



Making RSS  
newsfeeds  
work for your  
depart-  
ment/college

Barry  
Cornelius

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# Making RSS newsfeeds work for your department/college

Barry Cornelius

Oxford University Computing Services



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# Welcome to this workshop

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- This document is available at  
<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/presentations/itss2006/>
- I'm Barry Cornelius.
- I work for Computing Services (OUCS).
- I spend half of my time working for the Information Services team of OUCS ...
- ... and the other half working for OSS Watch, the national advisory service for UK HE and FE institutions on free and open source software.
- I've been at Oxford for about 15 months, and was previously at the University of Durham.



# Agenda

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# Newsfeeds

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- 1 Newsfeeds: what are newsfeeds?
- 2 Newsfeeds: how can I detect them?



# Newsfeeds: what are newsfeeds?

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- Establishing newsfeeds is a relatively new mechanism for delivering information.
- Essentially, a newsfeed is a collection of related items.
- Many web sites are providing newsfeeds.
- For example, the BBC has several newsfeeds, one for UK News, one for World News, ... .
- The web page  
`http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/help/3223484.stm`  
provides links to some of the BBC's newsfeeds.



# Newsfeeds: how can I detect them?

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- There are several icons that indicate a newsfeed is available from a web site, e.g. ,  and .
- If you click on a  or a , you will often be taken to a web page containing the code of the newsfeed.
- For example, click on the  icon in the *Events* section of `http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/`
- From the output, you can see that newsfeeds are coded using a markup language.
- Hidden away in all this markup is a list of items.
- **You do not need to understand this markup.**
- In the Location textbox of your browser, you will find the URL of this newsfeed (often ending in `.rss` or `.xml`).
- For the OSS Watch Events newsfeed, it is: `http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/rss/events.rss`
- The URL will be useful if you want to subscribe to the newsfeed (as we will see later).



# Reading a newsfeed

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- 1 Reading a newsfeed: overview
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- 3 Reading a newsfeed: using Bloglines
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- 5 Reading a newsfeed: using Firefox
- 6 Reading a newsfeed: using Thunderbird
- 7 Reading a newsfeed: using a program
- 8 Reading a newsfeed: from a web page
- 9 Reading a newsfeed: from WebLearn





# Reading a newsfeed: overview

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- There are many ways in which you can read a newsfeed.
- Usually it is a two stage process.
- First, you tell a newsfeed reader which newsfeeds you want to read.
- Then the newsfeed reader will do the hard work of getting the items of the newsfeeds and delivering the information to you.
- From time to time, the newsfeed reader will get new items.
- Although newsfeed readers work in different ways, the crucial idea is: when you wish to see the latest news, you do not have to visit each of the websites.



# Reading a newsfeed: from a Google page

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- There are web sites where you can subscribe to newsfeeds, e.g., Google, Bloglines, Yahoo!
- First go to `http://www.google.co.uk/`
- Then use the link labelled *Personalised Home*.
- If you are not logged in, use the link labelled *Sign in*.
- You will need a Google account: you can use a Google Mail e-mail address or some other e-mail address.
- You can subscribe to a newsfeed by using the *Add Content* link.



# Reading a newsfeed: from a Google page

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The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window with the Google homepage. The address bar displays <http://www.google.co.uk/ig?hl=en>. The page features the Google logo, a search bar, and navigation links for Web, Images, Groups, News, Froogle, and more. Below the search bar, there are several RSS newsfeed sections, each with an 'edit' link:

- jobs in IT from [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk)** (edit) [jobs.ac.uk](#) currently has 84 jobs in this category.
  - [Computing Officer Systems Group](#)
  - [Project Manager](#)
  - [Applications Support Officer](#)
  - [Assistive Technology Adviser](#)
- BBC News | News Front Page | UK Edition** (edit)
  - [Blasts hit Pakistan police school](#)
  - [UN agency to resume N Korean aid](#)
  - [Soviet-era satirist Zinoviyev dies](#)
- OSS Watch Summary** (edit)
  - [Institutional Web Management Workshop 2006, Bath, 14-16 June 2006](#)
  - [Google's Summer of Code](#)
  - [The Second International Conference on Open Source Systems \(OSS2006\), Como, Italy, 8-10](#)
- Oxford Materials Jobs** (edit)
  - [Electron Microscopy Facility \(2 Jobs\)](#)
  - [Personal Assistant to the Director of Studies](#)
  - [Maintenance Technician \(Plumbing\)](#)
- Oxford Saïd Business School: News** (edit)
  - [Private equity conference attracts high profile speakers](#)
  - [Top of the class](#)
  - [What a waste!](#)
- Future races in North East England** (edit)
  - [May10 half 2006-10-29: Jedburgh](#)
  - [May10 5K 2006-07-05: Newcastle-Gateshead](#)
  - [May08 7M 2006-11-05: Gilsbide](#)
- Weather** (edit)
  - Oxford
  - 8°C
  - Clear
  - Wind: N at 2 km/h
  - Humidity: 93%
  - Today: 22° | 18°
  - Fri: 22° | 11°
  - Sat: 17° | 11°
  - Sun
- Events test newsfeed** (edit)
  - [helpdesk](#)
  - [time for an ice cream](#)
  - [return of Randy](#)
  - [anniv](#)
  - [Randy's back](#)
- RTS Talks** (edit)
  - [NO TALK](#)
  - [NO TALK](#)
  - [Chibbelath and the Interjection into Reality](#)



