

RSS feeds and Mashups as supporting tools for the scientific information retrieval in the academic libraries.

Dr. Friedhelm O. Rump, Dr. Alexandre Kossovoi
Presenting author: Dr. Alexandre Kossovoi
Library of the Veterinary University Foundation, Hannover, Germany

RSS-feeds are well established instruments for supporting both individual researchers and academic libraries. The increasing use of RSS-feeds by this clientele is due to the fact that they are the most efficient tools for keeping up-to-date with the latest information in selected fields. RSS feeds of journals' tables of contents as a rule provide shortest ways to full texts of the articles. To collect relevant RSS feeds two approaches have established themselves. They are either stand alone Feed readers or Web-based feed aggregators.

In this paper the implementation of server based technologies in aggregating feeds in the academic library are analysed. Additionally our experience in developing some of such environments with the help of modern technologies including mashups is presented. Server based technologies are used in the Library of the Veterinary University of Hannover to aggregate information coming continuously from RSS feeds of new acquisitions in our OPAC (GBV), WorldCat, TOC of journals, feed of CABI-Blogs etc.

It seemed to us to be a natural approach to implement the RSS Mashup technology in aggregating feeds to build a server based tool. A Mashup combines the information from several independent sites, while one site as a rule provides a corresponding API (Application Programming Interface) to make the mashup functional. As a result the user gets access to additional information and is provided with addition comfort in reaching this information. Mashups may be individually programmed or built with the help of Mashup editors We used the Google AJAX Feed API which permits a rapid development of Feed Mashups combining the API and JavaScript approaches. The aggregation was realised in tabbed layout. It made it possible to organize feeds either alphabetically or according to chosen criteria, for example research topics. Our RSS Journal Contents Mashup is focused on specific journals, thematically relevant to the research areas of the Veterinary University. A broad spectrum of TOC of journals can be found in the databases of TicTocs, Highwire Press List of Journals with RSS-Feeds and Terkko Feednavigator.

Server sided tools in combination with mashup approach permit the usage of RSS aggregation in a comfortable environment, which can be appropriately designed and used by researches with little knowledge in informatics. They are valuable instrument in information retrieval and update of such information. Especially noteworthy is the multifold application of such tools, delivering effective access to information on online contents, links to full texts of printed articles or preprints and follow up of search results of specified topics.