Quick Start

User Guide

Cyndicate

Introduction to Cyndicate

What is Cyndicate?

Cyndicate, simply put, is an RSS/Atom aggregator and content management application. In other words, Cyndicate will help you manage, view, read, and rate the syndicated content or feeds you'll find on personal blogs, news sites, forums, and around the Web.

Cyndicate was built of entirely new code and using CoreData, independence resolution, and many newer technologies. Cyndicate applies many of the same principles as the long-ignored and Apple Design Award™-winning application PulpFiction and extends well beyond them. On top of the functionality PulpFiction offered, Cyndicate adds:

- Learned and automatic ratings.
- Support for the latest feed standards (including Atom 1.0).
- Enclosures support with a variety of handling options.
- Wide and traditional views.
- Improved theme support.
- Automatic updates, Share This, and a whole lot more…

What is Syndication, a feed, and RSS/Atom?

A "web feed" is the most usual kind of web syndication, and "feeds" are the type of syndication Cyndicate handles. A web feed, or a "feed" for short, is a data format for serving users frequently updated content.

In the "old" days of the Internet, if you liked to read articles on several news sites, a few personal home pages, and some industry sites (whether your industry is computers, golf, or furniture sales), you had to visit those websites daily. You had to actively go out and gather the information yourself.

Today, feeds allow you to sit back and collect new content almost as soon as it's published. As with physical newspapers and magazines, users can "subscribe" to the feeds offered by websites. If the "old" version of visiting web pages frequently and manually checking for updates is the equivalent of buying *National Geographic* from your book store every month, subscribing to feeds is equivalent to getting *National Geographic* delivered to your home every month.

To identify feeds, look for icons like those seen at http://feedicons.com/, icons that say "RSS," "Atom," or "XML" on them, or words like "Subscribe" or "feed." If you use Safari or some other feed-aware browsers, "RSS" or "Feed" may appear in the location bar. Every website is slightly different, but in general, if you want to subscribe to a site's feed and are unable to find the feed, you can tell Cyndicate to subscribe to the site and Cyndicate will do its best to find the site's feed for you.
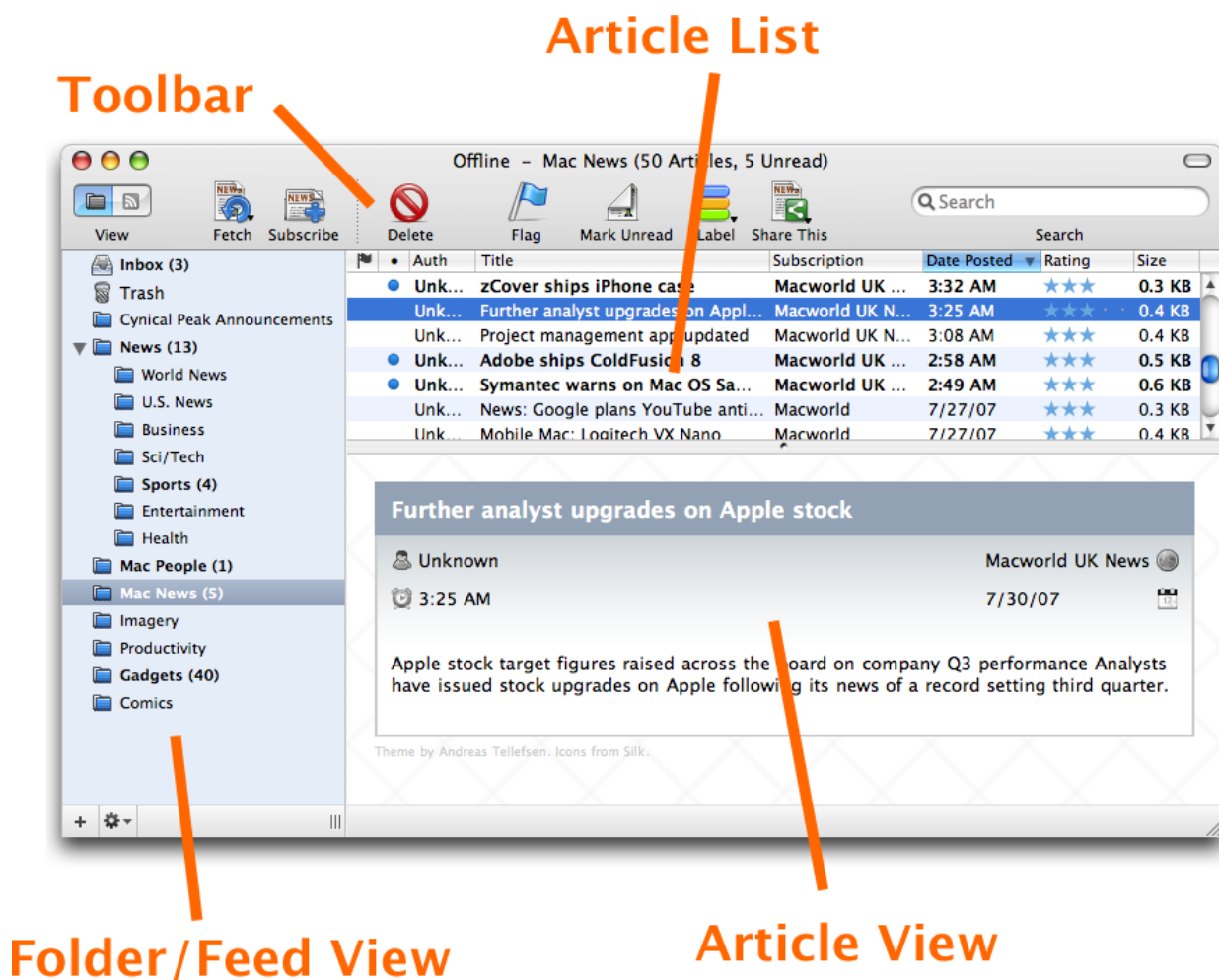
Additional Resources:
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_syndication
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_feed

