

# What to Look for in an RSS Aggregator / Newsreader

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## Import/Export feeds to and from other readers

Usually labelled as Import/Export OPML (Outline Processor Markup Language). This enables you to move your list of RSS feeds from one aggregator to another.

## Ability to organise feeds into folders

Essential for organising your feeds into topics, subjects, industry sectors etc.

## Can you order the feeds and folders the way you want them?

Can you move feeds and folders around and prioritise them or does the aggregator decide for you.

## Customise how often feeds are updated

Look for options that allow you to set up a default for all of your feeds e.g. every hour, four hours, once a day etc and to change it for individual feeds e.g. every twenty minutes, half an hour. This is useful if you are monitoring a particular feed, company or event and need to know as soon as possible when an announcement has been made.

## Filters/rules to automatically move articles containing keywords to separate folders

You may want to monitor all of the incoming feeds for company names, product names, people etc and have those articles moved into their own folder. Note, though, that this will only search or filter the headline, keywords and extract that is displayed within the RSS feed. It does not search the entire article unless that article is included in full in the feed.

## Ability to rename feeds

Sounds a simple requirement but one that is missing from some aggregators.

## Customise how long headlines are kept

Can you define for how long articles are kept by number of days/weeks or the maximum number e.g. 100, 200, 300? Can you define a default for all feeds and change it for individual feeds?

## User name and password support

Some news feeds require a subscription and you have to enter a user name and password to access them. Check that the aggregator supports the feature.

## Email headlines/links

Can you easily email interesting headlines or links to friends, colleagues or clients from within the aggregator?

### **Is there a search option ?**

As with the rules and filters above, this will only search the headlines, keywords and extracts that are held locally by the aggregator and not the entire article unless it has been downloaded and stored locally.

### **Does the aggregator display the feeds' favicons?**

Favicons are the small graphics that sometimes appear next to a URL in the address bar of your browser. Not really essential but when you have a lot of feeds, favicons make it easier to recognise and locate individual feeds.

### **"Pop-up" alerts**

Can you request pop-up alerts for individual feeds to notify you when a new headline has arrived. Can be important if you are keeping a close watch on a company or product launch for example. More importantly, if this feature is switched on by default, how easy is it to switch off?

### **Flag/mark headlines**

Can you "mark" headlines with symbols or by colour so that important articles are easier to find again.

### **Mark feeds as read/unread**

Can you easily mark whole feeds or folders as read or unread?

### **Create clippings/save a story**

Can you save or archive a copy of an article. Also, can you **annotate the story**.

### **"Blog this" or generate a custom RSS feed**

Can you easily blog a headline from within the aggregator or create your own RSS feed from individually selected headlines from different feeds. Useful if you compile a current awareness bulletin in blog or RSS format. **Warning:** check the terms and conditions and the copyright of the feeds involved before generating your customised feed.