



## A Message from the President

BY TIFFANY PLOWMAN

AWC Austin celebrated 75 years in Austin last year, a celebration that opened many of our eyes to the history of this treasured organization. Over the years, we have consistently championed the advancement of women across all communication disciplines by recognizing excellence, promoting leadership, mentoring fellow communicators and offering innovative programming. We have had the honor of nurturing many up and comers and seeing the success of so many who have left a mark not just on our organization but on history.



Tiffany Plowman

As we embark on year 76, we're challenged to continue the legacy. With the help of Lisa Maxwell, longtime AWC member and co-owner of The Work\*shop, we have developed a five-year strategic plan to ensure the Austin Chapter continues to thrive for the next 75 years. We are focusing our efforts on five areas including membership, member value,

reputation, administrative and financial issues and development and philanthropy efforts.

For the coming year, we will focus on creating valuable member services through innovative programming, professional development training, increased networking and enhanced career services. We intend to enrich our membership of diverse communications professionals to ensure that it represents all communications disciplines, industries, levels of experience, influence and participation.

We share this information with you, our members, in the hopes of offering insight into the vision for the organization. We encourage you to give us your input on programming and services and to get involved by volunteering on a committee. We value your membership and intend to make it even more worthwhile in the years to come.

## The Passing of a Creative Legend

BY TIFFANY PLOWMAN

On June 7, 2005, Anne Durrum Robinson passed away at the age of 92. She was one of the longest-term active members of AWC Austin and served as a mentor to many members over the years.

The organization's Creative Initiative Award is named in her honor and she was the recipient of the AWC Austin's Mentor Award (2002), Liz Carpenter Lifetime Achievement Award (1995), Gladys Whitney Hearst Outstanding Chapter Member Award (1987) and Outstanding Austin Communicator Award (1978).

Anne continued on page 2



## Calendar

### September

#### Career Transitions Group

Date: Monday, September 12  
Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Santa Rita Restaurant,  
1206 W. 38th Street

#### AWC Monthly Luncheon

Date: Wednesday, September 21  
Time: 11:30 p.m.

Location: Westwood Country Club,  
3808 W. 35th Street

#### Freelance Austin Meeting

Date: Wednesday, September 14  
Time: 12:30 p.m.

Location: Park Plaza Hotel,  
6000 Middle Fiskville Road

### October

#### Career Transitions Group

Date: Monday, October 10  
Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Santa Rita Restaurant,  
1206 W. 38th Street

#### AWC Monthly Luncheon

Date: Wednesday, October 19  
Time: 11:30 p.m.

Location: Westwood Country Club,  
3808 W. 35th Street

#### Freelance Austin Meeting

Date: Wednesday, October 12  
Time: 12:30 p.m.

Location: Park Plaza Hotel,  
6000 Middle Fiskville Road



Anne *continued*

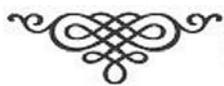
Anne also received the national organization's National Headliner Award.

A creative force to be reckoned with, Anne served as a trainer for government, business/industry and academia for the past 31 years. She designed her own courses, which included Whole-Brain Creativity, Creative Problem-Solving, Mind Mapping, Accelerated Learning, Humor (In the Workplace or Any Place), The Seven I's of Innovation and Futuring. She also designed and taught CREATEAMS, where she trained teams to use an arsenal of creative thinking skills.

Prior to her training career, Anne worked in many fields, but perhaps most fascinating is her early journalism career where she had the opportunity to interview Bonnie Parker (of Bonnie and Clyde fame), poet Edna St. Vincent Millay and Frances Perkins (secretary of labor for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first woman cabinet member in the U.S. government).

Anne was also an accomplished poet and writer. She wrote *Symphony for Simple Simon*, a children's book about the symphony, recently finished a travel book titled *I Never Met a Country I Didn't Like!* and wrote *How to Get the Biggest Bang for Your Birthdays: Many Happy Returns From Your Bonus Years!*, a book on creative aging.

