



Online community.  
Real-world impact.

## 3 Ways to make your nonprofit more effective with RSS aggregation

by Alexandra Samuel  
CEO, Social Signal

RSS aggregation is a powerful tool that can help nonprofits communicate more effectively, both internally and externally. Here's a quick take on three ways that RSS aggregation can help your nonprofit:

### Automatically populate websites with content

It's very expensive to create original content on a regular basis. But you can set up a series of RSS feeds on a particular topic that can pump useful content onto your organization's web site. For example, an organization that advocates for women with HIV might create an RSS-driven news section on its web site that pulls relevant web resources from del.icio.us, photos from Flickr, and blog posts from Technorati (the trick is to set up the search as a "watchlist", and then subscribe to the RSS feed for the watchlist.)

### Choose a team tag

Choose a tag that your staff, board and volunteers can use to share information and resources. Encourage your team to use del.icio.us, Furl or another social bookmarking service to save web resources they find personally useful or want to share with the team. Encourage bloggers to use that tag on any post they want team members to read. And then make sure your team monitors the tag regularly by visiting your media monitoring site, or adding the RSS feed for the tag to their personal home pages in Google.

### What is RSS?

RSS stands for "really simple syndication". It's a format for storing online information in a way that makes that information readable by lots of different kinds of software. RSS has two main uses: it lets people read lots of different news sources in one place using a newsreader, and it lets people republish and remix content from other sites using aggregation.

For an overview of RSS and how to get started, visit <http://www.socialsignal.com/rssocracy>

### Create a media monitoring site

You can create a media monitoring tool for internal use only. Something as simple as a Bloglines account can become a clearinghouse for information that helps with your work. That can include RSS feeds for Google or Yahoo news searches on particular search terms; del.icio.us feeds for resources related to your work; or news feeds for major publications in your field.

Most nonprofits would benefit from setting up a media monitoring site with RSS feeds that cover the following:

- Search of major news feeds (try Google News or Yahoo News) for the name of your organization, acronym (if any), major sub-brands/projects, and/or name of your organization's President/E.D.
- Search of major news feeds for keywords on the issues you need to track. Play with the search terms until you get the right volume of news.
- Search of blogs (using Technorati or Feedster) for your organization and name of your organization's President/E.D.
- Search of blogs for your issue keywords.
- del.icio.us, Furl & Flickr tag pages for your organization's name and key issue areas. Don't forget that del.icio.us lets you set up feeds that are narrowed down by using multiple tags (e.g. <http://del.icio.us/rss/tag/healthcare+policy>)
- del.icio.us, Furl & blog (Technorati/Feedster) search on your chosen team tag (see below)
- For a local organization, search feeds that search your issue keywords within the news feeds for all your major local papers and broadcast outlets (you can set up a Bloglines account that includes all your local media, then set up a keyword search that searches all the feeds in your account; then set up a second Bloglines account as your main media monitoring site, and subscribe to the keyword search from the first account).

For the original full version of this article see <http://www.socialsignal.com/nonprofit-RSS>



## About us

### Online strategies for real-world success.

We know the web inside and out. But we also know that your organization's goals come first. Our combination of communications skills, technical expertise and community experience gives us a unique ability to envision and implement the best solutions for your organization.

We bridge the worlds of strategic communications and web development, assembling and managing the team that's best suited to your particular goals and requirements. Turn to Social Signal to harness the power of the latest digital communications tools – and of the best technology providers – in the service of your mission.

### Social Signal builds online communities.

We develop and implement leading-edge strategies for online community-building.

### Social Signal engages your audience and stakeholders.

We plan, set up and manage a wide range of online participation processes, from formal consultations to community dialogues.

### Social Signal helps you make the most of blogging.

We can help you translate your public relations strategy into a distinctive online voice.

### Social Signal helps you communicate when the computer's off.

From a single, powerful speech to a strategy that integrates your on- and offline communications, Social Signal can help.

## Our principals

### *Alexandra Samuel, CEO*

Alexandra combines hands-on experience implementing online strategies with an extensive research background in digital democracy, e-governance and Internet activism. Her recent projects include managing the online launch of telecentre.org and developing the online community strategy for NetSquared.org. Alexandra holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University, where her research focused on the creative frontiers of online political engagement.

### *Rob Cottingham, President*

Rob is a seasoned communications strategist who is known online as an e-campaigning innovator, and offline as one of Canada's leading speechwriters. His recent projects include creating the Confeederation election blog aggregator and writing the final report for the Prime Minister's External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities. Rob maintains a long-running blog at robcottingham.ca and writes SpeechList, a free e-mail newsletter on speechwriting.

