

How to Find and Use Free News and Articles in your Web Site

In the previous article, Linda talked about how to use RSS feeds for aggregated Web sites or blogs. In this article, she leads readers into using RSS, press releases and other free sources to create a Web "hub" for topical information. She provides perspectives on various news sources, links and information on how to use this material.

Free Words for the Taking

If you plan to build a Web site or blog that works as a 'hub' for topical information, you may have wondered where you can find news, articles, images and other bits of information to fill up your site. You also may wonder how you can build a hub that won't eat up all your time and efforts. Although I'm still learning about all the resources on the Internet available for free (or at small cost), you may find the following information useful for your efforts.

On top of the information located below, you'll also need to add your social media platforms to the mix, so you have various ways to market your news (or, for those who object to marketing – you have various ways to spread the news). The available content I'll mention today are those resources that have worked for me in an extraordinary fashion at AppomattoxNews.com, but you can rest assured that you can use these resources for a graphic design or programming site, too.

Press Releases Can Save Your Sanity

You want to keep your readers informed about the latest news in graphics or design, right? But, you have very little time to spend on that effort, right? Additionally, you're just as tired of writing short blog entries only to point your readers to another site for the news, correct? The answer to your prayers might lie in press releases.

The beauty behind press releases is that many are free, they can be well written, and the cream of the crop in press releases often do not sound like a marketing pitch for any given company. Although you can purchase syndicated news services from the likes of Reuters and Associated Press, a designer can find more than adequate news sources from places such as [PR Newswire](#) and [PRWeb](#).

Don't be put off by the marketing that these sites use to people who need to write and send press releases (although, they all have insightful information available if that's your goal – but more about that issue in another article). Instead, find the press releases that each site generates and begin to delve into various informational treasure troves.

How to Use These Sites

Each site mentioned above has its own little quirks, and finding the news may not be easy. Here are some easy ways to dive into each site's press release base:

[PR Newswire](#): You don't need to register or sign in to use the press releases located at PR Newswire. You should know, however, that registered members of PR Newswire are solely responsible for the facts and accuracy of all information submitted to PR Newswire through their press releases. You can use those materials without consultation with PR Newswire. All other uses of PR Newswire's daily news release file, "including but not limited to any electronic redistribution or database storage and retrieval - whether or not for resale -- in full, in part, in full text or in abstract, is prohibited without the express written consent of PR Newswire."

Before you decide whether you want to use this site or not, simply head to the masthead and the tabbed menu located at the top of the page:



The arrow shown in the image above points to "Today's News" and, if you click on that tab, you'll find a list of news press releases that constitute "breaking news" for any given date:



Although you might be tempted to use these stories, do they pertain to your Web site focus? Probably not, unless you run a news site, a coffee-focused site or a site that reports on auto mobiles, specifically Volkswagen.

If you're seeking news about technology, though, you can click on the "Industry & Markets" tab located in the top menu to learn more. If you click on that tab and go to "Industry Home," you'll see the following page when you mouse over the "technology" news category:

PR Newswire
MultiVu

News & Information

We tell your story to the world.

Home Send Release Today's News Multimedia Industry & Markets International Investor News **RSS** Our Services About Us Contact Us

Industry Home Automotive Energy Entertainment Financial Public Interest Health Retail Sports Technology Travel Trade Shows

Industry & Market Focus

Choose links below to browse the latest Industry News and related resources from PR Newswire.

Auto & Transportation News
Banking & Financial Services News
Business Services & Consultancy News
Energy News
Entertainment & Media News
Environment
General Business
Health News
Heavy Industry News
Policy & Public Interest
Retail News
Sports News
Technology News
Travel News

International News
Multicultural News
News For Investors
Trade Shows

Small Business - Get Started
NonProfits - Get Started

Industry News Feeds - on your Web site

Submit Feedback

Roll over the links at left to see what's included on each page, then click the link to get there.

Technology includes:



- Computer Electronics
- Computer Hardware
- Computer Networks
- Computer Software
- Consumer Electronics
- Electronic Commerce
- Electronic Components
- Electronic Design Automation
- Electronics Performance Measurement
- Electronic Gaming
- High Tech Security
- InformationWeek
- Internet Technology
- Mobile Entertainment
- Multimedia & Internet
- Nanotechnology
- Peripherals
- RFID (Radio Frequency ID) Applications & Tech
- Semantic Web
- Semiconductors
- Social Media
- Telecommunications
- Telecommunications Carriers and Services
- Telecommunications Equipment
- VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol)
- Web Site
- Wireless Communications

The menu on the right above lists all technology news categories, which makes it easy for you to decide which news items you might want to use. For instance, if you click on "Electronic Gaming," you'll find news items for Sunday, 30 August 2009 that include information about Guitar Hero, Virtual Arena, Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen, and information about financial reports, conferences and more.