The User Interface

The Article Viewer

Almost everything you do in Cyndicate will occur within the main window, the "Article Viewer," seen below:

Users of Apple's email application "Mail" (or virtually any other email application) should be fairly familiar with the layout. The article viewer window is comprised of four main areas: the toolbar, the folder/feed view, the article list, and the article view.

The toolbar contains buttons and a search bar that generally act on what appears below - the articles, the folders, and the views themselves. Their use should be rather self-explanatory.

The folder/feed view contains a list of folders or feeds (depending on the "View" toggle toolbar item). Special folders like the Inbox and the Trash appear first, followed by a mix of smart and standard folders, arranged as the user likes. Feeds are listed alphabetically.

The article list lists the articles available in the currently selected folders or feeds. If you perform a search, the article list will show the articles which meet the search criteria (which can span folders if the "All" option is chosen).

The article view displays the currently selected article. This view can be toggled (⌘D) to display the feed content (what's included in the feed) or the linked content (the web page linked to as the original or official source of the content).

Again, anyone familiar with the use of Mail should feel comfortable using Cyndicate.

Creating Folders

Cyndicate has two types of folders available for users, both of which are available in the folder/feed view when you're viewing folders. A third, special type of folder is reserved for the Inbox and Trash. All other folders and smart folders will appear below the Trash, but can otherwise be organized as you see fit.

To create a folder, click the "+" button in the main window's lower-left corner or choose "New Folder" from the action menu just right of the "+" button. A ready-to-name folder will be created beneath the currently selected folder. After naming the folder, you can move it to the desired location in the hierarchy, rename it later (choose "Rename Folder" from the action menu), drag articles to it, or set up a filter to automatically add articles to it.

To create a smart folder, hold down the option key while clicking the "+" button or choose "New Smart Folder" from the action menu. A sheet will appear, prompting you to set up your smart folder's name and criteria.

Smart folders, like filters we'll touch on briefly later, can contain a number of criteria. To add or remove criteria, click the "-" or "+" signs to the right. Please note the "all/any" popup menu below the name. If you choose "any," the smart folder will contain every article that matches at least one of the criteria. If you choose "all," an article must meet all criteria to be displayed in the smart folder.

Smart folders are a great way of grouping content, and we encourage you to experiment with smart folders. For example, you might like having smart folders that:

• display unread articles rated 4 stars or higher
• display articles with "iPhone" in the title

- display unread articles older than 24 hours
- display articles which mention your brand of digital camera and Apple's "Aperture" photo-management/editing software

Ratings

Cyndicate contains a powerful ratings system. It not only allows you to rate articles yourself, but will soon begin rating articles for you. Like with Mail's spam management, the more articles you rate, the better the automatic ratings will be.

Cyndicate's ratings appear as blue stars in the article list. To adjust the rating of an article, click and drag left and right within the stars to assign the correct rating. Alternatively, to assign a rating to a selected article or group of selected articles, use the keyboard shortcuts ⌘1 through ⌘5 (in the "Article" -> "Rating" menu). ⌘6 will remove the rating from an article. Please note that there is no "zero" star rating. An article with no stars is simply an unrated article.

