



# Lightweight Content Management using RSS and Ajax

## Overview:

The goal of this project was to provide a quick and low maintenance method that would allow a client to maintain a section of content on an existing site without changing the web site's appearance.

## Objectives:

- Rapid implementation
- Compatible with Corporate technology standards
- Easy for the client to use
- Easy for a small staff to maintain
- Accessible to client's audience
- Low to zero technology costs

## Methodology:

- Interview clients and assess needs
- Define technology requirements
- Develop prototype
- Perform client review and get approval
- Implement final deliverables
- Create documentation

## Outcomes:

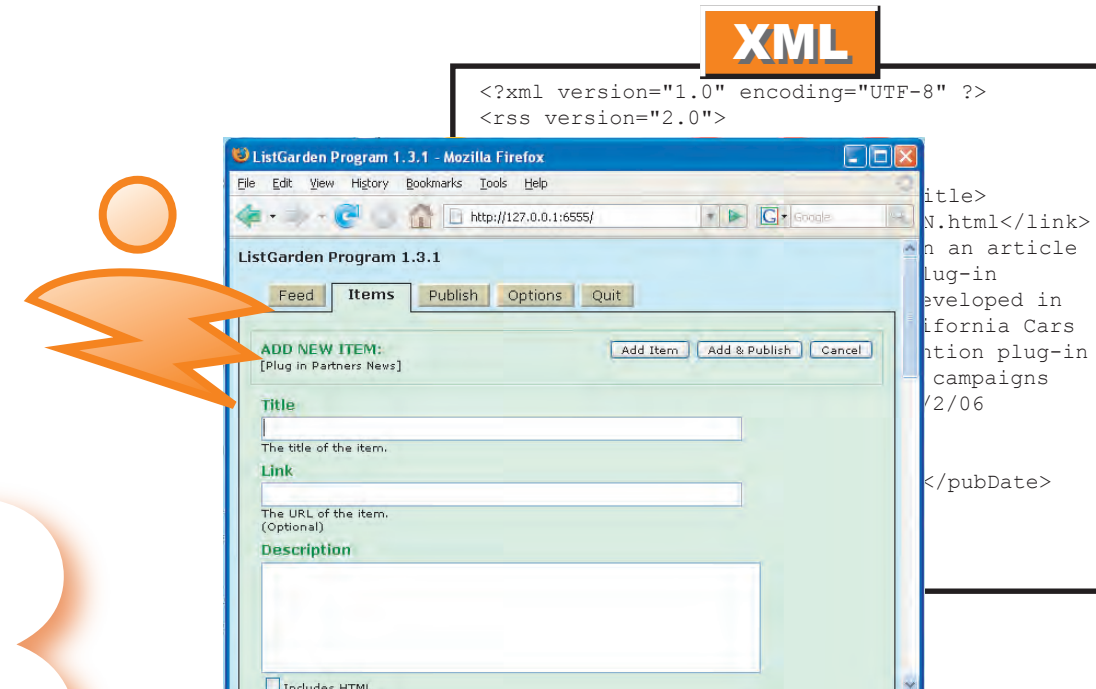
- Separation of content and display
- Ability to create structured RSS content easily with a free RSS creation tool
- An additional channel was created for enhanced communication with the client's audience via RSS
- Solution is compatible with over 95% of audience's browsers and degrades gracefully in other cases
- Display control through existing CSS style sheets

## Conclusions:

Using RSS as an XML data source with a Javascript parser utilizing XMLHttpRequest methods provides a solution that gives clients control over their content. This is ideal in small to medium organizations with limited resources and tight technology constraints. RSS provides an ideal data format because of its simplicity and the readily available creation applications.