# Reading a newsfeed: using Bloglines

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- Besides Google, there are other places where you can subscribe to newsfeeds.
- Another one that I've used is  
`http://www.bloglines.com/`
- Once again, you have to register using an e-mail address.



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Bloglines | My Feeds (292) - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.bloglines.com/myblogs

Welcome barry.cornelius@oucs.ox.ac.uk

Search for Posts

More Options

3 subscribers related feeds unsubscribe edit subscription

### Oxford University News

The latest News from the University of Oxford

42 Items | Sort Oldest First | Updated: Mon, Jun 5 2006 12:54 PM

#### Nobel prize winner launches online nanotechnology course

By "The Press Office" on research

A groundbreaking nanotechnology course, to be delivered entirely online, has been launched by Oxford University. The part-time course, leading to a postgraduate certificate award will draw on the University's world-class researchers working in this field.

Posted on: Mon, Jun 5 2006 12:39 PM | Email This | Clip/Blog This

Keep New: ☐

#### Study shows anti-inflammatory drugs could increase risk of heart attacks

By "The Press Office" on research

New research shows that high doses of some commonly used painkillers like ibuprofen or diclofenac could increase the risk of heart attacks. The study was based on the results of 138 randomised trials involving 140,000 patients.

Posted on: Fri, Jun 2 2006 3:29 PM | Email This | Clip/Blog This

Keep New: ☐

#### White Paper on governance published

By "The Press Office"

Significant changes to the way Oxford University plans and shapes its future are set out today in the concluding report from an official working party on governance.

Posted on: Thu, Jun 1 2006 3:30 PM | Email This | Clip/Blog This

Keep New: ☐

#### Clarendon Lectures on lessons learnt from Enron scandal

By "The Press Office"

As the former heads of US energy giant Enron wait to hear their fate, one man told an audience at the Said Business School in Oxford how one of the biggest

Done



# Reading a newsfeed: other ways

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- There are many other ways of reading a newsfeed:
  - Some web browsers (e.g., Firefox) allow you to establish a *live bookmark* to the URL of a newsfeed.
  - Although currently Internet Explorer does not have this facility, something similar will be in IE 7.
  - Some email clients (e.g., Opera Mail and Thunderbird) allow you to get the items of a newsfeed delivered into the email client like ordinary messages.
  - You can install a feedreader program, e.g., Awasu, NewsGator, NewzCrawler
  - If you know how to create web pages, you could provide one that displays the contents of a newsfeed.
  - If you can create resources in WebLearn, you can set up a resource that is a *news feed display*.



# Reading a newsfeed: using Firefox

- Some web browsers (e.g., Firefox) allow you to establish a *live bookmark* to the URL of a newsfeed.

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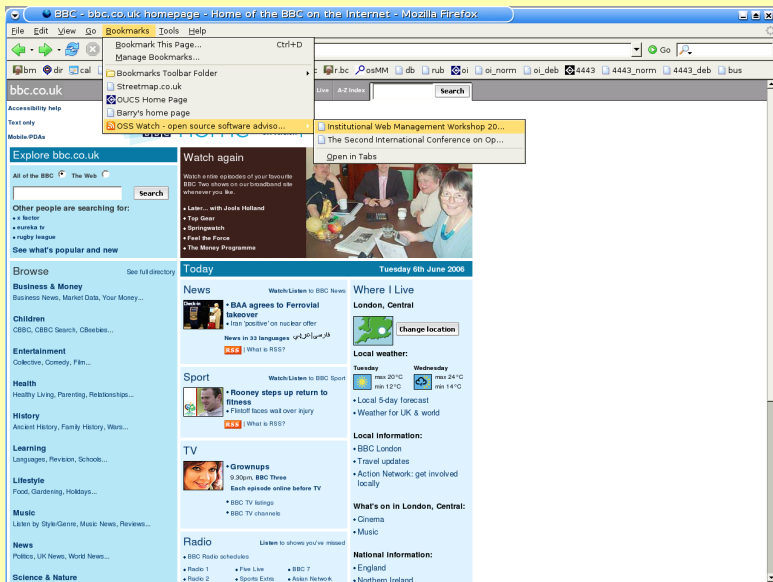
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# Reading a newsfeed: using Thunderbird

