language translation services for parents on any content coming from your school feeds (http://nativetext.com/)

Among the other benefits of using RSS feeds and weblogs in an education setting are the ease of sharing information from many sources, the ability to share the task of information publishing and the simplification of gathering and evaluating information from multiple sources.

A school website could be made up of a series of blogs that are interconnected, allowing each teacher to contribute to their portion of the school website, with the administrator as the aggregator on the home page. Pulling together and highlighting what is going on in the school.

At Centre d'Apprentissage du Haut-Madawaska, for instance, a blog has replaced the school's web site. The C.A.H.M. weblog links to individual blogs kept by students, teachers, department heads and administrators to present a dynamic and up to date picture of the school.

Each week, the school's director uses feeds from classroom and student blogs to post an update of what's going on in the school. The front page may include recognition of students or teachers, short summaries of classroom work that's being done and information about upcoming events.

The RSS feed makes it easy to pull in and format all the information, and the recognition encourages students and teachers to post their work, questions and information.

Use your own Teacher blog or the classroom blog to keep parents in the loop about what your class is doing. RSS syndication is even easier than putting together a class newsletter – because everyone is working together to add content all the time.

Other examples:

Centre d'Apprentissage du Haut-Madawaska - http://cahm.elg.ca/ - Clair, New Brunswick
Edgartown School - http://www.edgartown.mv.k12.ma.us/index.php/learn/ - Edgartown, Massachusetts
Goochland High School - http://www.glnd.k12.va.us/gateway/go/ghs/teachers/cjackson/ - Goochland County, Virginia.
Lakewood School - http://lakewood.kpdsb.on.ca/ - Kenora, Ontario

Track Discussions

Ideas:

61. track classroom discussions from an aggregator
62. create and track responses to specific issues
63. create an audio forum and get responses from around the world

A teacher may feel that a discussion board will better suit the needs of the classroom, than a weblog. Some discussion boards, like DiscussionApp from Server.com (http://server.com/communityapps/discussionapp/) are now offering RSS feeds in order for interested participants to keep track of discussions.

If you would like to create a disposable discussion board that you can use with staff or students try QuickTopic - http://www.quicktopic.com/. In less than two minutes, you can create a discussion board, invite contributors, and subscribe to the discussions RSS feed to keep track of contributions.

You can use http://vaestro.com/ to create an audio discussion board, where visitors from around the world can leave audio messages on your topics. An example of how this might be used is Darren Kuropatwa's forum   http://vaestro.com/viewforum-119 where he moves through topics from his blog.

Creating a Personal Learning Environment

Keeping Track of People

Ideas:

64. track the authors, journalists, and news that are important to you

Wouldn't it be great to have a feed for your favourite author, or journalist?

Some media sites, like CBC and TSN, already offer these - http://www.cbc.ca/RSS/ and http://www.tsn.ca/RSS/ The Globe and Mail offers feeds of your favourite columnist. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/RSS/ .

And who can forget Rick Mercer feed from Blogspot http://rickmercer.blogspot.com/

Audio and RSS

What is Podcasting?

Podcasting is very similar to a radio broadcast with the main differences being transmission via the Internet and producing pre-recorded content. Podcasts can be enhanced through the use of images, video as well as links to web site content. Broadcasting over the internet offers students and teachers access to a worldwide audience, with authentic feedback from around the world.

How it Works?

The multimedia files are uploaded to a blog and posted to the Internet. Often, the content is syndicated through RSS feeds and is downloaded or streamed by the listener.

Listeners can subscribe to feeds and automatically download new podcast content to their listening device whether it is an MP3 player or an iPod.

Ideas:

65. taking control of your own professional development
66. use audio books to enhance classroom programs
67. create a classroom radio show and publish it to an authentic audience
68. podcast lessons to your students and create a lesson archive
69. podcast interviews of guest speakers and other school visitors for students, parents and the school community
70. share an audio tour of the school or surrounding areas

Blogs with audio feeds are becoming more accessible. The flexible nature of RSS has lead to new tools that are being developed which allow you to convert any textual RSS feed into an audio feed. The free version of Talkr http://www.talkr.com/ allows you to listen to up to three of your own blog feeds, as well as their feeds as audio files. Feed2podcast http://www.feed2podcast.com/ is in beta and allows you to convert any RSS feed into an audio file.

