FreewareRSS™
RSS Client/Server

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WELCOME

Welcome to the FreewareRSS user guide. This guide will help you setup and use the FreewareRSS software on Windows 2000, XP, Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 or greater.

The FreewareRSS software is both a full featured RSS client and an RSS aggregation web server utility, which allows you to aggregate RSS feeds into one source and automatically upload the content to your website via FTP as formatted HTML and RSS XML. Alternatively, the software may be installed directly on any Windows web server.

When running in server mode, the software will create dynamic web pages based on custom templates that match your website's existing theme. Templates can be HTML, ASP, PHP, JSP or any other format.

An alternative to services such as FeedBurner™, the server mode allows you to manage your own feed and program your own tracking and advertising at a low level, giving you total control over all functionality.

REQUIREMENTS

This software requires the Microsoft .NET 4.0 runtime, 50 MB of free disk space and at least 256MB of free RAM. This software requires a basic understanding of RSS in order to effectively use the software.

The binary version of the software is freeware. The optional C# source code license allows you to customize the application for your organization. You may obtain a licensed copy of the C# source code at http://www.freewarerss.com Please note that the binary files and source code may not be redistributed and may only be used for the purpose of modifying the software for your own organization.

Programming with the optional C# source code is intended for use by accomplished, professional C# software developers, and requires programming effort, debugging and testing before being used in a production environment. If you do not have a C# software developer on staff you may contact us to request a free quote for customizing the software based on your specifications.

HOW THIS GUIDE IS ORGANIZED

This guide is organized as a complete walk-through of the software from start to finish. This guide covers topics ranging from setup to actual usage of each feature in the order of which the features are organized within the software.

You may skip ahead at any time or use the table of contents to locate a specific help topic.

GETTING STARTED

The software zip file can be downloaded from http://www.freewarerss.com/freewarerss.zip
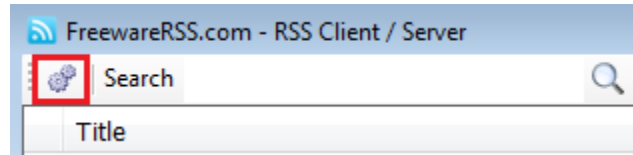
First, ensure that the Microsoft .NET 4.0 runtime is installed on your system.