- Some email clients (e.g., Thunderbird) allow you to get the items of a newsfeed delivered into the email client like ordinary messages.

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# Reading a newsfeed: using Thunderbird

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The screenshot shows the Thunderbird email client window titled "BBC News | News Front Page | UK Edition - Thunderbird". The interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Go, Message, Tools, Help), a toolbar with icons for Get Mail, Write, Address Book, Reply, Reply All, Forward, Delete, Junk, Print, and Stop, and a search bar labeled "Subject or Sender".

The left sidebar displays the "Folders" pane with the following structure:

- E-mail
  - Inbox (187)
  - Sent
  - Deleted
- News & Blogs
  - Deleted
  - BBC News | N...dition (29)
  - Events test newsfeed (2)
  - Future race...England (4)
  - OSS Watch News Summary
  - RTS Talks (1)
- Local Folders
  - Unsent
  - Drafts
  - Sent
  - Deleted

The main pane shows a list of news items with columns for Subject, Sender, and Date. The selected item is "NI politicians return to Stormont" from "BBC News | News Front Page | UK Edition" at 07:45.

Subject	Sender	Date
Four troops injured at Iraq camp	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	08:15
Strike hits Delhi health services	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	08:13
AstraZeneca to buy CAT for £702m	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	08:06
NI politicians return to Stormont	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edition	07:45
Defence to begin in Saddam trial	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	07:43
British values classes considered	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	07:16
Double hospital 'downgrade' fear	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	06:53
Murder inquiry after victim dies	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	06:43
Brazil reels from deadly attacks	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	05:12
Java volcano activity increases	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	04:57
New US alligator killings feared	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	04:18
Justice system out of touch - PM	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	02:48
Cricketer: England 'well set for win'	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	02:48
Sickness-leave levels 'dropping'	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	01:27
Optimism for manufacturing sector	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	00:45
BBC World Service hits new record	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	00:23
Muslim hardship under spotlight	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	00:10
Heart disease 'costing UK £29bn'	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	00:04
Rise in Blue Flags beach awards	BBC News   News Front Page   UK Edi...	00:04

The selected item's details are shown below the list:

Subject: NI politicians return to Stormont  
From: BBC News | News Front Page | UK Edition  
Date: 07:45  
Website: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/4769945.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4769945.stm)

The body text of the email reads: "Northern Ireland's politicians prepare to take their seats in the Assembly for the first time since October 2002."

The status bar at the bottom indicates "Unread: 29" and "Total: 249".



# Reading a newsfeed: using a program

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- You can install a feedreader program.
- Examples are:
  - **Linux:** Akregator, NewsFeed
  - **Macs:** NetNewsWire, Newsfire
  - **Windows:** Awasu, FeedDemon, Newz Crawler, RssReader



# Reading a newsfeed: from a web page

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- At the point in the web page where you want to output a newsfeed, include something like:

```
<script type="text/javascript"  
src="http://rssxpress.ukoln.ac.uk/lite/viewer/?  
rss=http://www.jobs.ac.uk/rss/disc/0700.xml">  
</script>
```

where all the text between `src="` and `>` should be on one line (with no spaces). Replace the URL `http://www.jobs.ac.uk/rss/disc/0700.xml` by the URL of the newsfeed that interests you.

- This uses a facility provided by UKOLN that first goes off to the website containing the newsfeed and then displays the news items as a web page.
- Here is a link to a web page containing the above code:
- <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/presentations/itss2006/jobs.html>



# Reading a newsfeed: from WebLearn

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- If you have a WebLearn account, you can read a newsfeed from WebLearn.
- My area is `http://www.weblearn.ox.ac.uk/site/testarea/asuc/barry/`
- In WebLearn, to create a newsfeed resource, use the *Create a new resource here* link.
- Then use the *News Feed Display* link.
- Then enter some appropriate values in the *Name*, *Title* and *Description* boxes.
- In the *URL of Feed* box, you need to enter the URL of the newsfeed, e.g.:

```
http://www.jobs.ac.uk/rss/disc/0700.xml
```

- Then use the *create now* button.
- That has created the resource.



