

Background

You will remember that earlier in the module, labsheet 2 concerned RSS feeds where we asked you to syndicate two feeds on a web page of your own, and to comment upon problems and solutions of aggregating multiple RSS feeds into one for end-user consumption.

This assignment builds upon labsheet 2, and requires you to track keywords in small numbers of RSS feeds for a period of seven days, using three related techniques, and also to report on the outputs created.

For this exercise, we will be using an application called [visualRSS](#) (vRSS) which has been developed by Martin, under Mark's supervision, and which forms part of the Martin's PhD work. [vRSS](#) allows users to track and visualise keyword frequencies in RSS feeds as social data, which may be useful in roles varying from statistics to marketing and trend analysis, correlating or tracking topical issues, or for mining numeric financial and sporting data.

Thus this labsheet forms an experiment, which we would like you participate in and support, where the outputs described in your submissions will record data and metadata which will later be analysed.

There are also bonus marks available for this labsheet as well!

So what do we want you to do?

1. **To register with visualRSS:** This is a simple process which will take a few minutes at <http://qzone.dcs.bbk.ac.uk:8080/visualRSS/getRegistration/>. No confidential information is held in vRSS although email addresses are required to be your Birkbeck emails.

Upon registration, you are recommended to read vRSS's [About](#) pages, and to look at the examples given for the selection of keywords you would like vRSS to track from RSS feeds.

2. **Track and visualise keywords frequencies in RSS feeds:** [vRSS](#) contains some [50 RSS feeds](#) arranged into a number of simple categories, which have been updated hourly since late-November and which will be updated hourly throughout the duration of this labsheet.

We would like you to use categories of these feeds, or small groups of RSS feeds of your own choice (possibly including those you used for labsheet 2), to track [keyword frequencies](#) for a seven day period.

This should be done by using up to half a dozen keywords in each of the three related techniques [vRSS](#) contains for selecting RSS feeds and keywords for tracking:

- a. **Simple RSS and keywords:** Using simple RSS and keywords, you can explore and visualise RSS feeds using keywords automatically generated from vRSS's RSS feeds. Simple RSS and keywords is useful for seeing the *current buzz* in the *rssosphere*.
- b. **Mixed RSS and keywords:** With mixed RSS and keywords, you can explore and visualise vRSS's RSS feeds using your own keywords, e.g. to track topical issues.
- c. **My RSS and keywords:** My RSS and keywords, allows you to explore and visualise RSS feeds with your own keywords and your own RSS feeds, or individual feeds from visualRSS. This allows a greater focus on a specific subject than permitted under mixed RSS and keywords.

For example, you could use **my RSS and keywords** with keywords representing current stories in some IT-related RSS feeds of your own, and compare their frequencies against keywords generated automatically by vRSS from its equivalent category of feeds. Another example would be checking two independent collections of feeds to record the differences in frequencies of your keywords between them.

Allocation of bonus marks will be based upon experimentation.

3. **Report on the outputs:** At the end of your 7 day tracking period, we would like you to write a report containing the following:
 - a. To list the particular feeds and keywords you tracked, to explain why you chose them and the how you implemented them in vRSS, a visualisation(s) of the results obtained, and why this type of visualisation(s).

- b. vRSS's [About](#) pages describe some possible scenarios of how it might be used and by whom. We would like you to describe two applications of where you think [vRSS](#) might be useful and why.

What to hand in:

Submit your findings to the work described above as a report of no more than 6 pages in .doc(x) or .pdf format to martin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk.

Submission Deadline: 15 Dec 2011.

Late assignments: No extensions are available as for this lab sheet and any late submissions will be graded as per the guidelines of the relevant MSc course being studied.

Miscellaneous:

Any emails sent to martin@dcs.bbk.ac.uk for this coursework should be headed SEWN Lab sheet 5.