



VisNetic Oddpost: Unified, Web-based Mail & News Aggregation

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RSS as a Communications Medium

RSS, short for *Really Simple Syndication*, is a web content syndication format that is changing the way many people receive and view news and information on the Internet. The RSS protocol is technically a form of XML (*eXtended Markup Language*), and is used to syndicate (or publish) Internet content in a way that's easy for computers to consume (and subsequently interpret and display to human beings).

But what really makes RSS a compelling and significant factor on the Internet today is its widespread adoption. The RSS protocol is being used to publish widely varied types of content; ranging from news from major providers such as The Wall Street Journal and CNET News to everyday blogs (short for weblogs), which can contain nearly any type of information. RSS essentially provides a content *feed*, which is consumable by anyone (or anything) that's interested in the subject matter being provided.

Consuming and storing content from RSS feeds is a process known as *aggregation*, named so because the consumer gathers information from a variety of sources into a single location. Typically in the case of individuals, information from RSS feeds is aggregated to their local computer for review, but this content can also be aggregated into other forms (such as a publicly searchable web database, for example).

RSS's Relationship with Email

Few would argue that email's reputation as a legitimate communications medium has gradually become tarnished, mostly as a result of the prevalence of spam. Spam, in turn, is an outgrowth of commercial organizations' desire to *push* content into the mailboxes of consumers across the world. The relative low costs of using email as the medium for such communications has turned its potential for widespread abuse into everyday reality. For these reasons, email's usefulness for staying in touch with a variety of commercial and non-commercial informational resources is steadily waning.

One might argue that the push-oriented delivery method of email is at the heart of such issues. After all, most other content resources are pull-oriented. Think about it; television, radio, even web browsing - all accessed "on demand" by the consumer. But with email, people and organizations can send email messages to you with no prior solicitation on your part, effectively reversing the flow of communications control and creating potential for abuse.

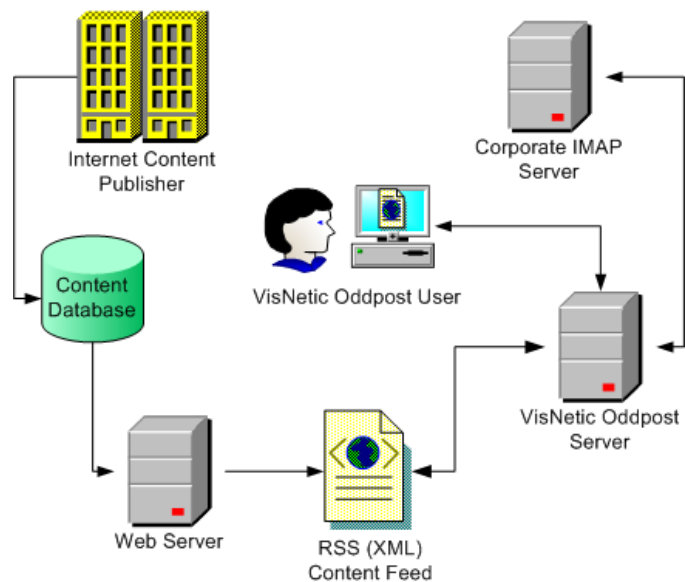
RSS, on the other hand, is strictly a pull-oriented communications technology, meaning that content is retrieved from feeds on a schedule dictated by the consumer, not the other way around as with email. This, in fact, is one of the primary reasons for the recent growth of RSS as a syndication format – it puts a fundamental level of control back into the hands of consumers. Users are able to control how and when they receive information from organizations of all types (e.g. businesses, news outlets, etc.) as well as other individuals.

Of course, email as a communications medium isn't going away anytime soon (if ever), but syndication protocols like RSS have come a long way toward supplanting its weaknesses.

VisNetic Oddpost = Email + RSS Aggregation

VisNetic Oddpost combines the functionality of a best-of-class email client and a powerful RSS aggregator into a unified, web-based software tool. VisNetic Oddpost can aggregate content from a variety of RSS feeds (such as Salon.com, Roger Ebert Movie Reviews, and Wired News) just as easily as it allows you to check, sort, and manage your inbound email.

This seamless integration of two of the Internet's primary communications methods achieves a new software milestone. Especially when coupled with a strong anti-spam software package such as Deerfield.com's VisNetic MailPermit, VisNetic Oddpost puts control of the flow of information back where it belongs – in the hands of the user.



VisNetic Oddpost is available for internal deployment within organizations starting at only \$165.00 (US dollars). For more information, please visit www.deerfield.com or email us at info@deerfield.com.