Using a web browser to read News

Internet 'News' is a worldwide discussion forum where people can post articles related to topics they are interested in. This discussion forum is organised by topic, so that users can quickly locate relevant articles. Each topic area is referred to as a newsgroup.

At RMIT CS&IT, newsgroups are an alternative to forums as a form of communication between students and their tutors and lecturers. Most courses have their own newsgroup. Students can find information in the course newsgroup, and can ask questions. It is important that students read the course newsgroups regularly. In order to read or participate in a discussion in one of the newsgroups you first have to join that newsgroup by 'subscribing' to it.

You can do this via your web browser. There are two ways to do this.

You can use the WebNews link on the Current Students page:


As you will find out in later Induction lessons, you can also do this via Unix.

Discussion groups that you may find useful are as follows:

For general issues related to RMIT: rmit.general
For general issues related to RMIT CS&IT: rmit.cs.general
For general issues related to specific programs:
  e.g. Post Graduate students: rmit.cs.pgrad
Announcements about facilities in the School: rmit.csannounce
Announcements about items wanted or for sale: rmit.forsale

As a general rule, there is a newsgroup for each course. The name of that newsgroup will be in the form rmit.cs.Xxxx, where you replace Xxxx with the name of the course (with no spaces)

eg: For students undertaking COSC1321 Computing Fundamentals this semester the newsgroup is: rmit.cs.ComputingFundamentals

Exercises

- Post a message to the rmit.cs.Orientation newsgroup – remember the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Check your student email: http://studentems.rmit.edu.au/
Reading News from the Unix shell

To make setting up your Internet newsreader easier, do each of the following steps, type `rm -f ~/.newsr`c

To start the reading news, type in `rtin` at the Unix command prompt while you are logged into yallara or numbat.

Internet News is broken into many different discussion groups organised by topic. These groups are commonly referred to as 'newsgroups'.

In order to participate in a discussion in one of the newsgroups you first have to join that news group by 'subscribing' to it.

Subscribing to Newsgroups

At the moment you are may not subscribed to any discussion groups so this list may be empty. To subscribe to a newsgroup so that you can join the discussion in that group, you have to hit 'S' and then type in the name of the group you want to subscribe to. To subscribe to the general CS&IT discussion group:

1. hit the capital 'S' key
2. type `rmit.cs.general` and hit the Enter key

Reading the articles in a newsgroup

Now you will have an entry in your newsgroup subscription list.

The format of these entries is some thing like the example below:

```
1  64  rmit.cs.general
```

- The first number is the position of the newsgroup in your subscription list.
- The second number is the number of articles that you have yet to read in the newsgroup.
- This is followed by the name of the newsgroup that you have subscribed to.

To enter a newsgroup you have subscribed to, use the right arrow key.

Once you have entered a newsgroup, you will see the list of discussions that have articles you have not already read in the newsgroup.

You can move through the list of discussions with the arrow keys.

To see the full list of articles in all discussions, hit `r`.

To go back to the list of discussions with articles you haven't read, hit `r` again (`r` switches between 'all articles' and 'unread articles').
Each of the discussions listed will look like this:

1 + 2 9 mobile phone for sale sstewart@cs.rmit.edu.au

+ here denotes that there are unread articles in the group

1 2 3 mobile phone for sale

not important the topic of the discussion the author of the first article
indicates the number of articles in the discussion in the discussion
+ position of this discussion in your list

To enter a discussion, move to that discussion, hit the right arrow key.

Once you have entered a discussion, you will see the list of articles waiting in that discussion, each of which will look like:

0 [ 9] mobile phone for sale Scott Stewart

subject of the article author of the article
number of lines in the article
order in the discussion (starts with 0)

Responses to an article are indicated by an entry like the one below:

1 [ 18] -> The Jackal

author of the response
indicates that this is a response to the previous article in the list
number of lines in the article
order in the discussion (starts with 0)

To look at the articles in a discussion topic move to the article you wish to view using the up/down arrow keys and hit the right arrow key.

To return to the discussion group, hit the left arrow key.

Once you are finished reading articles in the discussion you have entered, hit the left arrow key to move back to the discussion list.

You will be asked whether you wish to mark the discussion as being read so that the articles in the discussion will be skipped the next time you use rtin (skipped articles can be viewed by hitting R while you are in the discussion list of a newsgroup).

If you want to skip the articles currently in the discussion next time you are reading news, hit Y, otherwise hit N.

To return to the list of newsgroups you are subscribed to, hit the left arrow key while you are inside a newsgroup.
Posting articles of your own to a newsgroup

Now that you can read articles from newsgroups, you will post an article of your own to a newsgroup. First, subscribe to the following newsgroup:

   rmit.cs.test

This is a newsgroup that is reserved for testing whether you can make news postings. Do not make test postings to any other newsgroup.

Move into the group rmit.cs.test by moving to it in your list of subscribed newsgroups and hitting the right arrow key.

To post an article of your own to news, hit w while you are inside the newsgroup.

You will then be asked to provide a subject for your article. Enter the subject line

   Test posting for <your name>

and hit enter, e.g.: 'Test posting for Craig Hamilton'

You will then be able to write your article in the vi editor.

Hit “i” to enter insert mode. Write something about whatever you like (e.g. the weather, yourself or even your thoughts on how wonderful the presenters of the induction session are). When you are finished writing your article, save it and exit the program. (vi editor commands are on p65) Once you do this you will see the following screen (take note of the advice given in the message!):

   Your article:

   Test posting for...........

   will be posted to the newsgroup

   rmit.cs.test

   The list at the bottom of the screen is the options you have available to you. q)uit, e)dit, i)spell, g) pgp, p)o(st, p(o)stpone: p

   The three options you will most likely use are

   q - quit without posting your article

   e - edit the contents of your article again

   p - post your article (this is the default option)

To post your article to the newsgroup, hit enter. Note that it may take a little while for your article to appear in the newsgroup.

If your article contains quoted text please take some time to pare it down to just the key points to which you are responding. Many people simply skip any article whose first page is largely quoted material

Format your article to fit in less then 80 characters per line - 72 is a good choice, as it allows quoting without exceeding the limit. If you aren't careful and considerate in formatting your posting, people are likely to ignore it completely.
**Following up to an existing article with a response**

To do this you need to first enter the desired newsgroup and find the article you want to follow up in the article list of the group you are in by using the up/down arrow keys.

The article you should follow up to is in rmit.cs.test and has the following subject line:

```
Induction session article to follow up
```

Now open the article by hitting the right arrow key.

To follow up to the article hit the F key.

You will be taken into vi where you can type up your response. You can quote text from the article you are responding to by typing below the points you are interested in.

As a general rule, when you are following up to an article it is best to delete previous text you do not wish to quote in your article.

When you have finished typing your response in the editor, save and quit. You will see the same options you saw when you posted an article of your own.

Hit 'p' to post your article.