

# Tips 'n Technology

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

**Friday Online Continues!**  
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**Personalize a Google homepage!**  
See page 2 for more info...

**Custom Slide Shows in PowerPoint!**  
See page 3 for more info...



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## Bytes & Pieces

**RSS - Real Simple. Real Fast.**  
by Jill Hughson

In a world of billions of web pages, keeping up to date with the information you want can be a drag. Wouldn't it be better to have the latest news feeds and features delivered directly to you, rather than the process of searching and surfing? Well now you can, thanks to a service known as RSS.

So what exactly does RSS stand for? The accepted definition of the most recent version of RSS is 'Really Simple Syndication'. Basically, RSS allows you to identify the web content you like and have it delivered directly to you. It takes the hassle out of staying up-to-date, by showing you the very latest information available on your favorite sites.

To use RSS, the first thing you need is a news reader (also called an aggregator). There are many different versions, and some are web-browser based, while others are downloadable applications you must install. All allow you to display and subscribe to the RSS feeds you want.

A variation on RSS can be found with Firefox's Live Bookmarks (or Live Content). While it is RSS, it's not the "fully loaded" model. Firefox's RSS capabilities are designed for light news reading/dynamic content. It is a great way to get familiar with RSS. Check out Jeffrey SoRelle's EIT Tech Blog article for more information, found at [http://tceblogs.tamu.edu/wtexas/archives/2005/11/live\\_bookmarks\\_1.html](http://tceblogs.tamu.edu/wtexas/archives/2005/11/live_bookmarks_1.html).

Firefox 1.0.7, Netscape 8.0, and Internet Explorer 7 (which is due to be released this summer) all support Live Bookmarks or Live Content. If you would like to read more about each, please visit the Firefox, Netscape, and Internet Explorer websites.

For more information on RSS, visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rss>. To help you get an idea about what feeds are out there you can find a list of the top 100 most-subscribed-to RSS feeds at <http://radio.xmlstoragesystem.com/rcsPublic/rssHotlist>. Another popular Extension RSS site that provides news to many media outlets is <http://agnews.tamu.edu>. Check it out!

More information on news readers (or news aggregators) can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS\\_Feed\\_Reader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_Feed_Reader). Check out next month's TnT to find out how to use the GroupWise RSS reader and have your feeds delivered right to your Inbox.

## News and Updates

### The Brazos Valley Macromedia Users Group - Summer Wilson

The Brazos Valley Macromedia User's Group will meet February 21st from 11:45 to 1:00pm at MicroAge in College Station. For more information visit <http://bvmmug.tamu.edu>.

### The Brazos Valley Web Guild - Summer Wilson

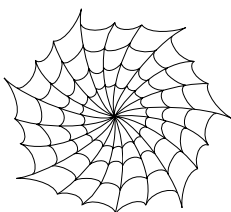
The Brazos Valley Web Guild will meet on February 3, 2006. For more information visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bvweb/>.

## Centra Central

The Friday Online series has been extended through June 2006. The events are listed in the Friday Online folder in Centra and they are open for enrollment.

Enroll or browse upcoming events or learn more about Centra by clicking the Centra Symposium link from the EIT webpage or going directly to <http://eit.tamu.edu/centra.html>. Playback any of the 100+ recorded sessions from the Public Recordings link at <http://centra.tamu.edu/main/tce>.

## Web Info



### Possible URLs to link from your Websites this Month

**FCS** - Identity Theft: Prevention and Survival - <http://www.identitytheft.org/>

**AG and Natural Resource** - Organic Farming Research Foundation - <http://www.ofrf.org/>

**4H** - Teen Fitness - <http://life.familyeducation.com/teen/fitness/34463.html>

### Giving Google™ a Personal Touch - by Wendy Wolfington

Do you use Google™ on a regular basis to search for information related to your work? Do you have Internet Explorer or Firefox set to use Google™ as the page it opens to (your 'home' page)? If so, you might want to consider personalizing your Google™ homepage.

To personalize your own Google homepage you first need an account with Google. To sign up for an account, go to <https://www.google.com/accounts/NewAccount>. This isn't an email account. It does not cost anything, and it does not contain any spyware.

[Personalized Home](#) | [My Account](#) | [Sign out](#)

Figure 1

After you have created an account you can go to <http://www.google.com> and **Sign In** (look for the sign in link in the upper-right corner). Once you have signed in click on the **Personalized Home** link at the top of the page (Figure 1).

