

Enterprise RSS

The Center of **Attention**

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Enterprise RSS: The Center of Attention

The Internet has both accelerated and compressed the time available to identify and take advantage of strategic business opportunities. Getting the *right* information to the *right* people at the *right* time is critical to creating strategic advantage and making the most of fleeting opportunities. New software tools based on Web technologies are enhancing how knowledge workers learn and share critical information and collaborate across the organization and its value chains to take advantage of windows of opportunity.

At Attensa, our work on AttentionStream analysis is focused on helping to cut through the unstoppable flow of information that comes in the form of overflowing inboxes stuffed with messages and documents demanding varying degrees of our attention. This problem is particularly acute in the day-to-day life of knowledge workers. We are developing software tools, networks and infrastructure that streamline collaboration by automatically and intelligently delivering prioritized, relevant information to anyone in the world on any device they choose.

The Synergy of Search, Syndication, Subscriptions and Social Networks

Innovative businesses are adopting new search, syndication, subscription and social network technologies and discovering new ways to enrich the value of information while streamlining internal and external communications. RSS and collaborative publishing tools like blogs and wikis are driving fundamental changes in how businesses can effectively communicate internally and externally. These tools allow knowledge workers to publish, track, monitor and be notified of new and constantly changing information without having to search or request it. The long-term benefit of these software tools is that they accelerate interactive improvements and increase awareness through knowledge sharing of strategic initiatives, internal processes, customer opportunities, competitive threats and industry trends impacting your business.

Combining the power of search, syndication, subscription and social networking goes beyond connectivity and into a higher zone of productivity. Instead of just sharing information, this new approach makes it easier to share useful information because it is more relevant. This new approach increases the opportunity for productive employee/supplier/partner/customer interactions that are critical to executing business strategy, growing revenues and increasing operating margins.

SYNDICATION AND SUBSCRIPTION WITH RSS

RSS is the type of communication technology that comes along once in a while and changes the way we do things. RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication and it's an evolution in publishing much like email was an evolution in correspondence. RSS is a communication tool that allows people to automatically receive information on any topic as soon as it is published. The technology itself is fairly simple and consists of a XML valid file that describes the location, title, item and description of any kind of publishable content. This file usually contains a clickable link that can point to new blog posts, recently published audio or video files, news articles, or any kind of text.

RSS syndication significantly increases the delivery speed of critical information. Having internal and external information sources syndicated using RSS feeds is key to significant productivity gains, as it brings highly relevant and desired information directly to those who need to absorb, refine and act on it. With RSS news feeds users subscribe to the information they want and need, or in the enterprise context, the news feeds they are allowed or required to subscribe to. Users are automatically notified the instant new content is published...getting the right information to the right people fast. Since RSS readers flag new items, knowledge workers can see at a glance what new information is available.

THE POWER OF PERSISTENT SEARCH

The average knowledge worker spends 30 percent of her time searching for information. Using persistent targeted RSS searches to continuously and automatically deliver highly relevant information slashes the time it takes to stay on top of a rapidly changing playing field. RSS search makes it possible to automatically keep up to date with information that is dynamic and unfolding over time.

RSS and Enterprise 2.0

- » Persistence
- » Subscription
- » Search
- » Links
- » Tagging
- » Publishing
- » Knowledge Management
- » Distribute

ENRICHING THE VALUE OF INFORMATION WITH SOCIAL NETWORKS

Blogs, Wikis and RSS eliminate barriers imposed by conventional communications by expanding transparency and providing a persistent source of information. These online publishing tools also inspire collaboration and create teams and communities working collectively toward a common end, creating improvements and solving problems interactively. Social networks also efficiently build group memory through persistence and attention. Information is continuously available for access and the most useful information gets the most attention through links and editing activity. This collaborative filtering drives the relevant information to prominence to the benefit of the entire community.

The Problem with Email

There is more information available today than we can possibly process and many business leaders and experts talk about “information overload” as one of the biggest impediments to productivity. In our personal lives an endless stream of news, weather, entertainment and social information comes at us from everywhere. At work the unstoppable flow of information comes in the form of overflowing inboxes stuffed with messages and documents demanding varying degrees of our attention.

OCCUPATIONAL SPAM

Currently much of this information flows via email. This leads to a number of problems, including the difficulty of “occupational spam” where people are copied on email messages they don’t need to read. The burden is on the sender to identify who needs the information. This often leads to critical people being left out of the loop.

