Week 10 Commentary

Structure of RSS

The structure of an RSS page/feed inherits the same basic structure and idea as an XML feed and is saved with an XML file extension but is not the same. I have created a short example of a typical feed that conforms to the RSS specification, using pages on Google as the context:

```xml
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<rss version="2.0">

<channel>
  <title>Google UK</title>
  <link>https://www.google.co.uk</link>
  <description>This is a description for a Home Page.</description>
  <item>
    <title>Google Images</title>
    <link>https://images.google.co.uk</link>
    <description>Search for Images</description>
  </item>
  <item>
    <title>Google Maps</title>
    <link>https://maps.google.co.uk</link>
    <description>Search for Maps</description>
  </item>
</channel>

</rss>
```

As you can see, the structure and implementation of an RSS feed is rather simple. This example shows two items, one titled 'Google Images', and the other 'Google Maps'. As it is an XML file, it begins with a declaration of the XML version, and then the version of RSS that it is on the line after that. One useful feature of RSS is that the names of each attribute generally has a meaningful name and is quite human readable, so the reader can ascertain what the purpose is of each tag just by looking at its name.

Each item in an RSS feed begins with an `<item>` tag, and the end of that item is marked with a `</item>` closing tag respectively. Then the `<title>` of the item is given, again with a closing tag, and so on and so forth for the `<link>` and `<description>` tags.

How the RSS feed was created for the CMSS Site

I created the RSS feed for the CMSS website by looking at other RSS feeds, and learning how the structure of it is, and then creating a feed to show the newest 5 articles from the articles table in the database. I was able to find out the latest 5 articles in the articles table by writing a short SQL Query to find this, and then I set about copying the contents of each row into the XML based RSS feed. To make the Feed more readable by someone who is perhaps not as familiar with RSS and XML as I am, I also added a stylesheet to this RSS so make it easier to view. The finished version can be viewed live here.

After I was finished writing out all of the code needed to show the 5 newest articles via RSS, I verified that my structure and everything was valid RSS by using an RSS checker website, which like their counterparts for XML and PHP which I have used in the past, check your code line by line to ensure that it is correct, and notifying you where and what is incorrect if there are any irregularities. In my feed there was none, so I then added it to the web server and added appropriate linked and references to it.