An introduction to RSS and your XML podcasting template.

One of the key ingredients of delivering your MP3s over the Internet as a podcast is RSS. So what is RSS? Here are two descriptions drawn from the Internet…

1. What is RSS?

> Really Simple Syndication (RSS) is a lightweight XML format designed for sharing headlines and other Web content. Think of it as a distributable "What's New" for your site.

> Originated by UserLand in 1997 and subsequently used by Netscape to fill channels for Netcenter, RSS has evolved into a popular means of sharing content between sites (including the BBC, CNET, CNN, Disney, Forbes, Wired, Slashdot, ZDNet, and more).

> RSS solves myriad problems webmasters commonly face, such as increasing traffic, and gathering and distributing news. RSS can also be the basis for additional content distribution services.

> Source: http://www.webreference.com/authoring/languages/xml/rss/intro/

2.What is RSS?

> RSS is a format for syndicating news and the content of news-like sites, including major news sites like Wired, news-oriented community sites like Slashdot, and personal weblogs.

> But it's not just for news. Pretty much anything that can be broken down into discrete items can be syndicated via RSS: the "recent changes" page of a wiki, a changelog of CVS checkins, even the revision history of a book.

> Once information about each item is in RSS format, an RSS-aware program can check the feed for changes and react to the changes in an appropriate way.

> RSS-aware programs called news aggregators are popular in the weblogging community. Many weblogs make content available in RSS. A news aggregator can help you keep up with all your favorite weblogs by checking their RSS feeds and displaying new items from each of them.

> By Mark Pilgrim
> Source: http://www.xml.com/lpt/a/2002/12/18/dive-into-xml.html

In creating your podcast feed you will need to develop a RSS file using XML. There is no need to panic. There is a simple template that you can copy and paste into a text file using WordPad or NotePad on your personal computer.

There is a description of this template and some examples on the following pages.

What sort of information does this RSS file contain?

This is a description of an example for the podcast of a single mp3 file. The words in *italics* describe the information that you need to complete in those specific fields in the script.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rss version="2.0"><channel>
<title>The name of your podcast</title>
<link>The complete address or url of your personal web site</link>
<description>A brief description of your podcast, online audio materials
or subject matter</description>
<language>en-us</language>
<copyright>2005</copyright>
<lastBuildDate>The date</lastBuildDate>
<webMaster>Your email adress</webMaster>
<ttl>1</ttl>
<item>
<title>The title of this specific podcast</title>
<description>A short description of the actual podcast.</description>
<pubDate>The publication date</pubDate>
<enclosure url=The exact web site address of the mp3 file, exact file size
in bytes and a description of the file type>
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

Each line or section of the script has an opening tag <title> and a closing tag </title>. In between each tag there is specific information that you need to complete.

Each time you create a new podcast simply copy and paste, or duplicate, the last RSS file you created and change the relevant lines of script.

That is all there is to it. All you need to do is to type carefully, check your spelling and make sure you have completed all of the relevant fields in each line of the script.

After you have uploaded your script to your personal web space you can then check to see if you have made any mistakes by using an online validator.

Some real examples of RSS podcast scripts

This script was used by myself when I began to initially try out this podcasting idea. I was uploading rare live recordings of various artists to my own web space and then sharing the web site address of the podcast with a select range of other collectors.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rss version="2.0"><channel>
<title>Larry's Back Verandah</title>
<link>http://www.larkin.net.au/podcast/</link>
<description>Live concert recordings and other rock oddities from Larry's back
verandah</description>
<language>en-us</language>
<copyright>2004</copyright>
<lastBuildDate>Sun, 20 Oct 2004 00:00:01 GMT</lastBuildDate>
<webMaster>yourname@email.com</webMaster>
<ttl>1</ttl>
<item>
<title>A classic Bowie performance</title>
<description>This moving performance by Bowie of It's Gonna Be Me was recorded at the
Universal Amphitheatre by his mixing desk crew during his Diamond Dogs tour in 1974.
The song was not officially released until the early 1990s. This live version was published
when the open reel recording of the concert was made available to the public via an
auction.</description>
<pubDate>Sun, 20 Oct 2004 00:00:01 GMT</pubDate>
<enclosure url="http://www.larkin.net.au/podcast/test.mp3" length="8923641"
type="audio/mpeg" />
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

This is a second example

In this example, a single file, "01_discussion.mp3" will be downloaded by the podcast application and delivered to the person's mp3 player software.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rss version="2.0"><channel>
<title>MP3 and Podcasting Workshop</title>
<link>http://home.exetel.com.au/larkin/podcast/</link>
<description>A selection of examples for participants of the MP3 workshop</description>
<language>en-us</language>
<copyright>2005</copyright>
<lastBuildDate>Thu, 13 Apr 2005 12:04:01 GMT</lastBuildDate>
<webMaster> yourname@email.com </webMaster>
<ttl>1</ttl>
<item>
<title>Podcasting Discussion</title>
<description>This is a discussion between myself and some friends regarding
podcasting.</description>
<pubDate>Fri, 01 Apr 2005 12:04:01 GMT</pubDate>
<enclosure url="http://home.exetel.com.au/larkin/podcast/01_discussion.mp3"
length="2613542" type="audio/mpeg" />
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

A third example

In this example, when the user checks for updates, three files, namely "eng101_tutorial_01.mp3", "eng101_tutorial_02.mp3" & "eng101_tutorial_03.mp3" will be downloaded by the podcast application and delivered to the person's mp3 player software.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<rss version="2.0"><channel>
<title>MP3 and Podcasting Workshop</title>
<link>http://www.larkin.net.au/larkin/podcast/</link>
<description>A selection of examples for participants of the MP3 workshop</description>
<language>en-us</language>
<copyright>2005</copyright>
<lastBuildDate>Fri, 01 Apr 2005 12:04:01 GMT</lastBuildDate>
<webMaster> yourname@email.com </webMaster>
<ttl>1</ttl>
<item>
<title>Introduction to Engineering 101 Tutorial 1</title>
<description>This is an overview of the subject and the activities that you will complete
during the term.</description>
<pubDate>Fri, 01 Apr 2005 12:04:01 GMT</pubDate>
<enclosure url="http://www.larkin.net.au/podcast/eng101_tutorial_01.mp3"
length="961477" type="audio/mpeg" />
</item>
<item>
<title>Engineering 101 Tutorial 2</title>
<description>This tutorial will look at some of the major issues facing today's
engineers.</description>
<pubDate>Fri, 08 Apr 2005 12:04:01 GMT</pubDate>
<enclosure url="http://www.larkin.net.au/podcast/eng101_tutorial_02.mp3"
length="665855" type="audio/mpeg" />
</item>
<item>
<title>Engineering 101 Tutorial 3</title>
<description>This tutorial will look at some examples of major engineering
feats.</description>
<pubDate>Wed, 13 Apr 2005 01:04:01 GMT</pubDate>
<enclosure url="http://www.larkin.net.au/podcast/eng101_tutorial_03.mp3"
length="855935" type="audio/mpeg" />
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```