# Reading a newsfeed: from WebLearn

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- The new resource can be viewed by using the *Back to menu of resources* link and then scrolling to the bottom of this screen.
- It is best to configure the resource to display the titles of each item as links.
- This can be done as follows.
  - Find the *Manage* link that is associated with the new resource.
  - Click on this link.
  - Then use the *Modify News Feed Display* link.
  - Ensure that the box to *display summary entries, if available* is checked.
  - Ensure that the box to *display the titles as links* is checked.
  - Ensure that the box to *display the title of each entry* is checked.
  - Click on *Save* and then revisit the menu of resources.



# Formats

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- 1 Newsfeed formats: numerous standards
- 2 Newsfeed formats: who will win?
- 3 Newsfeed formats: does it matter?

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# Newsfeed formats: numerous standards

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- As has already been mentioned, newsfeeds are coded using a markup language.
- Unfortunately, there are several markup languages that are often used.
- They include: RSS 1.0, RSS 2.0, Atom 0.3, Atom 1.0.
- You can see examples of the first three by visiting the following:

<http://ramble.oucs.ox.ac.uk/blog/stuart/rdf.xml>

<http://ramble.oucs.ox.ac.uk/blog/stuart/rss.xml>

<http://ramble.oucs.ox.ac.uk/blog/stuart/atom.xml>





# Newsfeed formats: who will win?

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- Atom 1.0 was released in August 2005.
- My view is that Atom 1.0 will become more dominant.
- Reasons are given at <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/formats/>

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# Newsfeed formats: does it matter?

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- Does it matter that there are numerous formats?
- Although it is useful to know that there are different formats, in many respects it is irrelevant.
- This is because many readers will read most formats.

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- 1 What is OXITEMS?
- 2 Using OXITEMS to set up newsfeeds
- 3 Societies/clubs can also produce newsfeeds
- 4 OXITEMS uses three levels of authorisation



# What is OXITEMS?

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- One aspect of the OUCS 5 year plan is to *establish and promote a service for creating, publishing and aggregating RSS news items across the university, including the description of event data ...*
- So OUCS has recently been producing a newsfeed system that members of the University can use to store news items.
- It is called *OXITEMS*.
- It assumes that any unit of the University may want to create news items.
- Here the word *unit* means any department, college, society, club or some other project.
- Work started on OXITEMS last August.
- It was first released last December.
- On 8th December, I gave a talk to ITSS and demonstrated what it could do.



# Using OXITEMS to set up newsfeeds

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- An OXITEMS newsfeed can be set up by someone that OXITEMS has been told is the *administrator* of the unit.
- Automatically, the main ITSS person of a unit is an OXITEMS administrator for that unit.
- That person (and any member of Computing Services) can add other people as administrators for that unit.
- An administrator can use OXITEMS to set up newsfeeds without any involvement of Computing Services.
- For example, the ITSS people of History, Materials and Zoology have set up the newsfeeds:  
histfac/jobs, histfac/medieval,  
mat/news, mat/seminars, mat/jobs,  
zoo/seminars, zoo/studentships.
- The Press and Information Office has set up:  
offices/university-news.



# Societies/clubs can also produce newsfeeds

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- For societies and clubs, the username associated with the society/club is an OXITEMS administrator for that society/club.
- So a person who authenticates with that username can set up newsfeeds (without any involvement of Computing Services).
- He/she can also add other people as administrators for the society/club.
- For example, a person who has webauthed with the username `ouoc` has set up the newsfeeds:  
`clubs/ouoc/news`,  
`clubs/ouoc/socials`,  
`clubs/ouoc/training`.



# OXITEMS uses three levels of authorisation

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- It is appropriate for one or two people in a unit to control what newsfeeds can be set up.
- E.g., to ensure a sensible naming scheme is employed.
- The administrator can delegate the day-to-day running of a newsfeed to another person (called a *manager*).
- For example, the administrator could make the head of a research group the manager of a newsfeed.
- The latter can in turn allocate *authors*, people who add news items to the newsfeed.
- Although OXITEMS provides three roles (administrators, managers, authors), this need not be too much bureaucracy: ...
- ... when an administrator creates a new newsfeed, they can quickly establish the initial values of the manager and the authors.



