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This user manual contains basic information for the free release Resco Neeews! v 1.03.

This is the last free release. Whichever additional extension will be part of the commercial release that can be expected end of January 2007.

Although we put every effort to make this description as concise as possible, mistakes, typing errors and even misinterpretations are not excluded.

If you find something we should know, contact us at palm@resco-net.com, please.

--- Resco Development Team

1 Introduction

1.1 What is Resco Neeews!?

Experienced RSS users will recognize an RSS reader, although taking a less traditional form. The rest of you, for whom the abbreviation RSS does not sound too familiar, may start discovering the exciting world of online news.

The potential of the RSS technology is enormous and it is not easy to understand why this idea did not take the smartphone world with a storm similar to the SMS wave. Finally, it is the technology ideally suited to the mobile devices. It brings the information essence, while skipping the annoying effects that make the mobile browsing a frustrating experience.




1.2 First contact

That's how the main Neeews! screen looks like:



Figure 1 Main Neeews! screen

It lists the newspapers and a few control elements:

-  icon updates currently selected newspaper
-  closes opened newspaper and returns to this screen
-  allows you to select among old issues of the currently selected newspaper

When you tap a newspaper, the last issue opens.

If there is no issue yet, you will be prompted to update the newspaper content. If you agree, Neeews! will read the feeds constituting the newspaper and create a new issue.

Fig.2 shows an opened newspaper consisting of a single feed (BBC World Service). First headline is collapsed – it shows only the date and the title. Second headline is expanded, i.e. displays also the headline details. Each headline starts with the small icon indicating the news provider. (The icon says “BBC”; the string is hardly readable due to the image downscale.)

The second headline is selected. Note the use of the directional keys for the browsing:

- Up/Down keys perform scrolling. (The amount of scrolling can be selected in *General Options*.) Headline selection is unchanged.
- Left/Right keys skip to the previous/next headline and perform the headline selection. This is important when you re-open the newspaper as it opens at the last selected headline.

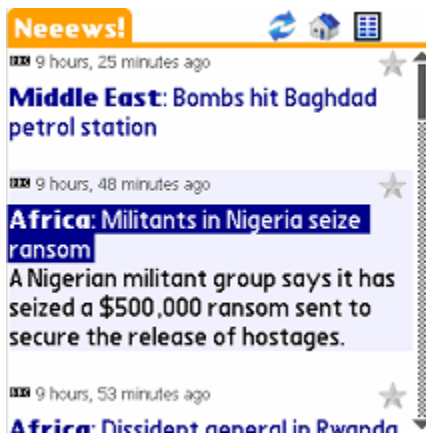


Figure 2 - Opened newspaper (single feed)

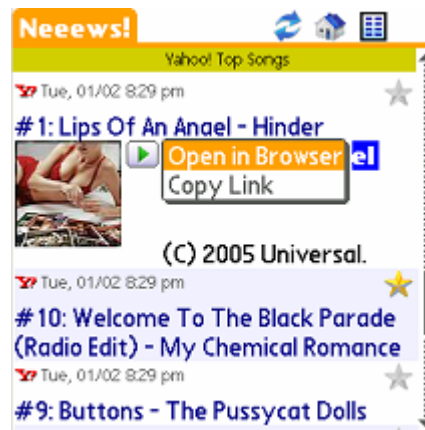


Figure 3 - Opened newspaper (more feeds)

Fig. 3 shows a bit more complex example. The newspaper has more feeds and we see the start of the “Yahoo Top Songs” feed.) The expanded headline is rather complex. It contains two images and an external link. The link is partially obscured by menu. To open the menu, tap the link; this is the way how you can open an external link in the Blazer. (Or another web browser – if it is supported, of course.)

★ star indicates that the headline is marked as favorite. To do so, tap the star. All favorite headlines can be listed in a separate window, accessible from the main menu.

Next important control element is the main menu. (See Fig.4 and 5) It is organized by the main concepts:

- Newspaper submenu lists actions done on newspapers. An interesting command is *Add it to Launcher*; it really makes a small Palm application in the News category that serves for fast access to the selected newspaper.
- Article submenu lists commands that relate to the newspapers headlines. (We use the terms article and headline interchangeably.) Of course, this submenu needs an open newspaper – there are no articles outside of newspapers.
- Finally Feed submenu operates on feeds. It allows actions such as adding or deleting the feeds.

