

Getting Started with RSS Feeds
EDM 310 Fall 2009
Dr. John H. Strange

This semester all students will be required to use Google Reader to monitor the RSS Feed of the EDM 310 Class Blog and to follow at least one other subject through the use of RSS Feeds.

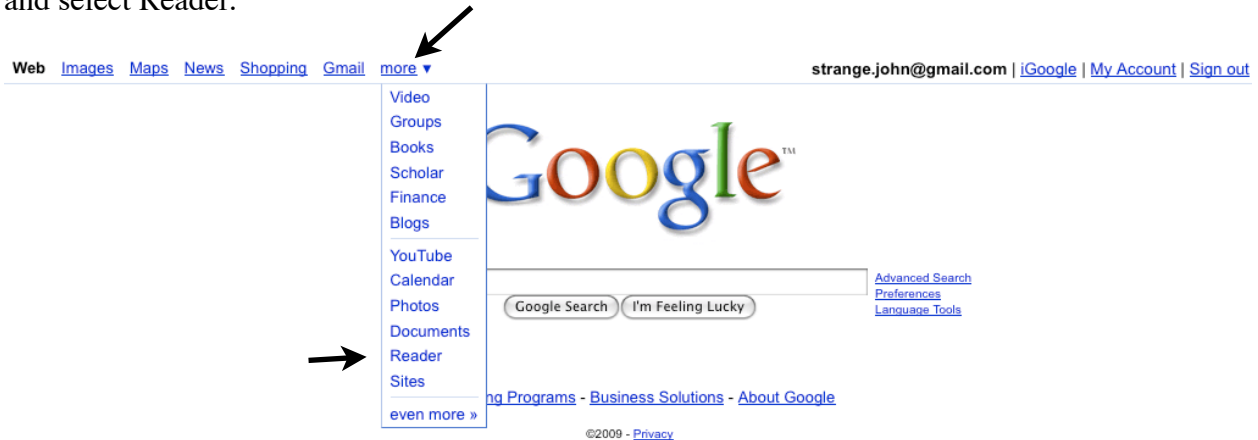
What are RSS Feeds? An increasing number of web sites, blogs, YouTube, Delicious and other sources of information are adding a small bit of code to their site that enables an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) Feed for their site. An RSS Feed notifies *subscribers* to the feed of any changes that have been made to the web site or the blog. This happens almost immediately in most cases. The RSS Feed sends a summary header to the subscriber's Reader. The Reader lists the topic, provides a link to the entire post or changed material, and keeps track of the items which have been read, deleted, or filed (if that is possible with the Reader being used). The Reader can also be instructed to delete read items automatically.

Who is a subscriber? Anyone who instructs a web page or blog that has an RSS Feed to notify his Reader of the subscription.

Does it cost anything? No.

What is a Reader? A Reader is an application that handles RSS Feeds. The one we will use in this class is Google Reader. There are many Readers available and most are free. We use Google's Reader because we are emphasizing the use of Google Tools in the classroom.

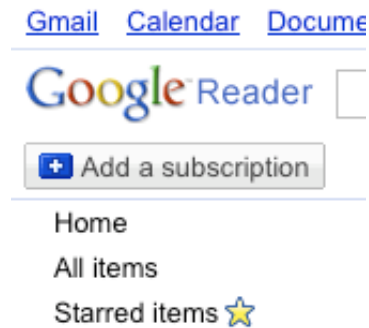
How do I get Google's Reader? Go to Google. Sign in using your Google account. Click more and select Reader.



Watch the 1 minute movie. Then take the tour. After you have finished taking the tour, click Try It Out.

You are in Google Reader even though it looks like the first page you visited. Click Get Started By Adding Subscriptions. A page will appear that invites you to Discover and Search for Feeds. Google has several "packages" of feeds ready for you. My suggestion is to avoid them at this time. Instead, start with a single feed. Since you are required to subscribe to the class blog, start

with that feed. In the upper left corner you will see a button that has a plus sign in a blue box and reads Add a subscription. Click that button.



Type the URL for the class blog in the box provided:
<http://edm310spring09.blogspot.com>

Click OK.