# An example of the use of OXITEMS

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# Example: setting up a new newsfeed

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- Suppose some department (or college) has a web site.  
`http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/  
demopages/zero.html`
- Suppose they want to produce a newsfeed.
- The main ITSS person of the department can do this.
- He/she needs to go to OXITEMS's web page which is  
`https://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxonly/oxitems/  
//rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxonly/oxitems/`
- As this is webauthed, it is available from anywhere.
- Then they select the *Add an ordinary newsfeed* link.
- They need to enter information such as the name of the newsfeed, its title, its description, who is going to manage the newsfeed, and so on.
- For example, if the person is in Medical Sciences, they could set up a newsfeed with a name like  
`medsci/news.`



# Example: adding an item to the newsfeed

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- Having set up the newsfeed, they will want to add an item to the newsfeed.
- Once again, this can be done from the OXITEMS's web page  
`https://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxonly/oxitems/`
- This time, use the *Add an item* link.
- Enter the news item, preview it and then add the news item to the newsfeed.



# Example: reading the newsfeed

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- There are two steps for displaying a newsfeed in a web page.
- First add the following to the head of the web page:

```
<script type="text/javascript"  
src="http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/  
                                output_newsfeed.js"  
language="JavaScript">  
</script>
```

- And then, at the point in the web page where you want to output a newsfeed, include something like:

```
<script type="text/javascript">  
    output_newsfeed("medsci/news", "1")  
</script>
```

- The , "1" means only display the latest item: leave it out if you want all of the unexpired items.



# Example: reading the newsfeed

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- The University's Press and Information Office displays its news stories at:
- <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/>
- These news stories come from the `offices/university-news` newsfeed.
- Suppose the department also wants to output some items of this newsfeed on its home page.
- Again, include something like:

```
<script type="text/javascript">  
    output_newsfeed("offices/university-news","1")  
</script>
```

- Here is a link to a new version of the home page:
- <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/demopages/two.html>



# Example: coping with disabled JavaScript

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- The above code assumes the visitor's browser has JavaScript enabled.
- We need to provide an alternative if JavaScript has been disabled.
- Here is some code that deals with both possibilities: enabled or disabled.

```
<script type="text/javascript">
    output_newsfeed("offices/university-news","1")
</script>
<noscript>
<p>JavaScript is not enabled.
Either enable it or use this link:
<a href="http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/offices/unive
rsity-news/newsfeed.html">University News</a>.
</p>
</noscript>
```



# Example: advertising the newsfeed

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- You should add to the <head> element of the HTML page an element like the following:

```
<link href=
  "http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oucs/news/rss10.xml"
      rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml"
      title="OUCS News">
```

This causes some browsers to output an icon indicating that a newsfeed is available from this page.

- Alongside the output of the newsfeed, you should display a button providing access to the newsfeed's URL:

```
<a href=
  "http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oucs/news/rss10.xml">
<img src=
  "http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/images/rss.png" />
</a>
```



# Example: using an events newsfeed

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- Besides ordinary newsfeeds, OXITEMS has *events newsfeeds* that are better at handling events.
- If you add an item to an events newsfeed, OXITEMS will ask you for lots of information about the event.
- The RSS/Atom formats do not have elements for describing events.
- One could augment the RSS/Atom with XML describing an event. However, would feedreaders understand whatever XML you supplied?
- It is better to include HTML describing the event in the `description` element of an RSS feed or the `content` element of an Atom feed.
- The feedreader can use this HTML to render details about the event.



# Example: outputting an events newsfeed

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- As with ordinary newsfeeds, `output_newsfeed` can be used to output an events newsfeed:

```
<script type="text/javascript">  
    output_newsfeed("running/events-demo", "",  
                    "", "", "", "Astartdate");  
</script>
```

- Because people will want to output different things and in a different order, you can give OXITEMS a template for the HTML produced by `output_newsfeed`.
- If you do not provide a template, a default is used.
- The above call of `output_newsfeed` is used at:
- <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/pages/events-demo.html>
- Use this link to see an example of the output.





# Example: more about templates

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- Go to `http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/templates/events-default.tpl` to see the code of the default template.
- We decided not to use one of the recognised templating languages, such as Smarty (from `http://smarty.php.net/`), because it allows people to do too many things.
- Instead we have invented our own templating language.
- It just has variable substitution and choose statements.