If you can't use gaming news, poke around some other categories to find a mix of information you can use. Yes, you – a mere mortal – can use these press releases on your Web site and yes, they are free. If you did not notice yet, each feed within PRNewswire also uses RSS – a feed that you can tack on to your blog (or your NING group site or NING blog or other 'hub' to make work even easier. These feeds, however, will work only if you cover all aspects of any given category.

[PRWeb](#): I like these folks. I registered on the site, and about 30 minutes later I received a phone call from a sales person at that company. Although I wasn't pursuing the goal of writing and sending a press release, the salesman still took the time to walk me through the site to learn more about what they offer. They offer a lot, but it may seem difficult at first to find their press release database.

PRWeb lists its top stories on the home page, but to dig deeper you must head to any of the submenus listed in the left column (you may need to scroll down to see the menu below on your screen):

Awards & Recognition	This July II transaction payment n
 	ED, HHS, State P-20 Webcast C Data Qual and Other
News Release Archive & Directory	
Industry	iVideo Bea
Country	In the red-Apple's iT app for the
MSA (Region)	
Day	
Featured Videos	Fletcher/C Developm Innovation Fletcher/C announce Improve P
Useful Links	
PRWeb News Release Distribution	
RSS	
Newsrooms	
Add PRWeb Content To Your Site	
Services for Editors/Journalists	

You can search for press releases by industry, country, region, day of release and even search through videos. In the "Useful Links" section, you can find RSS feeds for various content. RSS feeds are available for both public consumption and to third-party publishers for redistribution on Websites. In addition, they have a plug-n-play news feed solution (Javascript) available to publishers through their [plug-n-play](#) [PDF] guidelines.

Before you use any services, though, look through the categories and sub-categories to get a feel of what you might use from these services. If you click on the "Industry" link shown in the above menu, you'll come to this page:

The screenshot shows the PRWeb website interface. At the top left is the PRWeb logo. To the right, there is a contact number "We're here to help 1-866-640-6397" and buttons for "Login" and "Create Free Account". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for "Why PRWeb", "Customer Examples", "Pricing", and "Tools & Tips". The main content area is titled "Recent Headlines" and contains a list of categories. Each category has three associated links: "XML Feeds", "ViewNews™", and "eBook Digest".

Category	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
America - Post 9/11	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Architecture	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Books	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Celebrities	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Country Music	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Dance	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Fine Art	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Magazines	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Movies	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Museums	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Music	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Music Downloads IPOD & MP3	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: News & Talk Shows	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Performing Arts	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Photography	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Television	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Art & Entertainment: Web sites / Internet	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest
Automotive	XML Feeds	ViewNews™	eBook Digest

If you want to browse through stories, click on the links to the left rather than on the other links. If you click on "Art & Entertainment: Photography," for instance, you would have discovered these stories on 30 August 2009:

PRWeb® 1-866-640-6397

[Login](#) [Create Free Account](#)

[Why PRWeb](#) [Customer Examples](#) [Pricing](#) [Tools & Tips](#)

Recent Headlines

[Pretouch.com Yearbook/Bulk Photo Retouch Service Saves Thousands For High Volume Studios](#)
Pretouch.com offers bulk retouching for yearbook and wedding images. Labs currently using in-house staff are able to supplement and in some cases replace seasonal staff with the fixed cost service. With...

["Impressions of Syracuse" Photography Contest Offers Scholarship Opportunity to Onondaga County High School Students](#)
Green & Seifert Attorneys, PLLC located in Syracuse, New York is excited to announce the "Impressions of Syracuse" Photography Contest for Onondaga County High School Students in grades 9...


[Groundbreaking Photos from China's Great Wall: The Forgotten Story to Premier in the Bay Area](#)
China's Great Wall: The Forgotten Story documents the colorful and violent history of the Great Wall through enormous panoramic photographs. The exhibit depicts sites on the Wall where important Mongol...

[Brooks Institute Announces Participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)
Participation in the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Yellow Ribbon programs provides tuition benefits, fees and housing allowances.