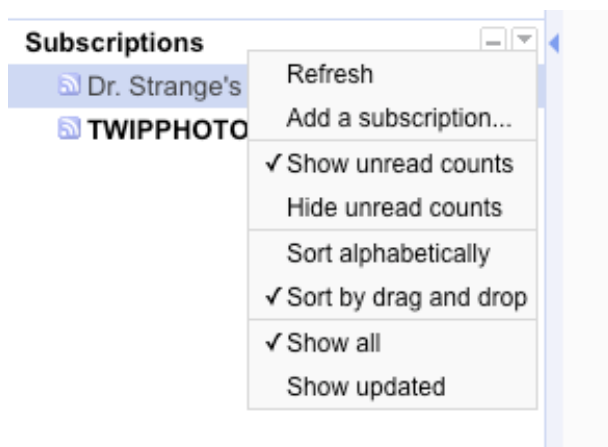
Very quickly the feed will be added to the Reader. It will be listed under Subscriptions and will be visible in the center of your Reader. You can access your Reader at any time, from any computer, as long as you are connected to the Internet. Just sign in to Google. Go to more/Reader and you will see what has happened on the sites to which you have subscribed.

Can I add a subscription while visiting other web sites? Yes, as long as that site has an RSS Feed. There are several symbols which indicates that a site has an RSS Feed. Here are some of them:

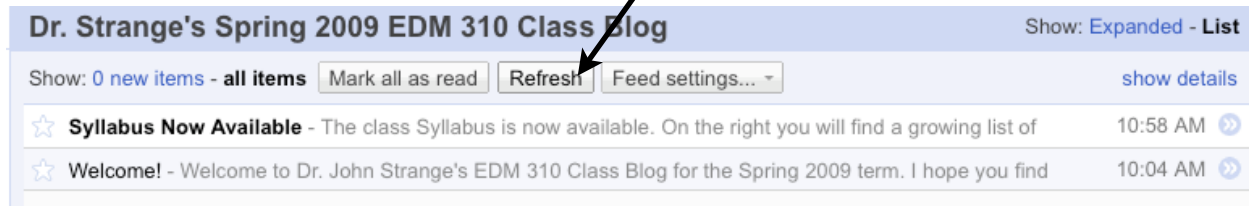


If you are on a site that supports RSS Feeds and you want to subscribe to that site, click on the RSS symbol. The symbol is often in the URL address box. If it is not there, go to the bottom of the page to see if it is there. If you cannot find an RSS symbol, you cannot subscribe to that site until it adds an RSS feed capability. You will be asked whether you want the subscription to go to your iGoogle Page (see the separate instructions for your iGoogle Page) or to Google Reader. For this exercise, click Google Reader. (In some cases you will have other choices. In this class, use Google Reader).

Your subscription will now appear in Google Reader. By clicking the down arrow to the right of Subscriptions you can select to show all of your subscriptions or just those that have been updated. For now, select Show All.



If you think that a new post has been made to a blog or web site to which you subscribe but the change does not yet appear in Google Reader, click Refresh. Usually changes appear rather quickly in the Reader but it does take time to monitor the world wide web!



Dr. Strange's Spring 2009 EDM 310 Class Blog Show: Expanded - List

Show: 0 new items - all items Mark all as read Refresh Feed settings... show details

☆ **Syllabus Now Available** - The class Syllabus is now available. On the right you will find a growing list of 10:58 AM »

☆ **Welcome!** - Welcome to Dr. John Strange's EDM 310 Class Blog for the Spring 2009 term. I hope you find 10:04 AM »

If you are doing research on a particular topic, this is an excellent way to keep track of new items added to blogs or web sites of interest to you. Whether the research concerns on-line courses or just Alabama or Auburn football, RSS feeds will make life easier for you.

There is a movie demonstrating RSS Feeds which is available on the class blog: <http://edm310fall2009.blogspot.com> Look on the right side of the page under the heading Instructional Videos by John H Strange. Find the Getting Started With RSS movie. Click on it. You can stop and start the movie anytime you wish.

A separate handout and a separate movie will discuss how to fully use Google Reader.