

AFO 653 – RSS Newsfeeds

653.1 Introduction

653.1.1 What are RSS News Feeds and how are they used in Vubis Smart? [//]

RSS News Feeds

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is an XML-based format for distributing and aggregating web content (such as news headlines). Using RSS, web content providers can easily create and disseminate feeds of data that include, for example, news links, headlines, and summaries.

What this actually means is the following: thousands of “bodies” in the world publish on a regular basis (which can be anything between every so many seconds and every so many months) “interesting” news that is exposed in an XML format and which can as such be easily incorporated into other applications.

Note that the acronym RSS is often also explained as “Rich Site Summary”.

RSS News Feeds in Vubis Smart

RSS news feeds integration is yet another step in our strategy to enrich the user experience through the WebOpac as much as possible: his search experience should be rich and interactive. As RSS feeds focus on “hot”, recent information it will complement other data enrichment techniques such as *Vlink*, fuzzy logic, associative searching, bibliographic relations and circulation transaction based relations.

The overall goal is to integrate RSS news feeds seamlessly into the WebOpac. To achieve this, news channels are now available through Vubis Smart and available for the library to manage (you can indicate which channels you want to offer to your customers, you can attach a subject to the channels, you can add new channels, etc.).

The “active” channels are accessed on a regular basis by a daemon process and the available news feeds are retrieved from the channel and stored in the Vubis Smart database. Once they are available in Vubis Smart they can be integrated in the start page of WebOpac. This integration can be user specific: on top of the general channels that the library selects by default, each user can select his own preferred channels. Once a user has logged on in a private session, feeds from his preferred channels will be displayed.

Licence information

Note that the RSS integration feature is not a standard part of the Vubis Smart application. It requires a specific license and must be installed and activated separately. Please contact your account manager for pricing and installation information.

653.1.2 Terminology

In this document we will constantly refer to three related terms:

1. News *channels*: these are the channels that supply (“offer”) the news feeds; news channels can be accessed through the <http://> protocol and have a URL format; they send back news feeds in XML format
2. News *feeds*: these are the individual messages in RSS format that are offered by the channels
3. News *topics*: these are topics that characterise a news channel; depending on the channel, they can be very broad (“News”) or very specific (“Fantasy literature”).

653.1.3 The XML-structure of RSS newsfeeds

The channel and item elements are requirements for any useful RSS file, while the image input is optional. The channel element contains data that describe the channel itself, telling what the channel is and who created it. The image element is an optional element that is usually used to include the logo of the channel provider. Items, the most important elements in a channel, usually form the dynamic part of an RSS file. While channel and image elements create the channel's identity and typically stay the same over long periods of time, channel items are rendered as news headlines, and the channel's value depends on their changing fairly frequently.

(Information based on <http://www.devarticles.com/c/a/Web-Services/Introduction-to-RSS/3/>)

A description of the RSS format can be found at: <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss>

653.1.4 Supplied RSS channels

If the RSS support feature is activated, approximately 9,000 RSS channels will be available to you. They cover a wide range of topics, divided in a dozen or so main categories like Business & Finance, News, Sports, etc. You can modify or delete the supplied channels, or add new ones to the list. See below for more details.

Note

There may be costs involved if all RSS channels would be set to “In use”. This would require ample disk space to store the feeds and would also require fast network connections.

653.2 Managing RSS channels and feeds

You can manage the RSS channels on your system through AFO 653. The RSS channels are shown in a select list, which is preceded by a bordered window. The bordered window contains the following information:

- the total number of RSS channels in the Vubis Smart database;
- the number of active RSS channels;
- the filters applied to the presentation.

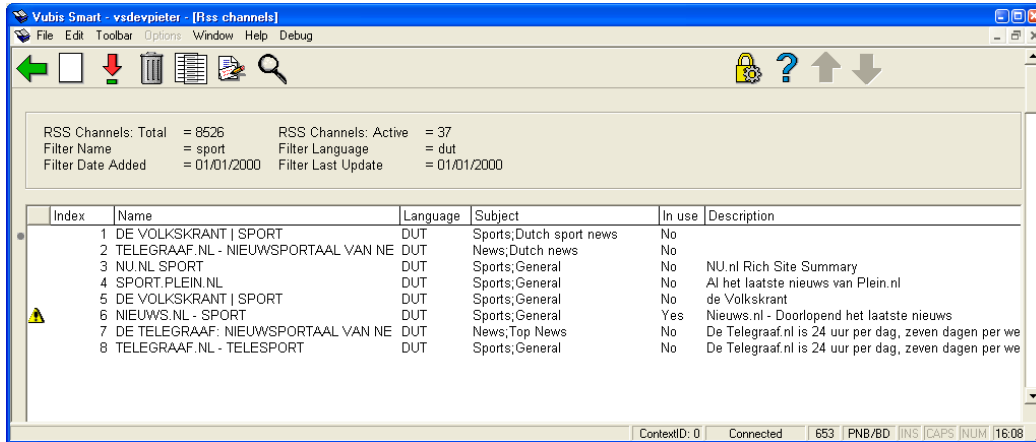
The overview screen shows the following information:

RSS Channels: Total = 8492 RSS Channels: Active = 1

Index	Name	Language	Subject	In use	Description
1	0x2a	eng	;Miscellaneous;Weblo	No	we apologize for the inconvenience.
2	10 online exhibitions	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	Art, design, storytelling, sculptures, fairy tales, idea development etc.
3	Greek.Ru	rus	Countries & States;Gre	No	????? ??? ? ?????????? ?? ??????? ?????? ????
4	2012	eng	Science;Science	No	Focuses on science news pertaining to doomsdays, cosmic rays, evolution and ancien
5	4DToday.com News	eng	Computers & IT;Softwa	No	The ultimate information source for 4D developers.
6	601am	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	
7	AISÖ	ger	Travel & Transport;Aut	No	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Internationaler Strassenverkehrsunternehmer Österreichs
8	The Weblog MetaData	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	The Weblog MetaData Initiative
9	Microsoft Blogs	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	a list of known blogs authored by known (or suspected) Microsoft employees.
10	FreeMartha.Org	eng	Entertainment;Celebriti	No	If its hand knit, you must acquit!
11	TheBentinel	eng	Entertainment;Humor	No	Providing clean, family-friendly news satire over the Internet for over 100 years!
12	BusinessPundit	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	Analysis on corporate strategy, economics, politics, and anything else that interests m
13	Lutetia	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	Tom Fox Blogs from Paris
14	A Whole Lotta Nothing	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	The last 10 posts at Matt's a.whole
15	A1 Debt Solutions	eng	Business & Finance;Fi	No	Are you buried under debt? Find practical real life debt reduction techniques to help yo
16	A1E1	eng	Miscellaneous;Weblog	No	Yes, it is a pun...
17	Abc de la sécurité infor	fre	Miscellaneous;Security	No	Actualité sécurité freeware libre antivirus et firewall
18	KABC: Mr. Food	eng	Health & Lifestyle;Cook	No	KABC-TV (ABC 7) in Los Angeles
19	KABC: Front Page	eng	Cities;Los Angeles	No	KABC-TV (ABC 7) in Los Angeles
20	KABC: Health	eng	Health & Lifestyle;Heal	No	KABC-TV (ABC 7) in Los Angeles
21	KABC: News	eng	Cities;Los Angeles	No	KABC-TV (ABC 7) in Los Angeles
22	KABC: On TV	eng	Entertainment;Entertai	No	KABC-TV (ABC 7) in Los Angeles
23	KABC: Sports	eng	Sports;Sports	No	KABC-TV (ABC 7) in Los Angeles
24	KFSN: Consumer Wat	eng	Countries & States;Cali	No	KFSN-TV (ABC 30) in Fresno
25	KFSN: Mr. Food	eng	Health & Lifestyle;Cook	No	KFSN-TV (ABC 30) in Fresno
26	KFSN: Recalls	eng	Countries & States;Cali	No	KFSN-TV (ABC 30) in Fresno
27	KFSN: Front Page	eng	Countries & States;Cali	No	KFSN-TV (ABC 30) in Fresno
28	KFSN: Health Watch	eng	Health & Lifestyle;Heal	No	KFSN-TV (ABC 30) in Fresno
29	KFSN: News	eng	Countries & States;Cali	No	KFSN-TV (ABC 30) in Fresno
30	KGO: Mr. Food	eng	Health & Lifestyle;Cook	No	KGO-TV (ABC 7) in San Francisco

A warning icon is displayed for channels that are in use if the difference between Last update and Current date is bigger than the value of the Last update warning parameter (see below for more information on this parameter).

Example



[Please note that sorting the feeds by clicking on the data will sort only 90 entries and not the full list. If you navigate past the first 90 entries, the system will sort on the entries you have looked at so far. You should use filter to restrict the number of feeds to get a manageable overview of the supplied feeds.]

Options on the screen

New item: RSS channels can be added manually. See section 653.2.1.

View/change properties (+): Select a channel and then this option to modify its properties. See section 653.2.1.

Delete item (+): Select a channel and then this option to delete it. The system asks for a confirmation: "Do you want to delete this record?". The associated technical information and the associated feeds are deleted.

Filter: Use this option to limit the display to certain channels. See section 653.2.2.