Next, unzip the contents of the zip file into a new folder on your computer and run the program.
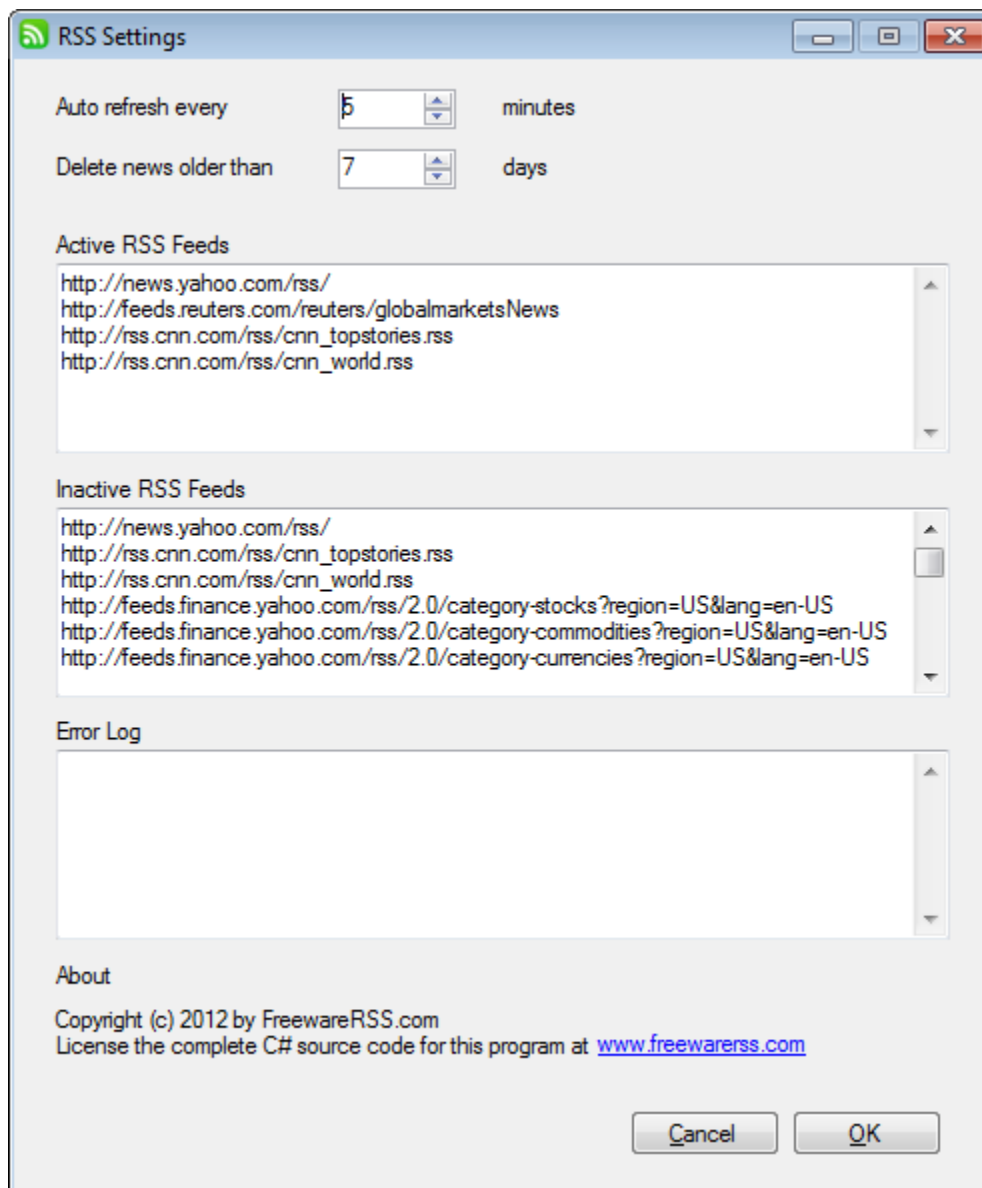
RUNNING THE SOFTWARE

Please ensure that your Internet connection is ready before proceeding.

Launch the program and then click the **Settings** button in the upper left corner of the screen:

The settings dialog will display:

SETTINGS

The "**Auto refresh every n-minutes**" setting causes the software to automatically download all the RSS feeds that are listed in the "**Active RSS Feeds**" box. If the software is running in server mode, the RSS feeds will be aggregated into one file and saved to disk. The file may automatically be uploaded to your server depending on the configuration settings that you choose.

The "**Delete news older than n-days**" setting causes the software to automatically delete all news that is older than n days. Be careful not to confuse this setting with the manual "**Delete Story**" menu option or the "**Deleted**" filter option on the main toolbar.

The "**Inactive RSS Feeds**" box is simply a placeholder to store your inactive RSS feeds. The software will not download or process RSS feeds stored in this box.