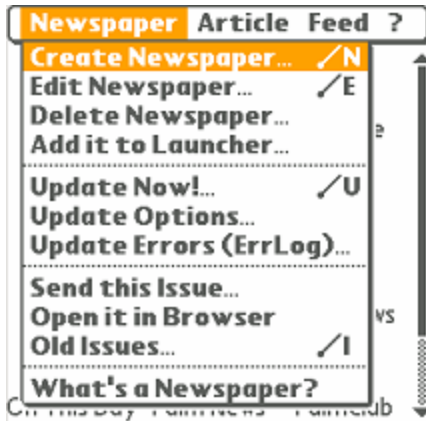


Figure 4 – Main menu



Figure 5 - Main menu

Always keep in mind the basic relations:

- ★ Newspaper consists of feeds.
- ★ Feeds produce articles (headlines).
- ★ The articles form a newspaper issue.

2 RSS tour

2.1 RSS in brief

You will find various definitions such as *Rich Site Summary* or *Really Simple Syndication*. Whatever definition you'll take, the essence is the same:

Information providers (CNN, BBC, blog authors etc.) publish summaries (called also headlines) of their articles equipped with other handy items such as the title, date and a link to the full article. All of this is combined together into so-called RSS feed.

New headlines appear with varying periodicity: News portal might issue an update every few minutes, while the blog authors can take days to come up with next hot topic. In any case the headlines are organized into the streams (feeds) that are updated with irregular periodicity.

So on the one hand the news providers offer RSS feeds; on the other hand applications called RSS readers present this information to the user.

RSS is better than browsing or subscribing to newsletters:

- Not only there is no spam, RSS feeds save also time and bandwidth:
- Instead of browsing, the news comes directly to you.
- You control the news flow through the feed selection.
- Most feeds have just a summary and link to the details. No garbage, you download only what you need.

RSS readers are with us for quite some time already, yet without a real adoption by an average user. The reason is simple: RSS readers acquired roof of an advanced toy that requires too much technological knowledge.

To prove that RSS is a technology appealing to the masses was our main design goal. It is now up to you, dear reader, to judge if the result corresponds to our expectations.

2.2 What is a Blog?

Blogs appear pretty often these days and are read by huge amount of people, so that they present a real competition for the print media.

Typically, a blog is a lot like an online journal or diary written by a single author. It uses to take a form of very simple web page.

The author can talk about anything and everything - he can publish political comments, sport stories, movie reviews etc.

Blogs usually have a free "RSS feed". It is a little XML web page that contains the headline, date and a description of each item published in the blog.

Sometimes the RSS feed publishes complete blog contents.

RSS readers provide a quick way to keep up-to-date with your favorite blog.

2.3 What is a Podcast?

Acc. to Wikipedia

Podcasting, a portmanteau of Apple's "iPod" and "broadcasting", is a method of publishing files to the Internet, allowing users to subscribe to a feed and receive new files automatically by subscription, usually at no cost.

Typically podcasts denote audio files published as part of an RSS feed. Often it is a private broadcast similar to a radio show that concentrates on a specific theme.





Podcasts became popular since 2004 and since their introduction RSS feeds acquired a new dimension – the audio contents. Hence we can now look to RSS feeds as a periodically updated set of articles consisting of the

- title
- description
- date
- optional link to the full article
- optional link to the podcast

2.4 How can I find RSS feeds on a web site?

There are millions of RSS feeds scattered around the web, yet it is not so trivial to find them. You will see now lot of pictures illustrating various techniques. For the time being we suppose that you are sitting behind a desktop computer operating your favorite web browser.

There is no standard, but the web designers are subsequently settling on a few common ways to mark the feeds:

- The links containing strings such as *RSS*, *RSS feeds*, *XML feeds* etc.
- The orange icons such as  or  or  etc.
- Blog icons such as  (borrowed from www.bloglines.com)

For an example see Fig.6 taken from the CNN web page. After you click the RSS icon, you get to another web page offering CNN feeds (Fig.7). Note that CNN has a large web site with many feeds; simpler sites may offer just one feed.

