The South Bay Mug

MACINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, April 2008

MAChinations
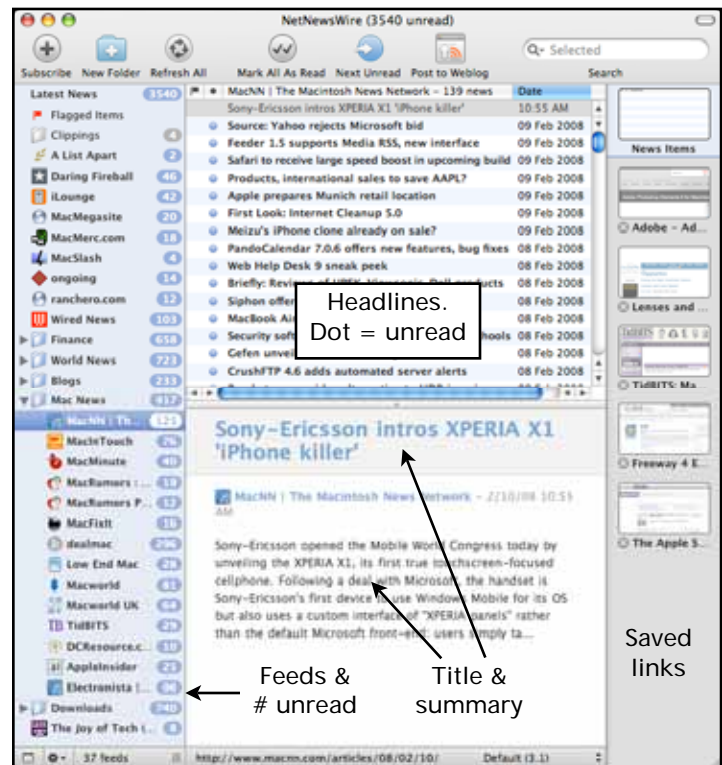
A personal view from Bob

News Sites and RSS

Do you visit a lot of news sites when you surf the web? These are newspapers, like the New York Times and Washington Post, or on-line news sources — Google News or Yahoo News. There are also hundreds of Mac news site, such as TidBITS, MacNN and MacWorld, as well as many blogs and podcasts. News sites are everywhere. Most people go to a site and read items of interest, but this can take a lot of time if you visit many sites and you can easily miss something important.

RSS: What if you could see all the headlines gathered together along with a summary of each article? You can if a site gathers the headlines and publishes them as an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed. RSS hides behind the page but gives you access by clicking the RSS icon (e.g. in the Safari RSS and Firefox ad-dress bar) to display a list of headlines and summaries, without distracting ads. Click on a headline of interest and the full story opens up. This is great time saver but you still have to open one site at a time.

RSS Readers or aggregators gather RSS feeds from hundreds of sites. It's one-stop shopping for all your news sites. In Nov 2004 I wrote about NewsMac, a free RSS reader, but it's no longer available.

NetNewsWire (NNW), previously commercial, is now a free download. It's terrific. In the left pane is a list of feeds for all your web sites. Easily add, delete and or-ganize sites into folders. The number of unread items is shown at the right of each feed. Click on a feed and a list of headlines appears at the top of the center pane. Click on a headline and the title and a brief summary appears in the bottom pane. Click the summary title or drag a headline or title into your browser window to

open it. Control-click a headline or title (see right) to save a thumbnail and link in the right pane. NNW is a full-fledged web browser. Click a thumbnail (right pane) and the entire center pane is replaced by the actual web page.

Save favorite URLs in the clippings folder at the top of the feeds. The search box, upper right, lets you search all headlines or just those in a selected site. There's a lot to NNW, much more than I can describe here. Download it and play.

Headlines. Dot = unread

Feeds & # unread

Title & summary

Saved links