If you are interested in finding some educational podcasters I suggest that you start off with http://www.epnweb.org/, http://recap.ltd.uk/podcasting/index.php and http://www.podcastalley.com/ There are also some really neat audio feeds are those that offer whole audio books to listen to on your favourite MP3 player.

Audio books:

- http://librivox.org/
- http://audible.com/ - http://feeds.feedburner.com/AudibleRSSFeeds-FreeAudio

Podcasters:

- http://davidwarlick.com/connectlearning/
- http://edtechtalk.com/
- http://www.pdtogo.com/smart/
- http://www.teach42.com/
- http://www.speedofcreativity.org/

School and Class Podcasts:

- http://www.mpsomaha.org/willow/radio/
- http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/
- http://long.dearbornschools.org/podcast/Long%20Elementary
- http://chatt.hdsb.ca/~magps/MapleGrove%20Podcast%20Radio

Podcasting Tools

- http://www.podomatic.com/
- http://www.feedburner.com/
- http://audacity.sourceforge.net/
- http://www.podomatic.com/
- http://studio.odeo.com/
- https://skypecasts.skype.com/ and https://www.skype.com/

Ideas:

71. add student essays, short stories or other written work into a shared blog. The conversion tool would then convert the text to audio files, so that students could listen to the podcasts to gain perspective on their work and their peers.
72. post student notes from classes into a blog and then convert them to audio feeds to help prepare them for assessments.

Video and RSS

What is Video Sharing?

Video sharing refers to web sites or software that enables a user to publish and share their video content. There are a variety of different services which offer public and private sharing of video content, as well as the ability to edit videos online.

Some video sharing services are free like Google Video (http://video.google.com), Uth TV (http://www.uthtv.com/), OurMedia (http://ourmedia.org/) and YouTube (http://youtube.com/). Other services like HomeMovie.com (http://www.homemovie.com/) and JumpCut (http://www.jumpcut.com/) offer online editing tools as well.

How it Works?

Each video sharing service is different, but they all offer upload forms with the ability to select video clips from your own computer that you would like to share. Each service offers different upload limits either in time or file size, for example YouTube has a limit of 10 minutes or 100 megabytes whichever comes first.

Ideas:

73. video professional development on your own terms
74. create your own subject specific videos with your students
75. create an English as a Second Language video dictionary.
76. use video sharing sites to find videos on current issues, maybe a natural disaster or a controversial event.

Track blogs with video feeds, it is like getting "Video on Demand". Some blogs include audio and video files in their blog postings. The video files can be downloaded to your computer or played online. With new free online media storage solutions appearing on the internet - for example http://video.google.com or http://www.ourmedia.org - these types of blogs seem to be appearing more and more.

Free tools that can be used to extract/download video and search for new video blogs are iTunes (http://www.apple.com/itunes/) and Fireant (http://getfireant.com/).

A few video blogs that you might be interested in reviewing:

http://tilttv.blogspot.com/

http://revision3.com/diggnation

http://www.photoshopguys.com/

http://www.teachers.tv/podcasting

Personal ePortfolio

Ideas:

77. review, remix, produce and share content quickly
78. build connections with other educators

Currently there is a shift for teacher to share what they are doing or thinking with other educators. One of the beauties of this emerging use of RSS and blogs in education is how easy it is to share your ideas and your reflections with other educators. Keep a blog of your experiences, lesson plans and reflections as you go, and syndicate it through RSS so that other teachers can learn from your experience.

Teaching Generation Z - http://gwegner.edublogs.org/
Bud the Teacher - http://budtheteacher.typepad.com/
Remote Access - http://remoteaccess.typepad.com/
Smelly Knowledge - http://forestfortrees.edublogs.org/

Productivity Tools

Merging Feeds Together

Ideas:

79. merge and filter similar feeds together for gap analysis
80. merge many similar feeds

Combine a number of feeds using FeedShake (http://www.feedshake.com/)and then stick the feed in your aggregator. The result is a single feed that is formatted to your specifications.