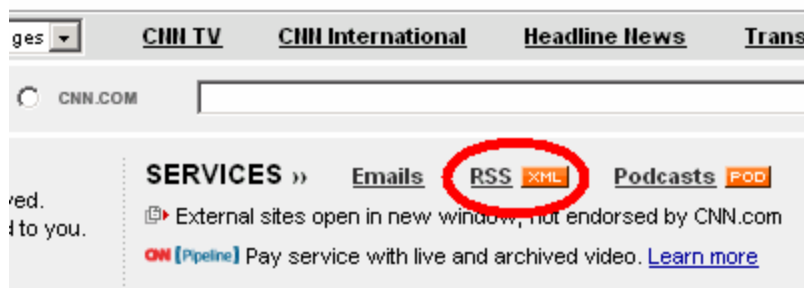


Figure 6 –RSS feeds on a web page (Click the XML icon to get to Fig 7)

| Title | Copy URLs to RSS Reader | |
|-------------|---|---|
| Top Stories | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/cnn_topstories.rss |  |
| World | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/cnn_world.rss |  |
| U.S. | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/cnn_us.rss |  |

Figure 7 - CNN feeds; every feed is represented by the URL (“http://rss.cnn...”)

2.5 How to get feed URL?

Fig.7 shows the most important feed property – its [URL](#). This is the string you need to tell RSS reader so that it can read particular feed.

Sometimes it’s not so easy as in Fig.7 because you don’t see URL written on the screen. In such case click the RSS icon. What you get, might be a nicely formatted text (Fig.8) or some hardly readable technical stuff (Fig.9). Whichever case happens, the only important thing is the feed URL written in the browser address bar as shown in Fig.9.



Figure 8 - Feed formatted with FeedBurner

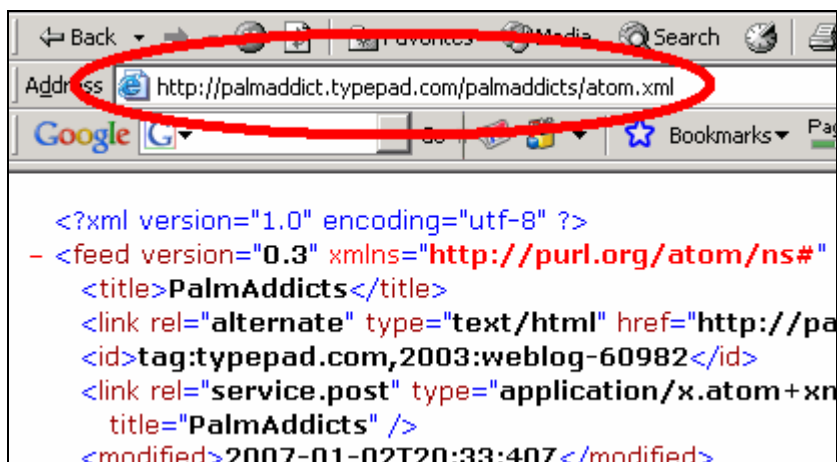


Figure 9 - Sometimes you'll get raw feed content. About the only readable thing is the feed URL.

2.6 How to search for feeds?

There are number of possibilities and we enumerate a few of them hoping that they can help you.

Google (or another search engine)

It depends on what you are looking for. Here are a few search strings for better imagination:

- “Best political blogs 2006”
- “CNN RSS feeds”
- “NBA blog”
- etc.

Google for “RSS directory”

This is a special search for sites that collect information about RSS feeds. Note there are millions of RSS feeds/blogs and some kind of categorization, evaluation etc. can be of great help.

Google for “OPML directory”

OPML is an abbreviation for a list of feeds formatted in an agreed way so that various RSS readers understand its contents. OPML directories collect OPML-related information.

Use well-known RSS search engines

- www.technorati.com is a blog search engine indexing millions of blogs.
- www.bloglines.com is a web-based news aggregator for browsing weblogs and other news feeds.
- www.syndic8.com is another known blog search engine

2.7 Further reading

RSS: Your Gateway To News & Blog Content by Danny Sullivan

<http://searchenginewatch.com/showPage.html?page=2175281>

Explains RSS and related concepts, searching for RSS etc.