# Example: conforming to hCalendar

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- It is best if the HTML conforms to the *hCalendar* specification (<http://microformats.org/wiki/hcalendar>).
- It is then possible for others to *scrape* the RSS/Atom to produce an *iCalendar* file (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICalendar>).
- iCalendar files enable event information to be imported into calendaring programs, such as Apple iCal, Google Calendar, Lotus Notes, Microsoft Outlook, Oracle Calendar or WebCalendar.
- As the output from <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/pages/events-demo.html> shows, OXITEMS provides two ways of producing iCalendar files from its newsfeeds.



# Example: another events newsfeed

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- Another example of the use of events is at <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/rts/talks/>
- This page displays the events of the events newsfeeds [oucs/rts-talks](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/rts/talks/).
- The first table extracts future events from the newsfeed and displays them using the template:
- <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/rts/talks/next.tpl>
- The second table extracts previous events and displays them using the template:
- <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/rts/talks/prev.tpl>
- If you use one of the *Abstract* links, you will be taken to a page displaying all of the items.
- This uses the template <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/rts/talks/abstracts.tpl>



# Other issues

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- 3 Other issues: aggregating newsfeeds
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# Other issues: adding categories

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- When an author is adding an item, OXITEMS allows the author to *categorise* the item.
- For example, if you are providing news items for a department which has several research groups, you might wish to add a category to each item to say that it is about a particular research group.
- Having categorised each item of a newsfeed, it is possible for people to obtain from your newsfeed those items referring to a particular category.
- For example, the University's Press and Information Office add the category `research` to any news stories that are about *research*.
- So research items can be obtained using:

```
<script type="text/javascript">  
output_newsfeed( "research@offices/university-news" )  
</script>
```



# Other issues: automatic email of news items

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- When you set up a newsfeed, you can associate an email address with the newsfeed.
- Typically, this would be the email address of a mailing list.
- Every time an item is added to the newsfeed, details of the item are also sent to the email address.
- If the newsfeed is an events newsfeed, the message has an attachment giving the details of the event in the *iCalendar* format.
- The message is sent from the person who added the item to the newsfeed.



# Other issues: aggregating newsfeeds

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- You can ask OXITEMS to display the result of combining the items of two or more newsfeeds.
- You can do *aggregation* by using a comma-separated list for the name of the newsfeed. One example is:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
    output_newsfeed("oucs/news,ict/ict-news")
</script>
<noscript>
<p>JavaScript is not enabled.
Either enable it or use this link:
<a href="http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oucs/news,ict/
ict-news/newsfeed.html">Aggregated Newsfeeds</a>
</p>
</noscript>
```

- Another example is:

```
http://rss.oucs.ox.
ac.uk/oucs/news,ict/ict-news/rss10.xml
```



# Other issues: feed validation

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- It is tricky to ensure that a newsfeed system is generating RSS/Atom that is correct.
- The following web site provides you with the ability to get an RSS 1.0, RSS 2.0 or Atom 1.0 newsfeed validated
- For example, the OXITEMS newsfeed for OUCS News is accessible at

`http://feedvalidator.org/`

`http:`

`//rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oucs/news/rss10.xml`

It can be validated by going to

`http:`

`//feedvalidator.org/check.cgi?url=http:`

`//rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oucs/news/rss10.xml`





# Real uses of OXITEMS

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- 2 Oxford University's home page
- 3 Oxford University's news page
- 4 [www.history.ox.ac.uk](http://www.history.ox.ac.uk)
- 5 [www.zoo.ox.ac.uk](http://www.zoo.ox.ac.uk)
- 6 [www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/hcl](http://www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/hcl)
- 7 [www.materials.ox.ac.uk](http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk)
- 8 Materials's news page



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- The University's Press and Information Office produces news stories every day.
- Go to `http://www.ox.ac.uk/`
- The text at the top right underneath *Latest news* is produced by outputting the first item of an OXITEMS newsfeed (called `offices/university-news`).
- If you use the link labelled *More news stories*, you will be taken to the web page `http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/`
- All the items of the newsfeed are displayed on this page.



# Oxford University's home page

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University of Oxford Home page - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.ox.ac.uk/

bm dir cal kwiki rt smap staff oucs ossw hc r.bc osMM db rub oi oi\_norm oi\_deb 4443

University of Oxford Home ... Meeting Room Booking System Google

**University of Oxford**

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**Quick links:**

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- Graduate admissions
- Continuing education
- Online courses

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**Latest News**

**Oxford comes top in The Times Good University Guide**

Oxford University has been named Britain's top university for the fifth year running by The Times Good University Guide, which has just been published. Published: 5 June 2006

- [RSS](#) [What is RSS?](#)
- More news stories**
- Journalists see the [Media Centre](#) for News Releases, the Online Media Guide and other useful links

**Internal users only: Governance White Paper and Question Time 8 June and 15 June - places available**

- [Webcast archive](#)

**What's on**

**Monday 5 June**

Department of Biochemistry: Lecture  
Professor Ronald Laskey, FRS: *Control of DNA replication and its exploitation for cancer diagnosis*  
Department of Biochemistry, 4 pm

- [More events](#)



# Oxford University's news page

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The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the Oxford University News & Events page. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/>. The page features a blue header with the Oxford University crest and the text "News & Events". Below the header, there is a search bar and a list of quick links. The main content area displays three news items, each with a small image and a brief description. The first item is about Oxford coming top in The Times Good University Guide. The second item is about a Nobel prize winner launching an online nanotechnology course. The third item is about a study showing that anti-inflammatory drugs could increase the risk of heart attacks. The right sidebar contains a "What's on:" section with information about a lecture by Professor Ronald Laskey.

News & Events - University of Oxford central web pages - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/>

bm dir cal wiki rt snap staff oucs ossw hc r.bc osMM db rub oi oi\_norm oi\_deb 4443

News & Events - University ... Meeting Room Booking System Google

SITE SEARCH

Search Go!

## News & Events

Oxford University > News & Events


**Quick links:**

- Search
- Contact search
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- FAQ
- News Releases


**Information about:**

- About Oxford University
- Research
- Innovation
- Divisions & Departments
- Colleges
- Libraries
- Museums & Collections
- Resources & Services
- Job Opportunities


**Oxford comes top in The Times Good University Guide**

 Oxford University has been named Britain's top university for the fifth year running by The Times Good University Guide, which has just been published. Published: 5 June 2006


**Nobel prize winner launches online nanotechnology course**

 A groundbreaking nanotechnology course, to be delivered entirely online, has been launched by Oxford University. The part-time course, leading to a postgraduate certificate award will draw on the University's world-class researchers working in this field. Published: 5 June 2006

**Study shows anti-inflammatory drugs could increase risk of heart attacks**

 New research shows that high doses of some commonly used painkillers like ibuprofen or diclofenol could increase the risk of heart attacks. The study was based on the results of 138 randomised trials involving 140,000 patients. Published: 2 June 2006

**White Paper on governance published**

 Significant changes to the way Oxford University plans and shapes its future are set out today in the concluding report from an official working party on governance. Published: 1 June 2006

If you have any Oxford-related news or events and wish to see them appear on this page please contact:  
[press.office@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@admin.ox.ac.uk) (news)  
[information.officer@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:information.officer@admin.ox.ac.uk) (events)

**What's on:**

**Monday 5 June**

Department of Biochemistry:  
Lecture  
Professor Ronald Laskey,  
FRS: **Control of DNA replication and its exploitation for cancer diagnosis**  
Department of Biochemistry,  
4 pm



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- Go to `http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/`
- Choose *Current Job Vacancies* from the *Staff* menu.
- That takes you to `http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/faculty/jobs/index.htm`
- The information on this page is generated from reading the OXITEMS newsfeed `histfac/news`.