Also look at http://allRSS.com/RSSremixers.html that includes a list of RSS Mixers.

Consider a class of students that each has their own blog. By merging a set of student blog feeds and filtering for keywords I can get a feel if the content that I am trying to delivery or the point I am trying to get across has succeeded. You might also be able to identify gaps in the knowledge of these students or see what is specifically interesting to them in the classroom.

Finally, it is just convenient to have all the feeds aggregated in a central location for both you and students to view new postings.

To Do Lists

Ideas:

81. track goals and lists and take them anywhere

You can use these web applications to keep track of your life. Each of these online applications has different features, but the all share something in common, they are a place to keep all those lists that you have. And because they have RSS feeds you can reformat them and take them anywhere on a computer, PDA or even a cell phone.

What are your professional goals?
What do you have to do this year and when do you have to do it?
When do you need to start preparing for graduation?
When should you begin working on those course overviews?
Who is going to remind me of all these things?

List Services that support	Ta-da Lists	43 Things	Remember The Milk	trackslife

RSS				
URL	tadalist.com	43things.com	rememberthemilk.com	trackslife.com
Cost	Free	Free (ad supported)	Free	3 tracks for Free, then $$$ depending on the number of tracks
Public List	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Private List	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Blog or Web Site Integration	hyperlink, RSS	Post to blog and 43things in one post, RSS	hyperlink, RSS	hyperlink, RSS
Group Items	No	No	Yes - Study, Work, Personal + more	Yes - Tracks
Tag Items	No	Yes	No	No
Add by Bookmarklet	No	No	Yes	No
Add by email	No	No	Yes	No
Social Networking	No	Yes	No	No
Reminder Service	No	No	Email, AIM, Goggle Talk, ICQ, Jabber, MSN, Yahoo and SMS	Email and RSS reminders
Geared Towards	Simple Lists	Social Networking	Listmakers	Listmakers
Repeated Task	No	No	Yes	No
iCalendar Support	No	No	Yes	No
Ease of Printing within Application	No	No	Yes - Weekly Planner	No
Downloadable	No	No	No	xml, csv, excel
Extra Features		43 places, add Flickr photos	Send tasks to your contacts	spreadsheet and database

This chart was developed by exploring different web applications and is not a definitive list of all features that these services may offer. Features offered by these services may change at any time, but are accurate as of December 2005.

Collaborating On Documents and Spreadsheets

Ideas:

82. track collaboration and team work to see if students are on task

83. identify the written portion of contributions by group members to the project or assignment
84. share data for student, class, or school projects through a collaborative spreadsheet

Students working on team projects do not necessarily need to work in the same geographic place in order to collaborate on a topic. Using some of the tools that they are already using instant messaging or the phone, and making use of new tools, they can work on the same document. Tools like http://docs.google.com, http://www.zohowriter.com/, http://www.ajaxlaunch.com/ajaxwrite/, and http://www.Writeboard.com environment similar to MS Word, other tools like http://numbler.com/, http://www.numsum.com/, http://www.zohosheet.com/, http://www.irows.com/, and http://www.editgrid.com/ offer a spreadsheet like MS Excel. Both sets of tools help to facilitate collaboration by offering sharing of documents through the web.

Tools like Google Docs become extremely useful to the teacher because of its ability to keep track of revisions to these documents through RSS feeds. By tracking the revisions teachers are able to see the type of written contributions group members make.

There is the ability to have any one of the revisions published for others to view in a read-only format. Students can post to a blog, open the document up to the world or a select a group of people.

Other tools allow you to compare different versions of a document by the written contributions of its group members. Each collaborators contribution is highlighted for easy identification.

Get Your RSS by Email

You can also subscribe to any RSS feed by email. If you use RMail (http://www.r-mail.org/) or Squeet (http://www.squeet.com/) you can take any feed and convert it to an email subscription. When an update occurs to the feed you will be emailed the posting. If your email service supports rules and/or filters you can move all of these messages into a folder dedicated to the feed.