Application error messages will be saved in the "**Error Log**" box. The most common error message is "**Could not read from [url]**". If this error occurs, it may be caused by an invalid RSS feed. You should remove all invalid RSS feeds otherwise the application will run slowly, as the refresh process takes longer for invalid RSS feeds to time out.
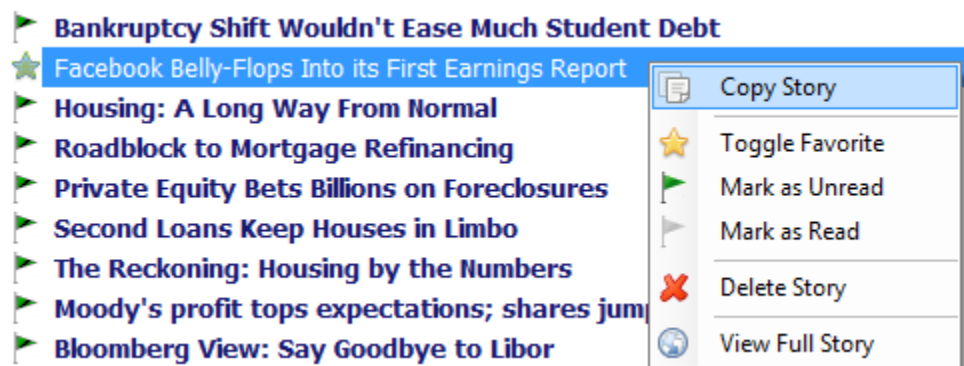
GENERAL FUNCTIONALITY

Multiple items can be selected by holding Ctrl or Shift while left clicking in the news list.

You can press the **Delete** key on your keyboard to delete any item, or press the **Enter** key to open a story in a new browser window.

You can also right click on one or more items to access the story context menu, which allows you to copy, toggle, delete or view stories.
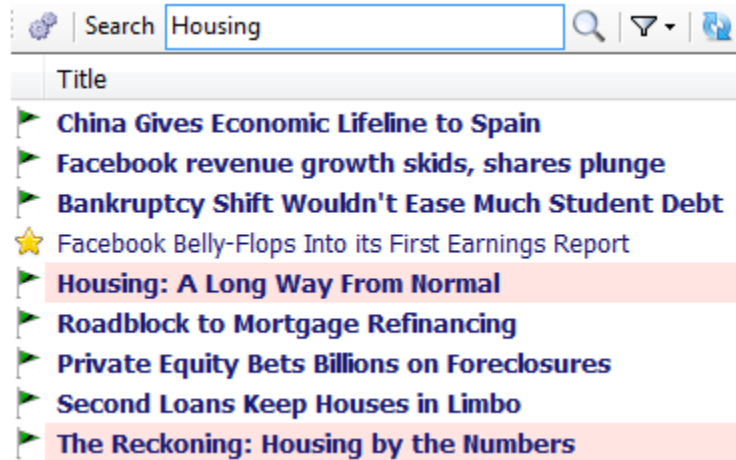
MENU OPTIONS

Right click on any item in the news list to display the story context menu. Operations will be applied to all news items that are selected. For example, **Copy Story** will copy all news items that have been selected in the news list. **View Full Story** will display news stories for all items that have been selected by opening the URLs in new browser windows. As a safety measure, only a maximum of 10 news stories will open at once to prevent the accidental opening of too many browser windows at the same time.
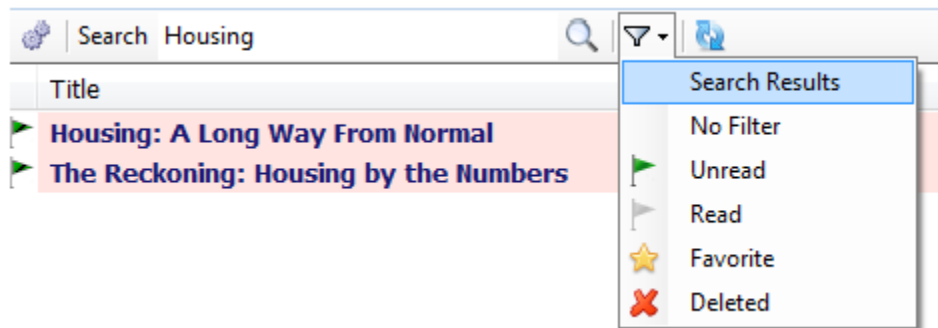
SEARCH FEATURE

