

How to find time to read blogs

RSS readers are the really simple secret

So many Web sites, so little time. Perhaps you have colleagues who frequently quote education blogs. You might wonder how they have time to keep up with so many Web sites. The secret: RSS readers.

An RSS reader (also known as a feed reader, blog reader or aggregator) is an online service that collects updates, or RSS feeds, from blogs and other frequently updated Web sites. RSS stands for “Really Simple Syndication.” Web sites that “publish” RSS feeds send information to RSS readers whenever they are updated. This allows end users to easily follow multiple Web sites. Rather than having to visit each site individually, users of RSS readers log in to one site—their RSS reader—to see the latest posts from all of the sites they have chosen to follow or to which they have “subscribed.”

Choosing an RSS reader

Internet users have many options for free RSS readers. Two popular readers are Google Reader (www.google.com/reader) and Bloglines (www.bloglines.com). You can also include an RSS reader on a personalized homepage through iGoogle (www.google.com/ig), MyYahoo! (<http://my.yahoo.com>) or Pageflakes (www.pageflakes.com).

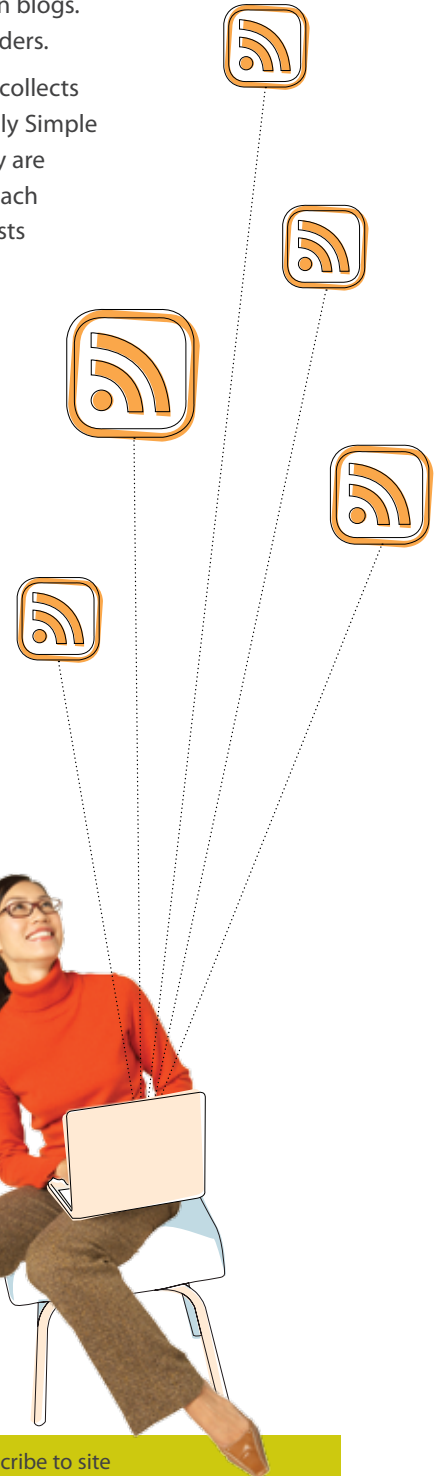
Developing a blogroll

Once you have your RSS reader set up, you need to subscribe to blogs, or develop a “blogroll.” Your RSS reader will give you specific instructions for how to subscribe to a site. Most sites with RSS feeds or subscriptions include an RSS icon—an orange square with white radio waves. This icon signals that you can subscribe to the site.

To help you get started, *ATPE News* asked ATPE member Scott Floyd, an instructional technologist from White Oak ISD, to recommend a few of his favorite blogs. Floyd follows more than 200 blogs and publishes a blog himself at <http://scottsfloyd.edublogs.org>. (He’s also teaching a professional development session during the 29th Annual ATPE State Convention on social networking for educators.)

These four blogs, Floyd says, are all written by “phenomenal people” and are a great starting point for educators new to using RSS readers:

- 1 Practical Theory: A View from the Classroom (www.practicaltheory.org/serendipity)
“Chris is one of the top campus administrators in the nation.”
- 2 Larry Ferlazzo’s Websites of the Day ... (<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org>)
“Larry focuses on ESL and ELL.”
- 3 Around the Corner (www.mguhlin.org)
“Miguel is San Antonio ISD’s director of instructional technology.”
- 4 Speaking of History (<http://speakingofhistory.blogspot.com>)
“Eric is a middle school history teacher and a state teacher of the year in Missouri.”



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RSS feed:

Information published by a Web site that allows visitors to subscribe to site updates. RSS stands for “Really Simple Syndication” and enables Internet users to easily follow multiple Web sites through one Web site known as an RSS reader.