Or Get Your Email by RSS

Ideas:

85. subscribe to newsletters and other services without giving away a personal email address
86. create your own RSS feed by emailing your own email account

You can check your email via RSS. Well I have shown you a number of different services that you might be interested in using in your classroom, but the last thing you want to do is give away your email address to a number of different service providers.

What if you are interested in keeping track of these services without giving up your email address?

Answer, get a disposable email address from one of these service providers, and then subscribe to your mailbox through an RSS feed to keep track of what is being received.

http://mailinator.com/
http://dodgeit.com
http://www.pookmail.com/

If you want to create your own feed of resources that you get by email you could forward your emails to the disposable account, and create a personal feed of emails that could be subscribed to by your peers.

Another method of checking your email through an RSS feed is using bloglines. You can create email addresses that show up as subscriptions in your account. Under the "Extras" section, there is a link titled "Create Email Subscriptions." When you give the email subscription a title you are given a unique email address. You may then subscribe to lists, newsletters or you could forward your email to receive through an RSS feed.

Reminders by RSS

Ideas:

87. add reminders to a feed using a remixer
88. send reminders to phones, PDAs and Blackberries by reformatting the feeds

Anyone who needs reminders can set up reminder feeds to be added to an aggregator as a method for keeping on task. A reminder can be setup for daily tasks or individual dates. You could use a remixer to mix into any RSS feed reminders about assignments, projects or other information.

You can also get reminders via RSS - http://www.reminderfeed.com/

An RSS feed can be reformatted so that it can be received on portable devices. You could have the reminder feed appear on a students cell phone or other mobile device, by using services like Lite Feeds http://www.litefeeds.com/ and Feed Beep http://feedbeep.com/.

Note Taking

Ideas:

89. students create and share notes from different classes

Student note taking tools like http://www.mynoteit.com/ and http://www.notemesh.com/ use social networking and collaboration in order to help them create and share notes for the different classes that they attend. These tools are mostly aimed at higher education, but would be very useful in high school classes. MynoteIT allows students to upload their scanned written notes, audio notes, MS Word and OpenOffice documents, and even formats its web site for students to access over their mobile phones.

Online Presentation Software

Ideas:

90. post student presentations to an authentic audience and get feedback from around the world
91. share professional development materials and have it available anywhere, anytime, to anyone
92. post presentations of special events for parents and students

93. post presentations for classes that you teach for students to reference later in the year

Online presentations have come a long way from converting your PowerPoint files to Web Page format and then uploading a big folder to a web site. Each tool offers a specific set of features. Tools like http://slideshare.net/ and http://www.zohoshow.com/ allow you to upload your PowerPoint or OpenOffice presentation directly to the web, and then embed the resulting slideshow into any web site.   Other tools like http://www.empressr.com/ and http://toufee.com/ allow you to embed images, audio and video into a slideshow that you create online. Some of these tools offer tagging and commenting on any presentation which makes finding similar presentations easy.

Online presentation software also offers some interesting alternatives for students who don't have any presentation software at home. They can create and collaborate with their peers online and then use the web site to make their presentations.

Online Diagrams

94. students map out ideas for projects, timelines, essays, and other topics
95. brainstorm ideas

Online diagramming software like http://www.gliffy.com/ and http://www.mayomi.com/ offers many of the features of other mind-mapping software with a few additional features. They offer the ability to automatically post the diagram to the web and allow students from anywhere to collaborate together on the diagram.

Calendars

Ideas:

96. make calendar events, homework, anything you want available on mobile devices connected to the internet

Just like the reminders, calendar feeds can be reformatted to appear on mobile devices. There are a number of calendar services that can be used for a variety of purposes in the classroom. You might consider posting district, school or class events for the school community. Students might use the calendar services to keep track of their homework or upcoming projects.

http://www.RSScalendar.com
http://localendar.com/
http://www.trumba.com/
http://www.calendarhub.com/
http://calendar.google.com/
http://spongecell.com/

Research Tools

Searching Newsgroups

Ideas:

> 97. keep current on subject specific information, get new ideas, make connections with other educators.