Subscription Management

Subscribing to Feeds

Cyndicate offers a few ways to subscribe to a feed.

One of the easiest ways to subscribe to a feed is to copy the feed's URL (or, if you cannot find it, the website's URL). Within Cyndicate, click the "Subscribe" toolbar item or choose "Subscribe" from the file menu. A settings sheet that allows you to set the feed's label, schedule, default display will appear. You can also explicitly add the feed to a filter in the sheet. Click "Add" and the subscription will be added. If the addition fails, a dialog box will alert you.

Another way to subscribe is to set Cyndicate as your default RSS reader. You can do this within Safari's "RSS" preferences tab. When you visit a site in Safari and the "RSS" graphic appears in the location bar, simply click the graphic to subscribe to the feed in Cyndicate.

Editing Subscriptions

To edit feeds, open the Subscription Manager (⌘9) from the "Window" menu. Locate the subscription you wish to edit on the left and click it once to select it. Make the necessary changes to the editable information on the right. Select another feed or click to another text field to set the changes - simply closing the window won't update the subscription. Some settings (those in the "Settings" section) are editable with multiple feeds selected.

To add or remove subscriptions within the Subscription Manager, use the "+" and "-" buttons in the lower-left corner, respectively.

Import/Export

Cyndicate will both import and export subscriptions in the standard and widely compatible OPML file format.

To import a list of feeds from a .opml source, simply choose "Import Subscriptions…" (⇧⌘I). A standard open dialog box will appear. Locate the .opml file you wish to import. A new dialog will appear which lists all of the feeds found in the OPML file. Check all or check only a few, then click the "Import" button to import the feeds into Cyndicate.

To export feeds, choose "All Subscriptions…" (⇧⌘E) under the "File" menu's "Export" menu item. A standard save dialog box will appear. Simply name the .opml file and click the "Export" button to create the OPML file.

If you'd like to export only a certain set of feeds, open the Subscription Manager (⌘9) window, select the feeds you'd like to export, and choose "Selected Subscriptions…" from the "File" menu's "Export" menu item. Use the standard save dialog box that appears to name and save your OPML file.

Preferences

General

External Blog Editor - For use with the "Blog This" item in the "Article" menu. If you choose "Blog This," Cyndicate will send information via an established standard to supporting blog editors like Ecto or MarsEdit.

Delete Trashed Articles - Cyndicate lets you control the fate of articles. Keep them as long as you'd like, or delete them. Articles will still be visible in the trash until they're deleted via this setting. A setting of "one week old" will delete articles in the trash that are one week old or older.

Delete Unflagged Articles - This setting affects articles outside of the trash. If you would like Cyndicate to delete one-week old unflagged articles outside of the trash, set this to "One week old." However, we strongly recommend sticking with the default setting: "Manually."

Open links in the background - Check this box to open links and articles in the background without bringing the browser to the front.

Downloads: Feeds

Check for New Articles - This setting determines the default schedule for all feeds set to "Default." You can manually over-ride this setting at any time and on a per-subscription basis by manually checking a subscription or by editing the subscription's schedule. If the "Refresh at Launch" button is checked, Cyndicate will check all new articles at launch, then revert to normally scheduled updates.

New Articles Growl - This option allows you to control the frequency with which Growl will notify you of new articles, or you may turn them off by choosing "None." For more info on Growl, a system-wide notification framework, please visit http://growl.info/.

New Articles Sound - Like "New Articles Growl," this option allows you to play a sound when new articles are fetched. Turn off the feature by choosing "None." The sound always plays at the end of the fetch, not per-subscription as with the Growl option.

Maximum Connections - This setting controls the number of subscriptions which will be simultaneously checked. On slower computers, you may wish to set this to 2 or 3. Users with faster computers may wish to choose 5 or 10.

Downloads: Enclosures

Download Location - Click the "Set…" button to choose a default downloads location for enclosures.

Maximum Enclosure Downloads - This controls the number of simultaneous enclosure downloads (not the number of times you may download any given enclosure). It is similar to "Maximum Connections" in the section above.

Automatically Download Audio Enclosures - If you subscribe to podcasts outside of iTunes, you may want to check this box. Options beneath this are fairly self-explanatory and allow you to automatically add the enclosure to iTunes with certain settings so that your iPod, when synchronized, will have the latest podcasts.

Automatically Download Non-Audio Enclosures - We're fairly certain you can figure this one out, given the description of the option just above this one…

Appearance: Article View

Stylesheet - Cyndicate has some built-in stylesheets and can also read and use NetNewsWire stylesheets. To change the stylesheet you wish to use to display your articles, choose the appropriate one here. Stylesheets are listed in this order: Default, built-in, Cyndicate Styles, NetNewsWire styles.