OVER EAGER SPAM FILTERS

On the other side of the equation over-eager spam filters (including a human who is overwhelmed and clicks the delete button too quickly) are a big problem, as is the problem of simply missing a message in the hundreds that people receive each day.

THE ENDLESS LOOP OF REQUEST AND RESPONSE

Workers are constantly walking the line of whittling down the massive amounts of information they get to a manageable level without missing or deleting the relevant information they need. One way to increase productivity significantly is to use RSS as a more efficient alternative to email for day-to-day news distribution, project coordination, scheduling and document requests and distribution. It is much easier and quicker to read an RSS feed from 50 projects than to wade through an overstuffed inbox, sending requests for information, spending time searching and visiting multiple websites to see if anything new has happened.

Why Should Executives, Knowledge Workers and IT Departments Care?

Managers who fail to capitalize on RSS will risk losing the potential of valuable intellectual property being created by employees and, in turn, lost business opportunities.

– Gartner, June 2005

While RSS feeds and aggregators gained initial interest among individual users, widespread adoption of them at the enterprise level is just beginning to develop. Proper installation and management of a corporate RSS plan can yield numerous productivity and financial benefits.

These benefits are high-value and they range from directly measurable reductions in information management time to broad improvements in targeted communications.

On the productivity side, the fire hose of information today’s knowledge workers face forces them to devote significant time and effort to manage the information they receive. Not only are they required to know what to do with the information; they’re required to know how to separate valuable information from useless content—a self-directed increase in the signal-to-noise ratio.

SEPARATING SIGNAL FROM NOISE

RSS helps everyone separate the signal from the noise. It allows information producers and publishers to know that the right people are getting the right information immediately. And it helps information consumers centralize a significant portion of their information management using the same tools they already use everyday.

Once installed, executives benefit from the peace of mind that comes from knowing that mission-critical content is delivered to every individual who needs it automatically, enabling knowledge workers to improve their capacity to track more relevant information than ever before. No longer do they have to wade through an overstuffed inbox, visit an ever increasing number of blogs, websites and intranets to determine if new actionable information is available. They simply look in their RSS folders within Outlook, on their mobile device, or login to their web-based account and see what's new. It's a one-stop shopping for all the information they need to make good knowledge-based decisions.

Applications Across the Enterprise - RSS Ecosystems

TRACKING INDUSTRY TRENDS AND COMPETITORS

Information consumers can automatically keep up with industry research on a continual basis. By subscribing to RSS feeds covering market and trend data from industry research groups, government agencies, news sources, and thought leaders, changes in business environments can be sent directly to workers on a real-time basis. Researchers and knowledge workers no longer have to manually check for updates. New information is sent directly to subscribers as soon as it is published.

Applications for RSS Touch Every Corner of the Enterprise



TRACKING PROJECT AND PROGRAM PROGRESS AND STATUS

Departments and cross-functional teams communicate vast amounts of information daily. Using RSS subscription feeds to automatically update team members reduces information clutter and helps to deliver the right information to the right people with ease.

Team members can benefit from automatically updated project management information including project status, shared knowledge, and changes in planning timelines, milestones and general progress reports. This includes internal communications behind a firewall and is secured on both the inbound and outbound transmissions.

STAYING CURRENT WITH CRITICAL INFORMATION

Vertical industries have similar benefits. Industries like manufacturing, publishing, and education have critical information flows that can be communicated via RSS feeds. In manufacturing environments, anything from machine status, productivity and yield data, schedules, order and material management, and cost data can be delivered via RSS. Publishing companies can communicate internal information like material costs, order and fulfillment status, and external information including the published content itself.

POTENT ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITIES

There are tremendous opportunities for RSS technology implementation in the enterprise.

