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About this capture



RSS ADVISORY BOARD

Really Simple Syndication specifications, tutorials and discussion

RSS 0.90 Specification

Archivist's Note: This is the RSS 0.90 specification published by Netscape on March 15, 1999. The current version of the RSS 2.0 specification is available at [this link](#) and [other revisions](#) have been archived. Netscape **transferred** this specification to the RSS Advisory Board on Jan. 22, 2008.

Quick Start

My Netscape Network (MNN) is a free Netcenter service that lets you create your own My Netscape channel.

To create a channel, follow the steps described in this document.

- Step 1: **Design and Create Your RDF Site Summary File**
- Step 2: **Register Your File with Netscape**
- Step 3: **Place the "Add Channel" Button on Your Web Site**
- Other MNN Help Topics**

Step 1: Design and Create Your RDF Site Summary File

First, decide what kind of content you will provide and how you will organize it, based on the template for channels shown in Figure 1. Although you can include any type of content in your channel, your alternatives for formatting are limited to the list of elements supported in RDF Site Summary 0.9, as shown in Figure 1.

Create an RDF Site Summary (RSS) 0.9 file that describes your content.

Name your file using the .rdf suffix, unless you are generating your file dynamically using a .cgi or other program. Netscape recommends the use of the .rdf filename suffix, but does not require it.

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OTHER FORMATS

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LINKS

- Find on Bloglines
- Find on IceRocket

Figure 1: Elements of a channel, shown as a user would see them when adding the channel.



Notes:

- You can create only one channel per Netcenter account.
- Your RDF Site Summary (RSS) 0.9 file must be 8 kilobytes or less in size.
- You can include only one channel per RSS 0.9 file.
- You can include up to 15 headlines (items) in your RSS 0.9 file.
- If you use an image in your channel, the image should measure 88 x 31 pixels.
- All tags in your RSS 0.9 file must be lowercase.
- RSS 0.9 supports the full ASCII character set, as well as all legal decimal and HTML entities. RSS 0.9 does not support other types of character data, such as UTF-8. For a list of legal HTML and decimal entities, refer to [Special Symbols and Entities](#) on DevEdge, Netscape's information resource for developers.

Figure 2 shows the RSS 0.9 file that describes the channel above. The file shows the required form and syntax of an RSS 0.9 file. This file defines five items of a possible 15 and does not include the optional textinput.

Figure 2. Sample RSS file that produces the channel shown in Figure 1.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rdf:RDF
  xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns="http://channel.netscape.com/rdf/simple/0.9/">
  <channel>
    <title>Mozilla Dot Org</title>
    <link>http://www.mozilla.org</link>
    <description>the Mozilla Organization
      web site</description>
  </channel>
  <image>
    <title>Mozilla</title>
    <url>http://www.mozilla.org/images/moz.gif</url>
    <link>http://www.mozilla.org</link>
  </image>
  <item>
    <title>New Status Updates</title>
    <link>http://www.mozilla.org/status/</link>
  </item>
  <item>
    <title>Bugzilla Reorganized</title>
    <link>http://www.mozilla.org/bugs/</link>
  </item>
  <item>
    <title>Mozilla Party, 2.0!</title>
    <link>http://www.mozilla.org/party/1999/</link>
  </item>
  <item>
    <title>Unix Platform Parity</title>
    <link>http://www.mozilla.org/build/unix.html</link>
  </item>
  <item>
    <title>NPL 1.0M published</title>
    <link>http://www.mozilla.org/NPL/NPL-1.0M.html</link>
  </item>
</rdf:RDF>
```

Table 1, below, provides a reference to the RSS 0.9 tags and syntax.

Table 1. RSS 0.9 tags and syntax

Tag Description	Required?	Max. Length	Example Usage
XML version identifier	Always, exact	--	<?xml version="1.0"?>
RDF version identifier	Always, exact	--	<rdf:RDF xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#" xmlns="http://channel.netscape.com/rdf/simple/0.9/">
Start channel data	Always	--	<channel>
Channel title	Always	40 char.	<title>Mozilla Dot Org</title>
Channel description	Always	500 char.	<description>the Mozilla Organization web site</description>
Channel title links to (URL)	Always	500 char.	<link>http://www.mozilla.org</link>
End channel data	Always	--	</channel>
Start image data	Optional	--	<image>
Image ALT text	If <image>	40	<title>Mozilla Dot Org</title>
Image location (URL)	If <image>	500	<url>http://www.mozilla.org/images/moz.gif</url>
Image links to (URL)	If <image>	500	<link>http://www.mozilla.org</link>
End image data	If <image>	--	</image>
Start item data	Always (1-15 items per channel)	--	<item>
Item title	Always	100	<title>Mozilla Party, 2.0!</title>
Item links to (URL)	Always	500	<link>http://www.mozilla.org/party/1999/</link>
End item data	Always	--	</item>
Start text input data *	Optional	--	<textinput>
Text input title	If <textinput>	40	<title>Send Comments</title>
Text input description	If <textinput>	100	<description>Use the text box below to send your comments to mozilla.org</description>
Text input name	If <textinput>	500	<name>ResponseText</name>
Text input links to (URL)	If <textinput>	500	<link>http://www.mozilla.org/cgi-bin/feedback.cgi</link>
End text input data	If <textinput>	--	</textinput>
End RDF	Always, exact	--	</rdf:RDF>

* Note: In this release, MNN supports only <form method=get>. Your .cgi program that is to receive data from the text input must use method=get.

RSS 0.9 places restrictions on the first non-whitespace characters of the data in **link** and **url** tags. The data in these tags must begin with http://, https://, ftp://, or mailto:. Among others, file: and javascript: are not permitted in **link** and **url** tags.

In subsequent releases, MNN will support an enhanced RSS format. For more information, refer to the **MNN Future Directions** document.

Special characters in RSS 0.9

RSS 0.9 supports the full ASCII character set, as well as all legal decimal and HTML entities. RSS 0.9 does not support other types of character data, such as UTF-8.

Because an RSS 0.9 file is an XML document, if you want to use special characters such as ampersands (&) in a **url** or **link** tags, you must substitute the appropriate decimal or HTML entities for those characters.

Decimal entities have the format &#ref; where *ref* is a number that references the character (*ref* must be between 0-255). Entity references have the format &mm; where *mm* is a text string that references the character.

XML also has reserved characters, such as angle brackets, for which you must use a decimal or entity reference.

As an example, to use the URL:

```
http://foo.bar.com/mycgi.py?a=1&b=2
```

as the value for a <link> tag, you must substitute the decimal or entity equivalent of ampersand (&) character:

```
<link>http://foo.bar.com/mycgi.py?a=1&b=2</link>
```

Table 2 lists common special characters and their decimal and entity equivalents.

Character	Decimal	Entity
'	%	'
"	"	"
&	&	&
<	<	<
>	>	>
non-breaking space	 	

For a full list of legal HTML and decimal entities, refer to **Special Symbols and Entities** on DevEdge, Netscape's information resource for developers.

Other Help Topics

Step 2: Register Your File with Netscape

When you are finished creating your RSS 0.9 file, place it on an HTTP server. The file must be publicly accessible so that Netscape can validate the file. Make sure that the server on which you are storing your file is accessible.

Next, return to MNN and agree to the Terms of Use.

In the Create A Channel Window screen, in the RDF Site Summary File Location text box, enter the full URL of your RSS 0.9 file (or the .cgi that generates it).

Before you submit the URL of your file, note that you **MUST** have a valid email address associated with your Netcenter account. The email address associated with your account is listed on the screen. Netscape will send important correspondence about the status of your channel to that address. If the address isn't valid or correct, click the Change Address button to correct the problem.

If the URL of your RSS 0.9 file and your email address are both correct, click the Submit button.

When you submit the URL of your file, Netscape attempts to validate the file. If your file is not valid, MNN displays an error message on the screen that you can use to diagnose the problem. Consult the **Troubleshooting** document for more information.

Other Help Topics

Step 3: Place the "Add Channel" Button on Your Web Site

When Netscape successfully retrieves your RSS 0.9 file, you will receive an email message that lets you know that your channel is available. You should receive this email within a few hours of

submitting the URL of your RSS 0.9 file.

Save that email message -- it contains important items, such as

- The raw HTML for an "Add Channel" button, which you can copy and paste onto your web page or site to enable your users to subscribe to your channel. Figure 3, below, provides an example of what the "Add Channel" button looks like.
- The raw HTML for a link that serves the same function as the "Add Channel" button.
- A record of your channel name, which is a unique numerical identifier that you will refer to your channel when you contact Netscape.
- Instructions on how to add your channel listing to the Netscape Open Directory.

Figure 3. A sample of the type of "Add Channel" button that you receive from Netscape.



To view your channel, copy and paste the raw HTML of the "Add Channel" button onto your web page or site. Then load the page in your browser and click the "Add Channel" button.

To help make your channel a success, place the "Add Channel" button in a prominent location on your site. By making the button more visible, you ensure that a maximum number of people know about your channel and are able to quickly subscribe to it.

After your channel is up and running, continue to monitor your email account for status messages from Netscape. If at some point Netscape is unable to retrieve your RSS 0.9 file, you will receive an email message stating the error code of the problem.