Many of Anne's works have been donated by her family to the AWC Austin chapter and are available for sale at <http://store.yahoo.com/innovationroadmap/ancost.html>. Additionally, per the family's request, AWC Austin is accepting donations to The Association for Women in Communications Scholarship Fund for a scholarship in Anne's honor. To make a donation, please visit the AWC Web site at [www.awcaustin.org](http://www.awcaustin.org).



## Plugging Into the Public with Weblogs

BY TONYIA SULLIVAN

Today there are more than 3 million Web logs, or blogs, on the Internet, according to Web log search engine Technorati. Many are used for personal ramblings, but companies are increasingly using them to connect with consumers and foster employee relations.

Blogging offers several advantages over traditional advertising and marketing. Not only are blogs inexpensive to launch, they are easy to maintain and are not intrusive, like spam. When used correctly, blogs offer consumers fast, informal access to information and serve as an interactive way to promote a message to a wide audience without interference from the media or analysts.

This May, IBM announced a significant corporate blogging initiative. As a signal that this is no small project, the number two corporate communications executive in the company is running the project and IBM's chief strategist is going to begin writing a blog. IBM encourages its employees to plug the company's products in online discussions as a way to strengthen its position in key technology segments.

For its part, Microsoft considers employee blogs an invaluable corporate asset, and employees consider blogging a privilege. In 2002, one Microsoft employee began blogging, without direction from the company. Since then, the number of Microsoft employee blogs has grown to more than 1,000, and the company officially supports blogging, although with guidelines.

"As a Microsoft employee, I have always regarded my ability to blog in public as a supreme privilege," wrote blogger KorbyP on [blogs.msdn.com](http://blogs.msdn.com). "The fact that I was allowed to blog in 2002 and am encouraged to blog in 2005 by my managers is a clear indication that Microsoft thinks of and



treats its employees as partners, not peons. Individual employees can make a positive difference and the relative success of corporate blogging efforts like Microsoft's proves it."

Blogs are a fast growing means of corporate communication; some say blogs will soon become as indispensable as telephones and e-mail in building customer relationships. Blogging must be used carefully and thoughtfully, however. In order to keep your audience interested in your blog, it should be updated often and should be straightforward, lively and well-written. It should be personal and insightful, and should not sound like a press release.

When done incorrectly, blogging can embarrass a company, alienate customers or even put the company at legal risk. To prevent libel or having company secrets revealed, it is important to establish blogging guidelines. When considering whether blogging is right for your company or what kind of blog will be most effective, it is important to gear the blog toward a specific target audience and identify upfront the results your company expects to achieve. With the right strategy in place, blogs can be a key communications tactic – and customer loyalty can be your biggest reward.



# The Basics of RSS

BY TONYIA SULLIVAN

## What is RSS?

Depending on who you ask, RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication, Rich Site Summary or Really Stops Spam. RSS is a format for syndicating anything that can be broken down into discrete items, such as news, Web logs, or recent changes to wikis, via news aggregation tools.

## For what is RSS used?

Once information about each item is in RSS format, an RSS-aware program such as NewsGator can check the feed for changes and react to the changes in an appropriate way. Syndication benefits users; instead of monitoring multiple Web sites for updated information, they can subscribe to an RSS aggregator and scan headlines or brief article summaries in one place, then click links to read articles they are interested in.

Because RSS is relatively new technology, not all sites syndicate their content today. However, most major news sites such as the *CNN* and *The New York Times* use RSS to syndicate news headlines and summaries. Other sites use RSS to alert customers of new products or upcoming events, specials, technical support tips, news and industry studies.

Headline syndication can build awareness of content and brands, drive traffic to a company's site, and serve existing readerships easily and inexpensively. Not only can syndication help build stronger relationships

with existing readers who want to know as soon as new content gets posted, it will also help attract new readers.