RSS Tutorial for Content Publishers and Webmasters

<http://www.mnot.net/rss/tutorial/>

RSS: why it's important by CNET

http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-10088_7-5143656.html

Includes a video tutorial.

3 Working with Resco Neeews!

3.1 Newspapers vs. Articles

Resco News, as an RSS reader, builds on a **newspaper** analogy. The user defines his personal newspaper containing news, articles, podcasts etc. from one or more selected feeds or blogs and sets it to update at regular intervals.

This reminds a print newspaper. Indeed, you can define a newspaper consisting of NY Times feeds and specify daily update. However, this is just one use - in general you may mix up any feeds and select suitable update policy, incl. no automatic update at all.

One newspaper issue takes the form of an html page consisting of headlines. Some feeds - f.e. blogs - export full articles. However, the traditional media (newspapers, news providers) use to publish just a brief description. In the latter case the user can go for the full article to the web browser.

RSS feeds deliver **articles**. Articles are usually composed of a date, headline, details (html text) and a link to the full web description.

Article details may contain image links. The user may switch off the image download for particular newspaper and decrease thus the downloaded data.

List of all newspapers can be found in the home screen – accessible via  icon.

3.2 Feeds

Resco Neeews! comes with more than 500 high quality default feeds. Despite they are really interesting and may satisfy lots of users, most users will also have their own feeds.

Because the number of feeds is large, certain organization is necessary. Neeews! divides the feeds into two large categories:

- Default (pre-installed) feeds
- “*My Feeds*” containing all user-defined feeds

Both categories are further divided into folders with a tree-like hierarchy. (Same organization as files and folders on a disk.)


3.3 Life cycle of incoming news

When you update a newspaper, all newspaper feeds are queried for new contents. The headlines are stored in a RAM database and those that pass the selection criteria (f.e. “*last 10 headlines per feed*” or “*headlines not older than 24 hours*”)¹ are selected into the new newspaper issue. The issue is formatted for easier reading and stored in the Resco Neeews! folder on the card.

¹ We tested also another headline selection option “*New since last update*”. While it looks logical, in praxis this option caused lot of confusion – typically questions of the type “*Why the newspaper is empty?*”

When you now tap the newspaper icon, the last issue is displayed on the screen. You can read the newspaper, mark articles as favorites, opened them in browser or listen to the podcasts.

Next update will create a new newspaper issue. The content may partially overlap with the previous issue – depending on the headline selection criteria and feed update frequency. The old articles that do not qualify for the new issue, become obsolete and Resco Neeews! will discard them sooner or later. (Note that the articles added to Favorites are never discarded.)



Old newspaper issues are accessible from the newspaper history – the  icon or the menu option *Newspaper > Old Issues*. Note that the old issue is usually just a plain Html document. The underlying articles may not exist anymore (because of automatic discarding) and hence cannot be marked as favorites. (But they can be opened in the browser.)

3.4 Reading the newspaper

When you tap the newspaper icon, the last issue will be displayed on the screen and you can start reading.


The issue opens either collapsed (showing just the news titles) or expanded (showing the complete content). Use *Articles* menu to select the preferred mode.

By tapping the headline title (or pressing the center button) the selected headline opens or collapses.

Interesting articles can be marked as **Favorites**. To do so, tap the *star*  icon. In turn, the icon will change to  and the article will be added to the Favorites database. Articles marked as Favorite are treated in a special way:

- They are not discarded once their lifetime is over.
- Can be browsed separately using the menu action *Article > Favorites*.

The feeds often contain just brief summaries. In such case you can go to the full article using the menu option *Article > Open it in Browser*.

Articles with attached podcasts display the podcast icon . Tap it to play the podcast.

Navigation

Up/Down keys are used for scrolling. Depending on the actual scroll mode (General Options dialog), the display can scroll one line, 1/2 page or a full page. For easier orientation the latter two modes briefly flash a small black rectangle pointing to the last line on the previous page. (Kind of reminder: “Continue reading here.” Displayed only when scrolling down.)

