

## Memorable Solutions Blog Tutorial

### What Are Weblogs?

Websites like [\\*Star In The Margin](#) (which is called a “weblog” or “blog”) are much different than traditional sites. They are living channels of information and discussion rather than the relatively static “.com” billboards so common on the internet. Weblogs employ a new technology which enhances the experience for both the publisher (author, in the case of weblogs) **and the reader**. The problem with these new websites is that many people don’t understand them, and more importantly, the power it gives them. What makes this medium so important to you is that you receive “fresh” information in a fraction of the time it takes to currently “surf” the web. This is done through a technology called RSS (Really Simple Syndication). Personally, I think this is one of the most powerful developments in communication since the advent of the internet. Simply put, RSS places the power of receiving communication in the hands of the consumer. Here’s a simple explanation of how it works and how you can take advantage of it:

Every site which employs RSS broadcasts a “feed” of any new information posted on the site. This feed is picked-up by various sources (I call them “agents”) like search engines and news aggregators.

Anyone who uses an agent can see the feed of new information released by the publisher.

### Why Is RSS Important to You?

The benefits to you are **saved time** and **less intrusions**. You no longer need to surf from site to site to check to see if anything new is posted. And, you are no longer dependant on those pesky e-mail blasts telling you about new deals, specials or vital information. It’s simple...you read what you want and when you want it. If it’s interesting to you, you’ll read it. If not, you won’t bother with it.

In a way, it’s similar to reading e-mail. You go to one place (MS Outlook, Entourage or an on-line service like MSN or Yahoo) to read all the messages meant for you. Just think if you had to check with everyone you know to see if they had anything to say to you? It would be nuts. The same with news and information that’s important to you. Now, you have a way to bring that information to you in one place.

There are also numerous benefits to the publisher or company using an RSS site. Namely, ease of making changes to the site, higher rankings with search engines and connecting with an audience that's actually interested in listening to you. There is far more and better information about these benefits available on-line.

### **Getting The Information The "New Way"**

So, how do you take advantage? Easy. Get a "news aggregator". There are a number of good ones. Some are free, some charge a nominal fee. I use [Bloglines](#), and it's free! Just go to their site, sign-up (they don't bother you at all afterwards), subscribe to the feeds in your area of interest, and you're all set. You can even read the headlines for the Washington Post and other national news agencies...again, without surfing the various sites.

Here's how you would subscribe to my site, \*Star In The Margin:

After you sign-up with Bloglines, type in a search for "Star In The Margin". My site will come up first in the list. There will be an option to subscribe to the feed. Click on that and select the category to place it in (either one of the ones they already have established, or there's an option to create a new one. I created one called "Daily Read" for the most important RSS sites I monitor. Congratulations, you've just signed-up for your first Blog.

Now, to check to see if there's anything new, you just get on-line, go to Bloglines, select the My Feeds tab (you shouldn't need to sign-in every time if your "cookies" are enabled in your browser) and look for something like this: **\*Star In The Margin (2)**. This indicates that there are 2 new posts on my site since the last time you viewed it. And, even more beautiful, when you click on the header, the posts show up just to the right, so you can read them without ever going to the site! This cuts reading time easily in half.

Okay, so why am I going through the trouble of telling you all of this? Because you can't read and **share** \*Star In The Margin effectively without it. And, I don't want you to be categorized as one of those "late adopters", the last ones to try something really neat.

Here's another person who gives a great overview of the subject with a few extra details...

<http://www.redmonk.com/sogrady/archives/000147.html>

I hope you give it a try...