Categories: These are important because the display of the RSS News feeds in the WebOpac is based upon these categories. There are main categories and sub categories. Sub categories are valid within one main category. The combination of one main category and one sub category forms one category that can be used in the channel parameters. See section 653.2.3.

Show the newsfeeds (+): The system will display the stored news feeds in a window displaying a temporary HTML file.

653.2.1 New channel

New item: RSS channels can be added manually. An input form will be displayed:

Fields on the screen

Name: it is not mandatory to enter a name for all languages.

Categories: it is mandatory to choose at least one category.

URL: of course this field is mandatory.

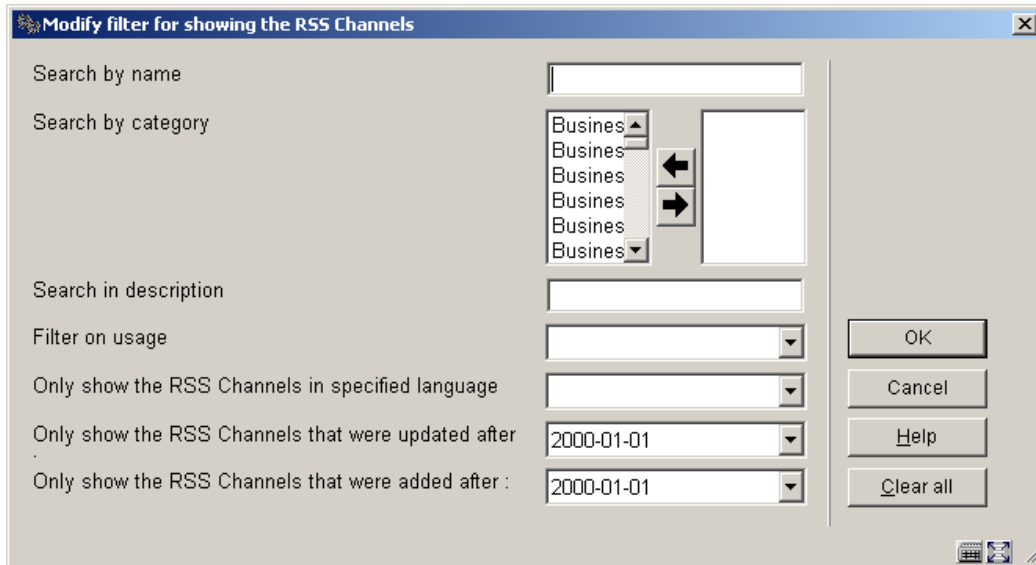
In use: If you tick the In Use check box, the system tries to retrieve the news feeds and gives a message indicating the result.

Last update: this field is filled by the system.

For the other fields you can leave the default values or modify them as required.

653.2.2 Filter

Filter: Use this option to limit the display to certain channels. An input form will be displayed:



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Modify filter for showing the RSS Channels". It contains several input fields and buttons:

- Search by name:** A text input field.
- Search by category:** A list of "Business" items with left and right arrow buttons next to them, and an empty list box to the right.
- Search in description:** A text input field.
- Filter on usage:** A dropdown menu.
- Only show the RSS Channels in specified language:** A dropdown menu.
- Only show the RSS Channels that were updated after:** A date dropdown menu showing "2000-01-01".
- Only show the RSS Channels that were added after:** A date dropdown menu showing "2000-01-01".

On the right side of the dialog, there are four buttons: "OK", "Cancel", "Help", and "Clear all".