Keep updated on new posts to your favourite Google Newsgroups http://groups.google.ca/ through RSS. If you add the following "/feed/msgs.xml" to the end of the url of your Google group, you will receive updates of your newsgroup through an Atom feed.

If you are interested in a particular topic within a group of newsgroups you can use a feed merging utility to search through a series of newsgroup feeds for keywords and serve up to you the filtered feed from all the other feeds. You use Blog Sieve http://www.blogsieve.com/ or Feed Shake http://feedshake.com/.

So say you are interested in the following newsgroups:

k12.ed.tech - http://groups.google.ca/group/k12.ed.tech/feed/msgs.xml
k12.ed.math - http://groups.google.ca/group/k12.ed.math/feed/msgs.xml
k12.ed.science - http://groups.google.ca/group/k12.ed.science/feed/msgs.xml
k12.ed.soc-studies - http://groups.google.ca/group/k12.ed.soc-studies/feed/msgs.xml
k12.ed.art - http://groups.google.ca/group/k12.ed.art/feed/msgs.xml

But if you are only interested in topics related to "blog" in the "item" area of all the feeds, you can create a new feed and filter it so that only posts with the keyword "blog' appears.

Tracking People, Places and Things

Ideas:

> 98. if you are interested in a particular person, place or thing you can track new information being posted about your subject

If you are interested in what people are saying about you, your blog, your school, or school board. Try searching for a person, place or thing on these services and as new instances of the term are discovered you will get an update of them in the feeds.

http://www.technorati.com/
http://pubsub.com/
http://feedster.com/
http://www.blogdigger.com/
http://www.blogpulse.com/

Creating a Search Feed

Ideas:

99. conduct web searches and research while you sleep
100. use multiple search engines to conduct searches will you sleep
101. create your own search engine by selecting specific web sites for students to use for research or create search engines for topics that students can share. (http://rollyo.com/)

Search for your favourite columnist on Google News http://news.google.ca and then subscribe to the search as a feed. When new articles from this author appear you will be updated through your feed.

Create a search feed for school projects using Google or MSN to deliver new information on specific topics directly to your students. Here is a search feed using this query for science project ideas - "Science Fair Project Ideas" -(books) -(homework)-(volcanos) -(earthquake) -(tornado) K-12 http://search.msn.com/results.aspx?q=%22Science+Fair+Project+Ideas%22+-%28books%29+-%28homework%29+-%28volcanoes%29+-%28earthquake%29+-%28tornado%29+-%28college%29+-%28university%29+-%28shopping+cart%29+K-12&format=rss&FORM=R0RE

You can also create a metasearch feed by building a library of exemplary search feeds for students to scaffold research for projects or you can use http://www.TagJag.com to quickly create a metaserch feed. This is an excellent tool for searching blogs, news and web search feeds with a single step. Although, complex search queries like the one above become a challenge because the advanced search features don't translate well from search engine to search engine.

All you need to do is tack on "/opml" to the end of the url of your search query. For example, use http://tagjag.com/discovery/science-fair-project-ideas/opml if you want to create a metasearch OPML on Science Fair Project Ideas. Save the page to your desktop as an OPML file and then just import this file into your favourite aggregator.

Newspapers

Ideas:

102. track your favourite columnist or topic in the news and bring them into the classroom

This is a large list of US newspapers which have an RSS feed,

http://www.themediadrop.com/archives/001588.php#more

and a few Canadian Newspaper websites.

The Toronto Star feeds page - http://www.thestar.com/cgi-bin/star_static.cgi?section=news&page=/RSS/rss.html
The Globe and Mail feeds page - http://www.theglobeandmail.com/rss/

The number of newspapers offering RSS feeds is growing, all the time.

Remember, you can use filters to identify topics and keywords that are of interest to you, and have them delivered to your aggregator.

Extreme RSS – A Few More RSS Ideas

RSS on Your Start Page

Do you use a customized start page? Perhaps you like Google Personalized Home Page http://www.google.com/ig,NetVibes http://www.netvibes.com/ or PageFlakes http://www.pageflakes.com . Many of these services support the addition of your favourite RSS feeds to your start page.