## What are the drawbacks for companies using RSS?

Customers monitor RSS-enabled sites via RSS aggregators they subscribe to. If they feel they are being spammed, it is as easy as a click of a mouse to stop monitoring a site. Furthermore, RSS cannot be easily measured, tracked and accounted for. There are currently no subscriber mailing lists or automated ways to track RSS feed subscribers, unless private access with a registration or subscription mechanism is set up.

## How can I begin using RSS?

As the name implies, it is relatively simple for publishers to make their content available to readers in RSS format, involving minimal ongoing work and cost.

Publishing software and hosting services are a good place for Web log and personal Web site publishers to start to learn how to enable RSS on their platforms. Many offer built-in tools to publish and update RSS files.

Webmasters and developers who manage larger, more complicated Web sites can consult tutorials such as O'Reilly's RSS DevCenter, Lockergnome's RSS Resource and RSS Tutorial.

## What is the future of RSS?

RSS has proven difficult to popularize as a "concept," but once the public grasps

# New Technology: the Buzzwords

**Blog:** Short for "Web log." Online diaries, journals and running commentaries that often point to articles elsewhere on the Web, frequently with comments.

**MSM:** Mainstream media (as opposed to online media).

**Podcasting:** Blogging meets radio meets iPod. A podcaster records his or her show as an audio file and a hyperlink is added for the show to an RSS feed on a Web server. The listener's podcast software checks RSS feeds at set intervals, downloading and adding new shows to a playlist. When the listener docks his portable player, it updates with the latest shows.

**Really Simple Syndication:** A format used by news sites and Web logs for distributing content. RSS feeds include headlines, abstracts and other information. Nearly all blogs publish RSS feeds and most news sites—from *The New York Times* to *MSNBC*—now publish them.

**RSS Aggregator/RSS Reader/XML Reader:** RSS Aggregators and XML readers grab content from Web sites and blogs you tell it to scan and deliver that information to you. They collect the latest posts from one's favorite blogs, so one can quickly see what's new.

**Technorati and Feedster:** Two specialized search engines that index RSS feeds. What Google is to searching Web sites, technorati.com and feedster.com are to blogs.

**Wiki:** An online database; wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to create and modify records or Web page content using any Web browser.

**XML:** Short for Extensible Markup Language. Allows designers to create customized tags, enabling the definition, transmission, validation, and interpretation of data between applications and between organizations.

*RSS continued on page 4*

## For More Information

More information on RSS is available at the following sites:

Newsgator: <http://www.newsgator.com/>

O'Reilly's RSS DevCenter: [http://www.oreillynet.com/topics/rss/getting\\_started](http://www.oreillynet.com/topics/rss/getting_started)

Lockergnome's RSS Resource: <http://rss.lockergnome.com/resources/>

RSS Tutorial: <http://www.mnot.net/rss/tutorial/>

RSS Resources: [http://www.larkfarm.com/rss\\_resources.htm](http://www.larkfarm.com/rss_resources.htm)

RSS Readers: <http://www.ourpla.net/cgi-bin/pikie.cgi?RssReaders>

RSS Info: <http://blogspace.com/rss/readers>



The Association for  
**Women in Communications**

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### RSS *continued*

its role and function, they will probably be quick to adopt the technology, and although Web logs initially drove RSS, the future of RSS may lie in the hands of the business world.

RSS can benefit both consumers and companies. RSS saves customers time, is convenient and allows them to opt in and out of the content they receive, while companies that effectively use RSS can bring new site visitors, increase search engine positioning and generate product interest.

## Volunteers Needed

AWC is known not only for great networking opportunities and career strengthening activities, we're also a leader in Austin for our terrific community involvement. This year is no different. Don't miss the opportunity to find out about the exciting volunteer activities that AWC will be pursuing this year. Get actively involved in our chapter and our community, while lending a helping hand!

Learn more about AWC volunteer opportunities in: career services, community affairs, membership, special programs, professional development, AWC newsletter and development. For more information, please e-mail [community@awicaustin.org](mailto:community@awicaustin.org).