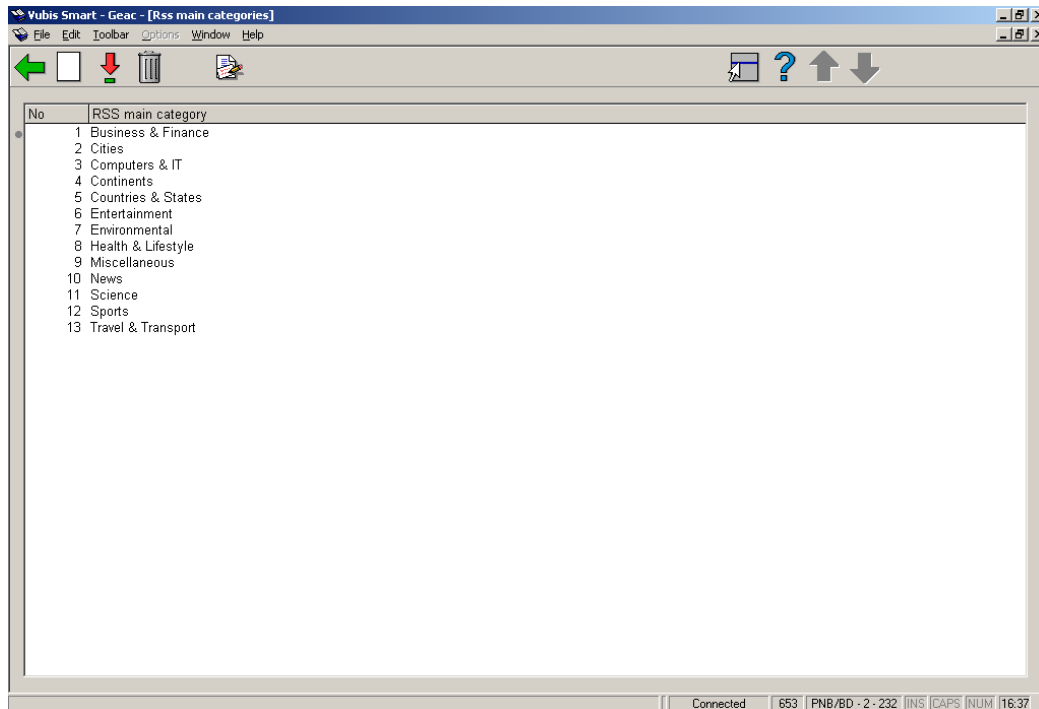
When you fill in one or more of the fields, the system checks all the channels and performs a Boolean search using the filters.

The "Clear all" button clears all filters and results in the display of all defined channels.

Filters are stored per user and are re-applied until they are removed.

653.2.3 Categories

Categories: These are important because the display of the RSS News feeds in the WebOpac is based upon these categories. There are main categories and sub categories. Sub categories are valid within one main category. The combination of one main category and one sub category forms one category that can be used in the channel parameters. After choosing this option an overview screen will be displayed:



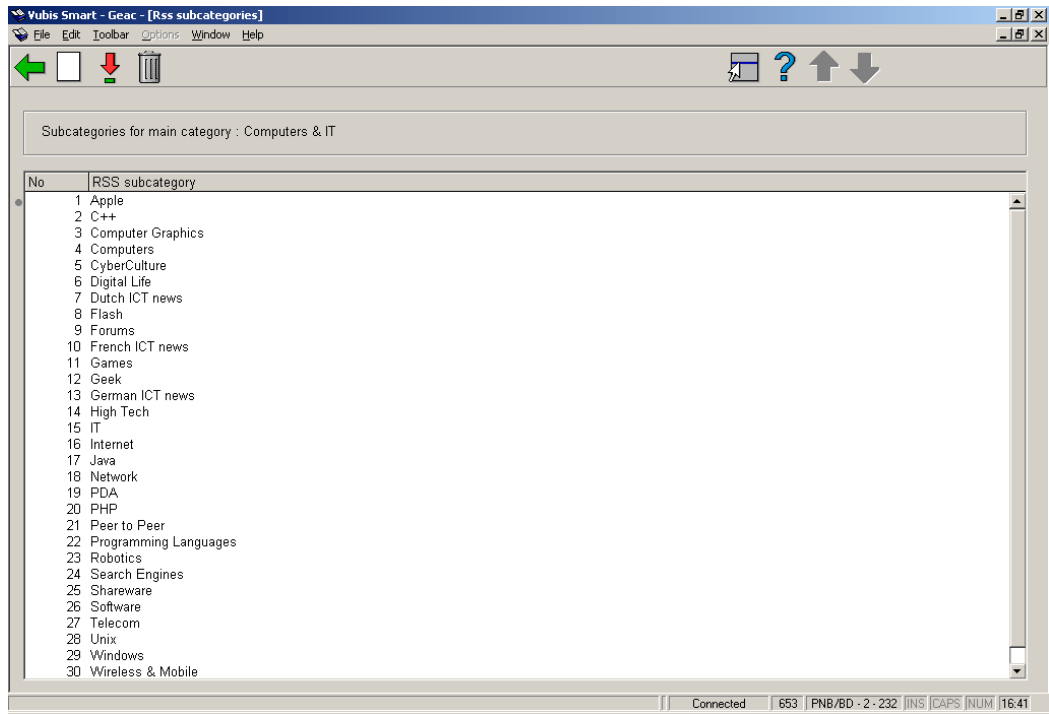
Options on the screen

New main category: select this option to add a new main category.

Modify main category: select a category and then this option to modify the details.

Modify main category: select a category and then this option to delete it. You can only do this if they are not in use by any channel.

Show subcategories: select a category and then this option to look at the subcategories. An overview screen is displayed:



From this screen you can add, modify or delete subcategories.

- **Document control - Change History**

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