



Real People Reviews by Daniel M. East

NewsFire RSS 0.22

by David Watanabe

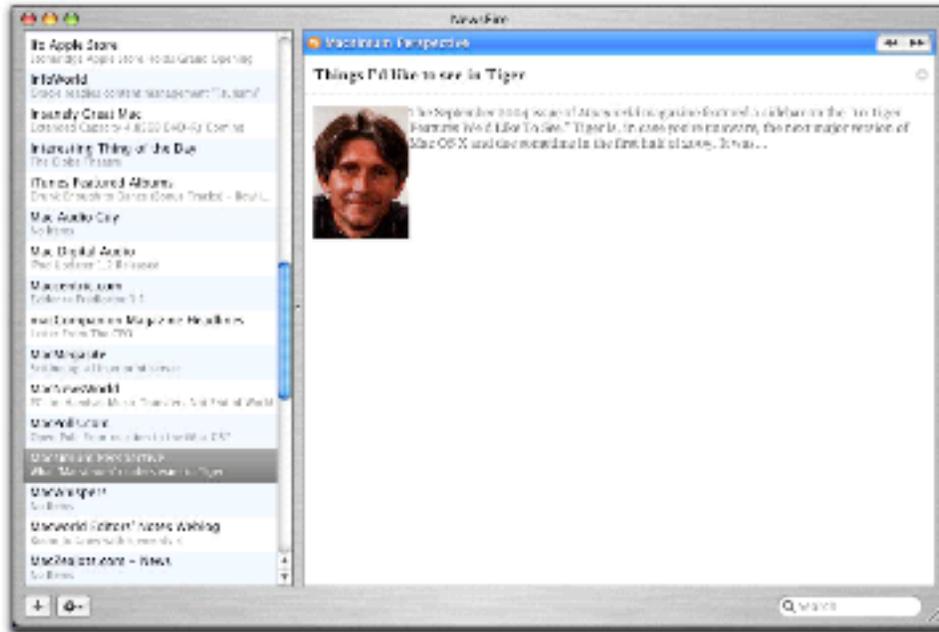


PULL QUOTE: "NewsFire simplifies the ability to view, read and enjoy RSS feeds"

With all of the attention now paid to "Blogs" online, it can be difficult for some to tackle this concept when trying to find the *RDF Site Summary* or "RSS" reader. Given that Apple has already announced that the next generation of **Safari** under OS 10.4 will now support RSS feeds, we now know that this seemingly new way of getting news headlines, discussion lists and information is here to stay. RSS feeds use *Extensible Markup Language*, or "XML," to send out text and images in a more standardized list format that only requires a viewer/reader.

Originally developed by **Netscape**, RSS content can usually be found by looking at most popular news sites for the XML/RSS button and simply copying and pasting the URL into your reader of choice. To give you an idea of how popular RSS has become, news organizations like *The New York Times*, *The BBC*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Mac-friendly sites Macsimum Perspective*, *The MUG Center*, *SpyMac*, *MacCentral*, *MacMinute* and others are all now making their feeds accessible.

There are plenty of RSS readers out there as both shareware and freeware; however, NewsFire simplifies the ability to view, read and enjoy RSS feeds with an easy to understand screen that lists your subscriptions and top news story on the left and, when a feed is selected, that feed's complete list on the right. When you click the story you want, the item appears on the right complete with simply icons to click if you'd like to view the original web page in your browser. The icons are clear and easy to understand. This is a great reader for any level of experience from novice to advanced use and, in my opinion, much easier on the eyes than some other readers currently available. In fact, NewsFire has now replaced my former favorite, **NetNewsWire**.



On the down side, there are just a few tweaks I'd like to see in **NewsFire**, but I can hardly complain given that it is, at this point, freeware (although the site doesn't say so). First of all, for those of us who *enjoy* the abilities built in to the Mac OS, I'm not sure what role ANY RSS reader will have once Safari has the support of XML. Also, I do miss NetNewsWire's ability to stay hidden and to CONTROL+CLICK on the icon in the dock to view my news as it becomes available. I also found it curious that there was no link to the developer's web site from within the app, itself. Having said that, I must mention one extremely cool link that DOES exist in NewsFire and that is the ability to send an iChat message and IM with the developer. NewsFire will even find the RSS feeds in the page you're viewing with Safari as you surf your favorite sites.

RSS NEWSFIRE NewsFire is fast, it looks great and it is easy to use. If you are ready (or not) to jump into RSS, NewsFire is on fire...for now.

NewsFire RSS v0.22

<http://www.newsfirerss.com/>

PRICE: free

Pros: Fast, easy, great looking, free

Cons: No link to dev site, Safari under Tiger *may* make it obsolete

Overall Rating: 4.5 out of 5 stars EXCELLENT

Daniel East is the president of The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs); a member of The Apple Consultants Network (ACN); a member of The Apple Developer Connection (ADC); co-host of "PC Talk Radio" in Philadelphia; trainer/speaker/presenter and a freelance columnist for several Mac publications.

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info@mamugs.com - www.mamugs.org