[HalloweenExpress.com announces the 2009 Tom Arma Baby and Toddler Photo Contest](#)
Tom Arma, the most published baby photographer in the world, along with HalloweenExpress.com are accepting nominations for the 2009 Tom Arma Baby and Toddler of the Year photo contest.

[Speedlight Pro Kit Manufacturer Awards US Firm Exclusive Rights](#)
Lightshop Design, Malaysian - Based Manufacturer of Specialized Photography Products, has Appointed Global Edge Technologies Group LLC its Exclusive Distributor in the USA.

[International Champion Salsa Dancers Invite Beginners to 2010 LA Salsa Woman Calendar Launch Celebration](#)
Charlicien welcomes all to come out and celebrate red carpet salsa launch party.



[Black Star Rising Celebrates 600 Posts as Leading Group Blog for Professional Photographers](#)
"We're successfully advancing the Black Star tradition of mentoring and aiding photographers in their careers," says agency president Benjamin J. Chapnick.



A few of the press releases listed above also contain images – which are free to use along with the stories. One suggestion here – if you find press releases at PR Web to work to your advantage, you might drop a few bucks in their coffers occasionally. You still come out ahead, considering what you might pay writers to come up with this information for you. Most of the press releases at this site are well written and focused, bringing interesting perspectives to current events.

Other Press Release Sources

You also can find free press releases on company Web sites. For instance, if you followed Apple's Snow Leopard debut, you might have learned more directly from [Apple's Web site](#). Their press release, "Apple to Ship Mac OS X Snow Leopard on August 28" was available on 24 August directly from the site. Yes, you are allowed to use these press releases on your site, too.

You can find press releases for companies such as [Pantone](#), [Open Source](#), [Adobe](#) and hundreds of other companies that focus on design, hardware, software and programming. It's up to you to find them and to utilize them to your advantage. You even can find government news releases for local, regional and national or international news about politics and more through any given government Web site, including the [White House](#).

The trick is to get to that company's press release and use it as soon as possible, before your competitors use it. That way, other sites may begin to point to your site as the 'source' for current news. In some cases, you can write to a company's media relations department to be asked to be added to their email press release list. This tactic can help ensure that you can be one of the first to distribute their news.

Other Resources

You may already know you can embed third-party **videos** on your Web site. But, you may not have searched for instructional or educational videos that might help your readers. For instance, at YouTube, you can find a video entitled, "[How to write a simple java program in 5 minutes.](#)" You also can find videos about [graphic design](#), [typography](#), [colour-matching](#) (Photoshop) and a video entitled, "[Basic Principles and Elements of Design in Painting : Elements of Color in Painting Design.](#)"

If you want to use free photographic **images**, you might try [morgueFile](#), [Wikipedia](#) (for copyright-free images) and [Free Images](#). I also use [iStock](#) for images when pressed for a great visual for an equally great story. Although the images here are not free, you can find many "x-small" images perfect for Web site use for less than \$3 USD per image.

Conclusion

You can find many, many more free resources for news and information on the Web, but how you use them is important both for your credibility and to develop a following of people who begin to trust on your ability to bring news to a 'one-stop' destination. Using free information usually works well, but there are some cases when you need to use your common sense:

- Don't use a story that leans heavily toward marketing a certain product or service unless you are a firm believer in that company's products or services. While most people feel they can trust Adobe, you might question or look into a company that's a virtual unknown before you push their press releases.
- Nothing beats a well-written press release. However, many press releases often need to be tweaked for grammar and/or for (believe it or not) spelling. Always read through a press release before you post it on your site. How do you know if a press release is well written? Look for the "who, what, when, where, why and how" journalistic answers to those questions in the article. If a press release includes that information, then you're well on the way to using a good story.
- You also can use press releases to write a different story about the same product or service. Consider that press release as a great resource for quotes, company statistics or other information you can use to write a piece for a Web site.
- Even if the story doesn't contain an image, you might include one from any given site mentioned previously to give that press release some 'umph.'
- Be sure to read all information posted at press release sites to make sure you do not violate any copyright laws or infringe on usage terms. Sometimes a link back to the site (for instance, it's become natural protocol to link Wikipedia pictures back to the Wikipedia page with the full-res image) is all you need to pay tribute to the site that offers help for your site.
- Finally, once you've posted the news item, use your social media tools to broadcast your 'news.' This action can help pull readers into your site for a story that took little time and effort on your part.