Opportunity	Example
Persistence and Subscription	Information access is persistently available instead of available only when someone actively looks for it
Knowledge Management	Subscription feeds make tacit knowledge explicit by shifting to a push model; valuable information is sent to subscribers rather than relying on them to obtain it manually Knowledge creators publish information in context improving the value of content
Linking and Commenting	Links to complete articles or reports replace entire paragraphs in your email Comments allow a two-way conversation in one place rather than a limited (or burdensome) email distribution list with a dozen forwarded comments
Distribute and Track Strategic Info	Competitive intelligence, market data, industry analysis, project status, pricing updates, personnel status, policy and corporate communications can be distributed using RSS Standard subscriber lists can be created based on project teams, department management, or any other designation; target information to exactly who needs it
Reduce Inbox Overload	Reduce your email volume by creating and subscribing to feeds for updated information Your subscriptions become a simple, short notification rather than an entire email to review

With Attensa, less is more

At Attensa, our work on AttentionStream™ analysis is focused on helping to cut through the unstoppable flow of information that comes in the form of overflowing inboxes stuffed with messages and documents demanding varying degrees of our attention. This problem is particularly acute in the day-to-day life of knowledge workers. We are developing software tools, networks and infrastructure that streamline collaboration by automatically and intelligently delivering prioritized, relevant information to anyone in the world on any device they choose.

Attensa provides software tools and infrastructure that help you automatically get fewer, more relevant articles on any device you use today. From your desktop or laptop at home or office, mobile phones, PDAs, basically any thing that connects to the Web. The complete Attensa solution synchronizes your feeds and automatically manages the delivery and optimization of fresh content exactly where you need it. No matter how you access your news feeds they will be up to date.

Attensa's algorithms act on usage behavior prioritizing or filtering articles for both the individual and in the aggregate. Preferences and usage behavior make Attensa's RSS management smarter. This additional prioritization based on network or workgroup behavior prioritizes articles from feeds derived from behavior aggregated using AttentionStream technology. The network offers low configuration and management time.

Less bad information means more good information. The goal is to increase the information value of the content while reducing its volume.

AttentionStreams®: The Attensa Advantage

MINING BEHAVIORAL ATTENTION DATA TO IMPROVE COLLABORATION

In the 1600's, the amount of written information absorbed in an average person's lifetime was the equivalent of today's daily edition of the New York Times. Today we are confronted on a daily basis with more information than we can possibly process, and in an age of information overload our Attention is the most precious of all resources. By identifying, organizing and sharing the information that we selectively choose to enter our awareness and draw our focus – the things that capture our attention – we can streamline the process used to build collective wisdom. New software tools are emerging designed to help cut

through information overload and streamline collaborative efforts by intelligently watching and analyzing Attention Data, the explicit and implicit behaviors knowledge workers use to identify and process valuable information that captures their attention.

Much of the work involved in searching, retrieving, analyzing and sharing information with project teams involves spinning wheels and wasting time. The process that each of us uses to find, sift, analyze, shape and share relevant information is mysterious and unique to our individual thought processes and work habits. As knowledge workers, we are constantly reinventing the information wheel because we don't have an effective way of accessing and benefiting from the results found by others. In many cases projects are bogged down with duplication of effort or needless weeding through extraneous, distracting information that is outside the pertinent bounds of the project.

STREAMLINING COMMUNICATION AND WORKFLOW

Having tools that facilitate information sharing is paramount to streamlining the communication and workflows companies are struggling with everyday. New software tools using behavioral analysis are being developed that notice all of the steps we use to gather and process information.

These tools can help us gain insight into how users effectively convert information into wisdom by mining the Attention Data that is created as users gather and process information in their quest to answer questions and solve problems. This information typically answers questions about "who, what, when and where." Information becomes knowledge when patterns and perceptions emerge from the collected information that explain the "how." Wisdom is the end product that comes through understanding of the "why" and leads to action.

Software tools are being developed to mine the Attention Data created as users search, discard, retrieve, categorize and analyze content. By aggregating, triangulating and filtering Attention Data, information can be prioritized and recommended in order to drive higher value content to the forefront while cutting down on useless and duplicate information. Effectively using Attention Data has the potential to create enormous cost savings by increasing the value and efficiency of information flow in the corporate environment.

IDENTIFYING EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT ATTENTION DATA THROUGH CONTEXT, ORGANIZATION AND ACTION

There are many explicit and implicit actions knowledge workers use to highlight information which has captured their attention. These behaviors can be overt or subconscious and generally fall into three buckets: the context of the information sought, the organization of the information retrieved and the action required to share the information following analysis.

Other key indicators of the value of information are the actions taken to share relevant information with project team members and management. The information can be forwarded in an email, a co-worker can be pointed to a significant URL, or a blog or wiki post can be created to share the information with interested parties. The assumption can be made that only the most valuable information is shared.