This would be nice to use as the start page for a classroom computer, where you could aggregate subject specific resources, bookmarks, and other content for students to see whenever the logon.

RSS to PDF Conversion

This RSS to PDF conversion tool is just plain old handy - RSS2pdf (http://www.rss2pdf.com/) You can take any RSS feed and convert it to PDF on the fly. This includes OPML, RSS and even feeds that include images. RSS to PDF is a great way to archive the conversations in student to student, teacher to teacher, or school feeds and pull them offline for storage.

Weather by RSS

Get your weather forecasts by RSS Weather (http://www.RSSWeather.com) which allows you to further customize their RSS feeds to your specifications.

Word of the Day

Use dictionary.com to feed you a new word every day to build up that voluminous vocabulary.

http://dictionary.reference.com/help/linking/wordoftheday-expert.html

or try podictionary.com for the audio word of the day.

http://www.podictionary.com/

RSS Contacts

Keep track of your contacts and share the information with your friends and colleagues.

http://www.RSScontact.com/RSS2/

Classified Ads and Auctions

Use the feeds available from Craigslist (http://www.craigslist.org) to create feeds for watching the classifieds or job listings for listings that interest you.

eBay has a feed for every search that you do on the web site. This can be found near the bottom of every search page. If you are looking for a particular item use the RSS feed from the search results to be informed of new items as they appear on eBay.

RSS on Your Desktop

Use Yahoo Widgets to add an RSS widget to your desktop for access to a few of your favourite feeds.

http://widgets.yahoo.com/

Or get a screensaver that you can subscribe to RSS feeds.

http://www.nuparadigm.com/Products/Toys/RssScreensaver/

Create Your Own RSS Feed Automatically

Feedfire (http://www.feedfire.com/) takes any web page and convert it into a fully functional RSS feed. It helps you to convert an older web site to one that will support an updateable RSS feed, without programming knowledge.

MORE IDEAS TO COME …

Glossary:

Blog – Also called weblog, is a web based publication of articles that can range from diary entries of one individual, to a group of users collaborating as a community of writers.

Web Browser – A computer program that is used to access information on the world wide web.

Cross-Linking – Websites have many links to each other.

Directory – A website that specializes in linking to other websites. They are often organized in category and may include editors that review website submissions.

Discussion Board – Also called Bulletin Board or Electronic Bulletin board, this is a form of communication where messages or files are stored in a central web based location, where users can retrieve or post messages/files.

Domain Name – This is a naming convention used to identify specific websites and/or webpages on the internet.

Frames – The use of a number of different sections that make up a single web page. The web page is put together with a controlling file that specifies each section of the web page.

Forms – Web pages where the user can input data and submit the data to a specified person or database.

GIF – Short for Graphics Interchange format, is a type of image format that can be displayed in almost all browsers.

Hit – The number of times a web browser requests a particular web page.

Home Page – The main entry point to a web site.

Host/Hosting – Providing a web server for the purpose of posting and maintaining web sites.

Hyperlink – A connection between different web pages on the same or other web sites.

HTML – Acronym for Hypertext Markup Language, which is the coding language used to create web pages on the World Wide Web.

JPEG – Joint Photographic Experts Group, another type of image format.

Mailing List – An online communication system that uses email as the primary means of communication on a particular subject.

Metatag – HTML code that is used to help index web pages in search engines.

Open Source – A program whose source code is made available to other programmers for modifications.

Podcast – A method for publishing audio, image and video files to the internet by using RSS feeds.

RSS – Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary, an XML format for easily distributing and sharing content.

Search Engine –Help users to find web pages and content on the Internet by searching by keywords.

URL – Uniform Resource Locator, a standard method for giving out addresses to specific locations on the Internet.

Website – A collection of web pages and files generally located on the same web server.

WYSIWYG – What You See Is What You Get, a term used to describe programs that show you what the end user will see, but still giving you the ability to edit it.

XML - Extensible Markup Language, a standard format for sharing data and structured documents on the internet.

(For an extended listing visit http://www.NetLingo.com)

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