To search for a phrase within the visible news list, simply type a search phrase in the **Search** box and press **Enter** or click the **Search** button. Matching results will be highlighted in the news list.
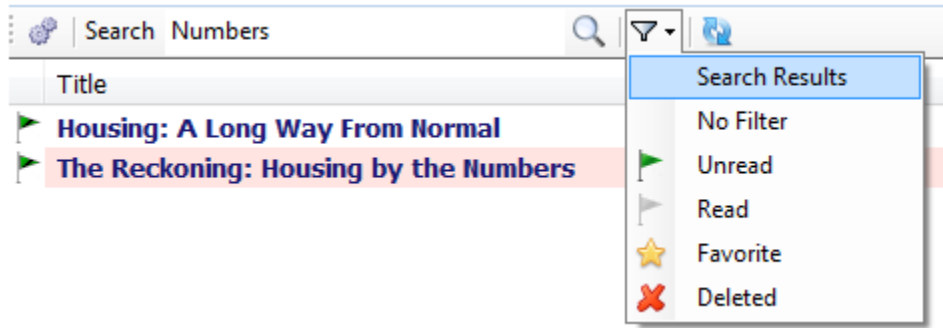

FILTER OPTION

Items can be filtered by using the **Filter** button on the main toolbar. Simply select from one of the available filter options to see a list of filtered news stories.

You can switch back to the original view at any time by selecting the **No Filter** option.
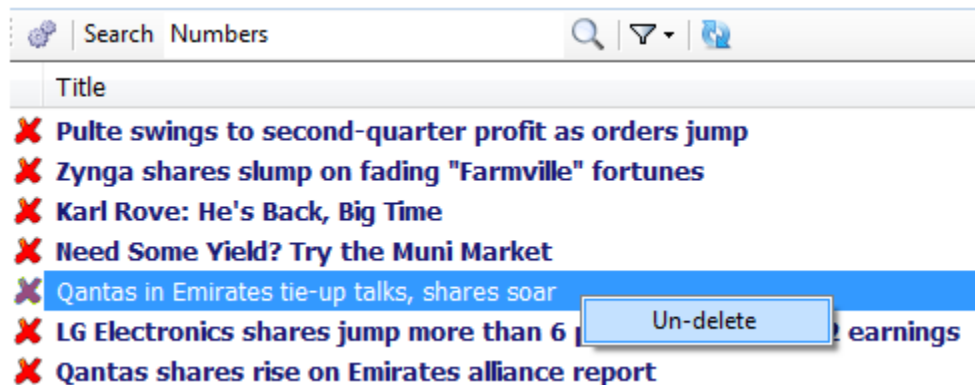
DRILLDOWN SEARCH FILTERING

After searching for a key phrase and selecting the **Search Results** filter, you can drill further by searching within the search results and selecting the **Search Results** filter yet again. These steps can be repeated multiple times to achieve the final search results that you are looking for. This method of "searching within search results" allows you to quickly drill down into search results with ease.

UN-DELETING ITEMS

To un-delete any deleted items, simply click the **Deleted** option from the **Filter** menu and right click on any item to select "**Un-delete**".

Please note that items that have expired as per the "**Delete after n-days**" setting in the **Settings** window cannot be recovered.

RESETTING THE DATABASE

To remove all RSS items manually, exit the application and then delete or rename the **news.xml** file located in the program directory then and restart the application.

SERVER CONFIGURATION

The software is designed be used as both an RSS reader and an RSS aggregation server utility.

When used in server mode, the software will aggregate all feeds listed in the "**Active RSS Feeds**" box of the **Settings** dialog into one single RSS feed. The software will save the RSS feed output in the form of a custom formatted HTML page and/or an RSS file, which can be automatically uploaded to your website.

To run the software in server mode simply rename the included server configuration file named "**ServerConfig.txt.rename**" to "**ServerConfig.txt**" and edit the contents, then restart the software.