Left/Right keys skip to previous/next headline. They determine the headline selection. (Another selection method is a pen tap.)

Backspace key closes the newspaper. (Same as pressing the  icon.)

Newspaper position


When you close and reopen the newspaper, it opens on the last selected headline. Note that the headline selection is determined with the Left/Right keys!

3.5 Podcasts

As already explained, podcast can be viewed as an article attachment. Resco Neeews! supports only audio attachments.

Current release needs an installed audio player – either Pocket Tunes or Kinoma. If you don't have one of these, audio files will be ignored.

Podcast files are as a rule very large – sizes use to count in megabytes – and receive therefore special treatment.


First of all you can specify whether the podcasts are to be downloaded along with the articles. (*Download Podcasts* option in the newspaper wizard.) In this case the podcast is stored permanently in a card file and waits there until the user taps the  icon. This option is attractive if you use background update and do not care too much about the download size.

The alternative is *audio streaming*: Podcasts are not downloaded apriori, but they are fetched part-by-part during the audio replay. The condition is – of course – that the audio player supports streaming. (Both Kinoma and Pocket Tunes do.) Advantage of the streaming is fast access (no need to wait until the download completes) and possibility to abort the download. The disadvantage – you cannot restart the audio without a new download.

3.6 Images

Similarly to podcasts, images use to take a lot of space, too. What is even worse, from the user point of view, lots of images are unwanted. This usually happens when the news provider makes his living from advertisements.

You have just one option. Either you allow images or disallow. (*Download Images* option in the newspaper wizard.) Resco Neeews! does not filter the images in any way.²

Image download is non-blocking, i.e. you can read the downloaded textual content while the image download is in progress. You can even abort the image download (for example when you see that the download size grows too much) by pressing the  icon. What happens is that the newspaper will have a few unresolved image links and it will eventually try to re-download missing images later.

Images are stored in a card folder called the **image cache**. *Cache Options* dialog allows you to specify the total card space reserved for the downloaded images.

² Note that the idea of filtering images included in RSS feeds is generally illegal. Many news providers offer their content for public use under the condition that it will not be manipulated, abridged etc.

Upon termination Resco Neeews! might perform the cache maintenance. If you requested *Clear Cache on Exit*, all images will be discarded. Otherwise the total image size is counted and if it exceeds given maximum, the oldest images get deleted.

3.7 Update

You can use either manual or automatic update.

Manual update is initiated via menu command *Newspaper > Update Now!* and behaves acc. to *Update Options* dialog. The update has two phases. At first, new articles are downloaded. This is the blocking phase and the user has just two options: wait or abort.

Second phase cares about images and is non-blocking, i.e. the user can start reading already downloaded text material while the image download is still in progress.

Automatic (or background) update is launched without the user intervention acc. to the schedule specified in the Newspaper Wizard. To give an example, you can specify the update each morning at 7.00 except Sunday.

The automatic update takes a few measures to minimize potential conflicts:

- If you happen to have a phone call, update is automatically postponed.
- In case the PDA is active (i.e. not sleeping), the update is preceded with a countdown dialog (counting seconds from 10 towards 0) giving a chance to postpone or cancel the update.

Another nice feature of the automatic update is an user alert (similar alert as when you received an SMS message) once a new content arrived – provided you have set *Notify on successful Update* in *General Options* dialog.

If you suspect a problem during an automatic update, use the menu command *Newspaper > Update Errors* that documents performed updates and eventual errors. Note that each newspaper has a separate log.

3.8 Adding Newspaper to the Palm Launcher

In case you need a fast access to an important newspaper, you can use the menu command *Newspaper > Add it to Launcher*. This will create a small application bearing the newspaper name and place it to the *News* category. The new application can be looked to as a reduced version of the complete Neeews! application that is optimized for viewing selected newspaper. Thus you get fastest possible access in exchange for small memory loss.

3.9 Sharing feed lists (OPML)

OPML is a format used to share feed lists and most – if not all – RSS readers support it. You can tell RSS reader to export your feeds as OPML and send it to your friend who might be using another RSS reader.

