

## **The NEW Internet - Connecting with Community Online**

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How many of you read the church newsletter sent out in e-mail?

How many of you have read e-mail from a friend or family member who is a member of this, or another Episcopal church?

How many of you have visited a website with Episcopal or Anglican content?

When you do these things, you are taking part in the online Anglican communion. Newsletters, e-mail, and websites have been around on the Internet for years now. I want to tell you about some new internet technology that can help you engage even more with your fellow Anglicans and Episcopalians, all around the world.

By the end of this forum, I want you to know three key terms for the new Internet:

1. **blog**
2. **RSS feed**
3. **aggregator**

How many of you are already familiar with all three of these terms? (If anyone raises their hand, tell them that this will be reviewed, but you might see some blogs that you didn't know about.)

A blog is short for "Web Log". Think of the log in Star Trek. It's a real person, saying what they want to say. There are some "Fake" blogs, Fake Steve Jobs, for example, is satire written in blog form, but most are written by **real people**, some professional, and many amateurs. Blogs are out on the Internet for everyone to read. There is such a thing as a private blog, shared only with a few people, but in general, blogs are in the **public**.

Usually, readers have the ability to leave **comments** on the blog, and engage in a conversation with the blogger and other blog readers. Some bloggers moderate their comments. Some let anyone comment. Some have requirements of their commenters, such as using their real names. Some bloggers close blogs for comment after a period of a few days or hours. Comments and blogs can be deleted, but please understand that there are resources available that can recreate any public page on the Internet. Blogs and comments are out there forever, so folks tend to be careful about what they say.

Let's look at a couple of blogs out there:

- **A Guy in the Pew** - <http://aguyinthepew.blogspot.com/>
- **Episcopal Cafe Daily Episcopalian** - <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/daily/>
- **Bishop Alan's Blog** - <http://bishopalan.blogspot.com> (a favorite from the Lambeth Bishops)
- **ADVANCED** – <http://pipes.yahoo.com> search for Lambeth Bishops

Notice the comments. Notice the About link. Notice the RSS feed button.

This brings us to the second term, "RSS feed". RSS stands for "**Really Simple Syndication**". (There's a new version of this called "Atom". It isn't as widespread yet as RSS, so you won't see it very often, but when you do, just think of it as turbo-RSS.)

How many of you read the comics in the newspaper? Comics strips are syndicated. Newspapers subscribe to that syndicated comic strip, so that all across the world, on the same Sunday, folks are all reading the same Doonesbury or Andy Capp or Peanuts or Family Circle comic strip.

Similarly, blogs can be syndicated. The Internet can “feed” the blog to you, giving you an update every time it changes. But in order to do that, you need an “Aggregator”. Aggregators bring together blogs, and other websites that have RSS feeds, so that you can read them all in one place – the same way that a newspaper brings comic strips, national columnists, and Associated Press news articles together, so that you can read all the material in one place.

There are a number of free aggregators available to you out on the Internet. I'm going to show you 3:

- **My Yahoo**
- **iGoogle**
- **Google Reader**
- **Internet Explorer 7**
- **Outlook 2007**

See how they're organized. See how you can change how they look. Notice how they tell you when the material was last updated. See how you can get other kinds of content, not just blogs? And see how easy it is to delete something. You don't have to be afraid of subscribing to an RSS feed. They're easy to delete if you find that it's not worth your time.

All you need for any of these is an account, available to you free. There's a whole raft of legal terms and conditions, so expect that. I use My Yahoo, in part because that's where I get my personal e-mail.

You'll notice that I didn't demonstrate Microsoft's way of aggregating RSS feeds – they do it in Internet Explorer and Outlook, programs that are installed on your personal computer, which means you can't get to your pages unless you're on that computer. They're **not portable**.

With any of the aggregators I showed you, you can read them from **anywhere**. From home, your computer at work, your relative's computer when you're on vacation, even the computer on your cruise ship or hotel. Just type in the URL, login, and go. Just don't forget to logout if the computer isn't your own.

I hope that you've enjoyed learning a little more about this new Internet technology. I started my own blog back in March, and have really enjoyed making contact with the rest of the Anglican community in the process.

If you'd like to get the list of terms and URLs that I've used in this talk, see me afterwards.

Are there any questions?