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3 tips to get the most out of Google FeedBurner

How to optimize your blog feed

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[RSS feed image](#) via Shutterstock.

There is always a lot of discussion regarding how to develop killer content and how to integrate sexy technologies such as a responsive design or HTML5 video into your real estate website or blog.

And rightfully so; as these things are really cool. However, optimizing the RSS feed, a far less glamorous feature of your publishing platform, can add tremendous value to your email marketing, usability and search engine optimization.

If you're unfamiliar with RSS ("really simple syndication"), it is simply a format used to publish content online, such as articles from a real estate blog. If you'd like to learn more, check out this video: "[RSS in Plain English](#)." It's an oldie but goodie created by Common Craft.

There are services available to help you manage and optimize your RSS feeds, most notably FeedBurner. [FeedBurner](#) made its debut in 2004 and quickly became one of the most popular feed services available. The company was acquired by Google in 2007 and is one of the most utilized RSS feed platforms on the Web today.

What exactly does FeedBurner do? It is a free application offered by Google that allows you to create an RSS feed and automatically send updates to your subscribers via RSS or email. There are also promotional tools available to help you advertise, monetize and analyze your feed.

Important note: Most blog platforms, including WordPress, have [built-in feeds](#) by default. FeedBurner and similar services are meant to enhance and optimize your feeds. If you would like to get started or learn more about the application, you can do so [here](#).

The application offers many benefits and can be set up in a matter of minutes. FeedBurner makes it easy to embed a subscription form on your website or blog, enabling registered users to receive automatic updates via email.

The service also supports video and audio podcasting and is fully integrated with [Google AdSense](#), making it extremely easy to monetize your feed.

Here are three tips to optimize FeedBurner:

1. Give your feed a thoughtful title.

The title helps identify your feed. Use keywords that are relevant to your content and brand. Having an optimized title will also improve your website's recognition in a subscriber's feed-reader application.

2. Make subscribing easy.

Activate "BrowserFriendly" in the FeedBurner console (found under "Optimize") by enabling the various subscription options. As Google states, this makes it "easy for potential subscribers to preview and subscribe to your text or podcast feed," and "applies clean visual formatting to the eyesore of raw-feed XML for much improved readability in all modern Web browsers."

3. Email subscription.

As I mentioned, FeedBurner makes it easy to add subscription forms to your Web pages. However, the mistake that I see many bloggers make is in not inserting the title of the post in the email subject line.

Having a subject line that stands out is an integral piece to email marketing. You can activate this feature under the "Email Branding" selection, which is found under "Publicize." This is noted as a "hot tip" and requires only pasting in a line of short code.

If you have been using FeedBurner for quite some time, like many real estate professionals, you have probably discovered some of the limitations of the free service. Some of the shortcomings include inaccurate analytics, the lack of customizable branding, and the inability to bulk import a subscriber list, which can be frustrating.

If you have outgrown FeedBurner or require a more robust platform for your business, there are other alternatives available for a fee.

[Feedblitz](#) is a popular alternative that is competitively [priced](#) and integrates a sophisticated email newsletter campaign. The service is utilized by many notable bloggers and businesses, as well. Feedblitz features SEO and can integrate social media content. It also has a subscriber import module, among other features. FeedBurner and Feedblitz are two of the more prevalent online feed services, though there are certainly others.

Leave a comment below and let me know if you are using an alternative platform and what you think of it.

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