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- Go to <http://www.zoo.ox.ac.uk/>
- On the right hand side of the page under the headings *News*, *Seminars* and *Studentships*, three OXITEMS newsfeeds are output (zoo/news, zoo/seminars and zoo/studentships).



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- The *Health Care Libraries* provides services to the staff and students of the University's Medical Sciences Division and to staff of local healthcare organisations and Trusts.
- It provides a main web page at `http://www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/hcl/`
- The area with the light blue background has been generated from the `medsci/hcl` newsfeed.



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- Go to `http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/`
- At the bottom left hand side of the page, use the *Information* link.
- The *info and news page* appears.
- In the menu on the right hand side, use the *Recent News RSS* link.
- The *Newsfeeds* page at `http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/infoandnews/newsfeeds.html` appears.
- On this page, three newsfeeds are output:  
`mat/news`, `mat/seminars` and `mat/jobs`.





# Materials's news page

Making RSS  
newsfeeds  
work for your  
depart-  
ment/college

Barry  
Cornelius

Welcome

Newsfeeds

Reading a  
newsfeed

Formats

Introducing  
OXITEMS

An example of  
the use of  
OXITEMS

Other issues

Real uses of  
OXITEMS

And finally

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the Oxford Materials website. The address bar shows the URL <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/infoandnews/newsfeeds.html>. The page has a blue header with the Oxford Materials logo and navigation links: Info&news, Admissions, Vacancies, Research, Teaching, Internal, and Sitemap. The main content area is titled "Department of Materials Newsfeeds" and contains three columns of news items, each with an RSS icon. The right sidebar contains links for Info&News, Useful Links, and a University of Oxford logo.

**OxfordMaterials | Info&News | Newsfeeds - Mozilla Firefox**

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

<http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/infoandnews/newsfeeds.html>

**OxfordMaterials** Google

Info&news | Admissions | Vacancies | Research | Teaching | Internal | Sitemap

### Department of Materials Newsfeeds

This page summarises the RSS (Really Simple Syndication) news feeds operated by the Department of Materials using the OXITEMS system developed by OUCS. To add or modify newsitems yourself just [login to OXITEMS](#) and read the instructions. To learn more about OXITEMS see <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oucsweb/oxitem5>

#### Oxford Materials News

**Award for Professor Sir Peter Hirsch**

Emeritus Professor Sir Peter Hirsch has been awarded the highest prize of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the 2005 Lomonosov Large Gold Medal, for his distinguished work on the "Physics of solid state strength and plasticity" Updated: 14 February 2006 Paul Warren

[RSS](#)

#### Oxford Materials Seminars

**MML seminar, Friday 9 June, 1.15 in 21BR committee room**

This weeks MML seminar is given by Steve Roberts (Oxford). His talk is entitled Dislocation dynamics - current status, prospects and limitations. Updated: 2 June 2006 Kay Davies

**Cookson Professorship Inaugural Lecture, Thursday 8 June, 5pm in St. Catharines College**

Professor Patrick Grant, Cookson Professor of Materials and Director of Faraday Advance, Department of Materials will give his Cookson Professorship Inaugural Lecture entitled Manufacture of new materials for industrial application using droplets. Updated: 2 June 2006 Kay Davies

[RSS](#)

#### Oxford Materials Jobs

**MML PDRA for the atomistic simulation of novel Ni-based superalloys for gas turbine blades**

MML PDRA for the atomistic simulation of novel Ni-based superalloys for gas turbine blades Grade RA1A / Salary: £20,044 to £26,470 / Job Ref No: DJ06/014 (Subject to review from 1 August 2006 as part of the implementation of the National Framework Agreement for staff in higher education). The closing date for applications is 30 June 2006. Updated: 30 May 2006 Kay Davies

**RESEARCH CO-ORDINATOR QUANTUM INFORMATION PROCESSING**

RESEARCH CO-ORDINATOR QUANTUM INFORMATION PROCESSING Grade ALC2 / Salary: £23,182 to £30,002 / Job Ref: DJ06/013 (Subject to review from 1 August 2006 as part of the implementation of the National Framework Agreement for staff in higher education. The closing date for applications is Friday 23 June 2006. Updated: 22 May 2006 Kay Davies

**Technician for Quantum Nanomaterials Laboratory**

#### Info&News

- Overview
- Recent News RSS
- Past News & Press
- Contact Dept.
- Contact People
- Visitor Travel Info
- Buildings & Maps
- Lectures and Seminars
- Materials Colloquia
- Industrial Tour
- History

#### Useful Links

- Department of Materials
- University of Oxford
- Contact Search
- Links Lists

Done



# And finally

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- 1 Some conclusions
- 2 Questions
- 3 Thank you



# Some conclusions

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- Many web sites of departments/colleges already provide news and/or events on their web pages.
- The advantages of using some newsfeed system such as OXITEMS are:
  - If you currently provide news/events by editing web pages, then this system is a lot easier to use as the information is provided by filling in a form.
  - It is possible to allocate other people to enter items of news/events.
  - Although items expire, they are still retained: so you have a record of what's happening in your department/college.
  - The use of RSS/Atom allows consumers to choose how they get the information.



# Questions

- It's time for your questions.

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# Thank you

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- I would like to thank those units that were *early adopters* of OXITEMS.
- I would also like to thank those IT Support Staff who have contributed to the development of OXITEMS. Ideas triggered by people outside OUCS include:
  - items being automatically sent to a mailing list;
  - the ability to add categories to an item;
  - what information to store about an event;
  - using hCalendar when outputting an event.
- Metadata:
  - *Making RSS newsfeeds work for your department/college*
  - Barry Cornelius, Computing Services, University of Oxford
  - `barry.cornelius@oucs.ox.ac.uk`
  - `http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/oxitems/`