SERVER CONFIGURATION OVERVIEW

The **ServerConfig.txt** configuration file contains several items, which must be edited prior to starting the application in server mode:

```
InputFileName=PageTemplate.htm
OutputFileName=MyRSSFeed.htm
RowTemplateFileName=RowTemplate.htm
FavoriteTag=<img src="images/favorite.png">
FTPServer = ftp://www.yourdomain.com/directory
FTPDir = \directory\
FTPUser=YourUserName
FTPPass=YourPassword
FTPPort=21
FTPUsePassive=false
FTPKeepAlive=true
AggregatedFeedName=MyRSSFeed.xml
AggregatedFeedTitle=My Aggregated Feed
AggregatedFeedDescription=My feed description
```

DYNAMIC TEMPLATE TAGS

The software will output both a traditional RSS XML file and a dynamically formatted html file, which may be of any ASCII format (text, html, ASP, PHP, JSP, etc.).

The software uses pre-defined tags to insert custom formatted RSS items into the formatted output file.

The **InputFileName** configuration setting should point to a page on the local hard drive containing one instance of the **{INSERT_NEWS}** tag, which will be replaced with actual RSS content when processed.

 Example Dynamic RSS File

```
<html>
<head>
<title>My Dynamic RSS Page</title>
</head>
<body>
  {INSERT_NEWS}
</body>
</html>
```

The **OutputFileName** configuration setting should point to a file location on the local hard drive where you want the dynamically processed file to be written. If running the software on a server, this page should point to a location in your website's www root directory. Otherwise you may edit the FTP settings to enable the software to automatically upload the output file to your web server. The output file will be written and optionally uploaded to your web server every n-minutes, as defined in the **Settings** dialog under the "**Auto refresh every n-minutes**" setting.

The **RowTemplateFileName** configuration setting refers to a local file containing a "row" template, which is a formatted block of text or html code that will be used for inserting each individual news item from the **{INSERT_NEWS}** tag. Please refer to the included **RowTemplate.htm** example file.

Valid row tags:

{TIMESTAMP}	date and time of the RSS items.
{TITLE}	RSS item title.
{DESCRIPTION}	RSS item description.
{FAVORITE}	set if the RSS item has been marked as favorite.
{URL}	the URL link to the RSS item.

Example Row Template

```
<div>
<b>{TIMESTAMP}: {TITLE}</b><br>
{FAVORITE} {DESCRIPTION}<br>
<a href="{URL}" target="_blank">{URL}</a>
</div>
```

Note the **{FAVORITE}** tag refers to the **FavoriteTag** configuration setting, which may be an image or text.

FTP SERVER SETTINGS

Before starting the application in server mode, ensure that the FTP server settings have been modified by changing FTPServer, FTPDir, FTPUser, FTPPass, FTPPort, FTPUsePassive and FTPKeepAlive.

The most common setting for FTPPort is **21**, the most common setting for FTPUsePassive is **false** and the most common setting for FTPKeepAlive is **true**. Please check with your FTP admin for instructions.

AGGREGATED RSS CONFIGURATION SETTINGS

The **AggregatedFeedName** configuration setting should point to an XML file on the local hard drive where the aggregated RSS content will be written. If running the software on a server, this file should point to a location in your website's www root directory. Otherwise you may edit the FTP settings to enable the software to automatically upload the XML file to your web server.

AggregatedFeedTitle may contain the feed title with a maximum size of 100 characters.

AggregatedFeedDescription may contain the feed description, with a maximum size of 500 characters.

SERVER ERROR LOG

In the event of server errors, messages are written to the ServerError.txt log file in the software directory.

AGGREGATED RSS FEED COMPATIBILITY

The aggregated RSS feed can be consumed by any RSS 2.0 compliant reader, including Outlook, NewsGator, Google Reader, etc. Simply point to the output file specified in **AggregatedFeedName**.

CUSTOMIZE THE SOFTWARE

A non-exclusive license of the complete C# source code for FreewareRSS is available for purchase at http://www.freewarerss.com

We also offer inexpensive consulting services for customizing the software. Our experienced C# developers will provide you with any type of customization and the turnaround time can be as little as one week. Please contact us for details.