Use of Really Simple Syndication (RSS) for Distribution of NWS Operational Data/Products

Service Description Document (SDD)

Part 1 - Mission Connection

1. Service Description:

The National Weather Service (NWS) is responsible for making its weather, water, and climate information widely available to external users in commonly accepted standards and techniques. One of the most widely accepted, available, and cost effective means of accomplishing this objective is the use of web services via the internet. An increasingly popular technology is the use of Really Simple Syndication (RSS) to update news articles and other content that changes quickly. As an application of XML, RSS also provides the ability to access internet content via portable wireless devices.

NWS technical specifications for use of RSS are provided in NWS Instruction (NWSI) 60-103, *RSS Feed Requirements and Specifications*, including podcasts, videocasts, and Weblogs (Blogs). To date, NWS has gained considerable experience providing information to external users via RSS. A listing of current RSS feeds maintained by NWS (both experimental and operational) is provided at: http://www.weather.gov/rss/. Many of these feeds have been positively reviewed by the external user community. Given the success of past/current use of NWS RSS feeds and the efficiency with which NWS is able to provide current operational information to users, NWS proposes to provide approval to disseminate any already-approved operational hydrometeorological information using RSS technologies. (Dissemination of any *new* data/products using RSS would require approval of the content information according to NWS Policy Directives 1-10 and 10-102.) NWS will continue to maintain and update the listing of NWS RSS feeds to capture additions or deletions, as appropriate.

2. Purpose/Intended Use:

The purpose of this service is to enable current internet technology to be used to deliver NWS operational products and services using means which maximize the flexibility in how these products and services are delivered and used. NWS will also provide and maintain a single listing of current NWS RSS feeds at http://www.weather.gov/rss/.

3. Audience:

The audience for this service includes emergency managers, commercial industry, transportation, recreation, commerce, and all general weather and water information users.

4. Presentation:

Links to current RSS feeds will be listed at http://www.weather.gov/rss/ (NWS RSS Library). RSS reader software, required to utilize any RSS feeds, is widely available. Information is provided in the NWS RSS Library. Links to RSS feeds will be denoted with the small logo 

.

5. Feedback Method:
NWS is always seeking to approve the availability and quality of NWS products and services based on user feedback. Comments regarding the use of RSS to disseminate NWS operational data/products should be emailed to National Weather Service at w-nws.webmaster@noaa.gov or may be provided using the user survey. The feedback period for this service will extend from April 6, 2007 through May 30, 2007.

Technical questions may be addressed via email to: w-nws.webmaster@noaa.gov
Or regular mail to :

National Weather Service
Attn: Office of the CIO / Internet Group
1325 East West Highway
W/CIO Room 9462
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Part 2 Technical

1. Format and Science:
The format used for providing RSS feeds is provided by (NWSI) 60-103, *RSS Feed Requirements and Specifications*. The software needed to read/access NWS RSS feeds is any RSS software available (whether commercially available or free) that reads RSS Version 2.0. More information is provided at the NWS RSS Library.

2. Availability:
RSS services and the library supporting it is intended to be available 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week, but availability and timeless of internet access cannot be guaranteed. Users who require higher levels of availability should consider other dissemination media provided by NWS.

3. Additional Information:
none