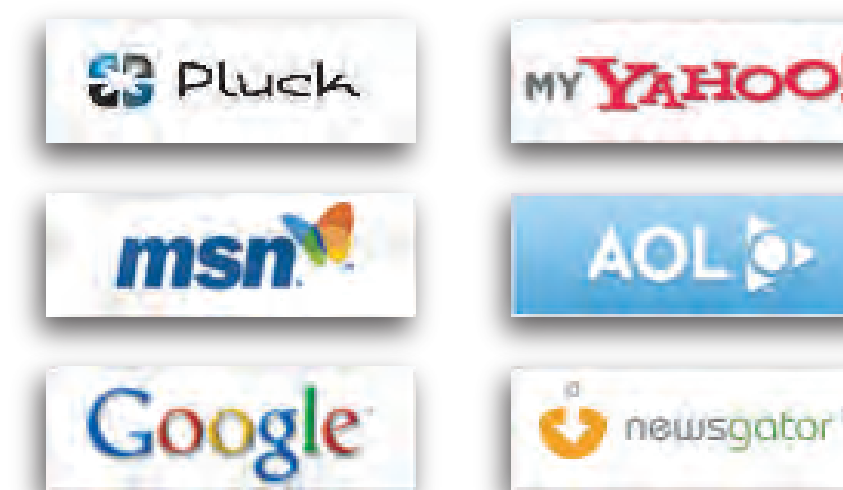


1. The web team starts with standard HTML web pages formatted with CSS.



3. The client creates and maintains an RSS formatted XML file using a simple RSS creation application.

<http://pluginpartners/news.htm#date>



5. The single XML file provides content to multiple web pages and is also available as an RSS feed. The client's audience views updated content in the browser of their choice and can subscribe to the content with an RSS reader and syndicated by aggregators.

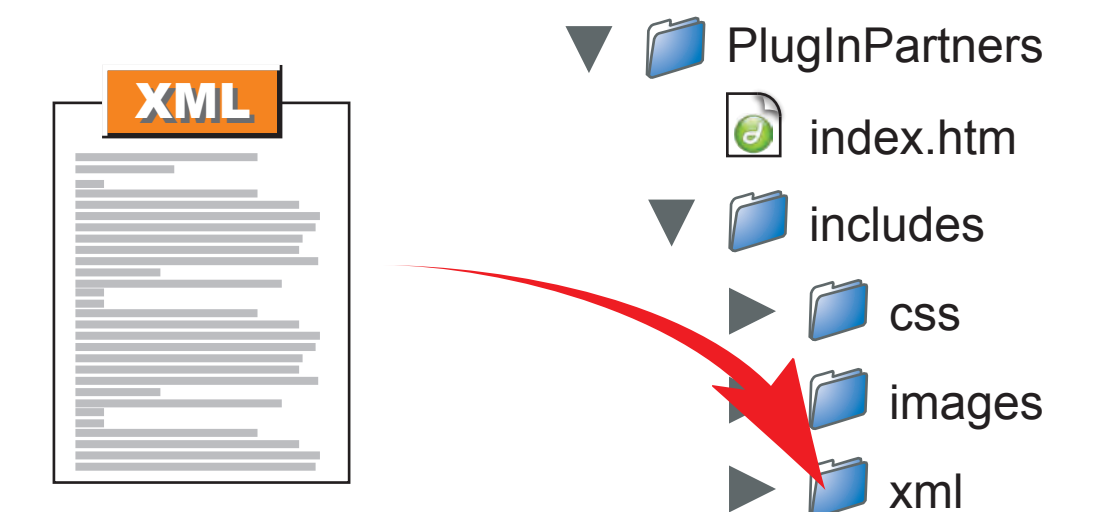


```
function showRSS(RSS) {
    // Defines the HTML code
    var startLink = "<a href='./news.htm?'>";
    var startLink2 = "</a>";
    var startDate = "</a><br><span class='style2'>";
    var endItem = "</span><br /><br />";

    var item_html = "";
    // Determines how many items to list
    for (var i=0; i<3; i++){

        item_html += (RSS.items[i].pubDate == null) ? "" : startLink +
            escape(RSS.items[i].pubDate) + startLink2;
        item_html += (RSS.items[i].title == null) ? "" : RSS.items[i].title
            + startDate;
        item_html += (RSS.items[i].pubDate == null) ? "" : RSS.items[i].pubDate
            + endItem;
        // Adds HTML defined above and data
        // parsed from XML to a String
        document.getElementById('HPNewsContentBlock').innerHTML = item_html;
    }
    // Replaces the HTML in the document
    // with the HTML code stored in the
    // item_html variable.
    return true;
}
```

2. The web team customizes a Javascript XML parser that replaces the existing HTML content with RSS formatted XML content via XMLHttpRequest.



4. When updates are required, the new XML file is uploaded to the server either manually at pre-determined intervals or automatically via a script.

	Cost	Setup	Flexibility	Maintenance	Use
HTML	\$	Easy	High	High	HTML
RSS/Ajax	\$	Medium	High	Low	HTML+RSS
CMS	\$\$\$	Difficult	Medium	Low	HTML+RSS