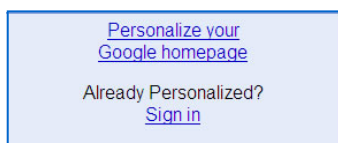


Figure 2

After clicking the **Personalized Home** link you will see the blue box to the left (Figure 2). Click the top link to do the initial customization to get a list of options that will allow you to choose news feeds and other websites that might be of interest (Figure 3). In the **Create a Section** field you can enter a keyword (e.g. "Agriculture") to find feeds and sites related to your specific needs.



Figure 3

To select content to add to your homepage, simply click the **add** button found to the right of each item. You can then use your mouse to drag them into different locations on the page or just leave them they way they are.

Once you have your homepage "just right", you can set your browser to open to this page. Go to **Tools-(Internet) Options** and click the "Use Current Page" button.

Have fun with your new customized Google homepage!

## Tip of the Month: Custom Shows in PowerPoint

by Jill Hughson

Ever have this happen? You've created a presentation that takes an hour to deliver. You've just been told you only have 30 minutes to make your presentation. You know you only have time to show the "important" slides in PowerPoint, but you don't want your audience to see you flipping past a lot of slides and realizing they are missing more than half of the presentation. One option is to pull the slides you want and save into another presentation. A big problem with this option is having two versions to update if changes need to be made. You could also do the "flip past" option, but that can still be time consuming. So why not try this third option - customizing your slide show so that only the slides you want are viewed.

Here's how you do it::

- Open the presentation you need to customize.
- Click **Slide Show** on the toolbar and select **Custom Shows** (Figure 1)
- Click **New** (Figure 2)
- Add the slides that will be used in the Custom Show (Figure 3)
  - \* Slides can be added and removed as well as reordered
- When all needed slides are added and in the correct order, click **OK**
- You'll see the new custom show listed.
- Click **Close** (Figure 4)

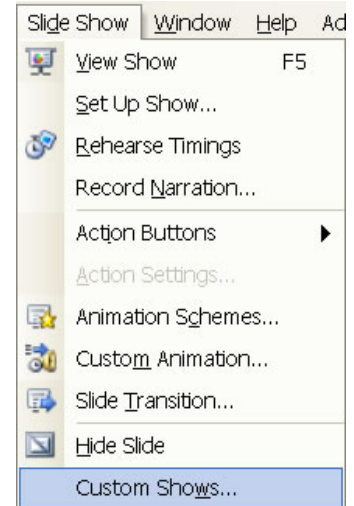


Figure 1

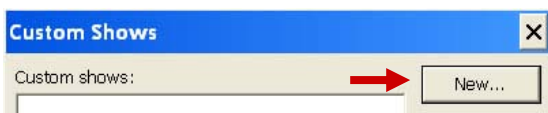


Figure 2

You have just created a **Custom Show**. You can create multiple custom shows for any given presentation. This helps save space on your hard drive and on the server by eliminating multiple versions of a presentation.

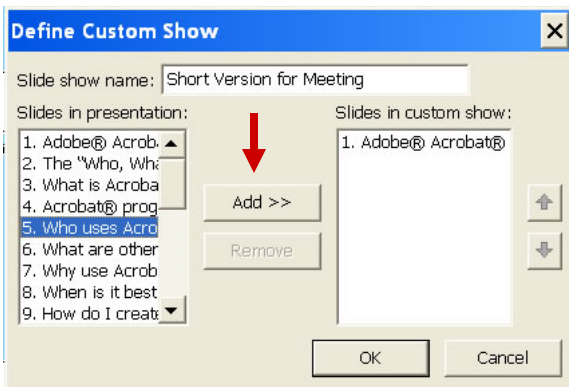


Figure 3

You also save time when updating a presentation. Changes made to the original will automatically update on the custom shows. So you save space and time!

So how do you use a custom show when it's time to do the presentation?

- Open the presentation you need to customize.
- Click **Slide Show** on the toolbar and select **Custom Shows**
- Click on the custom show listed and select **Show** (Figure 4)

What if you need to add or remove slides from your custom show?

- Open the presentation you need to customize.
- Click **Slide Show** on the toolbar and select **Custom Shows**
- Click on the custom show listed and select **Edit**
- Then add/remove or reorder slides as needed

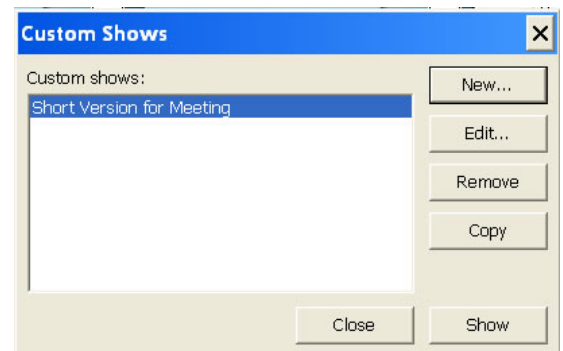


Figure 4