CONTEXTUAL ATTENTION DATA

EXPLICIT:

- » *Keywords used in search Web searching*
- » *Keywords used to tag Web pages, blog posts and RSS articles*
- » *Web pages and blog posts bookmarked*
- » *Rating articles to indicate the value of the information*
- » *Adding a new RSS news feed subscription*
- » *Deleting irrelevant news feed subscriptions*
- » *Looking at how relevant information is organized is critical. Since tagging and bookmarking are pure expressions of attention, identifying the categories and clusters used to organize content gives structure to relevant information.*
- » *Analyzing more subtle implicit behaviors can enrich the Attention Data and provide deeper insights into the value of information.*

IMPLICIT:

- » *The dimension of time: Noting what isn't being read can be just as important as the content a user examines.*
- » *How much time is being devoted to reading specific content?*
- » *Which content is deleted instantly?*
- » *Article length needs to be considered in the analysis.*
- » *Spending 5 seconds on a 15 word article means something completely different from spending 10 seconds on a 2,000 word article.*
- » *Prioritization: Which RSS articles, documents, reports, emails and other content are being read first?*
- » *What links are followed? What content is simply ignored.*
- » *Access: As knowledge workers adopt multiple communications devices, analyzing where they chose to have information available gives insight into the value they place on the incoming information.*

USING BEHAVIORAL ATTENTION DATA

Once all of this behavioral information is collected and analyzed, there are a number of things that can be done with it to extract its inherent value. It is important to realize that all of the attention data -- both explicit and implicit -- must be taken into account. As the technology surrounding Attention Data evolves, knowledge workers will be connected with the right tools to effectively gather and it. Email systems, RSS readers and aggregators, collaborative publishing tools including blogs and wikis, will be connected to a secure back-end infrastructure that ties users together so entire communities can benefit from aggregating, triangulating and filtering Attention Data.

FROM AUTOMATED SEARCH TO COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIZATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Today RSS readers with sophisticated search capabilities can be used to access multiple search engines. Simply typing search keyword queries once will launch searches across multiple search engines. Search results are updated automatically on a continuous basis.

In a marketing department the benefits of automated searches can be seen in their use to continuously monitor media coverage of the company, and keep tabs on significant industry and competitive developments. Using tagging tools and social networking, custom news feeds can then be created to keep team members and management up to date.

As these tools evolve they will add the ability to intelligently analyze both obvious and the subtle Attention Data to bring highly relevant content to the forefront. Less interesting articles will be pruned or stored for browsing when and if time permits.

When a project team member has done the work of identifying valuable information, co-workers should be able to take advantage of that work without duplicating effort. This can be implemented easily using tagging and RSS and collaborative publishing software tools currently available to create a "must-read" news feed that co-workers can easily subscribe to. Each time content captures a team member's attention and is considered useful, the content can be tagged with appropriate keywords and every team member receives the latest information automatically.

Identifying patterns in the ways team members do their jobs and how they spend their time searching, surfing, and reading content, reveals hidden clues to where their real attention resides. As these software tools mature, an analytics backend which processes the Attention Data of entire project teams using collaborative filters can provide prioritized information delivery and content recommendations that can keep the team continuously up-to-date.

The real advantage of connecting Attention Data in a collaborative environment is driven by the mysterious "Wisdom of Crowds." By providing a secure environment where Attention Data can be captured, recovered and shared, it's possible to discover specific information that colleagues and affinity groups are paying attention to. With the right processing techniques this can be done in near real-time to provide up-to-the-minute flow of highly relevant information.

IDENTIFYING THOUGHT LEADERS

As we broaden our thinking on harnessing the flood of information, the next step is to eliminate duplicated effort by layering the analysis of social networking in collaborative environments with analysis of Attention Data. By identifying the individual knowledge workers who are the most adept at converting information into knowledge, customized news feeds could be created to deliver highly relevant information to team members and management.

The Attensa RSS Network

ATTENSA WORKS WHERE YOU WORK

The Attensa RSS network is an integrated collection of software tools that organize, distribute, process and measure RSS AttentionStreams® in an end-to-end RSS network. The product line consists of RSS reader/aggregator clients and client technology, associated workgroup and enterprise servers and an underlying value-add infrastructure that aggregates and triangulates attention stream metadata.

ATTENSA RSS READERS

Designed for the desktop, the Web, for Web enabled mobile phones and PDAs and integrated into Microsoft Outlook, Attensa RSS reader clients that use a single RSS engine to efficiently deliver and synchronize information across devices via one entry point to the Web.