There are two ways how to import OPML list into Resco Neeews!:

- Resco Neeews! receives beamed OPML files and adds their contents it to the existing feed hierarchy.
- Copy OPML file to the card and use the dialog *Manage Feeds > More Actions > Import OPML*. Resco Neeews! will scan the card and lets you select among OPML files found.

Some publishers offer their OPML's on the web, f.e. Nature.com web offers <http://npg.nature.com/pdf/newsfeeds.opml>

3.10 Adding new feeds

Despite Resco Neeews! offers a rich selection of built-in feeds, most users will want to add their own sources of information. In the following paragraphs we shall cover several options to achieve this goal.

3.10.1 Adding feed with known URL

If you know the feed URL, then use
Menu > Feed > Manage Feeds

Select first suitable folder under *My Feeds*, where the new feed should be placed.

Afterwards press *Add* button and type the URL into the field *Feed or Website Address* and select the feed name.

Note: If you see the URL in a web browser, you can use Copy & Paste instead of typing.

See also: [How to get feed URL?](#)

3.10.2 Adding feeds for a known site

If you know a web page that offers RSS feeds, you can leave the dirty work to Resco Neeews! Proceed the same way as in previous paragraph, but use this time website address. Resco Neeews! will search for RSS sources on the web page and lets you select among identified feeds.

3.10.3 Searching for feeds

The idea behind searching is simple. There exist sites that collect feed specifications and allow for feed searches. Resco Neeews! relies on the services of the Syndic8 search engine.

The whole procedure reminds using of Google: You type a set of keywords and get in return a list of matching feeds. After you make your selection among returned results, Resco Neeews! will create a new folder with the search results.

The rest is standard feed management: You can rename the folder or move its feeds to other folders etc.

3.10.4 Importing OPML list

As discussed in [Sharing feed lists \(OPML\)](#) OPML provides the only general way to exchange the feed lists among various RSS readers.

3.10.5 Importing BlogLines feeds

Bloglines is a popular web-based news aggregator for browsing weblogs and other news feeds. Many users use it mainly because of its device independence – to run it you need just a web browser.

BlogLines users can import all feeds registered in their BlogLines account using the dialog *Manage Feeds > More Actions > Import BlogLines*. It is a one-way action, i.e. no synchronization is supported.

4 Vocabulary

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Audio streaming | The process of providing audio clips or content via a web page. |
| Blog | A blog is a public Web site with personal posts ordered so that the most recent is always first. Posts may come from one or many individuals, and the messages often share a common theme. The most recent blogs posted, with links and a brief description, are available via RSS. Also called: Weblog |
| BlogLines | A web-based news aggregator (www.BlogLines.com) for aggregating weblogs and RSS feeds that can be used in place of a desktop client. Acquired by Ask Jeeves. |
| FeedBurner | FeedBurner is a news feed management provider launched in 2004. Aug 2006: FeedBurner hosted feeds for 250,000 publishers, and delivered feeds to 19 million subscribers. |
| Kinoma player | Popular audio/video player |
| OPML | XML format for outlines. Most popular use is the exchange RSS feeds lists between RSS aggregators |
| Pocket Tunes | Popular audio player |
| Podcast | Method of publishing files to the Internet, allowing users to subscribe to a feed and receive new files automatically by subscription, usually at no cost. It first became popular in late 2004, used largely for audio files. |
| RSS | <i>Rich Site Summary</i> or <i>Really Simple Syndication</i> A format used to syndicate news and the content of news-like sites. |
| RSS feed | Periodically updated sequence of articles formatted to suit the RSS specification. |
| RSS directory | A site that collects information concerning RSS feeds, tools etc. |
| RSS reader | An application that serves for reading of RSS feeds and blogs. Web-based readers are programmed as web pages, i.e. you can access them only via Web browser. BlogLines is a web-based reader and you can launch it from Blazer. Also called: News Aggregator, Feed Aggregator, Feed Reader |
| Syndic8 | Popular RSS search engine: www.syndic8.com (Dec. 2006: 490,000 feeds.) |
| Technorati | Internet search engine focused on the weblogs. As of June 2005, Technorati indexes over 11 million weblogs. www.technorati.com |
| URL | Uniform Resource Locator; a string that uniquely determines any public web resource such as a web page, RSS feed, image etc. |