Standard Font and *Fixed-Width Font* - Choose the basic font and size for articles displayed in the article view. Stylesheets and certainly web pages may over-ride these settings.

Browser Options - The "Load Plug-Ins" and "Enable JavaScript" options allow you to customize how content is displayed or even loaded within the article view. Click the checkbox to turn on the option or enable Java/JavaScript, or uncheck them to turn them off.

Appearance: List Views

Show Unread Articles in Bold - Check this box to show unread articles in bold. If un-checked, unread articles will still display the blue dot. Note: changed or modified articles will display a yellow dot, but will not "re-bold" themselves as new.

Use Alternating Background - Check this box to turn on an alternating blue/white back-ground in the article list. Uncheck the box to use a solid white background.

Folder Font - Controls the font face and size used to display folders and feeds in the folder/feed view.

Article List Font - Controls the font face and size used to list articles in the article list area of the main window.

Labels

Use the "Add" and "Remove" buttons to add or remove label colors. You can edit the names and colors by clicking on the name or color section of the table. There are no real limitations, though we suggest trying to vary the colors as much as possible. Four shades of light blue may be tough to discern from each other at a glance.

Use Subscription Label for Articles - Subscriptions have labels, but articles themselves do not. Check this box to assign subscription labels to all the articles in that subscrip-tion. Filters can over-ride and change an article's label, and you can manually change an article's subscription as well.

The radio buttons below the table control how labels appear within the article list. If you would like to use labels purely to sort and categorize and do not want to see the colors appear, choose "Do not draw labels." The top two options will color either the text or the background behind the text of each article in the article list.

Filters

Filters are applied in order when fetching if the checkbox "Apply Filters when Fetching" is checked. Filters may also be applied at any time by control-clicking (or right-clicking) on a selected article or articles at any time.

To create, edit, copy, or delete filters, use the buttons to the right.

The filter editor contains two sections. The top section behaves just like the smart folder editor and contains the "any/all" option discussed earlier. Articles matching the criteria in the top section can be acted upon in a variety of ways: they can be deleted, moved, and

copied. They can cause sounds to play or Growl notifications to appear. Their labels can be changed, and more.

A "Stop Filtering" action is also included. If you would like to stop filtering that particular article if it matches the criteria of your filter, add a "Stop Filtering" action to the end of the list of actions. Doing so will speed up Cyndicate, as later filters won't be run on articles that match the earlier filter.

Ratings

Apply Ratings when Fetching - Check this box to have Cyndicate apply its automatic ratings when articles are fetched. You can still over-ride these automatic ratings yourself. Cyndicate will not automatically rate articles if this is unchecked.

Reset Corpus - We do not recommend clicking this button unless you have good reason to do so. Resetting the corpus will cause all manual ratings to vanish and the corpus will be cleared, allowing you to re-train Cyndicate on how to automatically rate articles.

Share This

The standard Cyndicate toolbar includes a "Share This" item that offers a drop-down list of social bookmarking sites. If you belong to some of these sites, check the boxes for the corresponding services to enable the appearance of those services in the toolbar menu. To post an article to one of the services, select the article and choose the service from the toolbar menu.

Update

Cyndicate uses the Sparkle system to provide seamless, easy upgrades. If you'd like Cyndicate to automatically check for updates, choose one of the scheduling options provided here.

We, the developers of Cyndicate, would appreciate it if you submit your system info by checking the "Submit System Info" checkbox. *No private information is transmitted* and the information we do receive simply helps us to better fine-tune Cyndicate's performance and features for the majority of our customers.

For more information on Sparkle, please visit http://sparkle.andymatuschak.org/.

Cyndicate Stylesheets

Creating Styles

If you've got a creative itch and want to develop your own stylesheet for Cyndicate, you can. It just takes a little HTML and CSS knowledge. You can find more information on the tags and format of a Cyndicate Style in our forum at http://forums.cynicalpeak.com/viewtopic.php?id=196.

Getting Support

Visit the Forum

http://forums.cynicalpeak.com/

Email Us

support@cynicalpeak.com

Credits

Thanks

Icons   Fernando Lins
Default Theme   Andreas Tellefsen

Ideas, Testing   Ludovic Hirlimann
and Similar   Karl Houlihan
     Aaron Linville
     Scott Peters
     Michael C. Rael
     Tor Einar Samdah
     Olivier Scherler

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