

Really Simple Syndication (RSS)

What Is RSS?

Really Simple Syndication (RSS) is an XML based format for providing information from one web site to other web sites, or direct to users. RSS is also known as RDF Site Summary and Rich Site Summary.

Although commonly referred to as an RSS feed, an RSS document is in fact a single XML page which is regularly refreshed and read by the various computer systems using it.

RSS takes a "news" approach, providing a list of headlines, summary contents and links to further information for each article in the RSS feed.

Why Is RSS Important?

RSS is important because it provides the key, time sensitive content of a web site in a simple human and machine readable form. It does this by removing the design, layout, navigation and graphic material that complicates a web page. It also uses simple tags (like <title>, <title>, <description>, <link>) to identify the key elements within the feed for each item.

The second key factor is that RSS readers typically aggregate one or more RSS feeds, so a user only has to look in one place for up to date information from across a wide range of web sites and web resources.

Microsoft's next version of Windows is expected to have an RSS reader embedded on the desktop, so RSS is set to become a mainstream technology.

More Information

The RSS specification is at:

- <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss>

An excellent general RSS resource is at:

- <http://www.rss-specifications.com/>



How Is RSS Used?

RSS feeds are typically used in one of three ways:

- To embed content from one web site into the pages of another.
- To create a customised news feed for an individual user
- To collecting and analyse data

What Are The Benefits of RSS?

RSS feeds on web sites can significantly increase web site traffic, as users can easily find out when there is something new that they want to read. It is also a lot less intrusive than e-mail alerting.

Although traditionally associated with news feeds, RSS can be used for any information that changes over time from events and press release listings to operational information. It is also useful when combining data from related sites or projects (e.g. combining a list of branch events into a single index). The key advantage is the ability to monitor multiple sites or systems from a single screen.

Next Steps

If you want to disseminate information to a lot of people, or want to aggregate information from multiple sources, contact us today to find out whether RSS could help you.

Daden Consulting

103 Oxford Rd
Moseley
Birmingham
B13 9SG

www.dadenconsulting.com
info@dadenconsulting.com

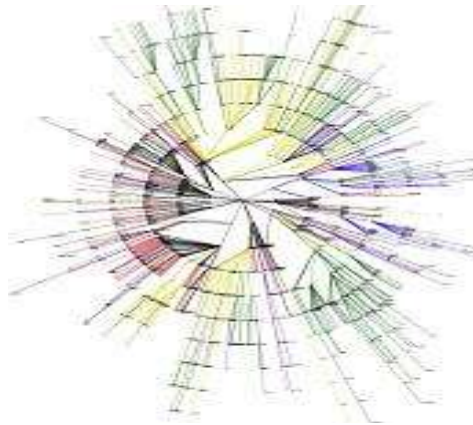
0121 247 3628

Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG)

Technology Briefing

What Is It?

Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) is an XML based standard for diagrams and other vector-based graphics on the web. By vector-based we mean a picture which is made up of discrete, identifiable lines and shapes. This contrasts with bitmap images such as those using the .GIF and JPEG standards which are just an array of dots – like a TV picture.



Why Is It Important?

SVG is important for three main reasons:

- SVG Graphics can be zoomed in and out without any loss of detail and no pixelation.
- They can be easily created, read and indexed by a computer programme, allowing diagrams to be created instantly from live data.
- They can be made interactive using simple Javascript programming. This means layers can be easily switched on and off, elements highlighted, and even simple animation programmed.

And, of course, SVG is open-standards based.

The only down-side at the moment is that plug-ins to view SVG are not yet available for all browsers, but they should be available soon. Internet Explorer with the Adobe SVG plug-in is probably the most common and workable SVG viewing platform at present.

More Information

The SVG specification is at:

- <http://www.w3.org/TR/SVG/>

Adobe maintains some excellent SVG pages at:

- <http://www.adobe.com/svg/>

SVG is likely to have two main applications.

- Intelligent Maps and Diagrams

Anybody who needs to use maps, blueprints, floor-plans or detailed diagrams will find that SVG provides an ideal standards based format in which to build, display and exchange such graphics. Cheap open-source solutions can be used instead of expensive proprietary tools, formats and viewers, and the programmability means that diagrams can become interactive.

- Data Visualisation

The ease with which computer programmes can generate SVG diagrams will make data visualisation accessible to anybody who needs it. Operational, financial, marketing and web data can be rapidly converted into informative diagrams from which better analysis, and better decisions, can be made.

In time it may even rival Flash as the standard for rich graphic interfaces and even for simple game design.

Next Steps

If you handle a lot of diagrams, or have data that you would like to visualise, contact us today to find out whether SVG could help you.

Daden Consulting

103 Oxford Rd
Moseley
Birmingham
B13 9SG

www.dadenconsulting.com
info@dadenconsulting.com

0121 247 3628