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Do You Kebberfegg?

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This is one of many tips that you may find on Mary Ellen's Web site, www.batesinfo.com/tip.html.

RSS feeds have been getting a lot more attention lately, and for good reason. For starters, they're one way to keep up with the blogs you read regularly; most blogs offer an RSS feed of either summaries or the full text of each blog entry. But what's really cool about RSS feeds is that the technology has expanded far beyond blogs. Think about it ... RSS feeds just notify you of changes to a web site. That could include not only blogs but company web sites' press release pages, government web sites' news and contract announcement pages, recurring searches in databases as diverse as [PubMed](#) and [Amazon.com](#), or what's been added to the [Librarians' Index to the Internet](#). If you are a serious news junkie, you can monitor headlines through an RSS feed; weather hounds can get RSS feeds of the current weather conditions. And if you want to see the most up-to-date results of a search on MSN, you can re-run the search through an RSS feed.

But how do you identify the RSS feeds of interest? The simplest approach is to look for the little "RSS" or "XML" button on your favorite web sites. There are also some specialized search engines that focus on tracking RSS feeds, such as Feedster's [FeedFinder](#).

But another, really cool, option for finding RSS feeds is a tool called [Kebberfegg](#), developed by web search maven [Tara Calishain](#). Yes, it's kind of a strange name—a pronounceable version of Keyword-Based RSS Feed Generator. Instead of trying to remember where the best RSS feed search tools are and how to use them, Kebberfegg builds RSS feeds around the specific information you're looking and in the types of sources you would probably find most useful.

An example is the best way to explain how Kebberfegg works. Say you're interested in staying up to date on the issue of space tourism (who knows? Maybe some day, it'll be cheap enough for anyone to become an astronaut). Head over to Kebberfegg, type your query, "space tourism," into the search box and then select which of the nine categories you want to use. For this search, you might want to get RSS feeds from news search engines, scientific and medical sources, and technology sources, so select those categories and click Submit. (Or you can select all the categories, and let Kebberfegg create RSS feeds from about 40 different sources, in case you really crave information overload.) The next screen you see will show you the RSS feeds that Kebberfegg has created for you. You can decide which of these sources you want to monitor, then add them to your RSS reader. Note that you can click the XML link to get the URL to the RSS feed, or you can click any of the specialized buttons below each feed listed. Kebberfegg can be a useful way to get started with a few good RSS feeds, and without your having to remember where to start searching for feeds. Just use it carefully, or you may find yourself subscribing to more feeds than you'll ever be able to read!

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