

Creating a podcast using XML

Locate your mp3 file

Locate the mp3 file(s) that you wish to use as the basis of your podcast.

Making a note of the audio file's exact file size and name

When your audio is done and saved, you will need to remember to write down:

- Where you saved it on your computer so that you can upload it later.
- What the exact file size is in bytes.
- The exact name of the file.

To check out the exact file size and to double check the exact name, just:

- Right click on the .mp3 file you created
- Click "properties" and note the size. As an example, it will look like this:

Size: 4.61 MB (4,834,743 bytes). What you want to write down is **4834743** without the commas.

Write down the exact name of the file, for example: **voice_001.mp3**, **tutorial_01.mp3**, etc.

Creating Your RSS Feed File

An RSS feed is actually a simple text file with the extension .rss . You can name it anything you like as long as it ends with .rss . As an example, MyPodcast.rss.

Now, inside the RSS file are several directions created in what is called Extensible Markup Language or XML. It's similar to HyperText Markup Language or HTML. There is no real mystery to this "language" and it is not something that you should approach with fear or trepidation.

If you've ever written any HTML or you have simply seen the code of a webpage, then you might know that web pages are created using what are called "tags" like:

```
<Title> This is the Title of my page </Title>
```

XML uses a similar tag system to describe exactly what is inside the RSS file. The good news is, you can copy another RSS file as your template and then modify it as needed.

Open up your windows Notepad by clicking:

Start > Run > and typing in Notepad then press ENTER or locate it using the Program menu.

Note: It's important you use a text editor like Notepad because a text editor does not include any text formatting like a word processor such as Microsoft Word. If you used Microsoft Word to create your RSS file, it would fail miserably because of the hidden formatting.

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 change-log of CVS check-ins, 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 web logging 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 *type of 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 address</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/update 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 Rare Recordings</title>
<link>http://www.larkin.net.au/podcast/</link>
<description>Live concert recordings and other rock oddities from Larry's Collection</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>Introduction to Engineering</title>
<link>http://www.ntu.edu.sg/eng101/podcast/</link>
<description>This podcast site provides an introduction to Engineering for new and potential students.</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.ntu.edu.sg/eng101/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.ntu.edu.sg/eng101/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.ntu.edu.sg/eng101/podcast/eng101_tutorial_03.mp3" length="855935" type="audio/mpeg" />
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

Saving the file

These are examples of different RSS files. If you have used the examples above and replaced my information with your own relevant information then you will have a complete RSS file. You’ve created all the code you need for a podcast!

Now, decide what the name of your RSS file will be and save it to your desktop or a directory you will remember where it is.

Example: MyPodcast.rss

Let me point out that there are other elements you can put into an RSS file. Save your file in an appropriate directory.

How to Upload the .MP3 File, RSS File, and Validate It

An RSS file must reside on a server. If you have your own website, you already have a server holding your website. Use that server! You can also use the “My Webspaces” or personal web space provided by NTU.

You upload your RSS file along with the mp3s for your podcast using either an FTP (File Transfer Protocol) program or possibly a webpage-based upload feature if you built your website using one of the many software interfaces many hosting companies now provide.

Either way, upload them to your website. Remember: if you decide to place these files in a separate folder on your server like /MyPodcast you will have to include that folder in the full address of your mp3 when you create that information using the <enclosure url= tag.

How to Validate or Make Sure Your RSS File is Written Correctly

This is the easiest part of all. If you have written your RSS file correctly, just go to <http://rss.scripting.com/> and type in the address of where you uploaded your RSS file. For instance:

`http://www.yourwebsite.com/MyPodcast.rss`

When you press the VALIDATE button, it will test out your RSS feed and tell you if it works or not. If you get an error message then you have made a mistake possibly in syntax, tags, etc. Go back to your RSS file, open it in Notepad and inspect it to see where you might have made a mistake. One little error – anything that’s off – will screw the whole thing up.

Another RSS Validator is: <http://validator.w3.org/>

Once your podcast has been validated, all you have to do now is provide the address of your RSS file to anyone who wants to subscribe to your podcast.

In our example it would be:

`http://www.yourwebsite.com/MyPodcast.rss`

For people to receive your podcast, there are many free software programs designed specifically for this purpose. You can use this web site to test your RSS script. Copy and paste the correct website address for your RSS file into a RSS validator. For example you could copy and paste this web site address

`http://www.larkin.net.au/podcast/multiple.rss`

into the data entry field of this web site:

`http://rss.scripting.com/`



RSS Validator

URL:

You then click on the Validate button. You should see the following window.

RSS Validator

URL:

Congratulations -- the RSS feed validates! You may include the following logo text into your page if you want to express your support for RSS.

```
<a href="http://rss.scripting.com/?
url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.larkin.net.au%2Fpodcast%2Fmultiple.rss"><i
mg src="http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/blogs/gems/tech/loveRss.gif"
width="65" height="59" alt="Valid RSS feed." border="0"></a>
```

Don't forget to get your podcast listed in the many directories available on the Internet so people know it's available and can subscriber. See locations in the link boxes on this page.