



## Case Study: RSS Feed Parser

*“Faced with the need for more resources, we were initially hesitant about how it would work to outsource some development work. SolveIT has been an ideal partner; we now think of them as an extension of our development team, and appreciate all their efforts to learn about our people and our products. They have been excellent at seeking clarification on design questions, and have increased the knowledge and depth of their team in response to our needs. We particularly appreciated their willingness to document their work using our internal systems, saving us administration time. We would not hesitate to recommend SolveIT to anyone seeking a reliable, knowledgeable and conscientious development partner.”*

Jacob Ipsen  
CEO, NextGen

**Summary:** The client sought a plug-in module for its customers to facilitate RSS Feed Subscription according to their needs.

**Solution:** The deliverable was the RSS Feed Parser module which provided a completely new user interface to InfoBoard Administration System to facilitate retrieval and parsing of RSS feeds at client end.

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Client Introduction**

The Client is the leader in the content presentation system. They are one of the largest providers of centrally managed and web based software which incorporates key constructs of internal information, campaigns, information, schedules and collaboration to enable the efficient distribution of content across network of screens down to individual screens. This flexibility creates the optimal environment for any communication department or marketing professional to communicate targeted messages that reach employees at the right place, at the right time.

### **1.2 Project Introduction**

The project aims to provide a software solution that controls the elements used in visual communicational, generates and schedules playlists, and delivers targeted messaging to the screens. The Players are using standard Internet protocols. Both media and players can be grouped to take advantage of user defined market and network characteristics, enabling the precise and efficient delivery of communication and campaigns. The software solution provides users the option to define and position designated areas of a display screen to showcase additional communicational messages along with the latest news, sports, business and entertainment headlines.

The deliverable is a web-based software with main focus on integration with Microsoft SQL Server 2005 and a customized web solution to present content in different forms.

## **2 Requirement**

As a rapidly growing Content presentation company, the client needed enhanced features to be added to its base product for managing content more efficiently and presenting it in myriad forms.

The client sought a plug-in module for its customers to facilitate RSS Feed Subscription according to their needs. The deliverable was the RSS Feed Parser module which provided a completely new user interface to InfoBoard Administration System to facilitate retrieval and parsing of RSS feeds at client end.

Since the module can be used as a plug-in module for any other web application, therefore the system was designed keeping in mind the desired flexibility to integrate it with other applications.

### **3 Features & Benefits**

The RSSFeedParser module was built over the features and functionalities provided by InfoBoard Administration System to read/parse RSS Feed using client script and display one feed item in iframe at a time. The RSS Parser can parse RSS 0.91, RSS 0.92 and RSS 1.0 and RSS 2.0.

#### **3.1 System Features**

Functionalities:

This module was developed to be iframed onto a screen, completely independent from the rest of the content. The content can vary as the user iFrame it into varied size iFrames. There are two options available to user to resize the iFrame. It could either have a variable size (within reasonable parameters, i.e., it should never be smaller than 200 pixels on either side) or the size could be set as a parameter.

Client can choose from an undefined number of URLs. The RSS Feed Parser can retrieve an undefined number of RSS Feeds from these URLs. The RSS Feed Parser module accesses the URLs chosen by client or configured into a configuration file and parse the RSS feeds. As the URLs are protected under client's private system, a set up was required to facilitate testing the system using some standard format provided by client (*RSS 0.91, RSS 0.92, RSS 1.0 and RSS 2.0*) of RSS feeds initially because there is no way to know the standard used by different RSS Feeds. Client can test it with the real URLs at their end. Client would provide rss.txt file that contains information like the RSS Feed format, and we may assume that all the other feeds, will follow the same format.

The RSS feeds are even automatically generated by a Microsoft SharePoint solution, so we need to know which standard is being followed by them, we might be able to test with one of these; otherwise there is no way for us to really know if our parser works, until we set the system up at the client side. So for this requirement, we need to try and troubleshoot the system with different formats provided by the Microsoft SharePoint Solutions.

The module can present or display each RSS feed item one after another, example: if there are four RSS feeds from a URL and two from another URL. Then to display all the six RSS Feeds on an .aspx page one at the time, it won't be imperative for each to be in .aspx format. The module makes it easier for us to show the feeds in some other format.

The module also enables us to set the style of the headline and of the text of the feed item.

## 4 Challenges

- The Main Challenge was to parse RSS Feed in different formats provided by the Microsoft SharePoint Solutions using client side scripting.

## 5 Technology Statistics

<b>Application Server</b>	Windows 2003 Server Advanced Server and above.
<b>Web Server</b>	IIS 6.0 or higher
<b>Application Scripting</b>	JavaScript , AJAX
<b>Web Languages</b>	ASP.NET with (VB.NET)
<b>Development IDE</b>	MS Visual Studio.Net 2008
<b>Browser</b>	Internet Explorer 6.0 and above and Firefox 2.0 and above

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