



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
1325 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3283
April 7, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: Edward Johnson
Director, Strategic Planning and Policy Office

FROM: Adrian Gardner
Chief Information Officer 

SUBJECT: Approval for use of Really Simple Syndication (RSS) for
Distribution of NWS Operational Data/Products

REFERENCE: RSS Service Description Document (SDD)

The National Weather Service (NWS) is responsible for making its weather, water, and climate information widely available to external users in commonly accepted standards and techniques. One of the most widely accepted, available, and cost effective means of accomplishing this objective is the use of web services via the Internet. A popular technology is the use of RSS to update news articles and other content that changes quickly. As an application of XML, RSS also provides the ability to access Internet content via portable wireless devices.

NWS technical specifications for use of RSS are provided in NWS Instruction (NWSI) 60-103, *RSS Feed Requirements and Specifications*, including podcasts, videocasts, and Weblogs (Blogs). NWS has gained considerable experience providing information to external users via RSS. A listing of current RSS feeds maintained by NWS (both experimental and operational) is provided at: <http://www.weather.gov/rss/>. Many of these feeds have been positively reviewed by the external user community.

Given the success of past/current use of NWS RSS feeds and the efficiency with which NWS is able to provide current operational information to users, NWS proposed approval to disseminate any already-approved operational hydrometeorological information using RSS technologies.

A public comment period for use of RSS for distribution of operational data and products was open from April 18, 2007 to August 24, 2007. There was 1 comment submitted during this period. The single comment supported use of XML, stating "NWS has all the experts and this is a great public service that no business is set up to reliably provide on a nationwide scale. This XML Web Service is equally available to all citizens no matter where you are or what type of computing platform you use. Only our government can provide a service like this and you do a great job of providing this and all the other NWS services." There were no negative comments.

NWS approves use of RSS to distribute NWS Operational Data/Products. Dissemination of any *new* data/products using RSS would require approval of the content information according to NWS Policy Directives 1-10 and 10-102.