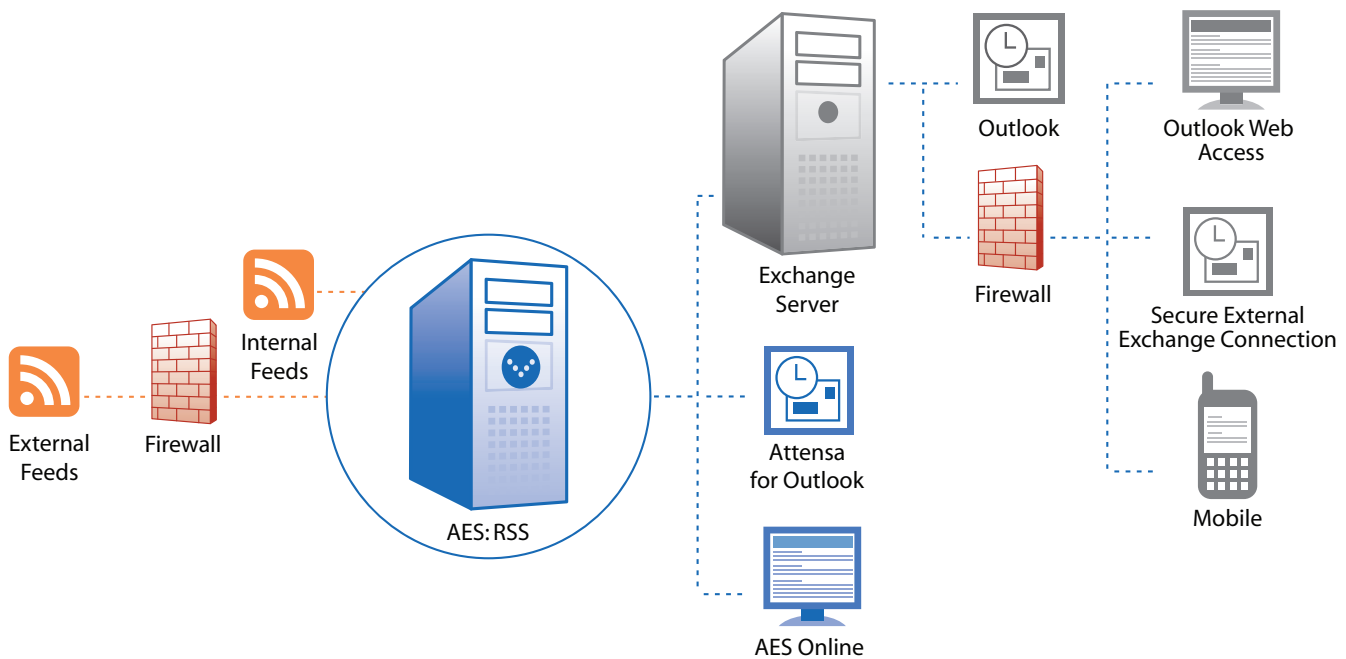
Attensa RSS clients use a unique synchronization system that helps people stay on top of articles coming from Websites and blogs. Attensa ties desktop, web and mobile RSS reader clients together so articles read, filed and deleted are treated consistently across all of the clients, minimizing management time and meeting the needs of today's road warriors.

ATTENSA SERVERS FOR WORKGROUPS AND THE ENTERPRISE

Attensa is pioneering the development of RSS workgroup servers to bring the power of collaborative workspace software and RSS technology to help businesses solve problems, spark innovation and improve decision-making. Scalable RSS workgroup and enterprise versions supporting collaboration and publishing will provide secure data communication inside the corporate firewall and to external partners through a secure bridge. The goal of these servers is to make it easy for administrators to institute an enterprisewide RSS environment that meets the unique needs of their organizations without draining valuable bandwidth and storage.

ARCHITECTURE

Attensa RSS Server appliance provides the enterprise IT administrator full control over RSS subscription access. RSS subscriptions are securely stored behind the corporate firewall.



MAIL SERVER SUPPORT
Microsoft Exchange 2003

DEVICE PLATFORMS SUPPORT
Blackberry (via Blackberry Enterprise Server)
Windows Mobile 5 (via Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync)

BROWSER SUPPORT
HTML browsers
XHTML browsers

RSS FEED FORMATS SUPPORT
ATOM .3, 1.0
RSS .91, .92, 2.0

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