

Tech tips for libraries: Twitterfeed



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The second in a series of short articles about useful technologies for academic libraries.

Twitterfeed is a free service which can be used to automatically update a Twitter or Facebook account from the contents an RSS feed. Twitterfeed provides an easy way of increasing traffic to your library blog, etc., by linking it with users of the 'big two' social networking sites.

Twitterfeed will work with any valid RSS feed. Libraries should expect to be able to get RSS feeds from blogs, from reference-management software such as RefWorks or Mendeley, from repository software like EPrints, and from some (newer) library catalogue systems. It's even possible use RSS to feed Twitter into Facebook, and vice-versa: see the *Twitterfeed blog* (2010).

For a more general introduction to RSS feeds in libraries, see Wu and Li (2007).

To start using Twitterfeed, it's necessary first to create a username and password for the service. After that, it's a three-step process to link an RSS feed to Twitter or Facebook:

1. Type or paste in the address of the RSS feed (and click a button to test that it is valid);
2. Choose which service (Twitter, Facebook) you would like to post the updates to;
3. Authenticate against your Twitter or Facebook profile.

Once that's done, any updates to the RSS feed will also be posted to Twitter and/or Facebook. There are a number of advanced options which determine the frequency of updates, control how links are displayed, and allow you to add additional text to each tweet or Facebook message.

A library could use Twitterfeed to advertise new additions to library stock, to post details of library events to its Facebook page, or to tweet changes to opening hours posted to a blog.

For example, the University of Lincoln uses Twitterfeed to tweet a link to each new item added to its institutional research repository. In 2010, Twitter was the tenth-highest source of referrals to that repository. (You can follow the University of Lincoln's repository at @eprintslincoln.)

Twitterfeed have their own presence on Twitter: you can follow them at @twfeed. The service itself can be found at: <http://twitterfeed.com/>

References

Twitterfeed (2010) How to post from Twitter to Facebook and vice-versa using Twitterfeed. *Twitterfeed blog* [Online], 2 November. Available from: <http://bit.ly/hcPpMU> [Accessed on 1 April 2011]

Wu, W.G. and Li, J. (2007) RSS made easy: a basic guide for librarians. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly* [Online], 26(1), pp.37–50. Available from: <http://bit.ly/fAri8W> [Accessed on 1 April 2011]